

## A Leaf From Hallettsville's History

By: Mrs. M. J. Ballard nee Hallet

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Hallettsville was laid off in the year 38 or 39 by Byrd Lockhart, one of the most competent surveyors of that early period, through a suggestion of his to Mrs. M. P. Hallet in honor of whom it is named.

Mrs. Hallet settled on the E. bank of the Lavaca, a short distance above Hallettsville, in 1833 where she remained, retreating with other settlers, upon the approach of Santa Anna's Army, and returning after his death, until her death in 18--.

### Indians

The Indians, some of whom were friendly disposed, did not give the settler in this neighborhood any very great degree of annoyance, though, upon one occasion, finding two men, Nunnely and Smothers engaged in cutting logs, somewhere in the vicinity of the present grave yard, for the purpose of putting up a house in the present town, attacked and killed them. The cattle, or rather milch-cows, by their peculiar behavior, were the most reliable indicators of the near approach of Indians, smelling, it is supposed, the smoked buck skin.

### Store-Houses

Hallettsville, though thus early laid off, did not make much progress till somewhere after the close of the Mexican War, when C. Ballard, who had married Mrs. Hallet's only daughter, lent his energy toward its developments building, we believe, the first store-house in it, the house now occupied by M. Green. The first house built, however, was a blacksmith shop, put up by Ira McDaniel, about where now Louis Turner grows a fine garden. The second store-house was that of Peter McDermott, the same now occupied by Mrs. Tippet & Miss East, after which other houses were erected, and other merchants came, prominent among those were Simons, Kelly, Hoffman and Dibrell.

### Saloons

Even at this early day there were not wanting places at which not the edleness of the Germans, but liquor, read and fiery, old Monongahela, Cognac, etc. could be obtained, often producing effects not seen in these later degenerate days. Upon one occasion, we remember seeing a party of young men, filled with these generous inspiring fluids, engage in the innocent pastime of tearing each other's shirts into a thousand pieces yet no exhibition of passion or of desire to proceed further in this direction. We supposed it was too from this same noble source of inspiration that Main Street would sometimes convert itself into a race-course and rider and steed strain every muscle to reach the goal, just beyond where so many a libation was poured to Bacchus, and near the old hickory tree, where we have seen so many, overcome by these libations, sweetly resting. In obedience to that law of nature, through which certain plants of flowers turn toward the sun, these trials of speed were always toward their source of inspiration.

### Hotels

The first hotel, was built to A.W. Hicks, on the corner where L.S. Pepper now holds forth; the second by Capt. Jno. Harrell, where F. W. Lindenberg now provides or the wants of man as did his predecessor.

#### School-Matter

The first school taught in the neighborhood, was at St. Marys' by Priest Clark; the first in Hallettsville by Tolleson, for many years afterward Assessor and Collector of Taxes; the second by Mr. Buchanan, the father of our present County Clerk, near where now stands the building owned by Mr. Cheney in the southern part of town. Mr. Anderson taught, also, in the same building. Sometime afterward through the exertions of Rev. Mr. Cottingham and others, the Alma Institute was built. In this institute S. T. Robb, J. L. Smith, Eld. J.V.E. Covey, Nelson and others taught the young idea how to shoot.

#### Masonic Lodge

The first Masonic lodge, Murchison No. 80, held it meetings in the second story of the building, the same now occupied by Messrs. Ellis & Patton; it was afterward removed to the third story of the building standing S. of Mr. Volney Ellis' residence, a building now erected by A. K. Foster and old citizen, and at one time County Surveyor.

#### Churches

The first religious meetings were held under arbors, in the first schoolhouse, then in the old courthouse, until the erection of the present Masonic building, and in the lowest story of the same house to a late day. Among the first preachers may be mentioned J. H. Stribling, Ponton, Chandler, Ellis, Elledge, Thurmond, Covey, Green, Cook, Thomas.

#### Drug-Stores

The first drugstore was that of Dr. M. B. Bennett, in the building once occupied by McDemott; the second that of East, Mason & Co. in a house occupied by Joe Kahn.

#### Doctors

The first doctors were M. B. Bennett, Hawkes, Smith and East.

#### Bakeries

The first bakery was that of Sleidell, where Louis Turner lived for a long time; after him, another by M. Lindenberg in a house now occupied by Wm. Kroschell, on the south side of the square.

#### Gun-Smiths

One best gunsmith, as also, locksmith, whether or not the first, we do not remember, was Louis Turner.

#### Saddlery

The first saddler we think, was a man by the name of Graves, the second Wm. Pierce, of Ky.

#### Tin-Shop

The first tin-shop was that of W. R. Hinckley, now a resident of Dallas.

#### Shoemaker

Our early shoemakers were the brothers Henry and Frederick Reese, now of Gonzales.

#### Hebrews

Those of the house of Israel that first visited our town and engaged in business were Gerson, Harman, Schwartz & Arnold, Pepper & August, Levy; some of whom still occupy the land.

#### Legal Lights

Among our first lawyers were L. T. Harris, Wm. Martin, Wm. Tate, Rogers & Walker, Volney Ellis and R. M. Tevis.

#### Courthouse

The first courthouse was of wood. After serving as such for several years, it was removed to the N.E. corner of the square and converted into a storehouse.

#### Jail

The first jail was, also, of wood, standing somewhere near the present residence of Eld. A. W. Rabb; it was burned years ago.