CHAPTER VI

PIONEERING MEMORIES

1. REMINISCENCES OF A PIONEER IN LOUISIANA

by

MRS. MARTHA PHILIPS MARTIN[1]

My object is to write something in regard to my family as far back as I have any recollection and can remember what I have been told by my mother.

My father, Joseph Philips, was the youngest of seven children—two daughters and five sons. My father was born in 1763, and raised in North Carolina, coming to Tennessee in 1791. My mother, Milbrey Horn (her maiden name) born in 1764 was also from North Carolina. They were married in 1785. They had nine children, three sons and six daughters. The eldest, Mary Philips, married Jesse Wharton from Virginia, a young lawyer of talents and great energy who represented the State in Congress twice and afterwards was elected United States Senator.

Sally Philips married in 1807 William Williams from North Carolina, a lawyer of great worth. His parents being wealthy, much time was spent on his education. A gentleman in every respect. His attention was turned more to farming than the practice of law. They lived to old age, my sister to be seventy, and her husband eighty-six. Mr. Williams' mother was ninety-six.

Rebecka died quite an infant in 1792.

Martha Philips (born in 1792) in 1809 married Thomas Martin, an Irishman by birth, raised in the County Down, leaving his native country when he was 19 years old, and landing in New York in 1800. He left Ireland during the rebellion, having taken an active part in favor of his party. He was taken prisoner but made his escape by some means. He was pursued, and followed to his father's home. Not being able to catch him they burned down every house on his father's place. Having a relation who was a captain of a vessel that was to sail the next day, he went there that night, the captain concealed him, and they left the next day.

My sister Charlotte Philips at the age of 16 was sent to a boarding school not far from Nashville. Mrs. Dr. Priestley was the teacher. Her husband was President of the Cumberland College. Mrs. Priestley often went in the river bathing, taking the girls with her. My sister being fond of that pleasure was generally one of the party. Unfortunately one day she went in but never returned. The next day her body was found and buried at my father's. Truly it was sad for my parents.

Henry Philips was born in 1797. At the age of 16 my father sent him to college. He remained there until he was nineteen. Then he engaged in the mercantile business but very soon after was taken sick and died in his twentieth year. A young man of character and much beloved by all his friends.

My sister Margaret Philips (born in 1799) married Josiah Williams, a young gentleman of unblemished character. She raised a large family of sons and daugh-

[1]See Table 32.

ters. My sister died in 1844 leaving twelve children. Mr. Williams died in 1853. Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.

Joseph Philips was born in 1803 and died in 1803, the same year.

William D. Philips (born in 1804), the youngest of the family, married in 1825 S. B. Clark, intelligent and amiable in all her ways. Truly did I love her. She passed away soon to her Father in Heaven. In 1828 he married Elizabeth Dwyer, born and raised in Dublin, Ireland. A lovely and charming lady. She died in 1872.

When I married Mr. Martin, he was living in Clarksville, Tenn., engaged in mercantile business with Mr. Reynolds. Soon after our marriage, Mr. Reynolds and my husband concluded to give up that business and go south where farming would be profitable. Louisiana was their preference. They purchased on Bayou Teche Allacapa, La. Remaining there ten months, my husband returned home in October, 1810, finding a little boy to welcome his return. The next winter we embarked on a flat boat for our home in Louisiana, leaving Nashville Feb. 4, 1811, a long tedious passage of eight weeks, stopping at Natchez a few days. We were frequently annoyed by the Indians when landing at evening, which we were always compelled to do. All on the left of the Mississippi was owned by the Chickasaw and Choctaw Indians. Where Memphis and Vicksburg are was then Chickasaw Bluff and Walnut Hills. Well do I remember the appearance of each place as it was pointed out to me by our old captain on the boat.

We had considerable trouble, after leaving the Mississippi, passing through bayous and lakes. Many places looked as if a boat had never been there before. Alligators were so numerous it was great sport shooting them in every direction. We landed Sunday at Mr. Reynolds', just below our home. He very soon came on board to welcome us. Mr. Martin in return presented him our little boy, who was called James Reynolds after him. Our meeting was mutually agreeable. I assure you we were glad to get on land and be at our long looked for home. All welcomed us with joy. The country was principally prairie, and at that season of the year every thing was looking well. Cotton and sugar were the principal products of that part of Louisiana, orange trees bearing and blooming all the year, and vegetables of all kinds growing in abundance. The mode of making sugar in those days was by grinding the cane with mules, which was tedious. From two to three barrels a day were considered good work but always commanded a fair price. So long as the war between Great Britain and the United States lasted, which was 1812 to 1815, cotton was cheap, but sugar commanded a good price. So soon as peace was made cotton went up from $7.00 to $25.00 and $30.00. The first summer and fall I spent there we had frequent attacks of fever. In November we lost our darling little boy James, which was sorrow indeed for a young mother away from all her family except my dear husband. Dear child, the Lord has taken him and I can say that it was my first treasure laid up in Heaven where we will all meet hereafter.

The country was settled by French, Spaniards, and Indians principally, when we went there. Very soon many from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi came and purchased. Having plenty made quite a favorable change in our Bayou. Three or four Irish families living near us, Mr. Martin gave the place the name of Irish Bend and it goes by that name today. Three brothers by the name of Sumner from Tennessee (connections of mine) purchased a large plantation very near ours the year after our arrival, also Dr. Henning from Nashville, which added greatly to our society and the appearance of things in general. Our communication with New

Orleans was by small schooners, passing across Berwick Bay and up the Lafourche to the Mississippi seventy-five miles above the city. We lived ten miles from the Gulf and two from Grand Lake. Being just between them we always had a fine breeze. By sending to the Bay we got oysters in abundance. Game of all kinds was numerous and fish—nothing to do but throw your line in the Bayou. The red fish we often got from the Indians, and they were superior to any other. They often brought us game.

Soon after we got home, Alexander Porter, a young lawyer from Nashville, came to see us. He had gone to that country with my husband the year before. He found on his arrival that he would not be able to practice his profession until he could speak French. In six months he was perfect in that language and very soon made a brilliant display of his talents, realizing a handsome fortune in a short time. He married Miss Baker of that parish. Six years after their marriage Mrs. Porter died while on a visit to his friends in Nashville, leaving two daughters. Soon after, Judge Porter left for his native country, Ireland, his little daughters with him, leaving them there to be educated. Soon after his return he was elected United States Senator. His daughters returned, but lived only a short time. He left Washington and returned home to his large estate in Louisiana. There he died and was brought to Nashville and buried by his wife. His fortune he left to his only brother James Porter, except fifty pounds, that was left to the poor in the parish where he was born in Ireland, annually for ten years. Mrs. James Porter is now living on the farm that my husband purchased in 1810.

During our stay in Louisiana we raised cotton, sugar, corn, and rice, which all grew to perfection, finding a market in New Orleans for all we could make. Two years after our arrival we were blessed by the birth of a little girl, whom I called Jane. Of course we thought her beautiful and lovely, as all mothers are alike in that respect.

During the War the planters often could not obtain certain articles that were necessary for them to have. Mr. Martin, Mr. Sumner, Mr. Patten, Mr. Caffery and others concluded to take a schooner and go where they had heard they could obtain those things. They purchased what they required and were returning home. The second night a terrible storm came on. They dropped anchor and remained until daylight. The pilot thought they might set sail with safety, but very soon they found the vessel sinking. They threw a portion of iron out but still they found there was no hope of saving it. Having a yawl and being only half a mile from land, all got in that except three or four. Mr. Sumner, Mr. Patten, the pilot, and a servant of ours remained on the vessel, a part of it being out of the water. After getting on the beach, Mr. Caffery and one of the sailors returned, and found Mr. Sumner, his arms around a plank, drowned. Mr. Patten and the pilot were not to be found. The servant was hanging on the mast perfectly insensible. They were brought ashore and Mr. Sumner was buried on the island. The boy recovered. They were all left without any provisions and had only a small yawl in which to get home. They left the next morning, making slow progress. Two days after, they saw some vessels ashore, and immediately made for them. Mr. Martin concluded it was most prudent for one of them to go and ascertain who they were. He went himself and found it was LaFitte, the pirate. He made his situation known, and immediately LaFitte sent for them and treated them with all the kindness possible, taking them aboard his vessel and giving them a bountiful breakfast. Mr. Martin related their unfortunate disaster to him and how far they were from home.

He had a schooner made ready and provisions put on and all that was necessary. He inquired of Mr. Martin if he had a family. He replied, "I have a wife and one child." He sent me a demijohn of Madeira wine and the first pineapple cheese I ever saw. He told my husband the schooner was a present to him. I will say something more about the pirate hereafter.

It was several days before they reached home. My husband had lost his hat when leaving the sinking vessel and LaFitte had supplied him with a cap and cape attached, which was very acceptable in December. Mrs. Sumner, my next neighbor, was with me the evening before they arrived home. We were fearful some accident had happened, as they were gone much longer than we expected. It came soon indeed for her. I never witnessed greater grief and sorrow. Long did she moan for her dear husband. She was the mother of two little boys. His brother sent out for his remains which were brought and buried at his home in 1813.

The brothers were dissatisfied, offered their plantation for sale, and soon found a purchaser, Dr. Duncan of New Orleans. They returned to Tennessee the next year. My health not being good, I often would tell my husband a visit to my old home would be all that I required. My physician thought a trip to the seashore was all that was necessary. We left in a few days, several of our neighbors going with us, taking tents and everything in the way of cooking. Gen. McCall and family, who went out each season, were with us. I found it pleasant—plenty of oysters and good company. We remained there three weeks. My little Jane was much benefitted by the trip, but my heart was set on going to Tennessee, the only place where I could find good health. On our return I received a letter from my father, urging us to come up and spend the summer at my old home. The invitation was readily accepted.

In June we left for Nashville, taking two servants. A neighbor, Mr. Theall, traveling for his health, was going to Tennessee and we were pleased to have his company. The first night we spent with a friend, Mr. Crow. The next day we got to Berwick Bay, having to cross that at night, on account of storms and wind, the latter always being too high in the day to attempt crossing. There we learned that the pirate LaFitte had been taken prisoner and sent to New Orleans but had very soon made his escape. A large reward was offered to arrest him. I think certainly he made some friends. We crossed the bay that night on a platform laid on two barges. At two o'clock in the morning we landed at Breshar City, I having a letter to the landlady from her father. I sent it to her by a servant. She immediately came out of her room to see me and received me with kindness and attention. The table was all ready for those that had crossed the bay and all as well as myself enjoyed our supper. We were a mixed company, Americans, French, Spanish, and Indians. We went up stairs to a large room, with berths all round like those on a steamboat. It was late in the morning when we got up. All had gone down and taken their breakfast. The lady told me the night before to take my rest in the morning and not hurry as I could get my breakfast at any time. My little Jane was not well and I told the servant to remain until I sent for her.

We went down and at the foot of the stairs a servant approached us. I think he was a Spaniard. He inquired if that was Mr. Martin, and said there was a gentleman that wished to see him. He took me in the dining room and then followed the servant. Our breakfast was ready in a few moments. The lady observed, "Will you wait for your husband?" I replied, "He will be in very soon." I sat down and commenced eating, and after a while Mr. Martin came in. The lady sent

up for my baby. Soon after breakfast we left. I think we were twenty or twenty-five miles from Donaldsonville. When we got there Mr. Martin told me he had business with some gentlemen, which would delay him but a short time. While there we got our dinner. I often enquired of him who it was that he stopped to see at Donaldsonville, but he always evaded answering me. Some time after he told me it was LaFitte, the pirate, that was concealed and wished him to take some letters to Donaldsonville. On entering the room, LaFitte talked to him, saying, "Sir, I think I can trust you." Knowing him, his reply was, "You can. Your kindness to me cannot be forgotten and whatever I can do for you will be done with pleasure." "Will you deliver those letters to such gentlemen as I direct living in Donaldsonville?" Giving him all the information necessary, he handed him the letters saying, "Sir, I learned you were here early this morning. I immediately concluded to put those letters in your charge and I feel that they will be safely delivered." Mr. Martin was always quiet on the subject. The next place we heard of LaFitte, he was fighting the British in New Orleans in favor of the Americans.

Having relatives at Natchez, Dr. McCreary and family, we remained there several days. When leaving there the doctor and my cousin went some miles with us. The doctor reminded my husband of the need of getting a pass from the Governor to carry our servants through the Indian Nation, as that was during the war. We passed through Washington where the Governor lived. Mr. Martin recollected he had neglected getting the necessary pass. Mr. Theall proposed taking his horse and he would drive on slowly until his return. We were about twenty-five miles from Natchez. Crossing Bear Creek, our horse got frightened, running up a very steep bank which did not check him in the least. I thought my only hope of saving myself and child would be to jump out. I threw her out as I made the leap, but that leap was awful for me. My left limb was terribly broken in the ankle joint, both bones crushing through my gaiters. My little Jane received no injury whatever. Mr. Theall had his arm and several of his ribs badly broken. So soon as my servant came to me, I sent him back for my husband. As we were in a part of the country thickly settled, in a very short time many were there to give us assistance and carried me to the nearest house. Very soon after, Mr. Martin came. Finding me suffering greatly, he gave full vent to his feelings, which made me feel more sensible of my terrible situation. Two doctors were immediately sent for. They examined the shattered limb and very soon announced their opinion that amputation would be necessary to save my life. My husband would not consent to that but sent for Dr. McCreary, our relative that we had left that morning. During the night I was threatened with lock-jaw. That alarmed my husband and he told the doctors to act according to their own judgment. Immediately preparations were made, just as the sun rose. My heart seemed about to burst. I felt like soul and body were about to separate. My darling child was brought to me. I thought to take my last leave of her. My dear husband, his trouble and sorrow no one knew but himself. He wished to know if I had any particular wish to make. I told him my heart clung to my dear little babe. "Take her home to my mother; it is all of myself I have to give her." I was taken out on the gallery and laid on a table. The operation soon commenced. Chloroform was not used in those days and my suffering was only known to my God and myself. Soon after the operation Dr. McCreary arrived. He said that on account of the terrible break, the warm climate, and the season of the year (June), it was certainly the safest thing that could be done to save my life. We remained at that house for twelve days.

Mr. Caradine, a gentleman living near, proposed having me moved to his house, which was done. Mrs. Caradine preparing a small bed, I was carried with great ease to myself. In that family I received all the kindness and attention that could have been given to a near relative. They had no children, only a sister living with them. Their love and affection for my little Jane was something to me that I really prized. We remained at the Caradines' six weeks. During that time Dr. McCreary often visited me. He said so soon as I could leave, he would come and take me to his home and I would remain until I could leave for Tennessee. Knowing that my health would not permit of my traveling at that time, Mr. Martin had disposed of our wild horse and got one perfectly gentle.

When leaving for the doctor's, he insisted that I should get in his buggy with him, which I did. About five miles from his place we saw many Indians sitting immediately on the road. When they saw us, they rose up; the horse was frightened and kicked until he broke the entire front of the carriage. Not thinking of my situation, I stood up on the one foot and leaped out, falling on the end of my amputated limb, crushing the bones through which had not yet healed. Blood flowed from the wound, like pouring water from a pitcher. Had the doctor not been with us I could have survived but a short time. He stopped the flow of blood by using a tourniquet. He was slightly injured by a kick from the horse on his leg. I was put in our own buggy and went on, arriving at the doctor's at ten o'clock that night. For two weeks I was confined to my bed. Inflammation was so great the doctor feared part of the limb would have to be taken off. My husband mentioned it to me. I told him never. I preferred death rather than to undergo that suffering again. But with great care and skill in two weeks I was up.

We remained in Natchez until the first of September. My father, learning of my situation, sent down Mr. Barnes, a man he had great confidence in, and two horses to assist in getting me to my old home, the only mode of travel at that time. Soon after his arrival we left for Tennessee. Mr. Martin had sent to New Orleans and had me a cork leg made, which rendered me great assistance, but still I had to use my crutches. We had about four hundred miles to travel through the Indian Nation, Chickasaws, and Choctaws. Many white families were living among them that had been sent there by the Government.

The first night after leaving the doctor's, we stayed at the home of our dear friend, Mr. Caradine. They received us most affectionately. The next day we got to Fort Gibson, stopping at Mr. Mortner's, a friend of my husband. We remained there two days.

In a few miles of their place we found ourselves in the Indian Nation. Wherever we stopped, they treated us with great kindness, as they would if you showed that you had great confidence in them. Traveling on, we heard a tremendous howling and yelling. Going near, we found about fifty sitting on the grass with their blankets over them, mourning for a chief whom they had just buried. Near the line between the two nations, we stopped to stay all night. Finding a great number there, the agent soon told us that they were to have a War Dance there that night and leave the next morning for Pensacola. It was truly a night long to be remembered. The dance commenced, both male and female, and continued until after midnight. About sunrise they stood up and made all join hands, children and all, going round and round, crying and yelling. Soon after, they made ready for their departure. Taking leave of their wives and children, they concluded with awful

groans and yells. They left and were soon out of sight. The squaws appeared to mourn their departure.

I will relate a circumstance that happened that day. Crossing a large creek, the horse stopped to drink. I set Jane in her father's lap, my crutches being fastened just before me. I deliberately took them and threw them in the stream and they disappeared very soon. My husband looked at me with astonishment. I told him I could not stand the sight of them any longer. He very gently reproved me, saying, "How will you get along without them?" From that day to this I have had no use for them.

Wherever we stopped, they gave us our supper—venison, potatoes, and coffee. Having provisions along, we always had plenty. We stopped one morning where a white family had been sent to teach the Indians how to spin and weave. The lady met me saying, "I have heard of your misfortune; your husband will never love you the less, as beautiful and young a creature as you are." They were all kindness and attention to me and my little Jane.

The next morning we got our breakfast at James Colbert's, the Indian Chief. He and his wife had a few days before returned from Washington. He said his visit there with many others was to have a talk with their father, the President, in regard to sending his subjects to fight the British. Mrs. Colbert was delighted with her trip, said the President gave them a dinner and all the fashionable gentlemen and ladies were there. She was quite fashionably dressed, except for being bare footed. We got a most excellent breakfast. Mr. Colbert invited us to stay several days and rest. She gave me a lunch for my little Jane that lasted several days.

Two days after, we stopped at a house, expecting to stay all night, but the doors were all open and things had every appearance of being left in a hurry. We went on about two miles and camped in the woods, the only night we were out of a house during our journey. The servants made a fire and were preparing our supper when Mr. Toplin, the mail carrier, rode up, got down, and took his coffee, ham, and crackers with us. He told us we were fortunate in not being along two days before, as a party of Creek Indians had passed along killing every one they met. The next night we got to a place called Big Spring. There we found a great many Indians who had come there to protect the place. Three nights before, many of those Creek Indians had passed there. The families heard that they were coming that route where they had passed before, and so left. That night seven boatmen, who had gone down the Mississippi in their flat boats, sold out their produce and were returning home. They stopped at that place and five of the seven were killed. Their graves were near the house where they were buried that day. They gave us supper—turkey, corn, and potatoes. Mr. Martin asked the old Indian if he would let me and my child sleep in his house, but he would not consent. It is their custom not to allow strangers to sleep in the house with their family. I, not knowing the danger we were exposed to, slept in the house with not less than fifty Indians and many of them were drunk. My husband, Mr. Barnes, and the servants sat up all night.

The next night we were twelve miles from Columbia, Tenn. There we felt secure from danger. The night after, we stayed at Franklin. Leaving early the next morning, we went sixteen miles to my brother-in-law's, Mr. Wharton, four miles from Nashville. That evening we left for my old home. Father and my little brother met us in town. On my arrival I found all the family there that I had left except two dear sisters, Mary and Charlotte, who had passed away. Our meeting

was sad, my mother and sisters wept, but it was joy on my part that I had arrived at the home I had toiled so long to get to. My little Jane was caressed by all with a love of great affection. My little brother called her his dear loving sister.

My parents would not let Mr. Martin think of taking me back to Louisiana. Finally he concluded to remain in Tennessee, which I greatly preferred. In November Mr. Martin left for our southern home, going with the army that was leaving Nashville for New Orleans, commanded by Generals Coffey and Carroll, all on flat boats. They arrived in the city December 22, 1814, and I think the battle commenced the next day and continued until the 8th of January, 1815. In that battle Gen. Jackson gained a victory that crowned him with laurels which never faded through life.

Soon after my husband left, my sister Margaret married Mr. J. Williams. I remained at my father's until Mr. Martin returned, which was in April, 1815. He had leased his place in Louisiana until a favorable time to sell. During the Summer he purchased the place I am now living on. In July we had a little daughter added to our family. My mother named her Mary for my dear sister, Mrs. Wharton. My dear Jane was delighted, having a little sister to love.

Mr. Martin improved the place he had purchased and we moved to it in January, 1816. During that year there was much sickness throughout the country, called the cold plague. Very few ever recovered who were attacked with the terrible disease and many families were all taken; it was more fatal than cholera.

In 1817 we made fine crops, cotton, corn, tobacco, and hemp. Many houses were built up in Nashville. Our merchants were principally Irish, establishing large mercantile houses and realizing handsome fortunes in a few years.

The first steamboat came to Nashville, I think, in 1816. The goods were brought in wagons. Some two years after, the steamboats commenced running regularly.

In August we had three little girls in our family, Jane, Mary, and Elizabeth.

In the winter of 1818, Mr. Martin carried his cotton to New Orleans. While there he sold his plantation to James Porter. Soon after his return, he purchased Mr. J. Jackson's farm a mile and a half from the city on the Gallatin Pike, handsomely improved, paying forty dollars per acre. This place he rented to different persons for many years, generally cultivating the land himself, which always yielded abundantly. The splendid spring was the attraction.

In May, 1822, my father died leaving my brother William the old homestead, one thousand acres, twenty-five negroes, stock of all kinds and every necessity for farming, valued at $40,000, my mother getting a life interest. The balance went to his daughters.

In June, 1822, I gave birth to William P. In September, 1824, Thomas D. was born; in March, 1827, Susan T.; and in October, 1832, Sarah W.

Mr. Martin made it a rule to purchase all land joining ours that was for sale. His first purchase was three hundred and twenty acres, and he added at different times six hundred or five hundred and sixty acres. He took great pride in having comforts and conveniences around him; a large barn, mill and gin house, stock of all kinds, particularly fine horses and a handsome carriage.

My eldest daughter, Jane, married Mr. McIver in 1833. He was truly a gentleman of polished manners. His father, a Scotchman by birth, had been raised in affluence and wealth. His pleasant manners won him friends wherever he traveled.

His eldest son, Evander McIver, married my niece, Elizabeth Williams, who died in ten days after their marriage.

Mr. McIver owned one of the handsomest farms in Rutherford County, where his father and mother both died. Mrs. Graham, his twin sister, married Major D. Graham, a gentleman of noble worth, serving his country as a statesman in many honorable positions. His widow is now living with my eldest grandson, Evander McIver.

In 1834 my daughter Mary married Major R. Dance, a Virginian by birth, a gentleman truly in every respect. He showed all the love and attention that could have been bestowed on a delicate wife. They had one little boy, Thomas, who died very young. Her health declining, the physician advised him to take her traveling. He went north and spent the summer, her sister Elizabeth accompanying them. The next winter she spent in New Orleans. She returned home in May and died in June, 1837. The next winter Major Dance had a hemorrhage from the lungs and was compelled to give up all business, so he came to the country and remained with me until his death in October, 1838.

In November, 1835, my dear husband was taken with a violent cough and constant fever, which lasted two weeks. Every attention was shown him by his friends and physicians to keep him with us, but God is just in all his ways. My home was desolate. I had everything in the way of living abundance, but his presence was all to me.

In October, 1839, my daughter Elizabeth married Dr. John Seip, a young graduate from the Medical Institute at Philadelphia, where he had been for many years. His father died at Natchez and his mother was left with one child in very delicate health. Her husband's dying request was that she should return to her native state by sea and in all possibility regain her health. But, alas, it was only to get there and die. I knew his mother before her marriage, a most accomplished and intelligent lady. She was a sister to Dr. McCreary of Natchez. Dr. Seip purchased a plantation on Red River, Louisiana, where I visited them often. In 1855 he died, leaving his widow and four children—one son and three daughters.

In 1840 I concluded that it was most advisable for me to live in Nashville, as my two youngest daughters should be at school. I purchased a house and lot and moved in. My sons I had sent to Kentucky to school. Susan had been going to the Academy for two years. I still kept her there; she progressed rapidly in her studies and music. In 1843 her health was delicate, so Dr. Dickinson advised me to send her south and let her spend the winter with her sister, Mrs. Seip, which she did. Her health greatly improved and they all insisted that she should remain longer. Thinking I should go down the next winter, I concluded to let her remain.

During the summer I received letters asking my consent for her marriage to Mr. James T. Flint, a young lawyer of considerable talents and good position, ranking among the first at the Bar. In 1844 they came to Nashville and spent the summer and fall with me. I often visited them in their southern home, which was a great pleasure to me. In 1853 Mr. Flint died with yellow fever, leaving my daughter Susan with five children—two sons and three daughters. They were living on a large plantation at the time of his death. My daughter still remained on the place. In 1855 I went down to visit her. I remained until the summer of 1856. During my stay just two years after Mr. Flint's death, my daughter and two of her children died with that awful scourge, yellow fever. I was appointed administratrix. We had a family meeting and it was decided the plantation and all the negroes should

be sold, which brought $140,000. The debts being considerable took the largest portion of the proceeds. So soon as I could leave there, I returned to my home bringing the children, Elizabeth, James, and Emma, with me. I put the two eldest at school and returned the next year. There were about 200 hogsheads of sugar and some cotton that had been reserved and sold after the sale of the plantation. I lent a part of the proceeds to a gentleman and took a mortgage on his plantation and negroes to secure the debt. The War coming on and the interest increasing, I was finally compelled to have the place sold, which brought the full amount of the debt, bidding it in myself. The brothers and sisters are now living on that farm, giving them a comfortable home. Elizabeth married Dr. Dupre in 1874, after being with me nearly twenty years. They concluded to return to the state where they were born, Louisiana.

My youngest daughter, Sarah, after leaving school spent much time with her sisters in Louisiana. In 1853, I paid Mrs. Seip and Mrs. Flint a visit, intending to bring Sarah home with me. Going down, I found her on the eve of marrying Mr. R. Tanner, a planter of Louisiana, a young man of correct habits and good family. He lived about forty or forty-five miles from Alexandria. I visited her at her new home. Her surroundings were comfortable and abundant. I had concluded to remain with her that summer. Receiving a letter from home informing me of Mr. McIver's bad health, I immediately concluded to return, which I did. Two days before I reached home, I heard of his death. I found my daughter, Mrs. McIver, with an infant only one week old. In October, 1853, dear Sarah passed away to a home of rest where there are no more partings. Her death was truly a lasting shock to me. At the same time that I heard of her death, Mr. Flint's was announced, one on the fourth and the other on the seventeenth of the same month. In the spring Mr. Tanner paid me a visit, remaining a short time.

In January, 1861, in company with Mary McIver, and Elizabeth, James, and Emma Flint, I embarked on the steamboat James Johnson for New Orleans. Arriving there, we took passage on the Mary T. for Alexandria. Not long after our arrival there, Evander McIver came down. Mrs. Seip had one son, Fred, and two daughters. Joseph Philips was there from Nashville. These with my party made everything look gay and cheerful. War between North and South commenced; all was excitement. The young ladies tried who could excel in making the handsomest suit of clothes for the soldiers. Miss Chambers, who had just married Mr. Elgee, gave her elegant wedding gown to make a Confederate Flag. The ladies embroidered it most beautifully, all wishing to give it a finishing touch. Mary McIver gave much of her time in completing it. I saw it the day it was completed and when it was presented to the Company.

Thomas Martin my son who had served two years in the Mexican War gave much of his time to recruiting. Many companies left Alexandria while we were there. Evander McIver thought it most advisable to return home. Then he would come to some decision in regard to joining the army. The first of June we left, leaving Elizabeth and James Flint. When they got to the city, all seemed to think they were perfectly safe. When we arrived at Memphis, they were blockading the town. There we had to leave the Mississippi and take the cars for Nashville. Arriving there, Evander got a hack and we went to his mother's, finding all well, delighted to see us return to our home. Nothing was thought or talked about but the War. Tennessee had seceded and they were making every preparation for the defence of our town, blockading every hill around Nashville.

The steamboat that we had gone down on the winter before and many others were turned into gun boats. Companies were leaving every day for Kentucky or other points. In the winter a Texas Regiment came to Nashville and many of the poor soldiers were left there, never to return. The first battle that was near, up on the Cumberland River, the Confederates met with a considerable defeat. General Zollicoffer and many brave soldiers were killed there. Evander McIver was in that battle, and lost his horse (that he called Jeff Davis), his trunk, and everything except what was on his person. I will say nothing more about the War, as it is a subject all are familiar with and its final result.

In 1866 I paid my last visit in the south. Mrs. Seip had just returned from Texas, where she had fled with the hope of keeping her negroes. While there she had five hundred bales of cotton and a handsome residence destroyed by the Federals, together with the gin house and mill. I found them living in the cabins, quite cheerful, with the hope of making a good crop and getting a high price for their cotton. But alas, their hopes were all blasted. The overflow in June and the caterpillars in September blasted all their hopes. I spent much of my time with my son and his family. The most of his place was above high water. A great deal of sickness was throughout the parish. I had always enjoyed good health there before, but now for six months I never saw a well day. Thomas went out with a party to the pinewoods fishing and returned very ill. He said he had had severe chills. Soon after he got home, he was taken with a congestive chill and died that evening, leaving a widow and five children. All those trials are truly sad but make me more willing to depart and be with Christ, my Lord and Saviour. Rest, rest for the weary

2. EARLY DAYS IN BOWIE COUNTY, TEXAS[1]

by

MRS. MIRIAM FORT GILL[2]

In the spring of 1836, shortly after the battle of San Jacinto, my grandfather, Dr. Josiah W. Fort, came to Texas on a prospecting trip, and coming overland from Tennessee naturally came into Texas at the northeast corner. Finding timber, springs, and small open prairies he thought this a similar country to the rich "barren lands" of Kentucky and Tennessee, and fearing the Indians farther west he stopped here. He secured a survey of land lying just one and one-half miles north of this city and later located the tract as his headright.

In November of the same year he brought his wife and seven children, a young lady friend of the family and forty slaves from Tennessee to Texas, traveling by carry-all, wagon, and horseback, the older girls through preference riding horseback all the way. For days they traveled along with or in the wake of Indians whom the United States Government was moving from Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia to the Indian territory. The family was six weeks on the way.

Texas was at this time in a most unsettled condition. There were only about twenty thousand people in the entire Republic. The line between Texas and the United States was fairly well known but had never been surveyed. Travelers from the States were required to pay duty on everything brought into the Republic. Land had practically no value, vast tracts being given by the Government to settlers to induce colonization. Indeed years later 640 acres were often sold for a cow and calf or a good mustang pony. The prairie lands were not considered desirable for settlers because the high grass afforded excellent hiding places for the Indians, and prairie fires were frequent and dangerous. The settlements therefore were in the timber and hugged the streams. There was only one wagon road through this section, running from New Orleans through the settlements. In these early days there were no churches, no schools, no law or order, every man being law unto himself and ruling for the good of his household. It was not good manners to ask a stranger where he came from, the unsettled condition of the country rendering all parts of it a safe refuge for delinquents and criminals, some of whom settled down and made excellent citizens.

At this time there was no Bowie county; all northeast Texas was known as the Red River Country. Stock raising was the main industry, the luxuriant grass in the woodlands in summer and the canebrakes in winter keeping the cattle in prime condition. A few farms were opened up, but there was general prejudice against a man who cleared land for crops as he decreased the open range.

The first winter my grandfather spent in housing his family and clearing land for the next year's crops. For his family he built a house of hewn logs, two large rooms with a wide open hall between and a stick and dirt chimney at each end. The negroes had one-room cabins for each family. The two-room log house was the common settler's home and cost not exceeding twenty dollars. As a general thing it

[1]From an article in the Texarkana (Tex.) *Four States Press*, December 2, 1923.
[2]See Table 29.

cost nothing, the settlers gathering for a "house raising," a common manifestation of mutual good will and helpfulness.

This primitive house contained only the bare necessities of living, for no furniture excepting beds and chairs could be brought over the long rough road from Tennessee. In it my grandmother, like many other pioneer women in similar houses, carried on the great business of homemaking, feeding, and clothing the family of fifty, white and black. She spun cotton and woolen yarns, colored them with dyes made from berries, roots, and bark, wove the cloth on a home-made loom, cut and made by hand every garment, and with the assistance of her daughters knitted all the socks and stockings for the big family. Food for a family of that size was a problem then. There was an abundance of game, but no fruit or vegetables the first year, although garden seeds had been brought from Tennessee. There was no coffee, no sugar, and for three years there was no flour on the table. There was no grist mill in that section and corn was ground into meal in a steel mill fastened to a tree, taking two negro men a whole day to grind a week's supply.

Candles were made by dipping a cotton wick again and again in melted tallow, an iron lamp of primitive Greek pattern, with a cotton wick floating in grease, was used in the kitchen and smoke-house, and lightwood knots supplied the cabins with lights.

There was no blacksmith shop nearer than twenty-five miles, to mend a broken chair or plowshare, and there was not a crossroad store in all the country. The nearest postoffice was at Washington, Arkansas, and a negro was sent once a month for the mail.

During the first winter the family had not even one visitor, and my grandmother, a cousin of the great Henry Clay, refined, educated, and accomplished, had no visitor in her house for three long years. During this dreadful loneliness death came twice into the home. First one of those dear companions who had come with her from Tennessee, sickened and died. During the winter grandfather had dug a sawpit and laid pine logs across it, and one negro standing at the pit and one above on the log with a whipsaw sawed some lumber. He took some of these boards and made a coffin for her friend, grandmother gave her best black dress to cover it, and one of the linen sheets lined it. A few months later her little baby boy died. They burned pine knots under an inverted washpot and made lamp black which was mixed with fresh turpentine from the pine trees and used to stain the little coffin black. As there were no screws to be had, the coffin lid had to be nailed down, each strike of the hammer crashing the mother's heart. There was no preacher, so grandfather read his Bible and prayed for his dead and his living. My father says his mother never was the same after this sorrow.

There was much sickness from malaria at this place that year. Every member of the family except my father and one negro woman were ill at one time. A kind physician named Dr. Gray came and stayed until all were recovering, but there never was a time when there was less than a third of the family sick.

The second year grandfather made a good corn crop and put up a gin and grist mill, the first in that part of the country. He made a cotton crop also, and hauled his cotton to White Oak shoals, a steamboat coming up from Fulton, Arkansas, for it. Very little cotton at that time was raised above Fulton.

Sometime during this year the Chihuahua traders, a company of Mexicans, came to the settlement and camped several days at grandfather's plantation. They had

a long train of wagons loaded with every necessity of the settler, which they traded for cotton, corn, pelts, etc., and their coming was both a joy and a blessing.

Having much illness on this place, after three years grandfather bought another body of land in the pine forests near old Myrtle Springs. He built there an imposing house of hewn logs, which was standing in my young days.

After Texas independence was established many fine people came in from the old states. The rich lands of the Red River bottoms attracted slave owners, and big plantations were opened up, the owners building their homes back from the bottoms in the pine hills.

These early Texans were men of splendid character, resourceful, honorable, and courageous, priding themselves upon their hospitality and honesty. It is said a loaded wagon broken down in the road would stay for weeks with its contents unmolested. They were educated people also and realized the great needs of schools, as the children were growing up with only such teaching as the parents and older children could give them. Grandfather and his neighbors built a school house about a mile from his home and secured a teacher. To give more children an opportunity for an education, he opened his home to them, and grandmother watched over them.

About this time grandfather went to New Orleans and bought a piano, the first in all the country, and the girls learned to play. My father had considerable musical talent and when he first came to Texas, although only a child, had made a fiddle out of a wooden box and some rawhide strings and actually put it in tune and learned to play the airs his father whistled and his mother sang. So when the piano was bought grandfather bought him a very fine violin, which filled his young heart with great joy, and, as he was the only fiddler in the country at that time, he was in great demand for all the frolics and weddings and affairs and had a jolly time. My brother plays now upon that same violin, beautifully toned by age. The settlers were religious people and churches of various denominations were organized in the little log schoolhouses or in some convenient home and some really able preachers came into the country. Men of influence predominated in public affairs: my father mentions Amos Morrill, John T. Mills, Thomas J. Rusk, Judge Todd, and others as exerting great influence for good in the community. Counties were laid off, county seats located, and a land office opened at Clarksville. There also about this time Mrs. Todd and Father McKenzie opened their famous schools, to which my aunts and my father were sent. My father was afterward sent to a high school at Spring Hill, Arkansas, and he also read medicine with Dr. Wilson at Lewisville.

In 1848 he was sent to Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, where he received his M. D. degree, and this is how he traveled there: He rode horseback to Memphis, Tenn., where he sold his horse and took a steamboat to Wheeling, W. Va., thence by stage over the Alleghenies to Cumberland, Md. Here he saw his first railroad, and rode in the cars to Philadelphia. Being from Texas, he was a curiosity, and as he was a mischievous young fellow, he delighted to entertain the staid Quakers with startling tales of Texas. Coming home one vacation he made a vest of duck's heads and a cravat of rattlesnake skin, got a coonskin cap, and a buckskin suit, and wore them while in Philadelphia with great glee in his character as a "Texan," although he was really a great young "dandy."

Visiting Tennessee, he met my mother and stayed until he married her. She bravely left her comfortable home and came to the new country, enduring its hardships to be with the man she loved. She was a beautiful bride and had a handsome trousseau and many little "falfals," as was customary in the old states. I have

often heard her tell of the first time she went to church in Texas. She knew, of course that it was a frontier country, but there were many refined people in the neighborhood, and she was young and credulous, so when my father asked her to put on her very best clothes and go to church with him, as he wanted to show every one his pretty wife, she gladly complied. She wore a handsome gown of brocaded silk, a fine embroidered collar and topaz brooch, a dainty watch and chain, fine mitts, silk hose and satin slippers, and crowned her toilette with her precious bonnet of uncut velvet with nodding plumes of pink and blue. In those days on impassable roads every one rode horseback; so she pinned up her silken skirts, put over them a riding skirt, and away she went. She said she noticed my father's eyes twinkling brightly but suspected nothing until they stopped at an open place in the woods. "What are you stopping for, Joe?" she asked. "Why, for church," he replied. "Where is the church?" "Just down here a little way." They walked a short distance to a log house with a dirt floor, with benches made of split logs and peg legs. The congregation was largely of settlers who wore homespun clothes, the women wearing sunbonnets. Proudly my father led the way, his mischievous eyes dancing, and she, realizing the joke he had played upon her, followed with blushing face and downcast eyes. After she was seated, the little girls, amazed at this wondrous vision, gathered around her, and said, "That's my watch," "That's my bonnet," "That's my mitts," until her confusion was completed by the preacher, who took for his text "Vanity of Vanities," saith the preacher, "Vanity of Vanities." But she had the good sense to know that those homespun dresses covered hearts of gold. And this tender bride herself one lonely night in the hills, when her doctor husband was away and the negroes fast asleep in the quarters, shot and killed a panther which had crept up to the open door and threatened her own and her baby's life.

A railroad was now the imperative need of this country. One had been prospected to run from Pine Hills, the northwest corner of Red River County, to Galveston, but fell through. In 1849 there was great excitement over the proposed Great Pacific railroad which was to run from the Pacific to the Atlantic, passing through Memphis, Little Rock, and Fulton, entering Texas at the northeast corner. This prospect should not be confused with the Memphis and El Paso, which followed it. A commission of eminent men planned to ask the United States government to aid with its lands. This commission was to meet delegates from all the southern states in Memphis on July 4, 1849, and the Texans had started on the way when an outbreak of cholera in Memphis broke up the meeting.

Grandfather, like many other Texans, had great faith in this prospect and firmly believed the road would be built. He said this piece of high ground near the corner of Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana was the logical situation for a city, and so firm was his faith that he erected on the south line of his headright a stout post, and on that post he nailed a board and on the board he painted the name which he originated for his dream city, a name made of the three states—"Tex-ark-ana."

3. PIONEER DAYS IN TEXAS[1]

by

JOSIAH FORT BATTLE[2]

Our maternal grandparents Dr. Josiah W. Fort and his wife, with seven children and about one hundred negro slaves, together with two families of Tennessee neighbors, Jethro Battle Fort[3] and Col. David Lane, moved from Tennessee to Texas in the fall of 1836. Dr. Fort had made a trip to Texas earlier in the year, was well pleased with the country, and had bought a fine tract of 800 acres of black prairie land in Hunt County, for which he paid five hundred dollars. They moved overland in horse-drawn vehicles. Our mother, her older sister, and Miss Jane Lane, girls in their teens rode horse-back the greater part of the way, which was about six hundred miles. It took the large caravan six weeks to make the trip.

At this time the United States Government was engaged in moving its wards, the various tribes of Indians, from Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida to their new reservation, the area now occupied by the State of Oklahoma. Frequently along the way the immigrants came in contact with the red people and many, many incidents occurred between and among the two groups of movers which were of interest to these equestrian girls, and which they ever delighted to relate to their friends and descendants.

Our sires landed in the northeast corner of the Republic of Texas in November, 1836. On account of the unsettled condition of the new government, and the frequent incursions of the wild Indian with his bow and arrow, tomahawk and bloody scalping-knife on the frontier and in the prairie districts of the Republic, it was thought wise and prudent to settle in the eastern, timbered country, and our grandfather, instead of going to his Hunt County purchase of land, accepted a grant of 1920 acres located four miles west of where the city of Texarkana now stands, tendered him by the Republic as a homestead. At this time there were no sawmills in that section of the country from which to get building materials, and they had to build log-houses for homes. With the help of the servants, the whites were soon housed in the hill-lands and quarters were constructed for the slaves near the rich Red River Valley lands, for the tract pre-empted lay about half in the hills, covered with a fine growth of pine timber and the other half in the river bottoms, well studded with hardwood timber such as ash, hickory, and oak. The slaves were soon put to work clearing the bottom lands for farming purposes. At this date the territory here mentioned was in Red River County. In 1840 Bowie County was carved out of Red River County's territory.

In this new and sparsely settled country the immigrants found an abundance of wild game. It had been hunted and frightened so little that it frequently came in range of the settlers' homes and could be shot from their premises. The settlers had but little trouble in keeping a supply of venison, wild turkey, ducks, and squirrels, and sometimes a bear was killed and they had bruin meat to feast on. It was

[1]From an article in the *Dallas* (Tex.) *News*, April 21, 1924.
[2]See Table 69.
[3]The author is in error here. Jethro Battle Fort removed from Tenn. first to Mississippi, thence in 1849 to Texas.

no very uncommon thing to see fifty deer in a drove or that many wild turkeys in a flock. Fish were found in abundance, too. Red River, the lakes, and creeks seemed to be alive with them. But it was thirty-five to fifty miles to any market where other food could be obtained. The main dependence was on steamboats navigating Red River and bringing supplies, landing them at various plantations. When there was plenty of rain on the headwaters, boats came up. At that time the raft at White Oak Shoals, sometimes called Milliken's Bend, had not accumulated to such an extent as to prevent navigation of the river when there was a good stage of water. I have seen steamboats at my father's landing when I was a boy. Corn-meal was ground on hand-turned steel mills the first year, but my grandfather added a corn grist mill to his cotton gin the second year. Flour, sugar, and coffee, at times became very scarce indeed.

My grandfather Orren D. Battle, his three sons—James W., Julius D., and Robert J. Battle, the latter being my father, along with two sons-in-law, Charles McCutcheon and William Ellis, and their families, and a grandson, Thomas Benjamin Hopkins, came out from Hinds County, Mississippi, in 1842. They bought lands and settled in the same community with the Tennessee colony. They also brought a lot of negro slaves with them.

In a period of a few years the four daughters of Dr. Josiah W. Fort were married. In 1842 my father, Robert J. Battle, married my mother, Miss Susan G. Fort; James W. Battle married Miss Diana Fort; John Rochelle married Miss Julia Fort; and Meek Smith married Miss Harriet Fort. The latter couple moved to Bastrop, south Texas. The others all settled at Myrtle Springs, creating an ideal community, almost every member of which was closely related to the rest. Myrtle Springs was near where the railroad station Hooks, in Bowie County, now stands.

These forbears were all Missionary Baptists and this community was composed almost exclusively of people of that faith. In 1843 they built the first church owned by that denomination in Bowie County. It was constructed of hewn pine-logs. It had a loft running half way the building, reserved for the negro worshipers. My first memory of church buildings and church affairs dates back to this old log house. When I think of the sweet and hallowed influences that surrounded my childhood and compare it with the city churches we have today, turning the Temples of God into playhouses, where they ring with the guffaw rather than the serious melody, I rather pine for "good old days of the by-gone." I remember sitting by the side of my mother, having cleaned my first red-topped boots with my white handkerchief, looking at a big florid-faced minister away up in that little old-fashioned pulpit, preaching away. It was Brother Pickett, father of Col. G. B. Pickett, who represented Wise County in the State Legislature for several terms. The next of my mother's ministers was Elder Lewis Ward Davis. When he left that charge, he went to Arkansas and married. To that union was born a son, who was later Governor Jeff Davis of Arkansas. The third of these pioneer preachers was "Daddy" Daniel Buckner, father of Robert C. Buckner, founder of Buckner's Orphan Home located at Dallas, Texas. "Daddy" Buckner also had a son, Henry, who was a missionary to the Choctaw Indians. When they visited their father, they preached for him. From the appearance of these two brothers on their respective visits, I was given an idea of what St. Paul meant when he said of himself: "To the weak I became weak that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men that I might by all means save some." It was thus: Elder Buckner (Robert) was then serving the church at Paris. He represented or served in a community of the most

cultivated people there were in North Texas. When he came on a visit he was dressed within an inch of his life—fine and nice. When Elder Henry Buckner came over from the Indian Nation he was dressed like an Indian, with a fringed buckskin suit and moccasins. He even adopted the manners and customs of the red man that he might win him to Christ. To my mind, they were both as fine a type of Christian men as "My Old Kentucky Home" ever furnished Texas.

These old Tennessee and Mississippi Baptists were zealous and consecrated members of their church and did their parts in sowing the seed and laying the foundation of the Baptist faith in the new country. If I have it down right, no denomination of Christians has excelled them in faithful work for the Master in Texas. I am glad to write of the success of my ancestors' branch of the Christian church. I do it with sincerity and all good conscience. It would be unfair to myself, however, if I gave no expression as to my church relations. I have been a Presbyterian elder for more than fifty years. I have been active in the service of my Master and I hope that I may be pardoned if I say "diligent in studying to know and do His will." I have now passed my seventy-fourth mile-post in life's journey and can say with a clear conscience that I have never for a moment regretted having affiliated with, espoused the cause of, or conformed to the ordinances of my church.

There was quite a lot of swamp and bottom lands in the vicinity of the old pioneers and at times they had a great deal of sickness, among both the white and colored population. Chills, fevers, and all kinds of malarial diseases were prevalent. Screen cloth was unknown and mosquitoes, flies, gnats, and all kinds of disease-bearing insects got in their work at first hand. Of course, in the sparsely settled country, there was no great incentive found for the practice of medicine and physicians were scarce. These frontiersmen were put to a great deal of inconvenience and delay in getting doctors. Most of them had a medicine chest in which they kept blue mass, calomel, lobelia, quinine, etc. If the patient was not taken too violently ill they would administer these and other remedies like teas made of herbs, and mustard plasters, and some would bleed their sick in order to avoid sending for a physician. The physicians of that date were all of the old school of practitioners known as "saddle-bag doctors." They were true and sincere men, not so mercenary as a great many of their profession appear today. They usually visited their sick regardless of distance, the bad weather, or any hardships they had to endure to get there. There was a sincerity about his practice that endeared the "old-timey" doctor to his patrons, and made him a confidant, second only to the family pastor.

Washington, Arkansas, thirty-five miles away, was the nearest post-office to the new-comers. They had to despatch a negro once or twice a month for their mail. The old Star Route system of carrying mail then in vogue was a slow process of delivery. They experienced long delays in hearing from "back home", and it took months for the transmission of news from the Old World.

These advance agents of our great Texas civilization were educated and accomplished and their offspring had a penchant for learning, but the school facilities of the new country were very poor indeed. The nearest permanent schools were at Clarksville in Red River County and Arkadelphia, Arkansas. They had to patronize them for a number of years until others were established nearer.

South Carolina can claim the honor of having the first railroad constructed in the United States. It was operated from Charleston to Hamburg in 1831. But when these torch-bearers of civilization of whom we are writing landed in Texas, there was not a mile of railroad within five hundred miles of this State. Just be-

fore the Civil War the roadbed of the Texas & Pacific was graded through Bowie County. My grandfather, Orren Datus Battle, was privileged to cast the first spade of dirt in its construction in this county. My father had his slaves to do a considerable part of the grading, for which he was paid in land certificates, granted by the State to that company. The Texas & Pacific was also the first railroad that was built in Bowie County. It ran a train from the West into Texarkana in 1878.

Our pioneer relatives were farmers. They planted just enough corn for the home consumption and the balance in cotton. Grain did not do well on their bottom lands. Cotton was their moneyed crop. It was the only product they could raise that would bear exporting and they had to market it in New Orleans. It sold at a low price after freighting about 600 miles and it had to be sold by commission merchants, the owners paying their percentage for handling it. The New Orleans Cotton Exchange has kindly sent us a detailed report of the prices that prevailed in the market from 1840 to 1845. In order to shorten our article, we give below just the average prices per annum as quoted by them: During the year 1840-41 the best grade sold for 9 1-4, the lowest for 7 3-4. In 1841 to 1842 the best sold for 8 cents and the lowest for 7 cents. In 1842-43 the best sold for 6 1-4 and the lowest for 5 1-2 cents. In 1843-44 the best sold for 8 cents and the lowest for 7 cents. In 1844-45 the best brought 6 cents and the lowest 5 1-2 cents. It will be seen by this that the average price of cotton for those five years was 7.5 cents for the best and 6.5 cents for the lowest, making it sell for an average of about 7 cents, or $35.00 per bale. The expense of sending it to New Orleans and the merchant's commission had to come out of this. It should also be considered that it took the owner two or three weeks to go to market and that he got nothing for the seed, as there was no market for them. We can see that even with slave labor the Southern producer did not have a gold mine in his cotton field. At that time a cotton gin was considered to be doing pretty well when it turned out five bales per day, the cotton being handled altogether by hand.

Our far-distant ancestors had come over from England in 1654 and settled in the South and their progeny scattered over the southern States, but few going north of the Mason-Dixon line. They had imbibed southern sentiments and adopted their manners and customs. Along with the others, they had become slaveholders. The Government of the United States had recognized slavery as legitimate. Slaves were bought and sold and considered as assets, just like other property and were just as legitimately their owner's property as the houses and lands, mules and horses of the citizen of the North. The Book of Books recognized slavery. The patriarchs and prophets had slaves and slavery was in vogue during the days of the Apostles. Abraham must have had a thousand slaves as he had 318 grown men able to bear arms and go to war with and for him. They were all born and reared under his own vine and fig tree. He was the Father of the faithful, the Friend of God. He was told of the Lord that "his seed was to be made slaves for a long period of time," just as if it had been so decreed by Jehovah. While Moses was engaged in the delivery of the Israelites, they had slaves; bought and sold them just as the people of the South did. Remember that Moses was cognizant of it and God was manifesting his presence in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. During the 400 years of theocratic government—God acting through the Judges, the Israelites had slaves. Clear down to the days of our Saviour and the Apostles, this chosen race of the Lord practiced slavery. So the South had a long line of examples in the ownership of slaves.

The writer was born on one of the most beautiful slave-worked plantations in the Southland. It was known as the Hawkins Prairie Plantation. It was a black-land prairie plantation in the valley of the Red River, fourteen miles west of Texarkana, and consisted of a thousand acres, level and smooth, sloping about five feet to the mile. It was leveled at the upper end to ward off overflow waters. It belonged to my father and his brother, James W. Battle. Our home was on a bluff overlooking the entire plantation. The negro quarters were built on an elevation about the center of the plantation and consisted of two rows of houses about the length of a city block, facing each other on a graded street. At one end of these rows was the overseer's house, the smoke-house, and the commissary. At the other end were large barns and mule-sheds. A cotton gin, with a corn grist mill attached, was in the middle of the plantation. The owners had a sufficient number of slaves to work the place like a well-kept garden. When the crops were growing and the hands all out at work, it was a beautiful and inspiring sight to behold. My people were kind and considerate with their slaves. They were good providers for them.

I have some fond recollections of that negro-worked plantation. It was in a fine fishing and hunting territory, a hunter's paradise, and as a boy I was full to the brim all the time of my stay there with fun and sport. Then my remembrances of some of the slaves have been pleasant and interesting. There were Uncle King and Aunt Harriett. They were born in slavery to my Grandfather Battle. While they were servants and expected to do their work like the others, my father had an especial regard for them. He would not under any circumstances suffer them to be imposed upon. There were Jerry and Abe, inherited by my mother; Jerry a good carpenter and Abe a blacksmith. They would have sold on the block in any city of the South for $5,000.00. A normal negro man was worth $2,000.00. As the rule, the male negro was worth $100.00 for every year of his age up to 20 years; the female a third less.[1] Then I have a vivid recollection of Simon, the ox-driver. He had charge of three yoke of oxen, had them well-trained. He could almost play a tune with his ox-whip in popping it. He married a half-breed Indian woman, about twice as large and strong as he was. She was a fine worker. My father bought her to gratify Simon. She was all right until she got mad. Then she would raise an Indian war-whoop that could be heard all over the negro quarters and at Simon's house it was "Rats to your holes!" and Simon was taking a vacation right NOW. Everybody just kept away from Louisa's house until the Indian blood cooled off. I will not soon forget "Slewfoot" York. He was big, brown, and rusty-looking; appeared like some big beast just out of the jungles of Africa. But the biggest thing about him was his feet. He could not get his toes in the largest shoes that came in a case and my father had to order an extra size, thirteens or fourteens, from New Orleans every year. Spencer was another inheritance of my mother's. He was short, stumpy, and resolute in appearance. He seemed to go back and partake of the nature of his Darwinian ancestors, fond of the forest. He would run off once or twice each year and stay a week or two. When he would get tired of sleeping in the fallen tree-tops, and was hungry and wanted to draw rations from "Marse Bob's" commissary, he would slip back to the plantation and be at work before anybody would know he was about. My brother was in the Confederate Army about the third year of the War. He was down on

[1]Mr. Fort probably overestimates these values. Certainly in the eastern Southern States they were much lower.

the coast of Texas and wrote my father that he could sell his slaves down there for $800.00 all around, that he thought it very doubtful about the success of the Confederacy and advised him to bring his slaves down there and sell them. My father saw it in a different light and went at once and bought a negro woman and her four boys. He paid $2,000.00 for them, paying $1,200.00 in cash, and gave his note for the balance, making it due and payable six months after a ratification of a treaty of peace between the Confederate States of America and the United States. Within twelve months the negroes were freed. The holder of the note brought suit on it but it was thrown out of court. This negro woman was named Saphrony. She gave birth to a girl baby after we bought her. Her children had unique names: Wesley Benjamin, Peter Origan, Sandy Richards, Charlie Isaac, and Beula Benton. The first two mentioned were twins, one a mulatto, wide between the eyes, with a broad and projecting forehead, the other, like his mother, jet black, mink-eyed, with flat and receding head.

Our grandfather, Josiah W. Fort, was past middle life when he came to Texas in 1836. He had been for years the leading physician in the western district of Tennessee. He had accumulated a competency and after moving to this State retired from the practice of medicine. He was a man of fine personal appearance and intellectual powers. He died at his home at Myrtle Springs in 1858, leaving a considerable estate, consisting largely of negroes and land. His wife died several years prior to his death.

Grandfather Orren D. Battle was of that hardy old type of North Carolinians, who, early in the history of the United States, settled in and developed the old Tar-Heel State. His ancestors came over from England and settled in this country in 1654. One of our ancestors, Elisha Battle, served in the North Carolina Provincial Congress before the Revolutionary War. They have been a sturdy and prolific family. Grandfather Battle moved from Edgecombe County, North Carolina, in 1808 to Tennessee, then in 1828 to Hinds Co., Mississippi, from thence to Bowie Co., Texas, in 1842. He was prepossessing in appearance, had strong religious and political convictions, was well-educated and wielded a wide influence. He died in Bowie County in 1869, at the age of eighty-four years.

My father, Robert J. Battle, and his two brothers, James W. and Julius D. Battle, came to Bowie County, as hereinbefore stated, in 1842. They were prosperous farmers, raised families, and did well until the Civil War. Having lost their fortunes through the emancipation of their slaves, they all left Bowie County. My father moved to Denton County and was in the flour mill business for a time, and then moved to Wise County, near Slidell. During the latter part of his life, he employed his time in religious work. He died at Greenville in 1892. My mother had died some time before that date. James W. Battle died in Tennessee. Julius D. Battle died in 1871 in Bowie County, Texas, having moved back there.

Two young men that came out with the original pioneers who became rather preeminent were Dr. Joseph M. Fort, son of Dr. Josiah W. Fort, and Dr. Thomas Benjamin Hopkins, grandson of Orren D. Battle. They completed their literary education at the McKenzie School, Clarksville, Texas. Both studied medicine and went to Philadelphia to the Jefferson Medical College, riding horseback to that place. They graduated in 1854, came back to Bowie County, and practiced their profession there as co-partners in the year 1855. Dr. Hopkins then moved to Claiborne Parish, Louisiana, and practiced medicine there until the outbreak of the Civil War. He volunteered in the Confederate Army and fought in the ranks for

two years until he was wounded at Corinth, Mississippi. After that time he was put in charge of a hospital and remained in that service the duration of the War. In Claiborne Parish he had married Miss Kennedy, who died during or soon after the War. When he returned from the War, he moved to Lafayette, Louisiana. Here he married his late wife's sister and settled. He lived in and practiced medicine at this place for more than fifty years. He was a man that took great pride in his profession, never allowing inclement weather to prevent his going to the bedside of the sick. He was preeminently a fine Christian character. He died at his home in Lafayette in 1922 at the ripe old age of ninety years. He left a large, well educated, and cultured family of sons and daughters who had settled around him. His house is over a hundred years old. The large live oak and magnolia trees which surround it were planted by Dr. Hopkins more than fifty years ago. They are covered with the long hanging moss which is indigenous to that country, and which adds to the beauty of the scenery. Dr. Joseph M. Fort moved to Boston, the county seat of Bowie County, and did an extensive practice. After the Civil War he moved to Paris, Lamar County, where he continued the practice of medicine. He was considered one of the leading physicians of North Texas for more than a half century. He helped to organize the North Texas Medical Association. He died at Paris in 1906 at the age of about eighty-five years. His widow, one son, and a daughter, Mrs. Thad Preston, lived in Paris. Joe Gill of Dallas and Murray Gill of Breckenridge are grandsons.

Judge Carey Ellis of Rayville, Louisiana, whose mother was a Battle, is another outstanding character among the old Bowie County pioneers. He moved to Louisiana quite a number of years ago. He has been recognized as one of the leading lawyers of that State for more than an ordinary life-time. He served as district attorney and as District Judge in his district for more than twenty years. He was also a delegate to the Constitutional Convention which framed the Constitution under which that State now operates. Judge Ellis is also president of the oldest bank in his home town. His son is the present district attorney of that district. He and the judge are partners in the practice of law at Rayville. Judge Ellis is seventy-five years of age and in good health.

Another of the old-timers, who lives now in one of the original pioneer houses constructed nearly one hundred years ago, is Jethro O. McCutcheon, whose mother was a Battle. He lives at Myrtle Springs, near the railroad station of Hooks, Bowie County. He is eighty-three years old. He fought through the War between the States under General Joe Wheeler. General Wheeler says in his printed farewell address to his division that they fought in three hundred battles. When I visited him last fall, Mr. McCutcheon was hale and hearty. He has a remarkable memory of the past, remembering almost every camping place his division stopped at during the war. I saw in the sitting room of this old house a carpet, a large round-top marble center-table, and a bookcase that were purchased at the sale of my grandfather's household effects after his death in 1858. This furniture dates back nearly a century, but still looks nice and tidy. The house is typical of the architecture of that time. The rooms are eighteen feet square. It has broad galleries and a wide hall. It is in fairly good condition now.

Hilliard Fort Smith has been an important personage in Central Texas for fifty years. He lives at Cameron. He is a banker and large land-owner. His mother was Harriet Fort, my mother's oldest sister, who rode horseback with her from Ten-

nessee to Texas in 1836. Hilliard Smith married Miss Oxsheer and has raised a large family at Cameron.

Orren Battle and his sister, Mrs. Ada Ector, children of Julius D. Battle, reside in Texarkana. There is also at Texarkana quite a family of Rochelles, who are descendants of Jethro Battle Fort.

There was no inconvenience or misfortune adjudged greater by the old pioneers than the poor school facilities they had to tolerate in the new country. The older the families grew, the more children were added to them and the more manifest it became that they should have a change in this condition of schools. But in 1850 there came a first-class school teacher from Virginia and opened a school at Boston, the county seat of Bowie County. It was called the Milam Male and Female Academy. The teacher was Mr. Booker Featherstone. He proved to be a success and soon had a fine patronage and school. My father, his two brothers, J. W. and J. D. Battle, and Dr. Joseph M. Fort moved to Boston in order to patronize this school. He taught there until the Civil War began, then moved to Tyler, and taught. From there he moved to Ladonia, Fannin County, and there, under the auspices of the Baptist Sister Grove Association, had a splendid school. The old schoolmaster finally moved to Cleburne, and taught. He died at Cleburne in 1877. Will Featherstone, a prominent Fort Worth lawyer, is a son. His widow, Mrs. Ann Featherstone, lives with another son, Mercer Featherstone, in Oak Cliff, Dallas, and Mrs. Mollie Towers, who has been a capable and popular music teacher in Dallas for twenty-five years is his daughter. William Reilly, editor of the Craftsman, a paper published at Dallas, is a grandson. I have never known a man in my long life in North Texas that did more to cultivate and train the minds of the youth of this State than did Prof. William Booker Featherstone, my beloved schoolmaster, who taught me the alphabet. I appreciate the opportunity to honor his memory.

While visiting Bowie County last September, I saw the ruins or debris of the home that my grandfather Fort built when he first arrived in Texas in 1836, also the house that my father and mother lived in the first year after their marriage in 1842. They were within what is now a ten or twenty minutes' drive from the city of Texarkana.

Oh! What a change eighty-eight years has brought about!