

Edward Hume Nelson The Nelson Academy

Late in the 1858 Edward Hume Nelson and his wife Ann Francis established an academy at Petersburg. On January 27, 1859, the Nelson purchased the house and grounds known as the Sherrill Tavern in the town of Petersburg from its current owners M.T. and Bathsheba Dunham.

The girl's dormitory was the old Townsend Inn, a large comfortable log structure not far from the east bank of the Lavaca River. The site was a few hundred yards above Foster's Mill on the Lavaca River. It was a large roomy building which enabled the Nelsons to keep some of the students as boarders.

Nelson was an excellent schoolman and his wife, Ann, was considered remarkable in her own right. Her dream and ambition were to prepare young woman for the teaching profession.

Miss Anzie Lay, two years later became one of Lavaca County's best teachers, was a student of Nelson's, and later became an assistant teacher in the academy, helping Mrs. Nelson with the female students.

In the April 9, 1859, Colorado Citizen, was the following article concerning the academy.

“Judge Wm. Martin, of Petersburg, Lavaca County, informs us that the school there, under the supervision of Mr. Nelson, is in a very flourishing condition. The Judge speaks in flattering terms of that village and neighborhood.”

Nelson was born in Georgia in 1820 and married his wife, Ann Francis Harvey, in July 1842. The couple lived in San Antonio, Texas in 1850 before moving to Petersburg.

The Academy operated until the Civil War when the enrollment was depleted.

Ann Nelson died in Lavaca County on April 4, 1863.

Nelson was so highly regarded as an educator that he was invited to move his academy to Independence, Texas and merge with Baylor University.