

The Promised Land

A History of Brown County, Texas

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gan a series of transfers of the cases from Brown county to Bell county and back again, and the Bell county judge finally dismissed them in June, 1888, and the matter was ended.

The wire cutting wave seems to

have passed out of the whole state at about the same time. It began in south and southwest Texas several years before it reached this section, because the older cattle growing regions had begun fencing much earlier.



First Tax Rolls of County

WHEREVER civilization goes—and stays—there inevitably is that bane of life, the white man's burden—taxes. The first settlers of Brown county, however, were not especially burdened by taxation, the total collections for the first year being only \$66.90 on a tax rate of about two cents per \$100.

The first levy and assessment of taxes in the new county was in 1859, the year following organization and election of officers. Due to the small population, it is likely that this assessment was complete, for it was comparatively easy to enroll all the tax payers at that time. Curiously enough, negro slaves comprised a property that was twice as valuable as all the land rendered for taxation that year, and it is noted that the Brown countians went right ahead assessing taxes against slaves through

the year 1862, in spite of the war and emancipation.

Tax payers listed for the year 1859, a list comparable to a complete census of the county, were:

Ichabod Adams, W. M. Bennett, Abel Bowser, W. F. Brown, David Baugh, F. A. Baugh, P. C. Brewer, Levi Roberts, James Vaughn, G. W. Williams, J. J. Cox, Welcome W. Chandler, William Carver, S. R. Coggin, M. J. Coggin, James H. Fowler, Thompson Fowler, Henry Skinner, Jasper Willis, W. L. Williams, Cyrus Ford, D. S. Hanna, Jesse P. Hanna, T. D. Harriss, Jesse S. Harriss, W. B. Hamilton, George Isaacks, George Tankersley, Gideon Willis, John Williams, John Jones, Brooks W. Lee, B. J. Marshall, J. B. McReynolds, R. Potter, Thomas J. Priddy, George Robbins, A. Roberts, Frank Tankersley, Rupel Williams.

Property valuations for that year included:

2,978 acres of land at \$1 per acre (evidently 100% valuation);

10 negro slaves at \$580 each;

41 horses at \$59.15 each;

3,952 cattle at \$6 each;

Cash, \$235;

Miscellaneous property, \$3,641.

There is no record, according to Professor T. R. Havins, of an assessment of taxes in 1860, although no reason can be discovered for omitting it.

In 1861 there was a levy and assessment, and 109 names appear on the rolls for that year, showing the speed with which the new county was being settled. The acreage of land rendered for taxation had increased to 24,081, and an additional 156,245 acres of unrendered land was shown on the tax rolls. The value of negro slaves had increased to \$773 each, and 23 were rendered for taxation. There were 216 horses, valued at \$47 per head, and 18,450 cattle at \$5 per head. Sheep had made their appearance in the county, and 265 were taxed at \$3 per head.

The tax rate for this year was 16 2-3 cents per \$100 valuation, and the tax total was \$799.48.

Names appearing on the tax rolls for 1861 were:

Ichabod Adams, A. E. Adams, M. G. Anderson, David Q. Anderson, J. J. Anderson, W. Aldredge, Peter

Alba, Charles Arnett, David Baugh, P. W. Brewer, W. F. Brown, Abel Bowser, W. W. Beaumont, Fred Brookerson, Wm. Bevens, William Bennett, Wm. E. Burks, J. N. Beasley, John Beasley, Welcome W. Chandler, William Chancellor, N. J. Clark, Israel Clements, W. R. Carver, J. J. Callen, S. R. Coggin, M. J. Coggin, John W. Cox, John Connell, H. M. Childers Sr., H. M. Childers Jr., Elisha Childers, Samuel Crimer, A. J. Davis, J. J. Daniel, W. C. Dunn, Richard Fitzpatrick, Thomas Fowler, James H. Fowler, Levi Fowler, Greenleaf Fisk, Thomas Forsythe, Benjamin Goates, L. D. Greaves, Isaac Griffin, Harry Gilliland, David S. Hanna, Jesse P. Hanna, Thomas D. Harriss, Jesse S. Harriss, R. Hill, W. A. Holloway, F. Marion Hodges, W. S. Houge, Malcom Hunter, H. H. Hunter, James M. Hunter, John James, A. J. Jones, Thomas J. Keesee, O. H. P. Keesee, James E. Keesee, Brooks W. Lee, Gresham Lee, James Lindsey, W. Manuel, John Mullins, William Mullins, A. K. McKean, E. B. McReynolds, Harvey McPeters, John Nichols, W. C. Parks, J. L. Poplin, Isaac Pettitt, Thomas J. Priddy, John Rhodes, James Richardson, Thomas Rogers, George Robins, James Robins, Arch Roberts, Levi Roberts, J. R. Austin, D. D. Sallee, T. C. Small, Benjamin Skinner, John Sheen, Elizabeth St. Clair, G. W. Tankers-

ley, R. F. Tankersley, P. Turner, 360;
James W. Vaughn, R. W. Vaughn,
R. A. Vaughn, Elizabeth Watts, W. 575 head of sheep valued at \$2,-
P. B. Wilbern, F. M. Wilbern, Ben- 300;
jamin Smith. Miscellaneous property valued at
\$7,625.

Tax rolls for 1862 contain the
following additional names: M. W.
Baugh, J. S. Byers, J. D. Barcroft,
Elias Bridges, R. D. Beauford, Jep-
see Bond, W. Baker, J. F. Black-
well, F. A. Baugh, Samuel Bailey,
J. J. Cox, Wm. Connell, James P.
Chancellor, Isaac Christmas, Geo.
H. Cherry, W. H. Cox, Duncan
Bros. Wm. Edmundson, John Gilli-
land, K. L. Gossett, Bap Howell,
L. J. Harriss, Jas. Hanna, D. Hol-
lingsworth, W. K. Hamblin, J.
Hamblin, Dudley Johnston, J. Kirk-
patrick, L. B. Ledbetter, W. P.
Mills, Isaac Mullins, W. A. More-
ton, D. J. Marshall, D. C. Morgan,
Joel Parks, L. D. St. Clair, James
E. Stiles, F. M. Stiles, Taylor
Smith, Anthony Smith, R. J. Towns,
John Williams, Thomas Williams,
W. L. Williams, Allen Williams,
Isaac West, A. L. Watts, Celia
Watts, W. J. Wilkerson, Lacey
Webb.

Properties listed on the tax rolls
for 1862 included:

29,799 acres of land valued at \$1
per acre;

26 negroes valued at \$17,300;

33,425 head of cattle valued at
\$205,355;

697 head of horses valued at \$15,-

Here were listed taxable proper-
ties of a total value of \$298,349—
a remarkable evidence of the de-
velopment that had been made in
half a dozen years.

Property assessments for 1863
are not available, but new names
appearing on the tax rolls for that
year included:

J. Adams, John A. Adams, F. M.
Anderson, W. C. Anderson, J. N.
Baugh, Howell Bass, Wm. Barfoot,
John Barfoot, B. J. Burford, Mary
Bevin, J. J. Collins, I. Christian,
G. Cherryhomes, E. O. Chafee, S. R.
Camgle, J. M. Coffelt, Joel Counts,
Henry Counts, S. L. Doran, Henry
Griffin, W. R. Hough, W. F. Hud-
son, J. Johnson, J. W. Lewis, D.
H. Moseley, W. J. Morton, John
Montgomery, W. McClear, Thomas
McClear, Lewis Roberts, J. M. Ral-
lins, G. M. Rallins, Willis Roberts,
W. Robertson, I. Scogg, W. Stowell,
G. N. Taksler, James Winters,
James Ward and Ida Watts.

A certificate attached to the 1863
tax rolls by M. G. Anderson, county
clerk, recited that O. H. P. Keesee,
county assessor and collector of
taxes, had gone before the com-
missioners court October 24, 1863,
with the desire and intention of
settling with the court, having been

ready to settle for some time past, but that due to the "deranged condition of the county, Indians and other causes, we can not get the court all together at one time." The "other causes" included the War of the Confederacy, which at that time was claiming the attention of a great many Brown county men.

That Brown county citizens were confident of the success of the

Confederate cause is indicated, according to Professor Havins, by the record of a transaction August 26, 1861, in which Ambrose Bull of Lampasas county, living between Lometa and San Saba, sold to Greenleaf Fisk of Brown county one negro woman and her child, for \$1,800. The woman was "of dark complexion, 26 years old, and the child was six years old."

"Father of Brownwood"

GREENLEAF FISK is a name that is engraved indelibly upon the tablets of Brown county's history, and is known throughout West Texas where his descendants have settled during the past eighty years. The title, "Father of Brownwood," has been given to him because he established the present site of the city and gave a large acreage to the townsite. Supplementing this gift, which obviously was inspired in part by the purpose of gain because he owned a tremendous acreage contiguous to the town, he gave many years of intelligent and faithful service to the city and county.

Judge Fisk had a romantic career. Born in Albany, New York, May 19, 1807, he began at the age of twenty years to prepare for en-

trance into the ministry of the Presbyterian church, after securing a liberal education in ordinary academic subjects. He spent one year at Lane's Theological Seminary at Cincinnati, and then went to Hanover college at Hanover, Indiana, for further study.

At this period of his life the Austin colonization scheme in Texas was taking tangible shape. Many families from the settled areas of the east and middle west were moving toward this section, and marvelous tales of adventure were in circulation. The orderly procedure of the classroom was entirely lacking in glamour; and young Fisk, and a companion, finally decided they would seek their fortunes in the new land.

Embarking in a skiff on the