



PO Box 251, Salado, Texas 76571

www.saladohistoricalsociety.com

3rd Quarter Newsletter

September 30, 2021

OUR PURPOSE: The Salado Historical Society is dedicated to researching and preserving the history of the area and of the families that helped build this community. Their mission is “To locate, educate, and preserve the history and the historical integrity of the Village of Salado.”

A Word From Our President - *Bill Kinnison*

It has been nine months since the current Historical Society Board of Directors was elected, and several significant projects have been completed. Here are some of the things we have accomplished:

- a. Updating our website, to include all 77 historic sites and pioneers who are significant to the history of Salado. Thank you to Linda Griffith our web master. The website is www.saladohistoricalsociety.com.
- b. Forty Historic Salado Site signs have been placed around Salado thanks to the donation of Sterling Ambrose. A map identifying the location of these sites is available at the Salado Visitors Center, on our website, and in shops and restaurants around Salado. Over 1,000 have been distributed. The home and shop owners of these sites have been very accommodating in helping us place the new signs. Forty “thank you’s” go out to Salado!
- c. The Denman Cabin's new cedar shake roof will be completely replaced thanks to a grant from Bell Co. Historical Commission.
- d. The Boles-Aiken Log Cabin will get a new tin roof on the porch this fall to replace the deteriorated one.
- e. Our agreement with the SISD for having a place for our historic log cabins has been updated.
- f. The Village of Salado has insured the log cabins under their umbrella policy.
- g. Eleven local historic sites have been marked with narrative signs by the Historical Society. These are sites that have a historical value to Salado but do not qualify for a Texas Historical Commission Landmark.

As you can see, we have been very busy in promoting the history of Salado for

tourists and residents alike who know this is a historic town but may not know precisely which elements are historic. More is coming. The Tour of Homes, trolley tours, and the continuation of locating and marking historic sites are ongoing. Please continue supporting us with your membership and participation in sponsored events.

November "Chili & Fixins" Supper: The Salado Historical Society will have a chili supper on Monday, Nov. 8th at 6:00 pm in the Church of Christ Fellowship Building. Everyone attending is asked to bring a salad or a dessert for the meal. The Historical Society will provide drinks (tea/water). The program will consist of three speakers who are currently involved in restoring one of three historic homes in Salado: Rose House (1870-72), Tyler House (1857), and Halley House (1869). It will be interesting to learn what restoration has been done and what is planned going forward for these historic properties. Also, we will hold an election of officers for the Board of Directors for 2022.

Painting of Old Salado.

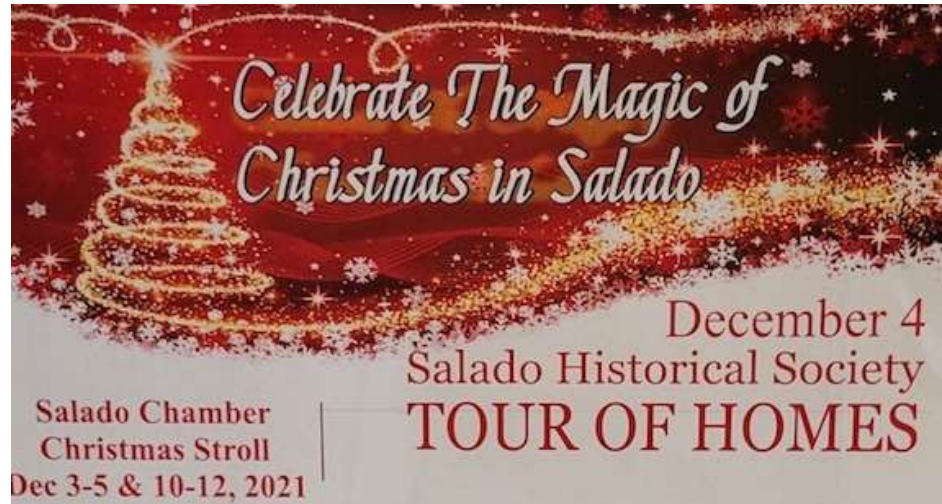
Copies of this oil painting titled "Old Salado," painted by Mildred Barton Law, are available for order as a fundraiser for the Historical Society. The original of this painting is in the Salado Library. It was painted in 1922 and has been in private homes since painted. It is in excellent condition for reproducing. Copies will be printed on stretched canvas



and unframed. For example a 16" x 20" size is \$100. Other sizes can be made to order and take about 14 days to deliver. Mildred Barton Law was the daughter of Salado pioneer Dr. Welborn Barton. The scene she painted is of Salado in 1869 that shows the first bridge across the creek, Salado springs, Salado College, Barbee-Berry Mercantile, the Grange, and Shady Villa Hotel. All of these sites are now recorded Texas Historical Commission Landmarks. A copy of the painting will be displayed at the chili supper on Nov.8th. If you would like to order a copy, contact bkinnison@embarqmail.com

Tour of Homes

This is the primary fundraiser the Historical Society sponsors each year. Information on purchasing tickets will be provided soon. Tour Hours are 9-5.



These sisters have a significant connection to Salado history. Can you guess that link?

Meet Donna Kearns, Janet Gravette and Dale Schumacher. These three lovely sisters are the daughters of William "Bill" Bratton, the sole nephew of the late Ruth Van Bibber. Ruth and her husband Dion were key figures in stimulating Salado's economy beginning in the 1940s when they turned the old Shady

Villa hotel building into the famed Stagecoach Inn restaurant. Bill Bratton, who was then a resident of California, acted as a confidant and advisor to his Aunt Ruth over many years, and added the hotel, clubhouse and coffee shop that expanded the Stagecoach Inn Restaurant into the Stagecoach Inn complex in 1960.

Although raised in California, the Bratton sisters have always felt a strong connection to Salado, where they spent many childhood summers. Donna still resides in California; Dale lives in the state of Washington, but Janet (pictured center) may look familiar to you. Janet and her husband Ron have lived in Salado since 1997. The Bratton sisters have been most generous in sharing information and memories about the original Stagecoach Inn, one of Salado's most significant landmarks.

A few great sources on local history



The white book shown second from the right is titled *Reconstruction in Texas*.

Author/historian/professor Charles W. Ramsdell, (1877-1942) a Salado native, wrote this book in 1910. Ramsdell also edited and completed George W. Tyler's *History of Bell County*, first published by Naylor Publishing in 1936, almost a decade after Tyler's death. Published by a local resident in 1960 is *Salado, Texas* by Felida D. Shanklin. Published in 2007 by a local author is *Salado, Texas – Frontier College Town*. A shorter history is *History of Salado, Texas* by B. Kinnison and MaryBelle Brown, published in 2019. A pictorial history published in 2014 is *Salado* by local authors, Mary H. Hodge & Charlene O. Carson. Other books you may find interesting are: *Tales of Old*

Salado by E.M. Hutchins, 1999; *A Waif From*

Texas by Kate Alma Organ, 1901; and *The Stage Stops Here, The History of the Stagecoach Inn*, by Carol O'Keefe Wilson, 2016. A thorough history of the principle founder of Salado, E.S.C. Robertson, is *Empresario's Son* by Michael & Nancy Kelsey and Genny Parsons, published in 2017.

A Saladoan's Perspective, Circa 1900

Doctor William A. Davis had a personal history deeply rooted in Salado. Born in Salado in 1873, William was the son and namesake of one of the areas earliest mill owners, pioneers in the truest sense. After he completed medical school at Galveston in 1898, William returned to Salado and married the local Baptist minister's daughter, Miss Miriam Cother. Two children were born to this union, a daughter in 1900 and a son in 1903.¹

The young Davis family remained in Salado until 1910 when greater prospects drew the good doctor away. Over the ensuing years, he took full advantage of those



opportunities and enjoyed a distinguished career.

Dr. William Davis established the bureau of vital statistics in Texas with such success that he was hired to do the same in the state of Georgia. He was, for a time, the Secretary of the State Board of Health and had also served as Fort Worth's city health inspector. He was highly respected in his field. He lived out the last years of his life in Austin and is buried there but he never forgot his love for Bell County.

Throughout his life, Davis held a deep affection and appreciation for his hometown as he demonstrated in 1946 when he penned a sentimental letter to the editor of the *Belton Journal*. In that communiqué, written just two years before his death, Davis recounted his memories of living in Salado as a young adult. One of his favorite reminiscences was visiting the "big city" of Belton, a journey that took 2 hours. Here are a few passages from the letter:

I'd like to hitch "old Hub" (named after Hub Halley) and "Old Henry" (named for Henry Hamblen) to the buggy. I'd pick up Ike Mathews, Bill Berry, Dr. Guthrie or Prof. Jones and drive over to Belton. It didn't take long, it's only 10 miles, . we could get there in 2 hours without breaking a spring or a single tree. I'd put Hub and Henry in Peay's Wagon Yard, give them a bundle of oats apiece and light a shuck to Jeff's Barber Shop. Of course Hub Cawthon usually cut my hair but I like to get a city cut once in a while and that's the kind I got at Jeff's Shop.

If Prof. Jones had come over with me I'd be apt to find him in the new law firm of John Robinson and James E. Ferguson. If Dr. Guthrie came he'd be in W. E. Cline's or Dr. Hunter's Drugstore. If I were looking for Bill Berry, he would be around in Naismith's Machine Shop, for Bill said that Naismith could fix anything in the world that broke down.

Then we'd go over to the courthouse for at that time the southern portion of Bell County held the balance of the power in elections and believe me that gang was pretty nice to the Salado folks.

. . . Those and other pioneers I could mention were the salt of the earth. They built Belton and Bell County in such a ways that after all these years, even a newcomer enjoys living in the friendliest town in the best county in the gretest nation in the world today.

We, the current residents of this great county, owe a debt of gratitude to early residents like Dr. Davis. We honor him by keeping alive a level of reverence and appreciations for our forebearers.

1. William and Miriam's only son, William III, died at age 16 in a car accident, bringing to an end the Davis surname on this branch of the family tree.



Where in Salado is this historic trough?
And, what was it used for? If you know, send your answer to www.saladohistoricalsociety.com using the form at the bottom of the home page.

Miriam Jordan

The historical society would like to thank and acknowledge a long-time friend of this organization, **Miriam Jordan**. In particular, Miriam was invaluable in heading up the annual home tour for many years. Our group chose her as Person of the Year in 2015. We understand that Miriam has recently moved to Austin. We wish her the best but will miss her.

Mary Hodge

It was with the deepest regret that we learned of the recent passing of our dear friend and fellow history-enthusiast Mary Hodge. Mary had a long association with this area and a very special association with this group, where she was chosen Person-of-the-Year in 2013 for her knowledge and tireless work. For many years she acted as our principle archivist.

Volunteers needed

We are in need of several volunteers to help with the Home Tour on December 4. We will need someone at the front door of each of the homes to check tickets and record the zip code of the visitors. There are morning and afternoon shifts available. (a shift will last 4 and a half hours) We will also need volunteers at the historic cabins on that day. If you can help, please contact Shirley Lett at lettsjlett@gmail.com



Thanks to volunteers Darlene Clemens and Carlene McKnight for cleaning the headstones at the Hamblen-Aiken Cemetery. The complete cleaning process could take as long as four weeks.