

Rusk County, Texas History

by
Rusk County Historical Commission

1982
Henderson, Texas

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Compiled and edited by
Rusk County Historical Commission
P.O. Box 1773
Henderson, Tx. 75652

Printed by
Taylor Publishing Company, Dallas
Account Executive and Consultant: Jodi Head

Public Library

JUL 19 1983

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"We have the hopes of our present population, as well as
millions who may come after us, in our hands; the eyes of
the civilized world are upon us."

— Thomas Jefferson Rusk



Melvin and Lela Little Rainwater, picture made right after their marriage at Woodglen.

L.B.M. Rainwater

Little Berry Moore Rainwater, 1833-or 1834), came to Rusk County, Texas, from White Plains, Greene County, Georgia, in 1852, with the family of Wiley Astin Parker. Berry was the son of Elisha Rainwater, who was a soldier in the Battle of San Jacinto and one of the group led by Deaf Smith, sent by Sam Houston to Vince's Bridge. Named Little Berry Moore by his mother, Donemency, a Cherokee Indian, he dropped the Little in later life. *WRONG*

In Rusk County, about 1855, Berry married Susan A. Parker, who was born in Georgia in 1836, daughter of Wiley Astin Parker.

During the War Between the States, Berry served in Company C of Lane's Recruits. He was not in any battles, but

spent his term of service as a saddle and harness maker. The couple lived in Oak Flat community and their children were: Ellen, who was born August 1, 1857, married D. Hillary Wallace, and died about 1910; James W., who was born January 26, 1859 and died about 1900; Laura W., who was born March 19, 1860 and died about 1915; William Thomas, who was born January 28, 1862 and married Mollie McGuire, (his step-sister); after they met when Tommie went from Rusk County to Collin County where his father lived; Marion Edmund, who was born October 6, 1865, married Fannie Raines and died about 1930; Francis Myrtle, who was born December 28, 1867, married Lucuis Rousseau in 1890 at Minden and died March 4, 1900; Walter, who was born 1871, married Nora Nesmith and lived in Collin County, Texas; Mary, who was born 1879, married a Mr. Husband.

When Mary was about six months old, her mother died and her father married Carolyn Peters McQuire, a widow of Rusk County, Texas, with three children: Thomas, John and Mollie McQuire. Berry and Caroline's children were: Charlie, Mandy, Hettie, who married George Little, son of James Robert Little of the Wood Glen Community; Ira who married Alma; Joe, who married Alice, sister of Alma; and Viola. Carolyn died when Viola was born and William Thomas and Mollie raised her younger half brothers and sisters.

Berry Rainwater's grandfather was Sol-



Lucius Rousseau Family: Florence, Lucius Rousseau, Frances, Hall Rosseau.

omon Rainwater, born in 1755, who lived in the Pendleton District, South Carolina. He married Ruth Felton and moved to Georgia. *Submitted by Ron Gregory*

Charles Gordon Rayford

My grandparents were Charles Gordon Rayford and Cora Wynn Wilson Rayford. Gordon was born in Mobile, Alabama in 1860, and Cora was born in Old Jamestown, Smith County, Texas in 1862.

As a teenager, Gordon left Mobile and came to Texas to join his father and his brother Arthur who had preceded him and were living in New London, Texas where they had established a shingle mill.

Gordon and Cora Wilson were married in 1883 and lived in Overton until Gordon decided to move to Henderson for better business opportunities. He worked for a time at Spharler's Meat Market, but soon formed a partnership with Fred Cover and the two established a grocery store. They also became the first Oldsmobile car dealers in Rusk County. Gordon was a council member of the first city council of Henderson.

After leaving the grocery business, Gordon worked for Alford Brothers Motor Company until his retirement.

Gordon died in 1946, and Cora in 1956. They were survived by five children. Their son Vernon L. was born September 8, 1884 and died May 6, 1959. He was in the hardware and furniture business for a time and later served as auditor of Rusk County for many years. He married the former Miss Margaret Still. They had two children. Vernon L., Jr., born in 1913, is retired and lives in Kilgore. Lois L., born in 1911, for many years operated Rayford Florist. She passed away in December, 1980.

John Julian (Don) was born November 26, 1886 and died October 21, 1963. He was a pharmacist with Hightower Drug Company for years; was in the cold storage business for a time but soon returned to his old love, the drug store, but not the first one. Don also served on the city council. In 1911 he married the former Miss Josie Beall Alford (September 3, 1887-October 14, 1953) (See Josie Beall Alford account).

They had three children. John J. (Jack) Jr., who was born April 4, 1916, is engaged in the cattle business. Bessie Lou, who was born December 13, 1918, is retired from Kilgore College after thirty years as Assistant Registrar. Jesse David was born November 25, 1923. He is an interior designer and is the owner and operator of "The Rooster," an art needlework shop in Henderson.

The third child Ray, born January 15, 1890, was a Supervisor of Art in the Mus-

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