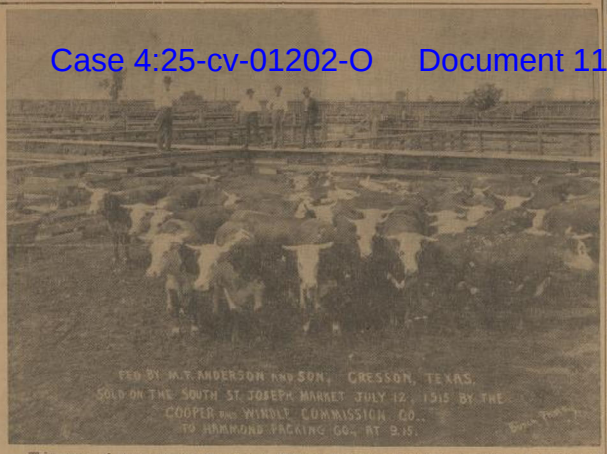
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This group of steers topped the market. William Anderson, second from right, is a resident of Granbury now, living at 707 W. Bridge. On the right is Edgar Young, now deceased, who also lived in Cresson.

# County Schools Had Humble Beginning

For a county of only 426 square miles, Hood had a great number of schools at one time. Since four schools now serve the county, Lipan, Tolar, Cresson, and Granbury, a number as large as 38 different schools seems almost unbelievable.

**Fireplace, Dirt Floor**

The situation of the early schools is perhaps best described by W. H. Barker in a written recollection of the early days of the county.

Mr. Barker was the father of Mrs. Oran Baker. He settled in this area in the 1800's and dictated these remembrances in 1901 of life and growth during the early days of Hood and Somervell County.

"Of course, the first settlers had no schools until there was enough in a neighborhood to justify them to employing a teacher. But as soon as a neighborhood was strong enough by sending three or four miles, a house, or rather, a log cabin was built about the center of the neighborhood and a teacher employed at the rate of one dollar a scholar per month, or one dollar and a half. Hence, some were without a school two or three years and when we did get a school we had to take very common teachers because the school was small."

Mr. Barker's recollection further describes the school buildings of the day.

"Our school houses were built of small logs, fourteen or sixteen feet long, covered with three foot boards and dirt floor. The fire place consisted of one whole end of the house, being built up with the house to the and clay. For a window, a log and clay. Wor a window, a log the whole length of the house was cut out, opposite the chimney. A writing desk was placed under the window. The writing desk was a slab of hued out about six inches thick, twelve or fifteen inches wide, and fourteen feet long and resting on a pen drove in the wall at each end. The benches were made of a tree or log ten or twelve feet long, split open, the split side hued to a fine face, holes bored in each end with an inch and a half or two inch auger and small poles the proper length for legs. The door shutter was made by nailing boards or a rawhide to a frame made the proper size and hung on rawhide hinges. Some houses had puncheon floors and different shaped chimneys. The fireplaces were made with rock, cracks stopped with rocks and mud."

Records were scarce on the details of early schools and the actual beginnings are difficult, if not impossible, to establish. One old record book of 1876 lists school boards for various schools, but gives no details about establishment.

**"Overs" and "Unders"**

An appropriation was made by the state for children between the ages of 8 and 14 for their schooling. At later times, the age limit was raised. There were "overs" and "unders" in age who paid tuition to attend school.

A record book of 1883 includes petitions for the organization of school communities over the county. Not until several years later did the state require counties to be divided into districts.

The following is an example of these petitions:

"Be it known on this 31st day of July, 1883, a petition was filed by W. A. Duke and others, in office, praying that a school community be organized at Granbury. The petition has been examined, and it is hereby ordered that the signers to said petition are constituted and recognized as Granbury School Community No. 18. It is further ordered that the sum of $615.09 be credited on the books of the County Treasurer, for the benefit of said community, to be applied to the maintenance of their Public School.*"

"It is further ordered that W. A. Duke, A. P. Gordon, and H. E. Hanna be and are hereby appointed Trustees for said school community. (Signed) T. J. Duke, County Judge."

* Note -- If the money is to be applied in aid of building a public school house, so state.)"

This record does not mean that this **was the beginning** for the **schools; it was a** recording necessitated by some ordinance, it is theorized.

**Schools Listed**

Besides the more well known school communities as Granbury, Temple Hall, Paluxy, Acton, Thorp Spring, Fall Creek, and Marvin Chapel, there were many other schools listed.

Crockery Creek was the name of one school. The creek runs into Kickapoo Creek near Lipan and the school was somewhere near.

The record lists two schools named Allison. One was supposedly near Kickapoo Creek; the other was a community near Ft. Spunky.

Shady Grove was east of the Brazos River near what we know as Acton. Caulders was a school east of Granbury, thought to be named for a preacher in the vicinity.

Fosters was a school also known by the name Martin and later Bethel, according to sources. Post Oak Grove was south of Tolar, near Paluxy.

Arrington, also known as Friendship, was between Granbury and Tolar. Stroud Creek was in the area of Asbury and Antioch near Tolar. Add Ran School was near Thorp Spring and, like the college, was named for Addison and Randolph Clark.

Rucker's Creek School may have been what was also called Rocky Point. It was above New Hope School, which was also located on Rucker's Creek.

**Names Change**

Pleasant View, originally Elm Flat, is said to have been east of what is now Mambrino, near Well's Cemetery. Rough Creek was later known as Brushy, southeast of Tolar. Mt. Pleasant was west from Brushy, on Squaw Creek. A cemetery is still there.

Powell's School was in the Tolar area, before Tolar was a named settlement. The Evergreen School may have been what we call Fairview.

Lawler Branch School was near that stream of water which runs into the Paluxy.

Mt. Ebo and Mt. Zion were schools for Negro students. Contrary Creek School was near the Wiggins place at the turnoff of highway 2425.

The petition record book notes one school with no particular name. It was called merely, "a school on Pearl St."

Another with an unusual notation instead of a name was a "fractional school community on the Johnson County line."

The Herrings School was near the Parker County line and later became, by an act of the legislature, a County Line Independent School District called Herring Hightower. With adjoining territory in Parker County.

**50 Teachers Paid**

The same record book noted that during the school year of 1882-83 there were 46 male teachers employed who were paid a combined monthly total of $906.89. The four female teachers in the county received an average monthly total of $180.50 for their work. That meant that an average of $1,094.38 in teachers salaries were paid. (Today the state requires a yearly minimum or base pay salary for each teacher of over $4,000.)

The salaries of these early teachers were based not only on their experience and the number of pupils, but also on the number of days in the year that they actually taught, which might vary from as few as three months or less to nine months.

Later records show that in 1915, Bethel was petitioning to build a new school house, stating a minimum of $635, not including equipment. It was to be a frame building, of first class material, 24 by 36 feet and was to have a "stove equipped with fresh air intake and foul air extractor; all interior wood work shall be without such unnecessary turnings or carvings as to catch dust and microbes."

Other schools appeared on the records available by the 1920's. Included were Stockton Bend, Cottonwood, Hill City, Prairie Creek, Colony, Bald Knob, Mitchell Bend, Ellis, New Harmony, Cresson, Live Oak or Waples, DeCordova or Kristenstad, Asbury and Antioch.

Gradually most of the schools grew smaller and the student bodies reduced. The advantages of larger schools and better transportation was realized and utilized.

In 1956, Acton and Mambrino were still school districts, in addition to the larger ones in Granbury, Lipan, Cresson and Tolar. Acton was annexed to Granbury in 1960.

## Hood County's First Elected Officials

With the creation of the county in 1866, commissioners were appointed to see that county officers were elected. Chosen under the spervision of the existing Texas constitution, the men were to serve four year terms.

Those chosen, according to what "The History of Hood County" calls "the most reliable sources," were Abe Landers, county judge; A. J. Wright, sheriff; Alex S. McCamant, clerk of the county court; Peter Garland, treasurer; John Morris, clerk of the district court; and Gideon Mills, tax assessor and collector.

What we now call the commissioners court was then termed the police court and along with the county judge, these men were the members: C. C. Alexander, Wilson Barker, John Meek, and Joe Robertson.

When the reconstruction government took over in Washington following the Civil War, a provision was made that all office holders in the previously Confederate states had to take an oath that they had not participated in the war.

The sheriff, A. J. Wright, had been a captain of a company of Missouri volunteers in the Confederate Army and was forced to give up his office. He was succeeded by J .C. Hightower. A. S. McCamant, who was the elected county clerk was officially replaced by J. F. Nutt, although McCamant actually continued to perform the clerk's duties.

## Questions & Answers

QUESTION: Who was the first County Judge in Hood County?

ANSWER: The first County Judge in Hood County was Abel Landers.


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