

Hallettsville's Name Linked With Romance in Tennessee

HALLETTSVILLE, Tex., Oct. 12.—Hallettsville, Texas, the county seat of Lavaca County, is this week celebrating its centennial, but few of its citizens know all the details surrounding the story of how it got its name as does Mrs. Horace Wimberly, Sr. of Yoakum. Mrs. Wimberly is a granddaughter of the man who determined this matter which was for some time in hot dispute.

The story begins back on the Harmon plantation near Lexington, Tenn., where in 1844, Fredonia Harmon, 20, was locked in her room by her irate father to prevent her marriage to A. W. Hicks, her lover. Her father frowned upon him because he was 17 years her senior and had lost his fortune in the iron foundry business in Virginia.

Eloped With Sweetheart.

Fredonia was aided in making her escape by a sympathetic sister who slipped her the sheets that she tied together in order to let herself down from her second-story window. The couple were married at the home of another sister in Lexington and a few months later left Tennessee for Houston, Tex., without having received the paternal blessing. At Houston Mr. Hicks entered the mercantile business, but was not satisfied as Houston seemed to the young couple to have reached its full growth and did not offer the frontier "advantages" they were seeking.

Early in 1846 they decided to move their stock to a small settlement on the Lavaca River, where reports said a store was badly needed. The settlers were driving ox wagons to Gonzales, Cuero and Indianola for supplies and welcomed the Hicks family and the new store. The family now numbered three, as the son, Boyce, had been born at the Old Capitol Hotel on March 2, 1846.

The Hicks store brought new life to the little town and people who came from the surrounding country to trade, noticed the difference and suggested that it have a name and began to call the place "Hicksville." But to this Mr. Hicks raised a protest saying that as Mrs. Hallett gave the land on which the town was built, she should be honored in its name. He insisted on the name being "Hallettsville" and, though he had great difficulty in making the change, he persisted and finally had the name "Hallettsville" well established. The town was named in 1846, eight years after it was settled.

The Hicks family, increased by 13 children and owning a number



Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Hicks, from daguerreotypes made 90 years ago.

of slaves, continued to live in Hallettsville until 1879. Mrs. Wimberly's mother, Betty Hicks, and her brother, Billy were one of three pairs of twins in the family. In the Wimberly home at Yoakum are to be found many interesting relics of the early Hallettsville days, including an old day book from the store and the daguerreotypes of Mr. and Mrs. Hicks taken soon after they moved to Texas.