

A HISTORY OF THE WEST COMMUNITY

by

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A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

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The development of the community of West began with the establishment of the settlement of Bold Springs near the time of the creation of McLennan County. The availability of rich wooded and prairie land enabled the original Anglo-American settlers to form a small farming community called Bold Springs in the mid 1800's. After the Civil War these original settlers were joined by others, including Czech and German immigrants, searching for land and a new home. The coming of the railroad through the area led to an influx of immigrants, the rise of cotton growing, and the creation of a new town, West, as the focal point for Bold Springs and other small farming communities. The successful business endeavors of the residents of the new town led to West's incorporation in 1892 and its becoming the dominant economic and cultural center of the prosperous farming region in Northeastern McLennan County.

The Czech and German immigrants, however, remained for some time isolated from the Anglo-American community by language and religion. Their increasing population and the development of their culture led to a rivalry for

dominance in the community. Slowly their traits of isolation and community self-sufficiency broke down, and, with the coming of World War I, the Czechs found acceptance. Although they retained much of their isolationist traits, the Czechs successfully fought off a nativist backlash against foreign elements occurring after the war and emerged as the dominant cultural force in the community. The shift in the balance of economic strength from the Anglo-American to the Czechs was not due to a decline in the population or business activity of the Anglo-Americans but to the increased Czech population.

In its first twenty years as a town the city of West experienced rapid growth, but was followed by a reversal of this trend during World War I. Despite organized efforts to revive a boom feeling, the conflict between the cultures resulted in a lack of unity that impeded the growth and progress of the town. The failure to cope with the problems of lessened economic opportunities left the city of West a small agricultural trading center noted for its unusually large Czech population.

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CHAPTER I

THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOLD SPRINGS COMMUNITY

On January 28, 1850, by Act of the Legislature of the State of Texas, McLennan County was created from territory taken from Milam and Robertson Counties.¹ This new county was located in northern central Texas and was bisected by the Brazos River, which flowed in a northwest to southeast direction. Blackland prairies comprised the greater part of the undulating surface of the county. Timbered regions were confined principally to the wide alluvial valley that flanked the Brazos River, its many creek bottoms, and occasional "motts" or patches of oak or cedar.² Four small settlements were located in this region when the county was organized: Waco Village, near the center of the county and on the Brazos River; Earth, eight miles northwest of Waco; White Rock, about ten miles north of Waco near the present community of Ross; and "Bould Springs," later known as Bold Springs, east

¹H.P.N. Gammel (ed.), Laws of Texas (Austin: Gammel Book Co., 1898), III, 525.

²B. B. Paddock, A History of Central and Western Texas (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1911), III, 1134; Memorial and Biographical History of McLennan, Falls, Bell, and Coryell Counties (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1893), 166. Hereafter cited as Memorial and Biographical History. Texas Almanac, 1858 (Galveston: W. Richardson and Co., 1858), 75.

of the Brazos and about fifteen miles to the north of the Waco Village.³ The development of the community of West began with the establishment of the settlement of Bold Springs near the time of the creation of McLennan County.

EXPLORATION AND EARLY SETTLEMENT OF McLENNAN COUNTY

Numerous expeditions had traveled to the Brazos Valley north of the settlements of the "Falls" on the Brazos River before the first pioneers arrived to build their homes and grasp the land from its Indian inhabitants. Anglo-American sponsored expeditions had surveyed the country as early as 1833 and 1835.⁴ After the Republic was established, Captain T. H. Barron, commanding a Texas Ranger Battalion, built a small fort, called Fort Fisher, near the Waco Indian village in 1837. The Rangers remained only a short time before being recalled to the Nashville colony at the falls of the Brazos. The group was considered too far away from the frontier settlements to be effective.⁵ In 1840 Major George B. Erath, surveyor and early settler, returned for a short time on a

³Texas, General Land Office, "McClennan [sic] County, Texas" (Austin: State of Texas, 1880). See Appendix A.

⁴John Sleeper and J. C. Hutchins, Waco and McLennan County, Texas (1875, rpt, Waco: Texian Press, 1968), 4.

⁵George B. Erath, "Memoirs of George B. Erath," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXVII (July, 1923), 146. Hereafter cited as Erath, "Memoirs."

surveying expedition of the area west of the Brazos River.⁶ Three years later David and John F. Torrey established Torrey's Trading Post some six miles south of the Waco Village on the Tehuacana Creek. George Bernard, the operator of the store for the Torreys, traded principally with the Caddo, Andrako, Cherokee, and Comanche Indians living in the region while a Major Neighbors served as the Indian agent.⁷

During the period of the Republic, settlers did not advance beyond the Nashville colony of Falls County. The hostility of the Indians retarded their settlement of this part of the Brazos Valley. According to Major George B. Erath, "the Comanches took particular pains to inform the settlers that they were the owners and the landlords of the soil and frequently demanded tribute . . ." of settlers on the fringes of their domain.⁸ During the period of 1842 to 1844, attention was drawn to the Mexican invasions of Texas from across the Rio Grande. This allowed little activity by the rangers in the region.⁹ Added to these discouragements, the beginning of litigation over land titles in large portions

⁶Sleeper and Hutchins, Waco and McLennan County, Texas, 8.

⁷Ibid., 9; Memorial and Biographical History, 87; Henry Armbruster, "John F. Torrey and Brothers," (unpublished M.A. thesis, Sam Houston State University, 1963), 14.

⁸Sleeper and Hutchins, Waco and McLennan County, Texas, 11.

⁹Memorial and Biographical History, 87.

of the region delayed immigration.¹⁰

By 1845, some of the conditions which had retarded settlement improved, allowing the arrival of settlers to the region of the Waco Indian village. Four companies of the Army of the Republic had been recruited for frontier duty. The squad operating for the protection of the Falls region made its headquarters on Tehuacana Creek near the Torrey Trading Post.¹¹ Toward the end of that year, a "grand peace council" was held on Tehuacana Creek with the different tribes living in the valley of the Brazos River.¹²

Thus when Neil McLennan, a settler in the Nashville Colony, and Major George B. Erath came up to the Bosque River on a surveying expedition in 1845, McLennan remained. He decided to settle on land near Hog Creek, a few miles northwest of the Waco Indian Village. By 1848 more settlers had arrived and Waco began to take the appearance of an Anglo-American village.¹³ A company of rangers under Captain Shapley P. Ross were stationed near the village for their protection.¹⁴ Major Erath surveyed block one of what would

¹⁰Paddock, A History of Central and Western Texas, I, 192.

¹¹James K. Greer (ed.), A Texas Ranger and Frontiersman, The Days of Buck Berry in Texas (Dallas: Southwest Press, 1932), 24.

¹²Ibid., 25-26.

¹³Sleeper and Hutchins, Waco and McLennan County, Texas, 9-10.

¹⁴Erath, "Memoirs," 146.

become the city of Waco for land agent, Jacob de Cordova.¹⁵
The following year Captain Ross established a ferry at the
Waco village.¹⁶

Under the federal government eight military posts were
established in 1849 at various points along the frontier.
The outposts were established at intervals from Fort Worth
to Fort Duncan, near present Eagle Pass on the Rio Grande
River. One of these posts, Fort Graham, was established
some thirty miles northwest of Waco in Hill county for the
protection of the residents of the Brazos River Valley.¹⁷
The posts formed a cordon of protection which gave a greater
degree of security and now favored safe and permanent occupa-
tion of the region now known as McLennan County.

EARLY SETTLEMENT OF A COMMUNITY AT BOLD SPRINGS

Among the early settlers that followed Neil McLennan up
from the Nashville colony and the first to the West area was
Isaac B. Cauble. For his service in the war with Mexico in
1846, Cauble received a grant of land on Aquilla Creek in
what was to be Hill County. He sold this grant for 25 cents

¹⁵Ibid., 147.

¹⁶Roger Conger, A Pictorial History of Waco (Waco:
Texian Press, 1964), 7; Sleeper and Hutchins, Waco and
McLennan County, Texas, 10.

¹⁷Paddock, A History of Central and Western Texas, I,

an acre and chose instead a site near one of several small flowing springs some sixteen miles north of the Waco village.¹⁸ The spring was located within the edge of the oak woods that spread west toward the Brazos River. To the east lay the rolling blackland prairie. For his family, Cauble built a cabin about 200 yards south of the spring. Having access to all the range for miles around, Isaac Cauble, or "Dock Cauble" as he was more familiarly known, and his sons began raising horses and cattle.¹⁹

The spring, located on property now called Lake Park, was the site of one of the many Indian camps that dotted the fringes of the oak woods and the valley of the Brazos River. Examination has revealed evidence that many generations of Indians resided on the site.²⁰ When Dock Cauble built his small cabin only a small band of Comanches camped near the spring. The young son of Cauble, James, had an Indian boy as his playmate. Their association did not last long for the Indian lad died and was buried on the hill now occupied by the Bold Springs Cemetery.²¹ No evidence was recorded to

¹⁸Ibid., 513.

¹⁹"Old Settlers Recall Early Days in West." The West News, February 13, 1936. Hereafter cited as "Old Settlers," West News.

²⁰Alois Weinberger, interview, West, Texas, October 29, 1971. Mr. Weinberger has long been a collector of Indian artifacts and is considered very knowledgeable of the Indians in northeastern McLennan County.

²¹"Pioneer Resident Dies at Aquilla," The West News, December 24, 1937.

indicate that relations of the Caubles and the other early settlers with the Indians were other than friendly or posed a threat to their settlements. As the buffalo disappeared in the early 1850's, the Indians departed the region.²²

The Caubles were soon followed by other settlers into northeastern McLennan county. The family of J. T. Wills settled about a mile north of the Caubles. Another settler, Carey Boulds, built a small cabin near another spring two miles east of the Cauble cabin and adjacent to the present southern limit of West. Very little is known of the Boulds family, for within a few years they sold their land and moved on. Their cabin was a single-room structure and was located on the edge of the prairie.²³ By 1850 the spring and the community of settlers living in the immediate area were referred to by the name "Bould Springs." By the end of the Civil War, the spring became known as Bennett Springs, for the owner of the property, and the spring near the Cauble cabin and the community were referred to as Bold Springs.²⁴

A sufficient number of people lived in the region of

²²A. Y. Kirkpatrick, The Early Settlers Life in Texas and the Organization of Hill County (privately published, n.d. rpt. Waco: Texian Press, 1963), 31.

²³J. Clyde Bennett, interview, West, Texas, June 12, 1971. Mr. Bennett is the grandson of an early settler, W. W. Bennett, and resides near the spring mentioned.

²⁴"Former West Man Recalls Early Days in This Section." The West News, December 15, 1939. Hereafter cited as "Former West Man," West News.

the Brazos Valley by 1850 to petition the state for the establishment of a new county. Although George Erath states in his memoirs that only about twenty families lived in the county at this time, the necessary signatures were obtained.²⁵ On January 28, 1848, the new county was established with Neil McLennan as its namesake.²⁶

A sufficient number of people lived in the vicinity of the springs to justify the establishment of a post office on October 4, 1850. Its postmaster was William D. Eastland. It was located near or at the Boulds cabin and took the name Bould Springs.²⁷ The location of the post office was moved several times in its first fifteen years of operation. When postmaster Richard D. McCrary and John F. Dunn were employed, the postoffice was located at the home of Mrs. Jenny Lewis, about two miles south of the present community of West.²⁸ Here the stage which ran from Waco to the Dallas and Fort Worth communities stopped to change horses. The mail was

²⁵Erath, "Memoirs," 147.

²⁶Roger Conger, Highlights of Waco History, 6.

²⁷Sam N. Horne, "History of Waco and McLennan County" (unpublished manuscript, Texas Collection, Baylor University, n.d.), 21; The West Weekly Times, 12th Anniversary Edition (1889-1902), published 1902 (n.d.), 4. Hereafter cited as West Times, 1902. This edition is owned by Mrs. Marvin Fickling, 804 North Marable Street, West, Texas.

²⁸William J. Dixon, U. S. Post Office Superintendent, to Congressman W. R. Poage, March, 1941, citing records of the U. S. Post Office Department. Letter in possession of J. Clyde Bennett and hereafter cited as Dixon Letter. See Appendix B, List of Postmasters.

put in a box about one-foot square inside her door.²⁹ In 1855 the post office was moved to the small White Oak Community with Alberto Vaughn as postmaster. During the Civil War, it was located at the home and stage station of the postmaster, Frederick MaKaig.³⁰

The early settlers of the Bold Springs region in the 1850's were attracted by the availability of both woodlands and blackland prairie. The opening of a large area under the University Land system added even more to the attraction. The Constitution of the Republic of Texas in 1836 had provided for the creation of a General Land Office to administer the sale of the unappropriated public domain as authorized by the Legislature. The purpose of the University Land sales was to provide funds for the establishment of two state colleges or universities and to support county school districts. The Legislature, for many years, appropriated tracts of University Land in a direct attempt to attract settlers. The practice was continued when Texas became a state. In 1856 the Legislature designated a large section of northeastern McLennan County as University Lands.³¹

²⁹"Old Settlers," West News; "B. B. Ingraham, Oldest Pioneer West Man, Recalls Early Days," The West News, June 21, 1935. Hereafter cited as "B. B. Ingraham," West News.

³⁰Dixon Letter; Memorial and Biographical History, 543.

³¹Louis J. Wortham, A History of Texas (Fort Worth: Wortham-Molyneaux Company, 1924), V, 91; Paddock, A History of Central and Western Texas, I, 193; Texas, General Land Office, "McLennan County Land Map" (Austin: State of Texas, 1946). See Appendix C.

The pioneers were attracted to this land by its excellent agricultural potential and by the reasonable price and purchase terms. According to J. Clyde Bennett, grandson of an early settler, many of the early settlers of northeastern McLennan County, such as Carey Boulds, seem to have been a transient lot moving on to seemingly better lands.³² However, many of the early pioneers were the first to take the opportunity to acquire University Lands and remained as permanent residents of the community.

James T. Russell and his family had settled on prairie land about two miles north of West in 1854. He purchased 320 acres of Section One of the University Land and farmed it until his death in 1862. His death left his wife and nine children to carry on his endeavors. A. W. Russell, the eldest son, later purchased 160 acres adjacent to his father's property and expanded his ranching and farming interests to include over 500 acres of land. He later served as a deputy sheriff and a school trustee for a number of years.³³

Cornelius S. Ingraham and his family chose to settle on land near the Aquilla Creek and near the present community of

³²J. Clyde Bennett, interview, June 12, 1971.

³³Memorial and Biographical History, 477.

Tokio, four miles west of West. Ingraham purchased 320 acres for seventy-five cents per acre. The sons of the Ingrahams, Barton and Horatio, born in 1855 and 1862, respectively, became two of the most successful ranchers and businessmen in West.³⁴

During the year 1855 more pioneer families were added to the Bold Springs community. Patrick Martin and his family settled near the Cauble ranch.³⁵ Thomas L. McGhee, coming with his family from Nashville, Tennessee, settled about three miles south of West.³⁶ Matthew Bates settled near the White Rock Community, where a young son was born to the family in 1861. This son, Isaac, was to become an important businessman in the town.³⁷

In 1856 the first of the settlers attracted by the University Land sales began to arrive. Walter W. Bennett and his family moved from Kentucky to Fayette County, Texas, in 1855. The following year they moved to the Bold Springs Community and temporarily occupied the old Boulds Cabin. A new cabin was built for the family and a smaller separate

³⁴"B. B. Ingraham," West News; Memorial and Biographical History, 471.

³⁵Memorial and Biographical History, 458.

³⁶Paddock, A History of Central and Western Texas, II, 787.

³⁷Ibid., 789.

structure for the slaves. After his first crop, Bennett purchased 160 acres of University Land for three dollars an acre. Walter Bennett died suddenly in May, 1860, while on a trip to Waco. His wife, Mary, and the five children continued through many hardships to live and farm the newly acquired land.³⁸

William C. Hurlock moved to McLennan County with his mother and eight brothers and sisters in 1857. They purchased 160 acres of University Land about five miles south of West.³⁹ Frederick MaKaig and his family settled about two miles north of the Hurlock farm. MaKaig had been engaged in the mercantile business in Marlin and Gatesville and had established the Clifton post office in early 1857. In 1860 MaKaig opened a stage station and also became the postmaster of the Bold Springs post office. He continued in this capacity until his death in 1866.⁴⁰ William W. Glasgow purchased a 557-acre farm in Hill County in 1858. He later added some University Lands to his holdings near the Russell farm and in 1860 married Martha Russell, daughter of James and Eva Russell.⁴¹ Other pioneers who settled in the area

³⁸Memorial and Biographical History, 501; Letter patent to W. W. Bennett and Mary M. Bennett from the General Land Office, State of Texas, August, 1856, preserved by J. Clyde Bennett in the Bennet Family collection.

³⁹Memorial and Biographical History, 436.

⁴⁰Ibid., 543.

⁴¹Ibid., 459.

during the late 1850's included John U. Clabough, William W. Westmoreland, William Mauk, Thomas McGhee, E. C. Brown, Rush Nalley, and William Carmichael.

Little is known of the many others who settled in the Bold Springs area and those who remained only briefly during the period before the Civil War. Of those who remained, it can be said that they must have been rugged individuals to have endured the hardships of pioneer life. Ranching and farming were the chief occupations of most of the settlers. The blackland prairies which had been generally considered unfit for farming and destined as perennial pasturage began to receive their share of the settlers. Rails for fences were cut from timber in the creek bottoms and were used to enclose small fields on the prairies.⁴²

PROFILE OF THE COMMUNITY IN 1861

The outbreak of the Civil War suspended further immigration into the Bold Springs area. In 1860 the census reported that half of the 6,206 residents of McLennan County lived in Waco. Bold Springs was listed as the second largest community with a population of 311.⁴³ Its residents were not of one specific village or town but included settlers of all

⁴²T. C. Richardson, East Texas, Its History and Its Makers (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1940), III, 1134.

⁴³U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census of the United States, 1860. Microfilm, Rice University Library.

the communities served by the Bold Springs post office. These smaller additional communities were White Rock, White Oak, and Liberty Grove.

Roads in the section were poor and few in number. The road linking Waco to the Hillsboro, Dallas, and Fort Worth communities passed through the Bold Springs community as early as 1856. Another road linked Waco with Fort Graham in Hill County.⁴⁴ A road connected Bold Springs with the Lee R. Davis lumber mill on the west side of Aquilla Creek, about ten miles from West.⁴⁵ A few miles to the southwest, the road led to the Dyer family grain mill on the Brazos River.⁴⁶ These roads provided some accessibility to service and trading centers, but use was infrequent. Until fences became common, one would only have to "head out" across the countryside toward the intended destination.⁴⁷

The Bold Springs Missionary Baptist Church was the only church in northeastern McLennan County at that time. Alberto Vaughn, pioneer farmer and postmaster, had led in its organization in 1858.⁴⁸ Thirty-two charter members erected

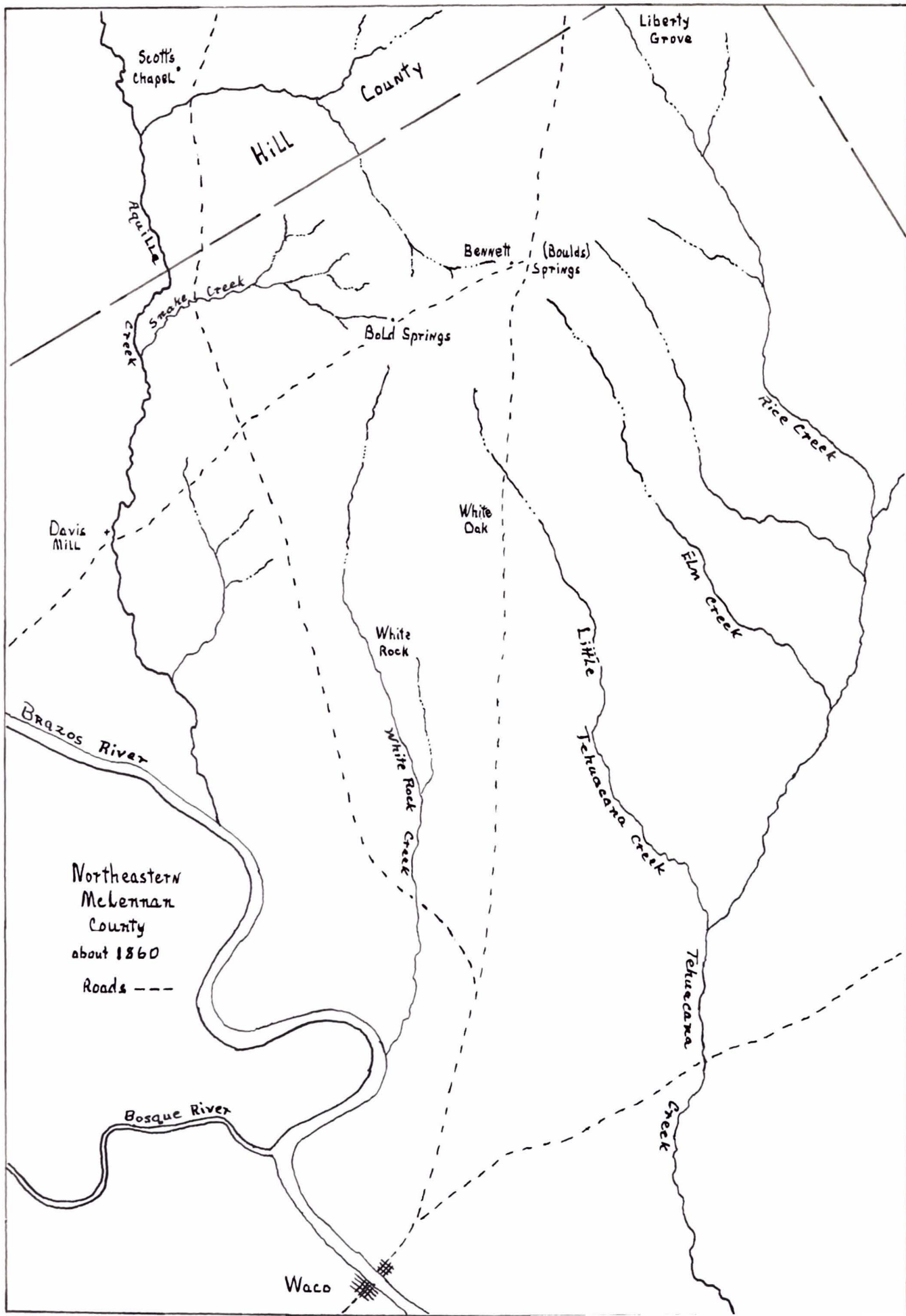
⁴⁴McLennan County, "Minutes of County Commissioners Court, 1850-1875," I, 2-150.

⁴⁵Ibid., 204.

⁴⁶"Pioneer Resident Dies at Aquilla," The West News, Dec. 24, 1937.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸"First Baptist Church," The West Weekly News, October 20, 1911.



a small frame building for worship on land that later belonged to William C. Hurlock about one mile south of West.⁴⁹ It is not certainly known who was the first pastor, but Dr. J. J. Riddle, both a physician and a preacher, was pastor in the year 1860.⁵⁰

Meetings of various kinds were held at the homes of the early pioneers. Visitors frequently remained as long as a week. Scott's Chapel, about six miles northwest in Hill County, was the site of many of the meetings which included religious services. The principal amusements, according to James L. Cauble, son of the first settler, were horse racing and dancing.⁵¹

As the War between the States began, many of the male residents left their homes to join the ranks of the Confederate Army. These and the many other able-bodied men who had settled in northeastern McLennan County had worked hard to turn the land from a wilderness into a rural farming community. The population of the Bold Springs Community had increased from a few Indian inhabitants to over 300

⁴⁹Henry M. Apperson, A History of the West, 1836-1920 (Waco: Texian Press, 1969), 19.

⁵⁰"First Baptist Church," The West Weekly News, October 20, 1911.

⁵¹"Pioneer Resident Dies at Aquilla," The West News, Dec. 24, 1937.

industrious Anglo-American residents. These settlers were a people with a strong character and disposition, the sort who had the courage and inclination to face the obstacles and discomforts of the frontier existence.

CHAPTER II

LATER SETTLEMENT AND THE COMING OF THE RAILROAD

The Civil War suspended the immigration that had spawned the creation of the Bold Springs Community. While most of its men were at the war, little changed. In the twenty-year period that followed, Bold Springs grew as a rural farming community with renewed immigration from the older settled areas of the nation. The beginning of settlement by recent immigrants from Europe, particularly the Czechs and Germans, added to the increasing population. The building of the Missouri Kansas and Texas ("Katy") Railroad in 1881-1882 gave the community its first substantial economic boost and created a nucleus for the community. Growth characterized the region during the period.

LATER ANGLO-AMERICAN SETTLEMENT

The Anglo-American settlers who came after the war possessed many of the same characteristics as those who had pioneered the region of northeastern McLennan County and some added qualities required in the growing expansion of this nation. Many of these settlers looked toward the west as an escape and haven from the chaotic and frustrating conditions in their southern states. Exhaustion of the soil was beginning and the need for more cotton acreage caused by

the development of machinery for the handling of the product encouraged the movement.¹ Texas was a land of opportunity for those industrious enough to resettle. The development of the community can be better understood by brief observations written about some of the settlers and their accomplishments.

Among the Confederate veterans returning to Texas who came to settle in the Bold Springs Community were Thomas M. West and Jacob Clausner. West had established a ranch at the mouth of Cottonwood Creek near Waco in 1859, but left to join the Confederate Army at the outbreak of the hostilities. Upon his return, he discovered that his cattle had been confiscated for food by Confederate troops during his absence. Undaunted, he acquired new cattle and settled near the spring called Callen Grove, within the northeastern limits of the present city of West. He later bought 260 acres where much of the city now stands from G. R. Bennett for three dollars an acre.² Six years later West purchased the stock of a store from William Hurlock and erected a wooden structure, 10x14 feet, on the Dallas Road which ran through his property.³ In addition to his ranching and merchandizing

¹Louisa Romans Dupuy, "Social Trends in McLennan County, Texas" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Baylor University, 1934), 18.

²Memorial and Biographical History, 414-15.

³"B. B. Ingraham," West News.

interests, West became the postmaster of Bold Springs on November 23, 1873.⁴

Jacob Clausner, a Swiss immigrant, had worked and traveled extensively throughout the country before accepting a job on a sheep ranch near the community in 1859. Following his discharge from the Confederate Army at the end of the war, he returned to Bold Springs and purchased 160 acres of University Land about three miles south of West. Within twenty years, Clausner had acquired over 700 acres of farm and ranch lands.⁵

Confederate veterans from the other southern states who chose to settle in the community included John M. Moore, Henry A. McGhee, and Samuel E. McClellan. Moore settled on a farm near White Rock Creek in 1869. In 1874 he added more land and also became the constable for the northeastern portion of the county.⁶ Coming from Alabama, McGhee settled with his family near the Moores on White Rock Creek. In 1874 he was appointed the overseer of the County Poor Farm, a position he held in addition to his prosperous farming activities until his death in 1887.⁷ McClellan came to the community in 1870 and engaged in several stock raising

⁴Dixon Letter.

⁵Memorial and Biographical History, 626.

⁶Ibid., 340.

⁷Ibid., 757-58.

enterprises before settling on prairie land near T. M. West. Within twenty years he owned one of the largest ranches which covered more than two thousand acres with one half under cultivation. Nineteen tenant houses were scattered over his property.⁸

Near the end of the war, the family of Francis Davis settled on land that was to become the center of the business and residential districts of West. Until his death on a cattle drive to Kansas in 1870, Davis worked for a rancher in Hill County, meanwhile maintaining his own cattle interests. His son, Zachary, purchased the land in 1870 and expanded his interests to include over 1,200 acres within the next two decades.⁹

The family of J. N. Kellis chose a site beside the spring referred to as Bold Springs and near the Cauble's cabin in 1867. Over seventy years later, a son, William F. Kellis, recalled that he was much impressed with the location as a young man: "It was almost a virgin country then. It was one of nature's beauty spots. Bluebonnets covered the prairies and in the spring made the terrain appear a blue fairyland. A magnificent forest of oaks stretched from the Bold Springs to a mile beyond the Brazos."¹⁰ About the

⁸Ibid., 528-529.

⁹Ibid., 412-413.

¹⁰"Former West Man," West News.

year 1869, Kellis, Patrick Martin, William Carmichael, and Jacob Clausner planted a little cotton on their farms. With successful crops they disproved the longstanding claim that the prairie land would not produce "such things." Soon after the successful experiment and the growth of cotton raising, Kellis established a gin close to the spring.¹¹

Such enterprising men as Thomas M. West, Samuel McClelland, and J. N. Kellis were joined by many other Anglo-American settlers and their families. Opportunities in business and services in addition to ranching and farming were created by these industrious settlers. For whatever reason they left their original homes, most came with a desire to acquire land and reap the riches of their labors.

The Anglo-American settlers were not alone in their desires. Recent immigrants from Europe also found their way to the Bold Springs community. From Ireland came Martin and Bryan O'Connell with their families, and they established adjoining ranches two miles east of West in 1874.¹² Thomas Leggot came from England after settling first in Illinois. In 1875 he established a ranch that within the next fifteen years grew to include three thousand acres with five tenant houses.¹³

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Memorial and Biographical History, 498.

¹³Ibid., 516.

The majority of European immigrants who made their way to the Bold Springs community were German and Czech. The Germans came principally from the kingdoms of Hanover, Prussia, and Bavaria.¹⁴ Accelerating fragmentation of the farms had led to laws allowing only a single heir to the land in the German states. Agricultural disasters beginning with the Potato Blight in the late 1840's brought near starvation. The spread of the industrial revolution and economic depressions also motivated their migration to the United States.¹⁵ The next most common reason among the younger men was the escape from compulsory military service. When they arrived in America, many of the German tradesmen found they were unable to establish themselves in their traditional trades such as carpentry and shoemaking. They therefore joined their fellow Germans in the farming opportunities afforded by the availability of land.¹⁶

The Czechs came to the United States from the provinces of Bohemia and Moravia in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The majority of those settling in the Bold Springs community were Moravians, but were called "Bohemians" by their Anglo-American

¹⁴Henry Heitmiller, interview, West, Texas, February 26, 1972; Louis Dulock, interview, Tours, Texas, February 26, 1972. Both are retired farmers and grandsons of early settlers.

¹⁵Terry G. Jordan, German Seed in Texas Soil (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966), 37-38.

¹⁶Louis Dulock, interview, Tours, Texas, February 26, 1972; Henry Heitmiller, interview, West, Texas, February 26, 1972; Albert and Alfonse Weinberger, interview, Leroy, Texas, February 27, 1972.

neighbors.¹⁷ They left their native land for several reasons. The Czechs were not allowed national status under the Dual Monarchy and suffered repression on both the local and national level. They resented the compulsory use of the German language in their schools and official matters.¹⁸ Religious harassment of the Protestant minority groups and the nationalistic Catholics spurred many to leave their beloved land. Like the Germans, many young Czechs left to avoid the compulsory military service required by the Austrian government. Overpopulation and the consequent scarcity of land for farms and homes induced many to believe the glowing reports of greater economic opportunities proclaimed in letters from those who had already emigrated. The opportunity to own land enticed many to make the tremendous efforts required to settle in America.¹⁹

¹⁷Reverend Petrus Houst, ed., Cěské Katolická Osady Americe (St. Louis: Wandas Brothers, 1880), 442-43. Hereafter cited as Cěské Osady. Anton Nemecek, interview, West, Texas, June 13, 1971. Mr. Nemecek is a retired member of the family who established the widely known Nemecek Meat Market.

¹⁸Samuel H. Thompson, Czechoslovakia in European History (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1953), 126-34; Anton Nemecek, interview, June 13, 1971.

¹⁹William H. Elznic, "Czechs in Richland County, North Dakota," in Collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota, IV, 1913, 62-73, found in Makers of America--The New Immigrants (New York: Encyclopedia Britannica Educational Corporation, 1971), VI, 83; Louis Svacina, interview, West, Texas, June 12, 1971. Mr. Svacina immigrated to the United States in 1905 and is now a retired farmer.

The first known Czech settlers to the community were Martin Cvikel, his wife, and their two children. They homesteaded 160 acres about five miles east of West in 1867.²⁰ Unable to find sufficient employment as cabinetmakers in Waco, Detrick Blume, in early 1872, became the first German settler in the area.²¹ Both Blume and the Cvikels were pioneers searching for a new home without a definite destination.

In the summer of 1872 five resolute German families, accompanied by two single men, left their assembly point at Effingham, Illinois, traveling by wagon train. Their destination was the University Lands in northeastern McLennan County. With the exception of August Dulock and his family, who stopped enroute to await the birth of a child, they arrived on November 11 near the southeastern limits of the community. The first comers were Edward and John Deitermann, Clemens Uptmor, and Frank Debendner and their families. The two single men were George Busher and George Hirshfield. The sites they chose were located on elevated prairie near Rice Creek, five miles southeast of the present city of West. They called their community St. Martinsville

²⁰Mrs. Joseph Dolezal, interview, West, Texas, December 11, 1971. Mrs. Dolezal is a granddaughter of the Cvikels.

²¹Memorial and Biographical History, 477.

in honor of St. Martin of Tours, on whose feast day they arrived. Later the name was changed to Tours when a post office was established.²²

The following year August Dulock and his family rejoined the settlers. Other families who had temporarily settled in Illinois also began to arrive. Among these were the families of Theodore Premier and Ernest Willenborg. Vaclav Mashek, a Czech who had come from Illinois to Brenham, Texas, earlier, also came and selected land. He chose a quarter section about one and a half miles east of T. M. West's store.²³

John Jupe and August Groppe were among the German pioneers to settle in the community in 1874. In the following years the German settlers were joined by the families of Alois Weinberger, Herman Grimm, Ernest Heine, Julius Leuschner, Karl Schultze, Karl Kreder, and Johann Schiemenz.²⁴

John Stanislav, Leopold Shrehot, Frank Urbanovsky, Joseph Fojt, and Frank Soukup and their families followed the first Czechs, Cvikel and Mashek, in the late 1870's. By the time the railroad arrived in 1881 they were joined by the families of Frank Grossman, Joseph Bezdek, Julius Pustejovsky,

²²Louis Dulock, interview, February 21, 1972; "State Convention For Catholics To Be Held At Tours," The West News, July 16, 1937. Hereafter cited as "State Convention," West News.

²³"State Convention," West News; "Recollections of Uncle Joe Mashek," The West News, December 24, 1937.

²⁴Memorial and Biographical History, 510; "State Convention," West News.

Joseph Hromadka, Frank Marak, Frank Karlik, Joseph Cocek, Frank Kramolis and John Heggar.²⁵

Before all the available University Lands were claimed, the German and Czech settlers of the 1870's initiated a pattern of settlement which was to be followed for many years. The German pioneers settled according to religious preference. The Catholics settled around their small village of Tours. The Protestants chose land to the West and south along the edge of the prairie. They established small farming communities about three miles south of West and at Gerald, about eight miles from West.²⁶ The Czechs selected whatever land was available and to their liking throughout the Bold Springs community and its newly formed German settlements. The greatest number, however, settled on the prairie land east of the Dallas road. Since the greater majority of the Czechs were Catholic also, no effort was made to settle apart according to religious preference.

THE COMING OF THE RAILROAD

The construction of the railroad through Central Texas became the most important factor in the establishment of the

²⁵Estelle Hudson and Henry R. Maresh, Czech Pioneers of the Southwest (Dallas: Southwest Press, Inc., 1934), 28; Nase Dejiny (Granger, Texas: Nasinec Publishing Company, 1939), 484.

²⁶Louis Dulock, interview, February 26, 1972; Henry Heitmiller, interview, February 26, 1972.

town of West. In 1872 the Waco and Northwestern Railroad, a subsidiary of the Houston and Texas Central, connected Waco with the main line of the H & TC at Bremond. By January 1873, it had completed laying track eleven miles north of Waco when financial difficulties forced the suspension of construction. Ross, a construction camp near the small community known as White Rock, became the northern terminus. Most of the railroad's traffic, however, terminated at Waco.²⁷ In 1881 construction was resumed and the line was connected with Albany in western Texas the following year.²⁸ Its tracks traveled through the western fringe of the Bold Springs community and created a station called Tokio, four miles southwest of present West.

In 1870 the Legislature of Texas approved the charter allowing the construction of main line track by the Missouri Kansas and Texas Railroad (formerly the Union Pacific). Agents began buying land along the approved route through Central Texas as soon as it was surveyed. When the panic of 1873 forced delay in construction, the railroad had been completed between Fort Riley, Kansas, and Denison, Texas.²⁹

In 1880, with the nation's economy on its way to

²⁷B. B. Paddock, A History of Central and Western Texas, I, 246.

²⁸Ibid., 252.

²⁹S. G. Reed, A History of The Texas Railroads (Houston: St. Clair Publishing Company, 1941), 393.

recovery, Granville M. Dodge, president of the M. K. & T. (Katy), came to purchase land along the approved route. Thomas M. West, the postmaster and merchant of Bold Springs, probably believed that the railroad would in time be an advantage to the country and sold Dodge forty-two acres. He also arranged with Dodge to locate a depot and the construction dump near his small store and post office. When the purchase of other needed land was completed, Dodge laid out a townsite with the lots to be sold later.³⁰ By September 1881 the Katy reached Hillsboro and construction continued throughout the fall and winter, reaching Waco in January 1882.³¹

When construction of the railroad reached T. M. West's store, the community began to be referred to as "West" and this name replaced "Bold Springs" as the designation on official documents. In January, 1882, G. M. Dodge filed the first official map of the town and honored T. M. West with his name for the new town.³² In August of the same year, the post office was also renamed and Bold Springs officially died.³³

³⁰McLennan County, "Deed Records," Vol. 38 (1880), 55-59.

³¹V.V. Masterson, The Katy Railroad and The Last Frontier (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952), 223.

³²McLennan County, "Deed Records," Vol. 87 (1882), 95.

³³Dixon Letter.

THE CHANGING COMMUNITY

The Bold Springs Community grew considerably after the Civil War, but it was not until the coming of the railroad that a focal point was established. The population increased with the influx of Czech and German immigrants as well as more Anglo-American settlers. No population figure for Bold Springs was reported by the census of 1880. The census, however, reported that Precinct Three, much of Northeastern McLennan County which included Bold Springs, had 4,177 residents.³⁴

The influx of the settlers in the 1870's rapidly diminished the unclaimed acreage in northeastern McLennan County. As the first settlers arrived, they selected land, previously surveyed into quarter section tracts, under the right of pre-emption. Up to 320 acres of University Land or unclaimed public land was available to a man who owned no land at that time.³⁵ He established his claim to the selected land by buying some logs, unloading them on the land, and notifying the state he intended to settle on it. Although the land was not free, the price never exceeded three dollars an acre and

³⁴U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of The Census, Compendium of the Eleventh Census: 1890, I, 396.

³⁵T. R. Fehrenbach, Lone Star, A History of Texas and Texans (New York: MacMillian Company, 1958), 282-84.

payment could be extended for several years.³⁶

By the time the railroad entered the section in 1881, all the University Land had been taken. Yet the flood of Czech and German immigrants continued. Most arrived without funds to purchase land and otherwise destitute after the passage to America. These later arrivals then became tenants or sharecroppers on the many large farms and ranches of the earlier Anglo-American settlers. After several years of hard work and frugal living, they fulfilled their desire to own land by purchasing from their landlords or from ranchers who began to see greater profits in their real estate operations or cotton farming than the continuation of ranching.³⁷

During the 1870's and early 1880's, stock raising was the dominant occupation. According to W. R. Tinsley, an early settler, the cattle were raised on the plentiful range of the prairie. After roundups the cattle were driven over the Chisholm Trail to Kansas until 1879, when the railroad reached Ennis, about fifty miles northeast. With the arrival of the railroad came barbed wire and a flood of immigrants, and with these came the conversion from ranching to

³⁶"Recollections of Uncle Joe Mashek," The West News, December 24, 1937.

³⁷Louis Dulock, interview, February 26, 1972; Mary Jerabek, interview, West, Texas, January 23, 1972.

farming.³⁸ The raising of cotton became important as more and more Czech and German immigrants arrived. While the Anglo-Americans devoted their efforts mostly to ranching and raising such grains as wheat and oats, the Czechs and Germans turned their hopes and efforts to raising cotton as well as grains.³⁹ Their custom of whole family participation in the manual work in the fields provided the answer to the problem of cultivating and harvesting their crops. This custom also allowed them to aid their Anglo-American neighbors and earn some extra money.⁴⁰

While farming and ranching were the principal occupations, other enterprises were begun and multiplied with the arrival of the railroad. D. C. Kinnard operated a mercantile business from his home near the Bold Springs until 1872.⁴¹ During the 1870's J. N. Kellis established the first cotton gin in the area and located it a short distance from the spring. B. B. Ingraham, son of an early pioneer, recalled that it "was a fifty saw gin with no condensor. The cotton was blown in a room made out of bagging and the press was tall with the cotton put in it at the top. A horse was hitched to a lever and went round and round to press three

³⁸"The National Bank," The West News, June 4, 1926.

³⁹Ceske Osady, 442.

⁴⁰Mary Jerabek, interview, January 23, 1972.

⁴¹Memorial and Biographical History, 458.

or four bales a day."⁴² A blacksmith shop was soon opened near the gin by Dick Mitchell to provide a much needed service for the settlers.⁴³

About 1870 Rush Mallory established a small store on the Dallas road about one mile south of present West. According to B. B. Ingraham the post office was moved to his little store, which contained a small amount of groceries and a number of fifty-gallon whiskey barrels. It therefore became a gathering place for many residents of the community and not always a quiet one. Recalled Ingraham,

I scarcely ever went to the store for there was always some disturbance going on. In those days nearly everyone carried a gun and after drinking freely of this whiskey, shootings were rather common around the place. One day a friend of mine and one of our most honorable citizens was forced to eat a raw mackerel at this store. When he would stop, the crowd would shoot ⁴⁵ Colt bullets in the floor near his feet.⁴⁴

Mallory did not stay in business long for in 1873 William Hurlock purchased the store and soon sold it to T. M. West.⁴⁵

West moved the store north on the Dallas road leading to his property. The stage stopped at his establishment and the travelers ate their lunch while the horses were changed and the mail put off. In his store West sold only the bare

⁴²"B. B. Ingraham," West News.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵"Old Settlers," West News.

necessities of foodstuffs and dry goods. During the building of the railroad, he expanded his operation and constructed the first brick building from material hauled from Waco.⁴⁶

In 1881 Dick Mitchell moved from Bold Springs to a larger blacksmith shop which he erected on the west side of the Dallas road across from West's store. W. T. Harris opened a woodshop in one end of Mitchell's shop. Dr. Vaughn came down from Hillsboro, at that time a town of over five hundred residents, to establish a small drug store beside West's store.⁴⁷ Zack Davis and J. H. Blume established small mercantile stores, but Davis was soon forced to discontinue after being robbed in January, 1883.⁴⁸ Doctors Baron, A. L. Willie, and S. E. Snodgrass arrived to begin their practice in the new town.⁴⁹

During this time all of West was located east of the railroad tracks. Where the city hall now stands and for some distance around it was a small shallow lake. Built by the railroad, the lake was soon surrounded by a luxuriant growth of cockleburs. T. E. Marable's farm residence and

⁴⁶"Captain T. M. West Passes to His Reward," The West Weekly News, February 2, 1912.

⁴⁷"B. B. Ingrahams," West News.

⁴⁸Memorial and Biographical History, 412.

⁴⁹"City Council Proceedings," The West Weekly News, April 21, 1911.

a rent house on the Davis property remained the only houses west of the tracks for several years.⁵⁰

As the population of Bold Springs and the new West community grew, churches were established to serve the needs of the residents. In 1874 Reverend D. C. Kinnard returned to the community and formally organized the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.⁵¹ The Christian Church was formed about 1880. A small Methodist congregation, the members of the Christian Church, and the Presbyterians all met in the Baptist Church. Services were held on alternate Sundays. In 1882 membership of the Bold Springs Baptist Church had risen over a hundred. Under the able leadership of Reverend T. P. Speakmen the congregation moved to a new frame structure now located at 310 West Spruce Street.⁵² The German and Czech Protestants worshipped together in their homes. Missionary work by the Reverends F. Werning and Christian Schaer served their needs.⁵³

In early 1874 the Catholic settlers constructed a small log church at Tours and Rev. Edward Fluery held the first

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹The West Weekly News, Booster Edition, October 20, 1911, 3.

⁵²Ibid., 3-4.

⁵³Seventy-fifth Anniversary of St. Peter's United Church of Christ, 1883-1958 (West: St. Peter's United Church of Christ, 1958), 3.

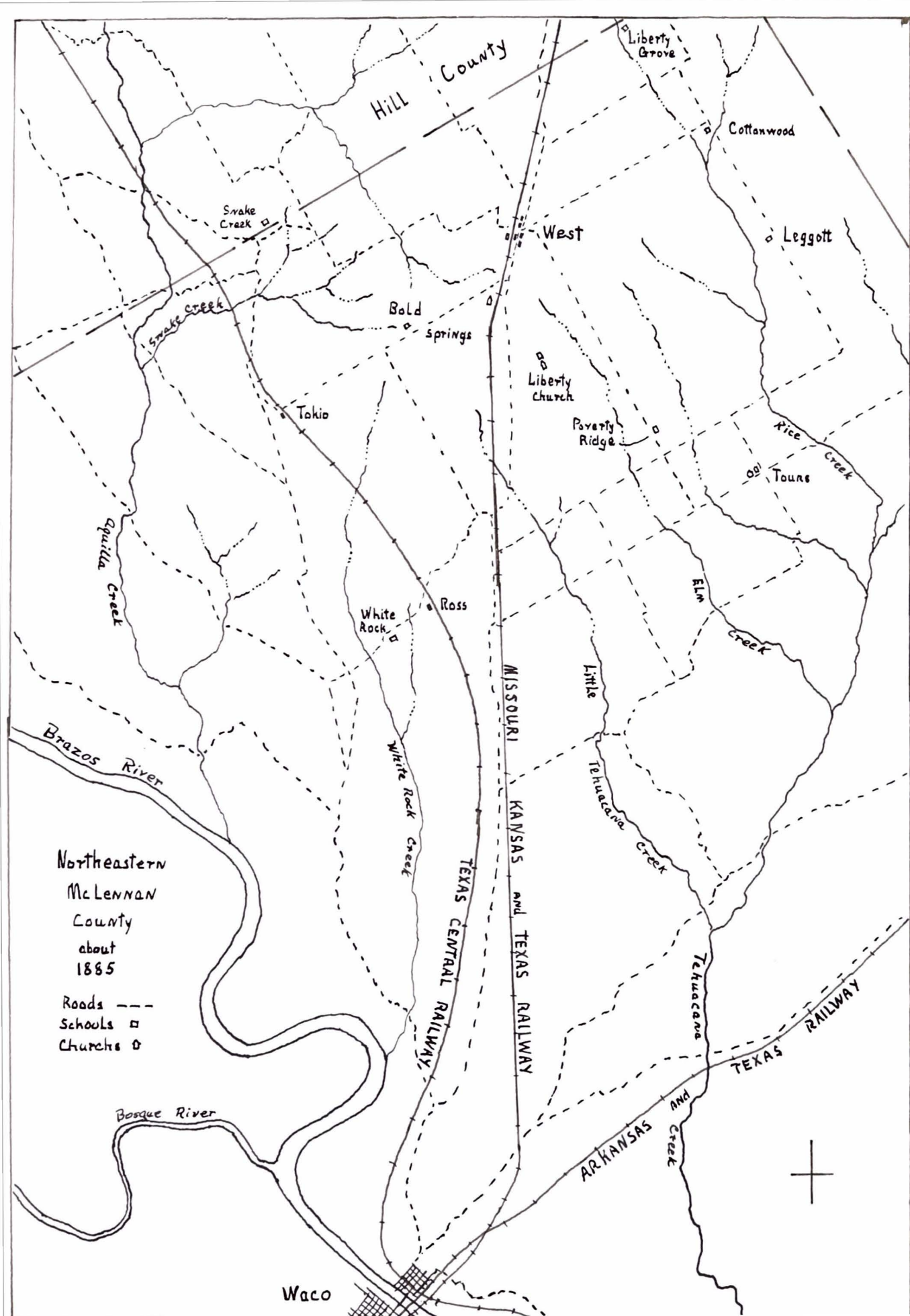
service on Easter Sunday. In the following years the missionary priests Bussant, E. Fluery, Joseph Marovitch, A. Badelon, J. Mijszevicz, and Joseph Chromcik ministered to the congregation twice a month. Frank Kramolis, an early Czech settler, reported in the CěskéKatolická Osady v Americe that when the priest came to hold services, the people would be summoned and the day of the service became a social gathering.⁵⁴

Soon after the war, schools, like churches, began to be established throughout the community. The first was a one-room log building where the White Rock Cemetery is now located, five miles south of West.⁵⁵ In 1868 W. C. Griffin and Capt. Ben Nalley started the Bold Springs Academy on the present site of Lake Park. Another school was held at the Baptist Church south of West.⁵⁶ Other schools included Liberty Church (also known as Clausner School), one mile south; Liberty Grove, three miles north; Poverty Ridge, on the Tours road; Cottonwood, four miles northeast; Leggott, four miles east; and Snake Creek, three miles west of the town of West. All the schools were one-room log buildings with usually one teacher per school. Each served a small

⁵⁴Cěské Osady, 442-43.

⁵⁵Monroe F. Kruse, West School Superintendent, "History of the Schools of West," Community TV Program, KWTX-TV, Waco, Texas, July 9, 1955.

⁵⁶"Former West Man," The West News.



common school district under the direction of trustees and a county superintendent.⁵⁷

The two decades following the cessation of the War between the States was a period of growth in the community. The availability of University Land had attracted both more Anglo-Americans and the European immigrants. As the population grew, a focal point for the agricultural community was established with the construction of the Katy Railroad depot and resulted in the creation of a town as the cultural and economic center for the Bold Springs community.

⁵⁷Martin Luther Bannister, "The Historical Development of the Public School System of McLennan County," (unpublished M.A. thesis, Baylor University, 1945), 24-30.

CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT OF THE WEST-CENTERED COMMUNITY

Spurred by the coming of the railroad, West and the smaller adjoining communities continued to grow. After a slow beginning, the new town of West entered a period of rapid growth and development. The city was organized a decade after the railroad's arrival and city services began to appear. The business activities of its citizens flourished and the town grew from a trading center into a small bustling city. In the three decades that followed its establishment, the town of West became the dominant economic nucleus and the emerging cultural center of northeastern McLennan County.

A PROSPEROUS DECADE

The coming of the railroad in 1881-1882 brought an added stimulant to the community. It enhanced the cattle raising industry by providing a convenient source of transportation for the movement of cattle to market. The extension of the railroad also made possible the opening up of the rolling prairie, with its highly productive dark-colored soil and moderately humid climate, to more settlers, both Anglo-Americans and European immigrants. The new settlers joined their predecessors in farming. This meant

the conversion of much ranch land into small farms. This effect was accentuated by the introduction of barbed wire to enclose fields and grazing lands and by the development of agricultural machinery which encouraged farming on a larger scale. The coming of the railroad also advanced the westward movement of cotton raising.¹ Already an established activity, cotton production began to rival cattle raising and eventually became the dominant agricultural enterprise of the region.

Large ranches, like that of Samuel McClelland and Thomas Leggott, were converted into tenant farms. Slowly these large farms were broken up and sold to the tenants and other prospering farmers. The Czech and German immigrants, increasing in number each year, were particularly anxious to acquire these lands and establish themselves as land-owning farmers.²

The community with its small farming settlements prospered, but the new center, West, grew very slowly. For several years only those business activities established with the coming of the railroad were to be found. In the late 1880's, however, the flourishing farming conditions created

¹Elmer H. Johnson, "The Basis of the Commercial Industrial Development of Texas," The University of Texas Bulletin, Number 3309 (Austin: The University of Texas, 1933), 59; Paddock, A History of Central and Western Texas, I, 489.

²Mary Jerabek, interview, January 25, 1972.

a rapid growth in the town.

Ben F. Park, a former resident, recalled in the West News in 1940 how the town appeared in July, 1889. When he arrived in West, he found several establishments that had recently joined the original businesses of the town. The W. R. Melton Grocery, T. M. West's Lumber Yard, the Glenn and Clausner Hardware and Implement Store, and a dry goods store owned by Bill Miller were located across from the Katy depot. Further on the same street he found Charlie Baugh operating a saddle and harness shop, John Boon conducting a grocery store, H. C. Craig and J. C. Autrey operating general merchandise stores, and a Mr. Bowen running a new drug store. The B. M. O'Connell Blacksmith Shop, a woodwork shop operated by J. C. Daniel, the Presley and Krizan Meat Market, and the J. R. Peter's Shoe Shop were located on another block. Several saloons, a hotel, and Peterson's and Jares' restaurants had made their appearance, according to Park. The Martin and Ingraham brothers had established cotton gins on the eastern side of town.³

The village was seemingly entering its "boom-town" stage in 1889, when Ben Park arrived. In that year Fred and Abe Whipkey founded the first newspaper, The West Times. Their office was a "box house," twelve by fourteen feet, with

³"Looking Over The Little City of West 51 Years Ago," The West News, November 29, 1940.

a hand-set press valued at three hundred dollars. In 1902 it boasted a circulation of 1,550 copies a week and one of the most modern print shops of that period.⁴ The paper was devoted to happenings of interest to the residents in the locality while extolling the trade and industry of West. According to William O. Allen, an early school superintendent, it was considered "non-political, preferring to give its columns to social, moral, commercial, and educational interest . . . than to the nauseating emanations of political fanaticisms."⁵

In 1890 the first block of brick buildings was completed by T. M. West. Before this, all of the business houses were in wooden frame structures. The following year West re-organized some of his business activities and founded the larger West Lumber Company.⁶

The smaller surrounding communities also felt the surge of business expansion. Several gins, among them the Nichols-Shoemaker Gin at Snake Creek and the Christian-Smastrila

⁴The West Times, 1902, 8; The West News, January 8, 1932; "News Observes 60th Birthdate," The West News, May 20, 1949.

⁵William O. Allen, "Our School," The West Times, Booster Edition, January 16, 1910.

⁶The Boulder, West High School Annual (Waco: Gayle Printing Company, 1922), 14. This was the first annual published by the school and a copy has been preserved in the Bennett Collection.

and Walla gins at Tours, were built to serve the needs of the cotton farmers. General stores were established by J. Gallagher at Tours and S. B. Jones at Ross. These activities and others, such as blacksmith shops and stables, were small and supplied only the bare necessities and services.⁷ Their creation illustrated the progress of the new town of West.

ORGANIZATION OF THE CITY

The prospering atmosphere of the community and the thriving activities of its businessmen led to the incorporation of the village of West a decade after the railroad's arrival. An election was ordered by County Judge W. H. Jenkins as a result of a petition by local citizens. The measure was approved in the election held by W. T. Harris on June 11, 1892. On June 30 of that year another election was held for the first city officers. The voters, casting a total of eighty-eight votes, elected Walter W. Morgan the first mayor, Tom Hall city marshall, B. B. Ingraham, John Moore, Brandon Alexander, Thomas M. West, and Zack Davis aldermen. The new city government met in a two-story frame building located on the corner of Pine and Reagan Streets.⁸

⁷The West Times, Booster Edition, January 16, 1910. Hereafter cited as The West Times, 1910; Louis Dulock, interview, February 26, 1972.

⁸The West Times, 1902; The Boulder, 15; "B. B. Ingraham," The West News, June 21, 1935.

The Criminal and Civil Ordinances of West, 1893, were adopted the following year. They provided for a tax-assessor-collector and several kinds of taxes.⁹ The traditional Protestant Puritan morality was revealed in ordinances which excluded all athletic contests on Sunday and placed restrictions on the sale of alcoholic beverages.

In addition to law enforcement, city services were extended in 1894 with the organization of the West Volunteer Fire Department. Buckets and a water tank mounted on a horse-drawn wagon served as the first equipment.¹⁰ By 1910 the equipment consisted of a Seagraves Horse Carriage, four chemical extinguishers, four ladders, and one thousand feet of hose. Nineteen fire plugs protected the city and the telephone served as the alarm system.¹¹

Although private and public wells provided an adequate supply of water, a group of "home capitalists" recognized the need for a reliable and abundant water supply for the future economic growth of the community. A company was organized and chartered with a capital stock of \$25,000. The company was composed of subscribers led by Jacob Denton, W. H.

⁹West, Texas, Criminal and Civil Ordinances of West, 1893 (West: West Times Publishing Co., 1903), 60-62.

¹⁰The West Times, 1902, 9.

¹¹The West Times, 1910, 9-10.

Johnson, James P. Glenn, W. R. Glasgow, W. D. Edwards, and the Ingraham brothers. In 1894 the company was granted a franchise and a well drilled to the Trinity Sands, a depth of 1800 feet, provided over 100,000 gallons of artesian water per day, a supply greater than the demands of the city at that time. A standpipe 100 feet high with a capacity of 115,000 gallons and an underground reservoir with a capacity of 75,000 gallons were constructed to hold the water. Eight miles of water mains were soon laid to supply the city residents and even patrons in the surrounding countryside.¹²

It was not until 1900, however, that the citizens received electricity. Granted a franchise by the city government, Louis and Harrison Legan and W. R. McDaniel constructed their plant at the time of the construction of the Brazos Valley Cotton Mill. The power plant was built beside the mill and near the water works.¹³ In 1912 the franchise was purchased by the Texas Power and Light Company, which began to extend this service to the rural residents.¹⁴ Telephone service, supplied by an independent company under the name Home Telephone Company, came two years after the establishment of the light plant.¹⁵

¹²The West Times, 1902, 9-10.

¹³City Ordinances, 108; The West Weekly News, April 19, 1912.

¹⁴Betty Edwards, "The Community of West," (unpublished manuscript, Texas Collection, Baylor University, 1949), 20.

¹⁵City Ordinances, 110; The West Weekly News, October 20, 1911.

TWO DECADES OF ECONOMIC EXPANSION

During the two decades following the city's incorporation, the economic activities of the city and the community prospered and, although slow at times, grew with the addition of numerous business establishments. After years of obligingly keeping the valuables of his patrons and friends in his store safe, T. M. West founded, adjacent to his store, the first bank in 1893. It remained a private institution under the direction of West and his son, Jeffery, until it was granted a charter as a State Bank in 1921.¹⁶ Following this show of confidence in the town's future, H. B. Terrell, subsequently a state senator and comptroller, started a dry goods store. E. G. Blume and his brothers, Detrick and John, organized and began operation of a grocery store which later became the Old Corner Drug.¹⁷

As these men were beginning their enterprises and the city's economic life seemed at its brightest, depression came to grip the nation and grind almost to a halt the progress of this former boom town. During this period of business slump only one successful business venture was begun in West. In 1896 Anastaz Nemecek, an experienced butcher in Czechoslovakia and Austria, was asked by friends to open a

¹⁶"Captain T. M. West Passes to His Reward," The West Weekly News, February 2, 1912; "West's Oldest Bank Gets State Charter," The West Weekly News, April 20, 1921.

¹⁷The West Times, 1902, 2-8; The Boulder, 15.

meat market which would process meats the way they liked. With the aid of his father, John, and younger brothers, Frank and Rudolph, Anastaz began the well-known Nemecek Brothers Meat Market. Remaining at its original location at the corner of Main and Columbus Streets, it has become the oldest business establishment in West in continuous operation.¹⁸

One event that may have stimulated the town's economy, however, took place in 1896 as a publicity stunt to promote the railroad's business. Directed by William G. Crush, general passenger agent for the M. K. & T., the well planned and nationally advertised head-on collision of two locomotives brought an estimated 40,000 people to a spot about three miles south of West. The wreck offered one of the few occasions for amusement available to the farming families and they joined the many spectators from all over the nation. On September 15, 1896, the two locomotives, numbered 999 and 1001, collided at speeds of sixty miles per hour.¹⁹ "When the trains hit they stood up apart like two fighting horses," says Louis Dulock, who viewed the event as a young man.²⁰

¹⁸Anton Nemecek, interview, June 13, 1971; The West Weekly News, October 20, 1911.

¹⁹Frank Barnes, "Train Wreck," True West, Vol. 7 (May-June, 1957), 14-17.

²⁰Louis Dulock, interview, February 26, 1972.

Within a few seconds after the collision the boiler of one of the locomotives exploded and the flying debris killed a young man and seriously injured seven other people who had crowded too close.²¹

"Business for the few days before and after the wreck was great. The people cleaned out the town," says Anton Nemecek, a long time resident.²² Though the business was brief, the spectacular event brought an awareness of West to those outside the immediate region. It also brought an awareness of the opportunities available in West to the residents of the town and the surrounding farming communities. Plans were soon underway and optimistic ventures followed.

During the period following the depression a number of textile plants were built in northern Texas in an effort to bring factories near the source of the raw material, cotton. A group of the community's citizens, recognizing the need for such manufacturing, took steps to provide such a mill for this community. A company was organized with an open subscription stock list, and one of its founders, B. B. Ingraham, was dispatched to gather information from textile centers in South Carolina.²³ Ingraham returned with H. M.

²¹The West News, November 2, 1934.

²²Anton Nemecek, interview, June 13, 1971.

²³The West Times, 1902; The West Weekly News, October 20, 1911.

Fowler, an experienced textile engineer.²⁴ A mill was constructed in 1900 at a cost of \$130,000 and called the Brazos Valley Cotton Mill. It employed over 150 people and its principal products were sheeting and "ozenburg burlap," used in the making of bags for coffee beans in South America.²⁵

Another cotton-related industry, an oil mill, used the plentiful cottonseed produced in the area. The seed was obtained from individual farmers and from the several cotton gins now being operated by J. A. Nichols, Charles Evans, J. T. Strickland, and the Christian brothers. The mill was under the direction of C. P. Davis.²⁶

As the economy of the region recovered, several other enterprises were established. A variety of carbonated drinks from the West Bottling Works was supplied to the residents beginning in 1899. The following year the West Locker Company, a cold storage business, was organized and a building constructed for an ice factory and a storage place for freshly killed meat. The West Furniture Company was begun by A. V. Aderhold and W. Wagley, who also served as the local funeral directors. In 1900 a second bank, the First

²⁴Mrs. Marvin Fickling, interview, West, Texas, January 29, 1972.

²⁵The West Times, 1902.

²⁶Ibid.; Souvenir: The Cities of Waco, McGregor, and West, 1905. This item has been preserved by Wendell O. Montgomery, West, Texas.

National, was organized. By 1903 Jacob Denton, William R. Glasgow, and James J. Holt began operation of new lumber yards.²⁷

The town now regained its boom feeling, temporarily lost in 1890's. By 1907 additional firms were to be found in West. These included Maneth and Pasler Shoe Store, George Brown Furniture, Cocek and Kucera Wagon Shop, Henry Pochyla's City Meat Market, and dry goods stores operated by H. M. Johnson and Brothers, J. C. Schiller and J. F. Urbanovsky, and J. E. McGhee. Six saloons dispensed liquor and beer and Jesse Jones served the gentler inhabitants at his ice cream parlor. E. B. Johnson and Joseph F. Hurtick were employed as photographers. S. B. Jones had moved his retailing headquarters from Ross and now dealt in everything from groceries to a type of horsedrawn carriage called "moon buggies." A common market located on Roberts Street across from the cotton mill allowed the farmers and traveling merchants to bring their goods to trade.²⁸

Such activities led to the establishment of other ventures. In 1909 a third bank, the First State, was organized by C. W. Halloway.²⁹ Another newspaper, The West Weekly News, began publication under the direction of H. B. Terrell

²⁷The West Times, 1910; The Boulder, 15.

²⁸The West Daily Times, August 15, 1907.

²⁹The West Times, 1910; The Boulder, 15.

that year.³⁰ With this paper came a supplement written in the Czech language. Called the Weske Noviny, it was published by Dr. J. S. Zvesper. The West Times followed this lead the following year with a supplement called the Vcela. In the following year Terrell gained control of the Times and the two papers were consolidated in 1913.³¹

The business interests of the town had grown tremendously within the thirty years after the railroad's arrival. The West Weekly News, Booster Edition, of October 20, 1911, reported that the city had over 70 business establishments, most of them housed in brick buildings.³²

The small farming communities which surrounded the city of West prospered, but without the same explosive growth. Ross, established in 1873 by the Houston and Texas Central Railroad, had a store operated by S. B. Jones and a cotton gin in 1910.³³ Established in 1882 as a station on the Texas

³⁰According to the article "West Crescent," found in The West News, August 7, 1936, a newspaper under the name of The West Crescent was published by J. H. Hammer in 1895 and 1896. No other information is available concerning this paper and no copies remain today.

³¹Gordon R. Terrell to J. A. Karlik, May 6, 1972. G. R. Terrell is the son of H. B. Terrell and resides in San Antonio, Texas.

³²See Appendix D.

³³Walter Prescott Webb, ed., The Handbook of Texas (Austin: The Texas State Historical Association, 1953), II, 508.

Central Railroad, Tokio had a gin and one store.³⁴ Tours had two stores operated by Joseph Huber and Joseph Prasifka, a blacksmith shop maintained by Ed B. Grimm, and a cotton gin.³⁵

The little community settled by the German Protestants, Gerald, had a post office, a general store, a drug store operated by a resident doctor, a cotton gin, and a blacksmith shop, this last business having come in when International-Great Northern Railroad built its line close by in 1900. A station called Leroy was laid out one mile northeast of Gerald and it soon drew to it all the businesses which had been established in the little town.³⁶ By 1910 it was the closest rival to West, having a post office, two stores, and a bank.³⁷ The other communities such as Snake Creek, Cottonwood, and Liberty Church remained mere clusters of farm homes with, possibly, a small cotton gin.

RELIGION

During this growing period the religious congregations also prospered, increasing in membership and welcoming those

³⁴Ibid., 785.

³⁵Ibid., 791.

³⁶Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration of St. Paul's Church, 1900-1950 (Gerald: St. Paul's Evangelical and Reform Church, 1950), 2.

³⁷Webb, ed., The Handbook of Texas, II, 50.

of other faiths. The Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians were joined by congregations of the Disciples, the Evangelical and Reformed German Protestants, the Catholics, and the Czech Moravian Brethern. All built new houses of worship.

The Bold Springs Baptist changed its name to the First Baptist Church in 1896 and in 1899 moved from its Spruce Street location to the corner of Marable and Virginia Streets, its present site. Under the dynamic leadership of its pastor, Rev. Holmes Nichols, a frame structure with a seating capacity for 500 persons was constructed by the congregation.³⁸ The land had been donated by Zack Davis, an early pioneer and deacon of the church. It was regarded as "The strongest church, both numerically and financially" in 1910.³⁹

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church used the Baptist Church building south of West until 1883, when the congregation constructed a two-story building at the corner of Pine and Davis Streets. In 1901 the present church was built. It had seventy members in 1911.⁴⁰

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was organized by Rev. B. F. Gassaway in 1884 and was then a part of the old

³⁸The West Times, 1902, 5-6.

³⁹The West Times, 1910.

⁴⁰The West Weekly News, October 20, 1911.

East Waco circuit. The congregation worshipped with the Presbyterians until 1891. Led by their pastor, Rev. W. M. Adams, the members, together with those from the Poverty Ridge, Liberty Grove, and Scott's Chapel congregations, erected their church on the corner of Pine and Marable Streets. A parsonage was added nearby in 1900.⁴¹

The Church of Christ, then called the Christian Church, was organized in 1886 and consisted of fifteen members led by Brothers Levi Speers and W. R. Richardson. In 1893 they built a small house of worship at the corner of Elm and Davis Streets. As the congregation grew they realized the need for a better location and a larger building. In 1907 they secured a lot a block away and the house was moved, remodeled, and enlarged. Their membership by then had swelled to over a hundred.⁴²

The German Protestants organized the St. Peter's Evangelical Church in 1882 and built a small sanctuary the following year. "For the advancement of education and the worship of God" were the words of Jacob Clausner on October 17, 1887, when he deeded ten acres, on which the sanctuary stood, to the trustees of the church. A year earlier a parsonage had been added for the first resident pastor,

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.; "Brief History of Church of Christ," The West News, April 13, 1933.

Rev. J. C. Reiger. In 1901 the church was enlarged by nineteen feet and a steeple was added.⁴³ Bad roads and the realization that the members were numerous enough to support and maintain another church led the congregation to erect a sister church, St. Paul's, at Gerald in 1902. The pastor served both churches and by 1913 his residence was moved to Gerald.⁴⁴

The congregation of the Czech Moravian Brethren was organized by Rev. Adolph Chlumsky of Brenham in 1892. Before the organization, the Brethren worshipped with the German Protestants at St. Peter's. A church was built in 1896 on land purchased from T. M. West just outside the city on the Tours road. The Rev. Chlumsky and the Rev. V. V. Pazdral ministered to the small congregation six times a year and organized Sunday- and summer-school programs. In 1910 Rev. J. Hegar became the first resident minister to a congregation consisting of about thirty-five families.⁴⁵

The Czech and German Catholics seemed to have prospered more than the others, particularly in number, during this period. Under the leadership of their first resident pastor,

⁴³Seventy-fifth Anniversary of St. Peter's United Church of Christ, 1883-1958, 3.

⁴⁴Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration of St. Paul's Church, 1900-1950, 2.

⁴⁵The West Weekly News, October 20, 1911; Evangelical Unity of the Czech Moravian Brethren Church (West: Czechoslovak Publishing Company, 1956), 3.

the Rev. Adelar, the congregation of St. Martin's Church at Tours replaced the small log church with a larger frame structure in 1888. Two years later the first parochial school was erected and three Sisters of Divine Providence of San Antonio, Texas, were procured as teachers.⁴⁶

As the number of parishioners steadily increased, it was thought expedient to provide another building for worship and, for the convenience of the majority of the large Czech membership, to locate it in the new city of West. Therefore, in 1893, with the consent of the pastor, Rev. J. B. Gleissner, a wooden frame church, one-hundred-by-forty feet with a tall steeple, was built and called the Church of the Assumption. Soon after the appointment of Rev. F. G. Sebik as the first resident pastor in 1895, a rectory was constructed. A parochial school was added four years later. The two-story building had three classrooms that accommodated over a hundred pupils and a convent for the four nuns from the order of the Sisters of Divine Providence who served as teachers.⁴⁷

On March 6, 1903, a fire destroyed the church building and its furnishings. The parishioners, undaunted by the

⁴⁶Naše Deřiny, 483; "State Convention," West News.

⁴⁷The West Weekly News, October 20, 1911; Nase Dejiny, 484.

calamity and with generous contributions, soon replaced it with a larger brick structure. Within a few years a large meeting and recreation hall was also erected on the church property, which consisted of almost two blocks. In 1911 the membership of the parish consisted of almost three hundred families, the vast majority of them Czech.⁴⁸

EDUCATION

The education of the young was not forsaken during this period of the community's growth, for as the wealth of the people increased the number of schools and pupils also grew. The common school district serving West became the second in the county to become an independent district after its approval by a special election held on February 15, 1890.⁴⁹ In that same year a private institution called Allen's Academy was established by William O. Allen. "Professor" Allen's school was located at the corner of Oak and Davis Streets. The professor established five departments, which included elementary and high school levels with about two hundred and thirty pupils, most of whom were boarders. He was assisted by his twin daughters, Laura and Lula.⁵⁰

⁴⁸The West Weekly News, October 20, 1911.

⁴⁹Bannister, "The Historical Development of the Public School System of McLennan County," 46.

⁵⁰Memorial and Biographical History, 408; Kruse, "History of the Schools of West."

Soon after the incorporation of the city, Professor Allen headed a successful drive for a new and larger school. A large two-story frame building was constructed on the present West Elementary School site at 209 West Harrison Street and the private academy ceased. Professor Allen became the district's superintendent.⁵¹ In 1905 a bond issue was approved by the citizens and a three-story brick building, "architecturally a composite of Morescal and French Renaissance," with eight rooms and a chapel hall was erected. At the time it was built the school afforded ample room, but by 1909 the need for more space was crucial and additional bonds were approved. These funds provided for the addition of seven more classrooms allowing the addition and instruction of the eleventh and twelfth grades.⁵²

The community schools at Liberty Church, Liberty Grove, Cottonwood, Poverty Ridge, and Snake Creek were joined by many others as education of the young became more important to the residents. A school was built at Gerald, but was later moved to Leroy when the railroad established that town.⁵³ Ross replaced White Rock as the site of its school. The Rodgers Hill and Sulak schools were located about seven

⁵¹Kruse, "History of the Schools of West."

⁵²The West Times, 1910.

⁵³Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration of St. Paul's Church, 1900-1950, 2.

miles southwest of West. Three miles west of these schools was another called Cattenhead. A school at Tokio replaced a smaller one called Bokstoffer, near White Oak, in the early 1900's.⁵⁴ A small school called Marak, about three miles to the northwest, and one at Hohen, seven miles southeast of West, were also established during this period.⁵⁵ The parochial schools, St. Mary's in the West and St. Martin's in Tours, also joined the community's educational systems.

Throughout the period the tendency was to create more and smaller districts, each with its own school within walking distance of most of its students. These rural community schools consisted of small one-or two-room frame structures with the teachers teaching all the subjects in the elementary grades. The few who desired and could afford higher education were forced to come to the West school or to those of Waco.⁵⁶

The education of the children played a secondary role to farming, and school sessions were often interrupted or shortened to as few as four months a year by the planting and harvesting seasons. Many parents did not consider education

⁵⁴John Sulak, interview, West, Texas, March 18, 1972.

⁵⁵Henry Heitmiller, interview, February 26, 1972.

⁵⁶Mrs. John Sulak, interview, West, Texas, March 18, 1972. Mrs. Sulak taught at the small rural Sulak School for several years; Mary Jerabek, interview, January 23, 1972.

important beyond simple reading, writing, and mathematics. Among the Czechs and Germans, this also meant the learning of the basics of reading, writing, and speaking of the English language. Instruction at the parochial schools was predominantly in the Czech language at St. Mary's and in German at St. Martin's. For the children of the immigrants who attended public schools, the ability to read and write the language of their parents was taught in the home.⁵⁷

DIFFERING CULTURES

As the community was undergoing growth and change, its character was being influenced by the growing population of Czech and German immigrants and their children. What had been an essentially Anglo-American community with a small minority of foreign settlers became one composed of basically two conservative cultures living and working together, yet always distinctive and set apart.

The Anglo-American culture was typically Texan in character, of Anglo-Saxon origin, and Protestant. As the first settlers to the region they had acquired large tracts of land, becoming ranchers and farmers. After the arrival of the railroad they also turned to enterprises which gave them

⁵⁷Henry Heitmiller, interview, February 26, 1972; Mary Jerabek, interview, January 23, 1972; Mrs. Henry Peters, interview, West, Texas, February 26, 1972.

control over the economy of the region. They built a small bustling city with their progressive and optimistic virtues.

Their social life centered around their families, churches, schools, and such lodge organizations as the Masons, Woodmen of the World, and Modern Woodmen. Extremely patriotic, they considered Fourth of July celebrations held at the Callen Grove a must.⁵⁸ Also proud of their southern heritage, the citizens of the community were hosts to a reunion of Confederate soldiers in 1907. The three days of festivities, with concerts and fire work displays, featured guest speakers such as Governor Thomas M. Campbell and Congressman R. L. Henry.⁵⁹

The cultures of the Czechs and the Germans were considered as one--both similarly foreign. The immigration of the Germans had halted by the time of the creation of the city and most remained in their settlements south of West. The Czech population, with continued immigration and the tradition of large families, soon outnumbered the Germans. Their quest for farming land forced many of the large ranchers to move to the west. Moving onto these lands, they became established throughout the northeastern part of the county and the adjoining portions of Hill County.

⁵⁸Frank Busby, interview, West, Texas, October 30, 1971; The West Weekly News, October 20, 1911.

⁵⁹The West Daily Times, August 15, 1907.

Some of these immigrants became involved in business ventures of the community and began to penetrate the Anglo-American culture, but because of their traits of isolation and self-sufficiency, a feeling of alienation was evident. The two primary contributing factors were the continued use of their languages and maintenance of their religions. Friendly relations existed between the Czechs and the Germans, for they often spoke or made an effort to learn each other's language. Both Czech and German Catholics worshipped together in their churches, as did the Czech and German Protestants in theirs. Though the majority of the immigrants were Catholic and were admonished to stay away from Protestants, their common languages prevailed upon them to retain friendly bonds. While the immigrants were expected to learn English, only a few of the Anglo-Americans made an effort to learn Czech or German.⁶⁰

Other examples can be seen through the use of language, particularly among the Czechs. These people spoke their language even while shopping, changing into English only when necessary. Many Anglo-American shopkeepers therefore hired Czechs in an effort to ease transactions.⁶¹ Supplements to the West News, the West Times, and newspapers and magazines

⁶⁰Mary Jerabek, interview, January 24, 1972; Louis Dulock, interview, February 27, 1972.

⁶¹Frank Busby, interview, October 30, 1971; Mary Jerabek, interview, January 24, 1972.

from other cities provided news and articles in their language. In 1909 Dr. Joseph Zvesper joined two other Czech doctors, George Pazdral and Frederick Dahne, in serving the needs of the community.⁶²

The Czechs, proud of their culture and language, organized several fraternal organizations to rival the Anglo-American lodges. The Slovanska Podporujici Jednota Statu Texas (Slavonic Benevolent Order of the State of Texas) was founded in 1897 and several chapters soon appeared in the community. Each chapter erected a meeting-and-recreation hall. Such halls were located at Cottonwood, Ross, and West. In 1909 the chapter in West was host to the organization's state convention. The Ceska Rimsko Katolicka Jednota Texaska (Catholic Union of Czech Men in Texas) and its women's auxiliary were founded by the growing numbers of Czech-Catholics. They too erected halls.⁶³ The halls of these organizations and other private halls, such as Chada, Smastrila, and Lone Star, also served as centers for community meetings, dances, wedding celebrations, and festivals.⁶⁴

⁶²Mrs. John Sulak, interview, March 18, 1972.

⁶³The West Times, 1910; Anton Nemecek, interview, June 13, 1971

⁶⁴Louis Dulock, interview, February 27, 1972; John Sulak, interview, March 18, 1972.

Other organizations also served the community. A group called the Sokol (Falcon) was dedicated to patriotism and physical fitness among the youth. A literary club called the Slavie was organized in West and in other Czech communities in Texas. The Germans, led by Detrick Blume, organized the Germania Club in the late 1890's.⁶⁵

Some animosity and alienation among members of the conservative classes was present. Name calling, although in muffled tones and in private, was not unknown. Schools where the majority of students were Anglo-American prohibited the use of any other language than English and fights between representatives of each ethnic group were common.⁶⁶

For the most part, however, relations were friendly as the Czech and German population strove slowly for acceptance in the community life. In business they found most success. They began as proprietors of small groceries and mercantile stores, meat shops, and saloons. By 1902 John Stanislaw and Detrick Blume were board members of the Brazos Valley Cotton Mill.⁶⁷ Of the business establishments found in West in 1911, over one-third were owned by Czechs and Germans.⁶⁸ And even

⁶⁵Anton Nemecek, interview, June 13, 1971; The West Times, 1902.

⁶⁶Mrs. John Sulak, interview, March 18, 1972.

⁶⁷The West Times, 1902.

⁶⁸The West Weekly News, October 20, 1911; See Appendix D.

though they were found in all the sections of the business community, trade was not restricted or segregated according to cultural lines.⁶⁹

Method Pazdral, the city attorney from 1905 to 1915, was the first of the immigrants to hold a political office.⁷⁰ Their greater influence, however, can be seen in the unsuccessful results of campaigns for prohibition of liquor in McLennan County in 1911 and 1912. The Anglo-Protestant churches supported the campaigns, while the minority, composed of Czechs and Germans with their traditional views of accepting liquor as a part of their culture, and liberal Anglo-Americans fought these moves. The measures were defeated in the elections by significant majorities.⁷¹ Thus, although their number was estimated to be less than half of the population of the community, they were a group whose influence was being felt throughout the region.

THE GREATER WEST COMMUNITY

The West-centered community experienced its most rapid period of growth and enjoyed prosperity during the thirty years after the M. K. & T. Railroad had constructed its line

⁶⁹Anton Nemecek, interview, June 13, 1971.

⁷⁰The West Weekly News, October 20, 1911.

⁷¹The West Weekly News, July 28, 1911; The West Weekly News, September 13, 1912.

through the region. Cotton farming replaced the cattle industry as the dominant agricultural endeavor and brought with it an increasing Czech and German population. The small thriving farming settlements, however, were overshadowed by the rapid growth of the town of West. Organized a decade after its birth, it became the dominant economic and cultural center, both by sheer number and influence, in northeastern McLennan County.

West had the appearance of a boom town at the beginning of the new century. Over seventy business houses with wooden sidewalks lined the graded streets. Numerous saloons encouraged a lively town on weekends and trade days. Entertainment, although modest by present standards, could be found at the West Auditorium, managed by B. H. Derrick, and at the Charles Jares Opera House. As the era ended, vaudeville companies were being challenged by the new motion pictures for the largest audiences. Side shows at the common market grounds helped to encourage business on the trade days, held on the second Monday of each month.⁷²

By 1910 a handsome park with trees, a band pavillion, and a fountain relieved the previously unsightly appearance of the land beside the railroad tracks.⁷³ The Lake Park

⁷²The West Weekly News, October 20, 1911.

⁷³The West Weekly News, March 25, 1910.

Association, a recreation club organized in 1895, indicated that at last a few persons were enjoying the economic advantages of the flourishing and prospering times. This organization constructed a small lake with bungalows for overnight and week-end stays. The property included much of the site formerly called Bold Springs.⁷⁴

Several doctors had joined Doctors A. L. Wilie and S. E. Snodgrass in the care of the medical needs of the residents. Among these were Doctors J. H. Thomas, J. W. Gidney, George Pazdral, and John W. Wills. Dr. Wills was a member of one of the earliest families to settle in the area. Dr. U. E. Biggs became the first dentist to establish himself in West. Two veterinarians, Dr. Henry Rogers and J. E. Marlar, also had begun practice by this time.⁷⁵

Although no population figures are available, it is estimated from deed record plats and voting records that the population of West was about four hundred when the city was incorporated. In 1900 the population had grown to 851 and within the next decade the number doubled. The 1,645 residents reported by the census of 1910 did not include an estimated two hundred people living outside the city limits

⁷⁴The Boulder, 15; The West Weekly News, October 20, 1911.

⁷⁵The West Weekly News, October 20, 1911.

near the cotton mill and along the highway leading to and from the city.⁷⁶

As in business, the small farming settlements did not share in the rapid growth of population. In 1910 Leroy led the small communities with approximately one hundred residents.⁷⁷ The population reported for Tokio was twenty-five. Tours had twenty, and eighteen people lived in Ross.⁷⁸ The precinct, however, had increased from almost three thousand in 1890 to 7,909 in 1910, indicating a large growth in the farming population.⁷⁹

Established along typical Anglo-Protestant lines, the thriving community found itself enveloped by a phenomenon occurring in many places in America. The development of the Czech and German culture and its infusion into the community life had begun. Also beginning was the rivalry for dominance in the community by two basically conservative cultures. Almost as a signal, the man who characterized the era of Anglo-American dominance in West, Thomas M. West, died on January 27, 1912.⁸⁰

⁷⁶U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, I, 305.

⁷⁷Webb, ed., The Handbook of Texas, II, 50.

⁷⁸Ibid., 785, 791, 508.

⁷⁹U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Eleventh Census of the United States, 1890, I, 396; Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, I, 637.

⁸⁰"Captain T. M. West Passes to His Reward," The West Weekly News, February 2, 1912.

CHAPTER IV

A PERIOD OF CRISIS 1912-1930

The city of West, dominating the surrounding communities and region, was not destined to continue the rapid expansion that characterized the preceding decades. Those factors which promote growth became elusive. Expansion took different forms and much of it became improvement. The struggle between the cultures remained and intensified. From this struggle, the Czechs emerged as the dominant force in the community.

BUSINESS

In 1912 Barton B. Ingraham, the first of the original settlers born in the community, was elected mayor of the city. With his election came the task of continuing the growth initiated by the railroad. Since the town was largely dependent on the agricultural community it represented and served, the economic condition of the farmers served as an indicator of its prosperity. A sharp drop in the price of cotton in 1911 brought losses to the farmers and, in turn, to the merchants of the town. After improved prices in 1912 an industrial depression in 1913-1914, followed by the outbreak of World War I, dropped prices even lower. In an

effort to sustain the market, a program was launched for citizens to buy a cotton bale to hold off the market in 1914.¹ The farmer with the first bale ginned, traditionally awarded with a premium donated by the town's merchants, was honored with an above-the-market purchase price by President Woodrow Wilson.² This program, however honorable, proved negligible in raising prices. State efforts of providing funds and loans for warehouses established in the towns also had little effect.

With cotton prices at an unprecedented low at the time of his election, Ingraham wisely recognized the need for measures that would invite continued progress. An opportunity soon presented itself. When the Southern Traction Company, operator of an electric railway from Dallas to Waxahachie, announced plans to extend service to Waco, the prospect of an interurban railway route through the city was welcomed by the residents. But when the announcement was made that the proposed route would go through Corsicana, hopes dwindled. Led by Mayor Ingraham, several representatives of the city joined those from other communities to petition the company to route the railway through Hillsboro

¹Rupert Norval Richardson, Texas: The Lone Star State (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1958), 278-279.

²The Boulder, 16.

and West. Because of their efforts both routes were approved.³

Construction began in early 1913, bringing a new wave of excitement. Local dray firms were engaged in hauling the necessary building materials and men were employed in laying track and building the power and passenger stations. The line ran through the center of Reagan Street, one block west and parallel to the railroad tracks. The passenger station was erected at the corner of Oak and Reagan Streets, on the present site of Tucker's Lumber Office.⁴ On October 12, 1913, the line was opened from Waxahachie, connecting Waco with Dallas.⁵

Beginning in Dallas in 1901, the profitable and expanding network enjoyed a practical monopoly of the passenger traffic between towns the electrically-powered trains served. The interurban system provided more frequent service, more convenient stops, and lower fares than the steam-powered trains and forced the railroads to abandon much of their local passenger service. The system also had a great advantage over the automobile and the mule- or horse-driven

³Frank Busby, interview, October 30, 1971; Reed, A History of the Texas Railroads, 497-498.

⁴Frank Busby, interview, October 30, 1971.

⁵Reed, A History of The Texas Railroads, 498.

wagons.⁶ Frequent visits by West citizens to Waco and Hillsboro were now practical.

In 1915 another project promised aid to the transportation problems and continuing progress. Because of the increasing use of the automobile, improvement in the quality of the highway system was undertaken by the state. That section of the road extending north to south through the center of the county served as part of the principal connection between the Dallas-Fort Worth and Austin-San Antonio communities. Construction included the straightening of the graded dirt and gravel roads and surfacing it with concrete. This highway, then called the "million-dollar road," followed the old route through the city.⁷

While civic projects aimed at enhancing the city were underway, improvements by the established industries and a few new businesses appeared. The cotton oil mill expanded and increased its output of crude cottonseed oil. It began utilizing the by-products such as lint for mattresses, upholstery, cushion stuffing, and lamp wicks and the cake and meal for cattle and poultry feed.⁸ The cotton mill changed production from sheeting to the more profitable single

⁶Ibid., 497.

⁷Frank Busby, interview, October 30, 1971; The Boulder, 16.

⁸"West Cotton Oil Mill Strong Industry with Good Output," The West News, May 30, 1930.

filled duck, a closely woven cotton fabric, while continuing to produce ozenburg burlap for bagging of coffee beans.⁹

The increase of automobile traffic when the highway was constructed led to the introduction of several service stations and garages. Among the other new businesses was the building of the first motion picture theatre in 1917. Managed by Will Baca, it was called the Liberty Theatre.¹⁰

The most optimistic ventures were undertaken by W. R. Glasgow, president of the National Bank and the West Development Company. In 1914 a number of brick buildings to house business concerns were built adjacent to his lumber yard on the west side of the railroad tracks on Washington Street. Almost all business houses before this move were located east of the tracks. Two years later he ended operation of the lumber yard and constructed several brick buildings on its site. The largest, an imposing two-story structure, became the new home of the National Bank.¹¹

By 1916, with the war continuing in Europe, the price of cotton rose rapidly and increased the demand for cotton acreage. More land, especially ranch land west of the city and in the adjoining Hill County, was turned to cotton

⁹"Brazos Valley Cotton Mills Sold to New Yorkers," The West News, August 10, 1945.

¹⁰The Boulder, 16; Frank Busby, interview, October 30, 1971.

¹¹The Boulder, 16; "W. R. Glasgow Announces Plans Ready for Building," The West Weekly News and Times, June 15, 1923.

production. The entry of the United States into the war and the drought of 1917-1918 drove up prices further.¹² During this time many farmers continued the practice of storing the baled cotton in their barns or public warehouses as well as holding back other products from market until they could obtain a better price. After the war ended the prices of farm products fell again and many were forced to accept prices far lower than they had expected. While prices slowly regained and surpassed the wartime levels, the farmers tried to increase their cotton yields and also turned their attention to other products. The large families of the Czechs and Germans and the appearance of engine-powered machinery in the late 1920's aided increased production.¹⁴ In 1927 Method Pazdral, a local attorney, noted at a businessmen's luncheon that West handled some 5,000 pounds of cream and approximately 100,000 eggs for shipment to other parts of the state each week.¹⁵ The following year over 15,000 bales of cotton were processed by the local ginner.¹⁶

¹²John Sulak, interview, March 18, 1972.

¹³Mrs. J. C. Bennett, interview, West, Texas, January 22, 1972.

¹⁴Dupuy, "Social Trends in McLennan County, Texas," 19.

¹⁵"Tuesday Luncheon Was A Big Success," The West News, May 13, 1927.

¹⁶Hugo Freund, "Busy and Progressive West Looking To Greater Things," The Waco News-Tribune-Times Herald, November 11, 1928, 11.

In 1918 the city was dealt a blow by the state-wide prohibition law which closed all saloons in July of that year.¹⁷ Twice before, the issue had been rejected in the county and by large majorities in the community. The area had always had a plentiful supply of liquor and the saloons were credited with attracting business from nearby Hill County, which had had prohibition for some time. With state-wide prohibition and later with the adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment, liquor and the business it claimed to attract seemed at an end.

The legal sources of alcoholic beverages were closed, but in a short time a number of bootlegging operations, producing both beer and whiskey, were established throughout the community. A wooded creek bottom west of Tours became best known for these clandestine undertakings and was called "Whiskey Hollow."¹⁸ The sale and consumption of their products were not restricted to the community, for trade developed with residents in the nearby Hill county. It is believed that these operations encouraged enough of the trade to help the banks with their financial troubles when the depression came.¹⁹ Enforcement of the laws seems to have

¹⁷Richardson, Texas: The Lone Star State, 288.

¹⁸August Dulock, interview, February 26, 1972.

¹⁹Mrs. J. C. Bennett, interview, January 22, 1972; John Sulak, interview, March 18, 1972.

been lax and the operations continued until the end of "the noble experiment."

The war and the adoption of prohibition brought a lull to economic expansion in the city. But as the prices of farm products began to rise, so did the activities among the merchants in West. In 1920 August Morris and Frank Muska led about thirty Czech farmers and businessmen in organizing the Czechoslovak Publishing Company. It printed a magazine, an almanac, and organizational literature in the Czech language, in addition to a small weekly newspaper in both Czech and English called the Czechoslovak.²⁰ The following year another motion picture theatre, called the Queen Theatre, was operated by J. Farbstein.²¹ However, it was not until after the organization of a commercial club by the merchants that noticeable changes took place. Because of their efforts natural gas service was made available in 1922 and in the following year, the Geyser Ice Company was secured to replace the older Krammer Ice Company. After building a new plant the company was able to provide an increased local delivery service. It also offered a twenty-five-ton cold

²⁰"Local Printers Put Out Bohemian Almanac," The West Weekly News, September 2, 1921; Joseph Holasek, interview, West, Texas; October 30, 1971. In 1938, Joseph Holasek purchased the West News, having gained control of the Czechoslovak several years before.

²¹The Boulder, 16; "Queen Theatre Soon to be Opened," The West Weekly News, August 26, 1921.

storage facility for meat and other farm products.²² Trade days encouraged by the club were held on the second Monday of each month and also on Saturdays. They featured sales and with each purchase the customers received tickets for prizes drawn from a cotton sack.²³ The trade days proved so successful in luring shoppers that I. C. Bates, of the Bates and Berringer Store, reported in 1923 the best business yet in thirty-three years of operation.²⁴ W. R. Glasgow optimistically replaced buildings burned earlier that year with new and larger ones providing space for a new post office, a Masonic lodge, and five business houses. A block of buildings that fronted Main and Spruce Streets was also remodeled in 1923.²⁵

The Chamber of Commerce of West, organized by the progressive men of the town in 1926, encouraged the expansion and establishment of business enterprises.²⁶ In the following years Frank Hlavaty and Emil Jerabek established sale and

²²Edwards, "The Community of West," 21; "West to Have \$10,000 Ice Plant and Cold Storage," The West Weekly News and Times, April 27, 1923.

²³Frank Busby, interview, October 30, 1971; Monsignor Frank Urbanovsky, interview, Houston, Texas, November 28, 1971.

²⁴"Miss Prosperity Great to City of West for Season," The West Weekly News and Times, October 5, 1923.

²⁵"W. R. Glasgow Announces Plans Ready for Building," The West Weekly News and Times, October 5, 1923.

²⁶"Chamber of Commerce Has Been Organized," The West News, June 25, 1926.

service centers to provide for the growing demand for automobiles. Two small mattress factories were begun and used the lint by-product of the cotton oil mill.²⁷ The West Flour Mill, a small grain mill started at the turn of the century, expanded its operations to include cattle and poultry feeds and in 1929 erected a 52,000-egg hatchery to supplement a developing poultry industry.²⁸ The Borden Milk Company was induced to locate a cooling plant in West in 1929 and within a year it was handling over 8,000 pounds of milk a day.²⁹ The construction of a small airport two miles west of the town in early 1930 was indicative of the optimism in the future progress held by the Chamber of Commerce and the residents of the community.³⁰

CIVIC IMPROVEMENTS

B. B. Ingraham, as mayor from 1912-1918, initiated several projects calling for municipal improvements. The first was the successful approval in 1914 of bonds for the

²⁷"Busy and Progressive West Looking to Greater Things," The Waco News-Tribune-Times Herald, November 11, 1928, 11.

²⁸Hugo Freund, "To The Members of the Chamber of Commerce," The West News, February 7, 1930.

²⁹"Over Eight Thousand Pounds Milk in One Day," The West News, February 21, 1930.

³⁰"West Airport Ready for Planes," The West News, April 18, 1930.

installment of a sewer system in the city.³¹ The following year his efforts led to changing the city government from alderman to commission form.³² During the construction of the highway, Ingraham led in persuading the citizens of West to vote another bond, \$10,000, to improve the city's streets. The graded dark-colored dirt streets often became a mire of sticky black mud after a rain and were left with deep troublesome ruts when they dried. Under Ingraham's directions gravel from a pit south of the town was used to surface the streets. At the same time a number of concrete sidewalks were installed and a tree-planting program was initiated to make the city more attractive.³³ In December, 1916, another ambitious project was begun with the construction of a new city hall. Costing \$13,000, the large modern brick structure housed the fire department and its equipment, a jail, meeting rooms, and offices for the city officials. A spacious auditorium occupied the second floor.³⁴ Following the end of the war, the city manager plan was seriously considered by the municipal government, but it was not approved by the residents of the town.³⁵

³¹The Boulder, 16.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.; Mrs. Marvin Fickling, interview, January 22, 1972; interview with Henry Heitmiller, February 26, 1972.

³⁴The Boulder, 16.

³⁵Ibid.

On the county level the generally bad financial condition in 1921 was blamed for the defeat of a bond issue and road maintenance tax.³⁶ After the conditions improved, Manton Hannah, County Engineer from 1915 to 1962, was able to bring the region "out of the mud" by extensive use of gravel on county roads.³⁷

EDUCATION

During this period the schools of the community experienced more growth and change. As a result of the passage of the state compulsory-attendance law in 1915, the number of students increased and expansion of the facilities was necessary.³⁸ The first to feel the need for enlargement was the parochial school, St. Mary's. In April, 1917, the school building was moved and remodeled as a convent for the nuns. It was replaced with a two-story brick structure with eight spacious classrooms.³⁹ In 1927 a similar building replaced the old parochial school at Tours.⁴⁰

³⁶"Road Bond Issue Defeated at Polls," The West Weekly News, August 26, 1921.

³⁷Apperson, A History of West, 1936-1920, 18.

³⁸Stuart A. MacCorkle and Dick Smith, Texas Government (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1960), 187.

³⁹Nase Dejiny, 484.

⁴⁰"State Convention," West News.

The public school in West was also faced with the increase in the student population, but since its creation in 1890, the independent district of West was hampered by being dependent on the municipal government for increases in local taxes to support the school. The new and enlarged independent school district created by a special act of the Legislature (Senate Bill 171) in 1923 separated the district from control by the city government and granted it the power of taxation.⁴¹ Consequently, in the same year, a two-story brick building with ten classrooms and a large chapel hall was erected to serve as the high school, and the old building was remodeled to satisfy the increased elementary enrollment. The new building was located at 206 West Shook Street, its present site. Later in the decade a school was started for the Negro population. Called Dunbar, it was located in their neighborhood, two blocks south of the elementary school and was supported by the district.⁴²

The law of 1915 also permitted the consolidation of schools whenever a majority of the voters of two or more districts favored it. As a result, over a period of several years many of the small rural school houses disappeared

⁴¹Mary Josephine Dvoracek, "Some Factors Related to the Sociometric Status of Students in a Rural High School (unpublished M. A. thesis, University of Texas, 1952), 5.

⁴²Kruse, "History of the School of West," Monroe F. Kruse, interview, West, Texas, September 28, 1971.

when their districts were consolidated. During this period Marak joined with Snake Creek to form a new district and school called Alligator. Poverty Ridge was abandoned and it became part of Liberty Church. Sulak was consolidated with Tokio. The Cattenhead and Rogers Hill districts merged and established a new school at Gohlson, ten miles southwest of West.⁴³

Though enforcement of the compulsory-attendance law was poor, attendance was good on the elementary level. Few youngsters, however, attended high school and many who started did not finish. Transportation was not provided, though for a time the patrons of the Tokio district did provide a school bus service in the 1920's.⁴⁴ The quality of the schools seems to have been good, for in 1927 Method Pazdral reported to the Chamber of Commerce that the West schools were rated as "one of the seventeen highest in the state."⁴⁵

CULTURAL CRISIS

The struggle between the Czech, German, and Anglo-

⁴³Bannister, "The Historical Development of the Public School System of McLennan County," 46-47; Interview with John Sulak, March 18, 1972.

⁴⁴Joseph F. Karlik, interview, West, Texas, October 29, 1971. Joseph F. Karlik is a retired carpenter and the author's father.

⁴⁵"Tuesday Luncheon was a Big Success," The West News, May 13, 1927.

American cultures increased markedly and erupted into manifestations aimed against each other. The outbreak of World War I provided the circumstances which aided the efforts of the Czechs to rise to dominance in the community. As the war progressed in Europe and American opinion became decidedly set on the side of the Allies, the German minority of the community was placed in a peculiar position. While they could not be expected to enjoy the idea of a war against their motherland, only a few supported Germany and its allies.⁴⁶

The Czech residents were unanimously against the Central Powers. The land which they or their parents had left was dominated by the Austrian Empire and this was among the reasons for their emigration. The war renewed their nationalistic feelings for self government of their homeland. When a part of the Austrian Army composed of Czechs munitied and made its way across Russia and Canada in 1917 to fight on the Western Front, Czech residents of the community aided them with funds.⁴⁷ The Anglo-Americans sympathized with them and representatives of this group were joined by some Czechs in their suspicion and dislike of the German minority.

⁴⁶Henry Heitmiller, interview, February 26, 1972.

⁴⁷Anton Nemecek, interview, June 13, 1971; Louis Svacina, interview, June 12, 1971. Louis Svacina's brother, Karl, was among the Czech soldiers who traveled to fight with the Allies.

When the United States entered the war, the loyalty of the German-speaking residents became suspect and there were manifestations of an anti-German feeling and intolerance. The use of the German language in public became less frequent and was frowned upon, and instruction in the language at St. Martin's School in Tours ceased. The language, except in the homes, fell into disuse, allowing later an easier assimilation by the younger people. To demonstrate their loyalty some members of the German community were pressured into buying more war bonds than they could afford.⁴⁸ It should be pointed out that their loyalty to the nation remained steadfast and, though most were against the draft, those called served in the armed forces. The sentiment against them was never violent and was brought about by a small minority; yet it created some resentment and bitter feelings. For almost a generation they withdrew from active participation in the community life.⁴⁹

During this period the circumstances that worked against the German population aided the Czechs. The war brought to them unprecedented acceptance in community life. This acceptance, coupled with the compulsory-attendance law, brought more children to the public schools, where they

⁴⁸Henry Heitmiller, interview, February 26, 1972; August Dulock, interview, February 26, 1972.

⁴⁹Henry Heitmiller, interview, February 26, 1972.

would learn English. Many of these children continued on to the high school. Beginning at this time the efforts of individual teachers helped to break down the barriers and allow acceptance.⁵⁰ Czechs also got important jobs in the community. In January, 1916, Charles P. Zapalac became the postmaster of West.⁵¹ Rudolph Marak became the first Czech elected to the West City Commission and became mayor pro-tem in 1919.⁵² And when Paul S. Shrabanek became president of the West Bank, the bank founded by T. M. West, in 1920,⁵³ it was obvious that the Czechs had not only been accepted, but were also regarded as leaders in the community.

A test of the new-found acceptance, however, appeared in the early 1920's. During the war the nation became aware of the presence of a large number of foreign-born persons and after the war sharp resentment arose toward everybody and everything "foreign." This anti-foreign feeling led to an anti-Catholic feeling within the community. At the same time, these conditions helped to promote the appearance of an organization known as the Ku Klux Klan in Texas and a local Klan group was formed in the West community. It was

⁵⁰Mary Jerabek, interview, January 23, 1972.

⁵¹Dixon Letter.

⁵²West, Texas, "Minutes of the City of West," IV, 87.

⁵³"West's Oldest Bank Gets State Charter," The West Weekly News, April 20, 1921.

Protestant in sympathy and professed a program against crime and corrupt officials.⁵⁴

The anti-Catholic movement and the Klan seem to have found only a small following, but this small minority was able to disrupt the relative harmony which existed in the community. Despite a request by Mayor J. E. Bridges and the city commissioners that it was not in the best interests of West, a short parade through the business district was held by over two hundred white-robed Klansmen in January, 1923. Informed sources reported that most of the Klansmen were from outside the community and the number was far less than expected. It was also reported that it was directed as a show of force against would-be criminals.⁵⁵ After the parade the Klan and the anti-Catholic movement were fought with almost equal passion by a small group of Czech-Catholics. The resulting friction between the two cultures destroyed much of the unity established during the war. The Czechs began to feel unaccepted because they were of foreign birth or parentage: The majority were Catholic. They felt indifferent toward prohibition or supported the violation of prohibition laws. The conflict helped to renew their isolation which had been broken down during the war. Their organizations became more active, and the Sokol, which had

⁵⁴Richardson, Texas: The Lone Star State, 316.

⁵⁵"Over 200 in Klan Parade," The West Weekly News and Times, January 12, 1923.

died out early in the previous decade, was restored with much enthusiasm.⁵⁶

Except for the parade, friction fortunately never rose above individual expression. The resentment it had created remained for a longer time among the rural residents than among those of the city. In the city, where the economic relations required more interaction of cultures, the resentment disappeared quickly.⁵⁷ Baseball and school football teams, composed of all elements, won championships, and their success was attributed to confusion among their opponents when the West team called signals in the Czech language.⁵⁸ The friction seems, however, to have slowed down the cooperation enjoyed on the community level until then and may help to explain the sluggishness of the city's efforts toward progress.

COMMUNITY PROFILE IN 1930

Faced with outside influences and the struggle within that discouraged growth, the West-centered community reached a turning point in this eighteen-year period. The censuses

⁵⁶Mary Jerabek, interview, January 23, 1972.

⁵⁷Mary Jerabek, interview, January 23, 1972.

⁵⁸Monsignor Frank Urbanovsky, interview, November 28, 1971; "Busy and Progressive West Looking to Greater Things," The Waco News-Tribune-Times Herald, November 11, 1928, 11.

of 1920 and 1930 reported shifts in the population of the area. Precinct Three dropped from 7,909 residents in 1910 to 7,184 in 1920, but in the next decade the number climbed to 7,875. West lost 16 in the period from 1910 to 1920, but by 1930 it also showed an increase, with 1807 residents reported by the census.⁵⁹ The population in Leroy increased from approximately a hundred in 1910 to about 250 in 1920. Its population remained about the same for the next two decades.⁶⁰ The population of Tours doubled in the first decade and reached sixty-one by 1930.⁶¹ Ross showed an increase from eighteen to fifty-two by 1920, but the following census showed little change.⁶² The other small communities were not listed on official census records and evidence does not indicate any change in their populations.

The shifts indicated by the reports were the result of several factors influencing the community during this period. The demand for additional cotton acreage forced the remaining ranchers to move out of the area and also forced many farmers to cross into the adjoining Hill County in search of land. The poor financial conditions in some areas and

⁵⁹U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, I, 1052.

⁶⁰Webb, ed., The Handbook of Texas, II, 50.

⁶¹Ibid., 791.

⁶²Ibid., 508.

improvements in transportation facilities, particularly the introduction of the interurban system and the construction of the all-weather highway, sent some residents to the growing city of Waco. Not all settlements were affected by this movement. The increase of the population in Ross and Tours seems to indicate a normal growth pattern, while Leroy experienced a brief period of development as an agricultural trading and service center and station on the International-Great Northern Railroad.

The improved economic climate of the 1920's brought an increase in the population in both the precinct and the town. The town of West, however, did not regain the rapid growth of the former period. The drilling for oil southeast of the town in 1921 brought hopes of a boom that the city of Mexia was experiencing, but after over six months of work, no oil was found.⁶³ Although new businesses were begun and increased production of farm products created expansion, organized efforts to induce industry to locate in the town met with little success. An editorial in the West News in 1930 took note of this problem:

West has everything needed in the building of a real little city. Location, means of transportation, which together give the accessibility necessary to growth and development of a town and community. Productivity of soil, climate, adequate water supply, all of

⁶³"Drilling Resumed in Test Well near West Tuesday," The West Weekly News, May 20, 1921.

which together are paramount factors in city building. . . . With just a little push and pull things can be done.⁶⁴

Many suggestions to help the town grow were heard; the most repeated was "keep the dollars at home."

West was a typical little American town dominating the surrounding rural community as the period ended. The friction among the people had largely disappeared. The Czech-Catholics, however, emerged as the dominant cultural force and members of this element were firmly entrenched in the economic and political life of the community. The efforts to insure and promote growth enabled the town to progress when the financial conditions improved. Although the rate of growth was slow, the outlook again seemed to promise a bright future.

CHAPTER V

THE TROUBLED DECADES

The growth of West and its business interests as envisioned by the Chamber of Commerce and the residents of the town did not materialize. The price of cotton dropped after the stock market crash in 1929, but most believed that the period of financial slump would be short. The drilling of another test oil well west of the community in 1931 promised success this time, and efforts to encourage the local economy continued.¹ The Chamber of Commerce, the West Home Demonstration Club, and groups of farmers joined in sponsoring functions to enlarge trade. Meetings to discuss the farmers' problems and demonstrations of new farm implements, farming techniques, and conservation methods drew large crowds.² A district fair exhibited the farm products and livestock, articles made by the ladies of the town, and products of their industries. Over 5,000 persons attended each of the two days of the fair to see the exhibits and the accompanying carnival. The West News commented optimistically

¹"Well on Kolar Farm Down About 400 Feet," The West News, June 5, 1931.

²"Farmers and Business Men Discuss Problems," The West News, August 28, 1931; "Over 400 Persons Attend Terracing," The West News, November 20, 1931.

the following week: "Everybody is now thoroughly convinced that this country has not gone to the bow-wows. With such a display of our great resources . . . decidedly we are taking on a new life."³

The situation, instead, became worse as the depression continued. A feeling of uncertainty prevailed. Falling prices of farm products forced a few farmers who had over-extended to lose their land. The banks, however, soon became reluctant to foreclose on farm land and lowered or extended payments on loans.⁴ Since little money was available, farmers became increasingly self-supporting. Most produced an ample supply of provisions for home use throughout the period, and they shared both food and labor with any less fortunate neighbor.⁵ Unemployed families from the town were hired to cultivate and harvest cotton, and the more prosperous farmers like August Groppe hired jobless men to build barns and silos and make other improvements. Although the wages were low, all these hired workers appreciated the jobs and the good meals served with them.⁶

Business activity in the town became slow, but no store or industry closed its doors. Although the cotton mill

³"West District Fair Wonderful Success," The West News, November 13, 1931.

⁴Henry Heitmiller, interview, February 26, 1972.

⁵Alois Weinberger, interview, April 8, 1972.

⁶Henry Heitmiller, interview, February 26, 1972.

diversified its production of fabrics, it was forced to lower wages, reduce the number of working hours, and finally lay off some employees. One bank was forced into bankruptcy. Numerous small shops offering such services as tailoring and shoe repair were opened in this period. Many people turned to making household articles such as furniture and quilts and doing odd jobs to increase their small incomes.⁷ One such home industry, the Horn Mop and Broom Company, was begun by C. W. Horn in 1931, and within a few years it had grown to an enterprise with statewide sales.⁸ Nevertheless, the poor financial conditions ushered in a return to the self-sufficiency of the earlier pioneer days.

Despite the efforts by the local residents, aid from government agencies was necessary and welcomed. In 1932 Hugo Freund, the local Red Cross representative, reported that over 1,300 residents were receiving free flour and clothing supplied by the government. The heaviest demand for these commodities came from families living in the wooded district west of the town and from the mill workers.⁹ While some programs provided direct relief, most programs placed an emphasis on providing work for the unemployed. During

⁷Alois Weinberger, interview, April 8, 1972.

⁸"What Texas Makes, Makes Texas," The West News, May 31, 1935.

⁹"Free Government Flour Distributed," The West News, May 6, 1932; "Residents of West Community Ask for Free Clothing," The West News, September 23, 1932.

1932 and 1933 construction of a new highway between Elm Mott, five miles north of Waco, and the Hill County line, one and a half miles north of West, provided jobs to about four hundred local unemployed men.¹⁰ Public works projects of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation in 1933 employed over two hundred. These projects included landscaping and repair work at the Bold Springs and Liberty Grove cemeteries, at the elementary and high schools, and in the city parks. Repair of the sewage disposal plant, a city-wide clean-up, and the institution of a mosquito control program were also undertaken.¹¹ A Public Works Administration project in 1934 assisted the city in beginning the surfacing of the gravel streets with asphalt.¹² Projects of the Works Progress Administration in the following years included the following: construction of tennis courts on the school grounds; re-wiring of the school buildings; building of a rock wall around the elementary school grounds; placing thousands of feet of curbs, gutters, and sidewalks in the city; digging permanent ditches to drain the city; hauling gravel onto the city streets; building public restrooms; widening the principal streets; and constructing a public warehouse. In most

¹⁰"Work Started This Week on New Road," The West News, October 28, 1932.

¹¹"RFC Branch Doing Some Fine Work Here," The West News, February 3, 1933.

¹²"Street Squeegee Plan is Re-Opened for West," The West News, August 10, 1934.

of these projects the city and individuals provided the materials while the labor was furnished by the W.P.A.¹³ In 1940 large quantities of surplus cotton were provided to low-income farmers in a mattress-making project.¹⁴

The federal programs calling for the slaughter of livestock, plowing under of cotton, and the reduction of cotton acreage was not opposed by the farmers. The compensation they received from participating in such programs was often more than the market price. Although prices increased slowly, the prosperity of former periods did not return and many of the farmers became critical of the programs.¹⁵

During the period two events stirred the emotions and the business activities of the town. The first was the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment in 1933 and the second was by-passing the city with a new section of the highway. The four-to-one vote in West bolstered the vote of McLennan County in favor of repeal and re-introduced the legal sale of beer. Except for Falls County to the southeast, all the surrounding counties remained dry. This left West the only

¹³"Local WPA Projects Are Well Underway," The West News, November 15, 1935; "WPA Project Opened in West," The West News, September 9, 1938; "City Officials Stand on Past Record," The West News, April 2, 1943; George Kacir, interview, West, Texas, February 27, 1972. George Kacir was the mayor of West from 1939 to 1959.

¹⁴"Mattress-Making Project to Get Underway in West," The West News, March 22, 1940.

¹⁵Henry Heitmiller, interview, February 26, 1972.

wet community between Waco and Dallas. After fourteen years of prohibition, over fifteen local residents opened, with elaborate celebrations, concerns to dispense beer. All of these establishments enjoyed a good trade from the surrounding counties.¹⁶

The second event, by-passing the city with a new section of the highway, was equally controversial. Though fought by the city on grounds that it would be a blow to the city's economy, state officials argued that the main streets of the town could not be widened to accommodate the increased traffic. Undoubtedly the action was more a psychological than an economic blow and after the war the decision was considered a blessing in disguise, for it removed much of the traffic problem found in other towns that had kept the highway.¹⁷

By the end of the decade the financial situation had improved a little. Farm prices were slowly rising, and, with credit available, some farmers were again purchasing farm machinery. Although some people were still on relief, the economy of the city was coming alive. The building of the first of several brick houses indicated some persons were

¹⁶"West Box Gives Beer and Repeal a Four to One Margin," The West News, September 1, 1933; "Sale of 3.2 Beer Legal in This Precinct Today," The West News, September 15, 1933.

¹⁷Alois Weinberger, interview, April 8, 1972.

enjoying better times.¹⁸ The census of 1940 reported a population of 1,979, an increase of 172 in the last decade, indicating that despite immense problems the city was slowly growing. The population of Tours increased to 80, while that of the other small communities remained almost unchanged.¹⁹

The slow recovery of the community was soon interrupted by the outbreak of World War II. The Medical Detachment of the 143rd Infantry, a local national guard unit organized in 1922 and composed of about seventy local citizens, was mobilized in January, 1941.²⁰ After the entrance of the United States into the war, this unit served as a company in the famed Thirty-Sixth Division.²¹ Hundreds of young men from the community answered the call to arms and distinguished themselves in all branches of the armed forces. Many did not return. At home, the residents of the community financed the nation's war efforts through purchases of war bonds. A heavy bomber named "The City of West" was

¹⁸Alois Weinberger, interview, April 8, 1972.

¹⁹U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, I, 1052.

²⁰"West Guardsmen Now in Training," The West News, January 10, 1941.

²¹"West Medical Detachment at Salerno," The West News, October 10, 1943.

dedicated to the citizens of the community for their investments.²²

The austerity accompanying the war was accepted without much complaint. Farmers returned to full production and defense contracts enabled the Brazos Valley Cotton Mill to become the state's leader in production of fabrics for military purposes. Unemployment disappeared.²³ By 1944 the closing of several shops as more people began to shop in the larger neighboring cities and the return of prohibition brought fears of West's becoming a "ghost town." The Chamber of Commerce was reorganized and led in the drive for another election which again ended prohibition in the county.²⁴

When the war ended the economy of the community came to life again. Emil Plasek expanded the operations of the West Flour Mill and Chick Hatchery with the construction of a new warehouse which included a hammer mill and space for feed storage. The oil mill discontinued making oil and concentrated on producing mixed feed. A new garage was built by

²²"City of West Needs Sister Plane," The West News, September 10, 1943.

²³"Brazos Valley Cotton Mills Sold to New Yorkers," The West News, August 10, 1945.

²⁴"Local Merchants to Reorganize," The West News, January 14, 1944; "Local Election Ends Prohibition in County," The West News, May 11, 1945.

Emil Jerabek. A new barber and a shoe repair shop were opened by J. C. Karlik, and F. G. Gerik began an electrical appliance store.²⁵ Frank Busby and Jim Morgan opened a combination grocery and meat market. A new theater was erected by Jim Tobola, and John Smaistrila opened an auto supply store. Other new business concerns included Mulh's Flower Shop and Pareya and Grimm's Cafe.²⁶ The following year Guy and Tall Scott constructed a large restuarant and nightclub on the highway outside of West. August Dulak and his son, Edwin, built a swimming pool, one of the largest in the state at that time. Along the side they erected a large recreation center used for dancing and roller skating.²⁷ In 1947 telephone service was extended to the rural areas, and a fair and rodeo association was organized to promote the expanding livestock industry.²⁸ The West Twine Mill, owned by J. P. Moses and George Wilson, began production of twine and yarns after a building was constructed in 1949.²⁹ In 1950 the Silvers, Wolf, and Sangers

²⁵"New Buildings on Schedule for West," The West News, August 24, 1945.

²⁶"New Business in West," The West News, October 19, 1945.

²⁷"Two \$30,000 Projects Under Construction," The West News, April 5, 1946.

²⁸"Rural Telephone Extension Work to Start," The West News, October 10, 1947; "Fair and Rodeo Association Formed," The West News, May 30, 1947.

²⁹"West Twine Mill Starts Production," The West News, July 30, 1948.

Company began operation of a garment plant employing over fifty local women.³⁰

Higher prices and easy credit promoted expansion in farming. Returning veterans were able to buy small farms and the necessary machinery. Production of cotton, livestock, and other farm products increased. A conservation group was organized and worked with the county soil conservation service to encourage terracing and reclaim eroded fields and pastures.³¹

The period of expansion was not without problems. When the veterans returned to the community they found few satisfactory jobs opened to them, few business opportunities, and little entertainment. After a short stay and, possibly, marrying a hometown girl, they moved away in search of better opportunities.³² For the same reasons graduates of the high school also began leaving the community. The increasing number of automobiles meant shopping in larger cities like Waco and Hillsboro and commuting to work in Waco.³³ Several

³⁰"New West Industry Near Full Production," The West News, November 17, 1950.

³¹"More Farms to Practice Soil Conservation," The West News, June 10, 1949; Henry Heitmiller, interview, February 26, 1972.

³²Alois Weinberger, interview, April 8, 1972; Robert Wendorf, interview, July 16, 1972; Albert Vanzuro, "West is A Good Place to Visit Occasionally, But No Place to Live," The West News, September 7, 1945.

³³Mary Jerabek, interview, January 26, 1972.

efforts by the Chamber of Commerce to bring industries brought limited success. Lorch Manufacturing Company of Dallas established a women's garment plant in 1956. The lack of a sufficient water supply and an industrial site were cited as reasons why a large brewery, a turkey processing plant, and other industries were located elsewhere.³⁴ Though improvements continued and small business concerns opened, the failure to stem the movement away from the community and to entice new industries to locate in the city led to the stagnation of economic activities in the 1950's.

EDUCATION, RELIGION, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Consolidation, building expansion, and improvement in the quality of education became the important issues during this period of the community's history. Little changed during the depression until 1938, when a drive by the students, the Parent-Teacher Association, and civic groups succeeded in convincing the voters to pass a bond issue to build a gymnasium.³⁵ In 1932 the small Liberty Grove district was the first to join the West Independent School District. In April, 1940, the Liberty Church consolidated with the West district and between that date and July, 1949, nine other common school districts also became a part of the

³⁴George Kacir, interview, February 27, 1972.

³⁵"Bond Issue Carries Two to One," The West News, April 15, 1938.

larger district.³⁶ The parochial school in Tours, St. Martin's, and the nuns who acted as teachers were retained by the district. All the other school buildings were closed. The consolidation of these smaller schools was due to their inability to operate with decreasing enrollments and to follow the state educational and financial guidelines.³⁷

The small school for the Negro population, Dunbar, was enlarged after the war, and a high school was added in 1949. The school building at Tokio, made available by their consolidation with the West district in 1945, was moved beside the Dunbar school to serve as the high school building. In 1955 the high school had an enrollment of seventy-five students. Two-thirds of this enrollment was made up of transfers from neighboring districts which did not provide satisfactory, if any, secondary education for their young Negro population. These students were bused from the Bellmead, Hillsboro, Axtell, Connally, Ross, Gholson, Aquilla, and Abbott districts. Racial integration with the other public schools did not come until 1965.³⁸

The growing enrollments after the war forced the schools of the area to expand their educational facilities. In 1949 St. Mary's added four classrooms, a cafeteria, and also

³⁶Kruse, "History of the Schools of West." See Appendix F for a list of these schools.

³⁷Monroe F. Kruse, interview, September 28, 1971.

³⁸Monroe R. Kruse, interview, June 16, 1972.

offices.³⁹ A new building was erected on the West Elementary School grounds in 1953 and the old building was remodeled and converted into a one-story building for use as a band hall and kindergarten the following year. Because of increased enrollment and the need to expand the curriculum, additions to the high school in 1956 included four homemaking classrooms and a modern well-equipped science laboratory. A large building to house the vocational, agricultural, and industrial arts classrooms, and woodworking and mechanical shops was also erected.⁴⁰

By 1960 the district's enrollment had slowly risen to over a thousand students. The common school districts of Ross and Gholson were able to continue operation and improve their facilities, but the secondary education of their youngsters continued to be provided at the high school in West.

The religious congregations of the community also expanded their building programs. A new brick structure was erected by the Baptists in 1939, after their church burned down in 1938.⁴¹ The present St. Paul's Evangelical Reformed

³⁹"Work Started on St. Mary's Auditorium," The West News, July 22, 1949.

⁴⁰Kruse, "History of the Schools of West," Monroe F. Kruse, interview, June 16, 1972.

⁴¹Apperson, A History of West, 1836-1920, 36.

Church was built in 1937.⁴² The congregation of St. Peter's United Church of Christ used volunteer labor to dismantle their old church building in 1949 and replaced it with a larger structure. Their parish house, the old Liberty School building acquired in 1937, was replaced with an annex to the church in 1957.⁴³ The members of the Czech Moravian Brethern Church sold their old building outside of West and erected a large brick structure adjacent to the West High School in 1957.⁴⁴

The Catholics of West replaced their meeting hall with a large two-story brick structure in 1937 and in the following year also replaced the old convent for the nuns with a two-story brick building. By 1940 the congregation had swelled to over seven hundred families.⁴⁵ The number of families increased to over a thousand by the mid-1950's and forced the congregation to replace the old church building with a larger brick structure. Completed in 1959 at a cost of over one-half million dollars, the new church has a seating capacity for over 1400 and is one of the largest Catholic

⁴²Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration of St. Paul's Church, 1900-1950.

⁴³Seventy-fifth Anniversary of St. Peter's United Church of Christ, 1883-1958, 3.

⁴⁴Evangelical Unity of the Czech Moravian Brethern Church, 3.

⁴⁵České Osady, 444.

churches in the state.⁴⁶ In 1960 this large Czech-Catholic parish was selected as one of the few in the nation to be visited by the exiled Josef Cardinal Beran, the Archbishop of Prague, Czechoslovakia. After celebrating a mass at the Church of the Assumption, the Cardinal was honored with a reception so that the large number of parishioners could meet him.⁴⁷

The visit of Cardinal Beran was the most recent evidence of the community's dominance by the Czech element. The number of Czechs steadily increased during the period, and, by 1960, they comprised over sixty percent of the city's population. The percentage varied in the rest of the community with almost ninety percent east of the city and as low as twenty percent in the extreme south and west.⁴⁸ Their population had increased sufficiently in West to elect the first Czech mayor, Jim Maresh, in 1931. From 1939 to 1959 that office was held by George Kacir, also Czech. In 1959 the present mayor, Joseph Holasek, was elected.⁴⁹ Except for a period of two years, 1954-1955, all the postmasters since 1936 were Czech,⁵⁰ and by 1936 over half the business

⁴⁶Dedication--Church of the Assumption, West, Texas (Waco: Hill Printing Company, 1956), 3.

⁴⁷"Cardinal Beran Visits West," The Waco-News-Tribune, April 20, 1960, 1.

⁴⁸George Kacir, interview, February 27, 1972.

⁴⁹See Appendix E for list of mayors.

⁵⁰Dixon Letter.

concerns in West were owned and operated by Czechs.⁵¹

World War II marked the weakening of their cultural mainstay, the Czech language. By restricting movement to within the community, the depression had increased the use of the language. The popularity of Czech-speaking films shown at the local theaters characterized this increase.⁵² During the war, however, the importance of speaking English was renewed as the young men entered the armed services. Instruction in Czech at St. Mary's ceased. After the war, improved transportation and communication became the major factors in the continuing decline of the language.⁵³ Although services at the Church of the Assumption and the Czech Moravian Brethern Church and the conversations of the older generation continued in Czech, the language was not learned by the majority of the young.

The war also marks the beginning of the movement of a large number of persons away from the community. Returning veterans were sent to larger cities in search of better job opportunities. In the following period many of the young people were also forced to seek jobs elsewhere after finishing high school. Higher operating costs and decreasing incomes on small farms forced many small farmers to sell to

⁵¹Compiled from The West News, December 25, 1936.

⁵²"Bohemian Films Here Next Week," The West News, October 7, 1932.

⁵³Mary Jerabek, interview, January 23, 1972.

bigger operations. Fortunately, improved transportation systems, an expressway, and paved farm-to-market roads helped to enable many to remain in the community and commute to their jobs in the Waco and Hillsboro areas.⁵⁴ Despite this movement away from the community, the census of 1950 reported the population had increased to 2,130 in West and 8,786 in the precinct.⁵⁵ In 1960 the census reported 2,352 residents in West, but the population of the smaller surrounding communities remained about the same.⁵⁶

⁵⁴Mrs. Marvin Fickling, interview, January 22, 1972; George Kacir, interview, February 23, 1972.

⁵⁵U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Seventeenth Census of the United States, 1950, VI, 43-44.

⁵⁶U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Eighteenth Census of the United States, 1960, I, 45.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Although the prosperity of a former period did not return, the city of West continued to grow slowly. Answers to some crucial problems were not realized and West became resigned to slow growth and progress.

The availability of rich wooded and prairie land enabled the original Anglo-American settlers to form a small farming community called Bold Springs in the 1800's. These original settlers were joined by Czech and German immigrants searching for land and a new home. The coming of the railroad through the area led to an influx of immigrants and the creation of a town, West, as the focal point for Bold Springs and other small farming communities. The successful business endeavors of the residents of the new town led to its becoming the dominant economic and cultural center of the prosperous farming region in Northeastern McLennan County.

The Czech and German immigrants, however, remained for some time isolated from the Anglo-American community by language and religion. Their increasing population and the development of their culture led to a rivalry for dominance in the community. Slowly their ideal of isolation and community self-sufficiency broke down, and, with the coming of World War I, the Czechs found acceptance. Although they retained much of their isolation, the Czechs successfully

fought off a nativist backlash against foreign elements occurring after the war and emerged the dominant cultural force in the community. The shift in the balance of economic strength was not due to a decline in the population or business activity of the Anglo-Americans but to the increased Czech population.

Despite organized efforts to revive a boom feeling, the conflict between the cultures resulted in a lack of unity that impeded the growth and progress of the town. The failure to cope with the problems of lessened economic opportunities left the city of West a small agricultural trading center noted for its unusually large Czech population.

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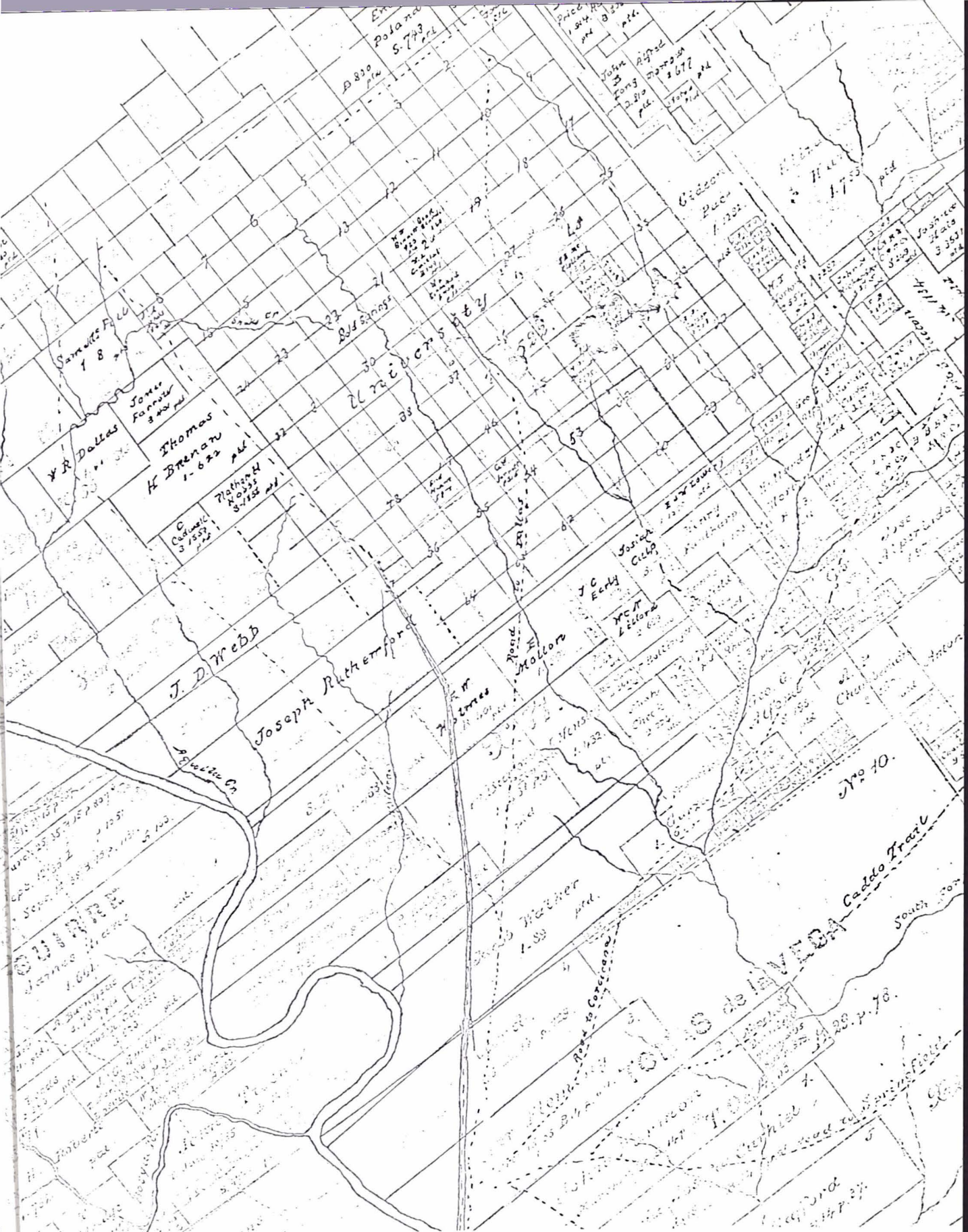
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APPENDIX



APPENDIX A
 "McClellan [sic] County, Texas"

*From map published by the General Land Office in 1880.

APPENDIX B

Postmasters*

Bold Springs and West Since 1852

Postmaster	Date Appointed
Richard D. McCary	June 23, 1852
John F. Dunn	February 22, 1855
Alberto Vaughn	October 26, 1855
Frederick MaKeig	March 14, 1860
The office was discontinued November 5, 1866, and re-established July 24, 1868.	
Barlett Y. Freeman	July 24, 1868
The office was discontinued July 18, 1870 and re-established April 12, 1871.	
William Carmichael	April 12, 1871
Thomas Franklin	August 14, 1871
Thomas M. West	November 24, 1873
The name and location of the office were changed to West on August 28, 1882.	
Benjamin Southard	November 11, 1889
Albert J. Cook	November 15, 1893
Austin M. Robinson	October 18, 1897
Lida T. Robinson	January 22, 1904
James W. Griffin	May 10, 1907
Charles P. Zapalac	January 5, 1916
Marie Hinton (acting)	March 20, 1924
Humphrey M. Fowler (acting)	March 21, 1924
Humphrey M. Fowler	June 6, 1924
Rudolph J. Marak	May 27, 1936
Henry M. Lednicky (acting)	May 1, 1952
J. F. Holasek (acting)	June 15, 1953
J. D. Wilkinson (acting)	April 1, 1954
R. J. Hruska (acting)	January 1, 1956
R. J. Hruska	September 1, 1960

*Dixon Letter, citing records of U. S. Post Office Department. See footnote 28, Chapter I.

APPENDIX D

Business Establishments in West in 1911*

Jess T. Wills and Co. -mercantile and drug store operated
 by Jess T. and Dr. John W. Wills
 E. F. Ousley Dry Goods Store
 A. B. Neilson Mercantile Store
 Mikeska Variety Store
 Bates and Berringer Dry Goods Store
 L. T. Elnic Dry Goods
 Skrabanek and Urbanovsky Dry Goods- operated by Paul
 Skrabanek and J. F. Urbanovsky
 H. M. Johnson and Company Dry Goods
 The Star Store - dry goods store owned by J. R. Schiller
 and J. F. Urbanovsky
 George W. Brown's Furniture Store
 West Furniture Company -owned by H. V. Aderhold, Frank Krizan,
 E. W. Kolar and J. R. Schiller
 S. B. Jones Hardware
 Glenn and Christian Hardware -owned by J. D. Glenn and
 Steve Christian
 W. M. Cameron and Company, Inc. -lumber yard
 J. Denton Lumber Company; J. E. Bridges, manager
 Garrison and Patterson Tailoring
 Christian and Landrum Tailoring
 Metropolitan Barbershop -operated by J. W. Vancleave
 Tubbs Barbershop
 Palace Drug Store -owned by Thomas Hruska
 Eagle Drug Store -owned by Rudolph Marek and Henry Garrison
 The Old Corner Drug Store -owned by Detrick and Charlie Blume
 Louis Horsak's Blacksmith Shop
 Joe's Tin Shop -owned by J.R. Polasek
 Joseph Kubella's Blacksmith Shop
 Frank Neckar's Blacksmith Shop
 Tom Motis' Blacksmith Shop
 West Livery Stable -operated by W. W. Taylor
 McDonald Brothers Stable
 City Livery Stable -operated by Claude Miller
 John Bednar's Saloon
 Two Brother's Saloon -owned by John and Frank Popp
 Farmers Saloon -operated by M. J. Mazanec
 Will Barker's Saloon
 Oscar Ware's Saloon
 W. M. Talley's Saloon
 Louis and John's Place -operated by Louis Jecmenek and
 John Gaidusek

Appendix D, continued:

The Sanitary Meat Market - owned by Anaztas and Anton Nemecek
 City Meat Market - owned by Levi Poteet and Rudolph Nemecek
 R. L. Bailey Grocery
 Ed Schuman Grocery
 C. L. Hardison Grocery
 West Block Grocery
 Zapalac Grocery Company -owned by C. P. and John Zapalac,
 Robert Cervenka, and Sam Pass -also served as cotton
 buyers.
 John S. Hruska's Red and White Store
 St. Charles Cafe -operated by Mr. Burns
 J. Y. Smallwood Restuarant
 McCormick Grain and Coal Company -operated by W. J. and
 Ben McCormick
 Pace Golden Jewelry Store
 J. C. Mitchell Harness Shop
 The Millinery Emporium -operated by Misses Eula Hurlock and
 Christine Mallory
 Burts Racket Store -operated by Joe and Johnny Burt
 Pool and Billiard Hall -operated by Julius Herizik
 Walla and Strickland Gin -managed by Charles Evans
 Christian and Archer Gin Company -Ed Archer, active manager
 Nichols Gin Company -owned by J. A. & W. H. (Bud) Nichols,
 and Frank Krizan
 Farmers Gin Company -managed by Frank Denton
 Round Bale Gin Company
 Hagen Hotel -managed by Joseph Small
 Commercial Hotel -managed by W. C. Nerren

*Compiled from The West Weekly News, Booster Edition,
 October 20, 1911.

APPENDIX E
Mayors of West*

Name	Date
W. W. Morgan	1892
W. T. Harris	January-June 1893
John Brazleton	July 1893-January 1894
J. B. Cook	January 1894-September 1894
P. L. Harrill	September 1894-1895
A. M. Robinson	1895-1896
P. L. Harrill	1897-1898
J. M. Moore	1898-1899
J. J. Holt	1899-1902
C. W. Holloway	1902-1905
Dr. W. T. Elliott	1905-1908
J. E. McGhee	1908-1911
Dr. A. C. Wylie	1911-1912
B. B. Ingraham	1912-1918
J. E. Bridges	1919
Rudolph J. Marak	1919 (Pro-tem)
J. E. Bridges	1919-1924
C. P. Davis	1924-1931
Jim Maresh	1931-1935
G. B. Helton	1935-1939
George Kacir	1939-1959
Joseph F. Holasek	1959-

*Compiled from "City Minutes" of West.

APPENDIX F

West Independent School District:

Annexations and Consolidations*

Year	Name	Acreage	Valuation
1932	Liberty Grove	2,818.46	7,380.00
1940	Liberty Church	4,820.90	139,525.00
1943	Denton 53	2,563	51,425.00
1945	Tokio	15,968.3	311,130.00
1947	Tours	2,945	110,000.00
1947	Hoehn	2,905	14,680.00
1948	Gerald 24	7,942	277,400.00
1948	Cottonwood 20	4,528	195,440.00
1948	Leroy	3,851	216,580.00
1949	Legett 22	5,665	183,930.00
1949	Alligator 71	5,465	101,310.00

*From list prepared by Ben J. Vanzura, President of the School Board, West Independent School District, 1950.

Vita was removed during scanning