



The John Harrell House

By Brenda Lincke Fisseler

The Harrell House was a two story wooden building built in 1854 and located on the Lots 2 & 4 in Block 7 south of the Lavaca County Courthouse.

On April 7, 1854, John Harrell purchased two lots in Block 7 from Josiah Dowling and John W. Kelly. On May 14, 1854 Harrell purchased the E 1/2 of Lots 6 & 8 from Thomas H. Hawks. These two 1/2 lots adjoined the lots on which the hotel was situated.

To purchase the property from Dowling and Kelly, Harrell signed a promissory note for \$390.00 to be paid on or before January 1, 1855.

According to the book, *Free State of Lavaca*, John Harrell build a fine hotel, two story high, with a very large bell. It looks like a whale among the little cabins.

This note would turn out to be the downfall of Harrell. Dowling and Kelly sold the note to W.G.L. Foley who later sold the note to Edward Neuhaus.

The note was never paid, so Neuhaus filed suit against Harrell and Foley for failure of payment. Neuhaus asked the court for a judgment against Foley and Harrell in the amount of \$390.00 plus interest owed.

To achieve payment, Neuhaus asked the court to enforce the lien upon the property for the purchase money.

During the court case, John and Elizabeth Harrell, in an attempt to stave off Neuhaus, sold 400 acres of land, Lots 2, 4 and the E 1/2 of Lots 6 & 8 in Block 7 and Lots 2 & 4 in Block 11 to C.W. Garrett for \$2,200.00 in a Deed of Trust. If Harrell paid off the note the obligation is null and void. If Harrell should fail to pay off and discharge the note then Garrett could was authorized to sell the property to cover his expenses.



“Great minds are related to the brief span of time during which they live as great buildings are to a little square in which they stand...”

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As part of the Deed to Trust, Harrell promised to have the Planter's Hotel, as it was known by then, insured from loss by fire to protect Garrett's collateral.

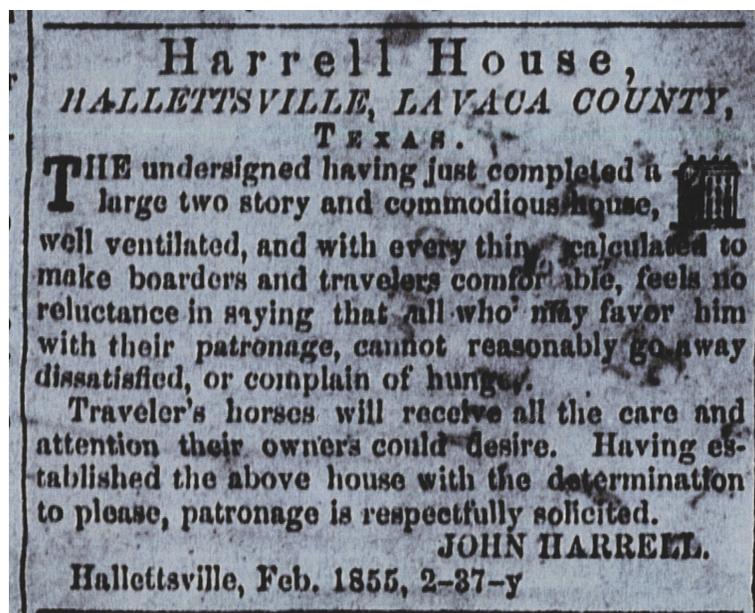
On April 11, 1856, judgment was issued in the Neuhaus case. It was ordered by the court that Edward Neuhaus recover from the defendants John Harrell and W.G.L. Foley the sum of \$359.52 plus interest. To achieve payment, the court ordered that the lien on the property be enforced and the property sold.

On March 18, 1857, John Harrell, mired in debt, sold Lots 2 & 4 in Block 7 to Zachariah Hanna for \$4,000.00. The sale included the Planter's Hotel, all buildings, appurtenances, furniture and the famous bell. The hotel was renamed the Hanna House.

Note: After the sale to Hanna, on March 19, 1857, Harrell paid the note in full and the trust to Garrett was declared null and void.

On June 20, 1857, the E 1/2 of Lots 6 & 8 in Block 7 were sold to Hanna by Josiah Dowling, John W. Kelly and John Harrell.

Note: Dowling and Kelly were the previous owners of these lots and may have been included in the sale due to the lack of documentation concerning the ownership claimed by Thomas H. Hawks in 1854.



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The Z.N Hanna House

As stated previously, on March 18, 1857, John Harrell, mired in debt, sold Lots 2 & 4 in Block 7 to Zachariah Hanna for \$4,000.00.

On the lots sold by Dowling and Kelly to Hanna in 1857, Hanna enclosed the two 1/2 lots and used the area as a garden.

The story of the Hanna House was short lived however,

On January 25, 1858, the Hanna House was sold by Zachariah Hanna to Morehouse Latting of \$9,000.00. The sale included Lots 2 & 4 and the E 1/2 of Lots 6 & 8 in Block 7.

Next:

The Latting House