

THE FORT HOUSTON SETTLEMENT

by

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A THESIS

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THE FORT HOUSTON SETTLEMENT

A THESIS

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by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

More than a century ago, in Anderson County, Texas, there stood one of a string of early forts established on the Indian frontier as a part of the defense of the widely scattered settlements of the pioneers. This fort was named for the most illustrious Texan of them all--General Sam Houston. Around the fort a town of Houston was laid out which threatened, for a brief time only, to become "the" city named in honor of this hero of San Jacinto. The fort served its destiny and passed into oblivion, and the city failed to materialize.

Unfortunately, the early settlers around Fort Houston had much to occupy their time and thoughts, so much that there was little time given to the important task of keeping a proper record of the settlement for posterity. No generation seems able to place a proper evaluation upon their own importance in the history of a state or nation--the pioneer least of any. But whether people's activities seem important to them or not, they make the record--they form the heritage of the next generation and, for that reason if for no other, the record should be kept.

The history of Fort Houston and the Fort Houston Settlement form the point of beginning for a much-needed and long-awaited history of Anderson County. The writing of the history of this settlement is the problem of this thesis.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study has been to preserve and honor the memory of the pioneers who made the first white settlement in Anderson County more than a century ago. There is a wealth of story, legend, tradition, and the like current among the people of the county, much of which cannot be substantiated. Some of it has been written in histories, periodicals, letters, county records, and official military records; but a connected, chronological history of this first settlement and the fort which protected the people from the Indians has not been written. The writer has made an honest effort to unearth and examine all available material in order to produce as true a record as can be reconstructed. The purpose might be stated in the words of Miss Mary Kate Hunter, local historian, poet, musician, and civic leader,

"A little here, a little there, fragments of word and story, to piece together the record of their deeds, to fit the compass of their activity into one mosaic."

Limitation of the Study

The short span of years during which Fort Houston served as a military establishment, 1836-1842, created a definite limitation for that portion of this study. The settlement and its influences reached into the future to the present, but it has not been the purpose of this writer to carry the study beyond the establishment of Palestine as the county seat except as the pioneer settlers affected that new center and other communities in the county immediately following the cessation of Indian hostilities.

Method of Investigation

The historical method of investigation was used in collecting information for this study. The library at Sam Houston State Teachers College, the Barker Library at the University of Texas, the Carnegie Library and the high school library in Palestine, Texas, and the Archives Building in Austin, Texas, provided the secondary works used. Facts stated in secondary sources where primary sources could not be obtained were not used unless they could be substantiated from other sources.

Many primary sources of material were available for this study through the efforts of the late Mary Kate Hunter, musician, poet, historian, and civic leader of Palestine.

Miss Hunter became interested in local history in the early decades of this century with a view to writing a county history. She conducted a very thorough study and did much research in such primary sources as the Thomas J. Rusk Papers in the Stephen F. Austin Library at Nacogdoches, Texas; the Wortham Papers in the hands of Major Wortham's granddaughter, Mrs. Hortense Sweet of Crockett, Texas; the Comptroller's Military Service Records in the Texas State Library; in the Archives of Texas; in the newspaper files of the University of Texas; the files of the Trinity Advocate, an early newspaper published in Palestine, Texas; and the files of present-day newspapers in Palestine. In addition to these sources, Miss Hunter held interviews with every descendant of any original settler in and around Fort Houston who could be located, either in person or by mail, and recorded whatever any of these could recall of personal experiences or of stories told to them by their parents or grandparents. These statements were signed and dated, many with witnesses, and some were notarized. Miss Hunter, personally, searched the county clerks' records and court records of both Houston County and Anderson County for data pertinent to her subject. She examined family papers, old letters, deeds, wills, church records, cemetery markers, and anything else which might yield usable material.

Unfortunately, Miss Hunter died before she was able

to put her findings to the use for which they were intended. After her death, all of her papers were deposited at the Carnegie Library in Palestine, together with a very fine accumulation of books, pamphlets, magazines, and other publications on Texas, for the use of interested persons.

The writer had access to these unpublished papers, but nothing from Miss Hunter's papers was used without verification except the personal depositions and statements taken from "old settlers" who have since died.

The writer has interviewed a number of people in Palestine who were able to furnish some data bearing on the subject. Many items from local newspaper files are included in the appendix of this study.

CHAPTER II

THE FORT HOUSTON SETTLEMENT

On Sunday, February 7, 1932, the Fort Houston Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas gathered to mark the location of old Fort Houston in Anderson County. By the use of an original map of the town of Houston, made by Wm. S. McDonald, one of the original donors of the site, Mr. Jeff D. Reagan (son of John H. Reagan), himself a surveyor, was able to locate the site of the stockade and, with appropriate ceremonies, the "Daughters" planted a cedar tree in the center of it.

It was a proper thing that this should be done; in fact, it was long overdue. The fort itself, like all those built of logs, had long since disappeared; but stories of the fort, the people who built it and lived within its walls, of the trials and vicissitudes as well as the pleasures of life in the wilderness around it, along with stories of Indian depredations nearby had circulated among the "old settlers" and their children and grand-children down through the years. But time was running out; the really old settlers were nearly all gone, and even the second generation was rapidly passing. Too little of the record had actually been written down for future generations; there was a real need not only to mark the historic spot but also to create in

the younger generation a desire to unearth and record the facts concerning this, the first white settlement in the county.

The occasion and the moving force behind it, Miss Mary Kate Hunter,¹ succeeded very well in the course of the

¹ News item in Palestine Daily Herald, February 8, 1932; see Appendix A.

next quarter of a century in kindling a vibrant interest in such a project. Much research has been carried on by the members of the Fort Houston Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, the William Findley Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Junior Historical Society of Palestine High School; but too often family yarns and tradition color the stories unearthed for club programs, so that it becomes impossible to draw the line between fact and fiction. For this reason the really accurate record of the Fort Houston Settlement waits to be written.

Sometime between June 10, and August, 1835, Joseph Jordan, John Crist, Captain W. T. Sadler and William Frost settled with their families in the rich and fertile lands ten miles east of the Trinity River, about two miles west of the present town of Palestine, and approximately fifty miles beyond the line of the frontier settlements of the nacogdoches District. Here, near a magnificent spring,

(tradition has it that the water gushed forth from the earth) they began the settlement which became known as the "Fort Houston Settlement." Soon afterward the small band was increased by the coming of the families of David Fortinberry (also spelled Faulkenbury), Adrian and Valentine Anglin, Stephen Crist, Roland and James Box, P. O. Lumpkin, George T. Lamoin, David M. Crist, George W. Browning, first commissary of the post of Fort Houston, and Wm. S. McDonald, who became the first justice of the peace in the little colony, and was one of the donors of land for the town of Houston which was laid out there.²

² A. J. Fowler, "Historical Sketch of Anderson County," in Trinity Advocate, early Palestine newspaper, later edited by Kate Efnor, in American Sketch Book, Volume V, 67, in Archives Bldg., Austin, Texas.

The location of the settlement was true to the needs of pioneers. It was near a crossroads, the junction of the Nacogdoches and Pecan Point roads to the falls of the Brazos; it was near enough to the river for the people to make use of navigation thereon and far enough away to escape the overflows which still plague bottom-land farmers, and it had a wide reputation for being a healthful spot. In William Bollaert's diary we find this entry:

Sunday, January 21st, 1844: . . . Above Alabama on this river is situated the new town

of Magnolia, being the landing place for Fort Houston, which part of the country is rather a favorite spot with many of the folk on the lower parts of the river, particularly as regards its salubrity. . . .3

³ W. Eugene Hollon, and Ruth Lapham Butler (eds.), William Bollaert's Texas, 312.

For quiet, pastoral beauty, the scenery of this area was not surpassed in Texas. It lay near the half-way point between the Trinity and the Neches amid the red hills, with their tall pines, giant oaks and colorful sweetgums. With the fine springs for water, the subirrigated creek bottoms and a fine saline only four or five miles away, what more could the people desire? Probably the best commentary on the land is found in a letter dated January 12, 1840, written by Dr. James Hunter to his father in North Carolina. This young man had but recently come to Texas and learned to his amazement that land claims were being bought up in this area at the ridiculously low price of \$500.00 for a league--4428 acres. He speaks of the fine prospects for cattle-raisers here:

The range for cattle is the finest I ever saw. You may ride miles through gama grass as high as your head; thousands of acres are covered with it. . . . The cattle are fat at all seasons of the year. . . . I have seen some hogs killed this winter 18 months old which weighed 250 lbs. and had never tasted corn. I

think that it cannot be beat for hogs in the world. They never think of fattening pork but drive them from the woods and kill them right away.⁴

⁴ Letter from Dr. James Hunter to Col. Archibald R. S. Hunter, January 12, 1840, original in Texas State Library; see Appendix B.

Elsewhere in the letter the doctor states that the soil "is extremely productive and so open that plowing may be started at once."

With this fine beginning Joseph Jordan and Wm. S. McDonald, whose headrights joined, proceeded to lay out a town which they called Houston, in honor of Sam Houston who, at that time, was the rising citizen of Nacogdoches, from which place these settlers had recently come. Under date of December 2, 1835, the Telegraph, published at San Felipe de Austin, carried this article:

Town of Houston

We are requested to state that a town called Houston has been lately laid out on the east side of the Trinity River, forty miles north of the San Antonio Road. It contains between three and four hundred building lots and a large quantity of outland. The situation is said to be handsome, salubrious, and well watered: surrounded by fertile, well-timbered land, and is about six miles from a good steamboat landing on the Trinity. The town is intended to be on the roads leading from Nacogdoches and Pecan Point to the falls

of the Brazos. Within a few miles of it there are two large and good salines.⁵

⁵ Texas Telegraph and Register, December 2, 1835, University of Texas Newspaper files, 58.

According to a story compiled by Jeff D. Reagan from an original map of the town of Houston, dated 1836, and made by Wm. S. McDonald, who was a surveyor, the town proper was divided into forty-nine blocks which were subdivided into six or eight lots, together with eighteen large donation lots including a public burying ground. The town was plotted, lots numbered, streets designated and certain blocks and parcels of land set aside for public purposes: two public watering places, a church block, and seven acres designated for "Seminary" purposes. There was a public square in the center of the town and provision was made for a public wagon-yard. The Nacogdoches road ran east and west through the town and a branch half-circled the town on the south and west (this branch is now called Town Creek), and McDonald's mill stood on this branch south of the town. Mr. Reagan supposed the blocks were three hundred feet square but said that they might have contained an acre each.⁶

⁶ Statement by Jeff D. Reagan to Mary Kate Hunter, August 20, 1939, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," in Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas; see map, Appendix C.

Messers Jordan and McDonald then set aside a donation of 500 acres of land to be assigned to the first twenty settlers in the town of Houston on condition that the said settlers were to build, occupy and tenant said donations for a term of at least twelve months from the first of January, 1836, after which time they were to have title to all the property designated in their shares by their numbers surveyed and plotted.⁷

⁷ See map, Appendix C.

From deed records in the County Clerk's office, Anderson County courthouse, it is possible to give the names of many of the people to whom lots in the town of Houston were assigned. In some cases the price of the lot is indicated and in others no price is given. The names only will be given here as the numbers of lots and the sum involved are of no importance. This is not meant to be a complete or bona fide list of all people to whom lots were assigned during the brief history of the town of Houston but only as an item of interest. The list includes: D. M. Crist, John McLinn, Oliver Lund (also spelled Lunn), Shadrack H. Moore, William Perry, A. E. McClure, Silas H. Parker, W. Lewis, James Wilson, Richard Sparks, G. E. Dwight, Alexander Joost, H. A. Delespine, E. H. Persons, W. Wilson, G. Glenn, Ed (or

Eli) Faulkenburg, Benj. Parker, B. W. Douthit, James W. Gardner, Randolph W. Davis, and James E. Box. By adding the names of ten or twelve others known to have been prominent in the settlement this list could almost serve as a roster of those around whom the history of the settlement for the next few years could be written.⁸

⁸ Deed Records of Anderson County, Book A.

By an act of the Congress of Texas, dated June 12, 1837, Houston County was established, being cut off from Nacogdoches County. This placed the Fort Houston Settlement and the town of Houston in the newly established county and subject to its jurisdiction.⁹ An abortive effort was made

⁹ John Sayles and Henry Sayles, Early Laws of Texas, 1731-1876, Volume I, 247.

in 1841, to establish Burnet County with Fort Houston as the county seat. This was done by an act of the Fifth Texas Congress, the county to be a judicial county, not entitled to representation in the Congress. This act defined the county boundaries, prescribed its court sessions and designated the town of Fort Houston as the "seat of justice . . . until otherwise directed by law."¹⁰

¹⁰ Sayles & Sayles, Early Laws of Texas, 1731-1876, Volume I, 459, 460.

The County of Burnet functioned for a brief time and became defunct when judicial counties were declared unconstitutional. The story of the demise of Burnet County appears in something of a light vein in a small volume entitled History of Palestine, the authorship of which is attributed to S. P. Allen and an unknown collaborator. The book is in the rare-book collection of the Fort Houston Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, in the Carnegie Library in Palestine, Texas. As Mr. Allen's story goes, all the usual activities were carried on in Burnet County: court being held, taxes assessed, marriage licenses issued, et cetera. The county seat, Fort Houston, began to improve and might even have flourished into a city, leaving the present city of Palestine a "cotton patch or a goober field" except for the ruling of the Supreme Court of the Republic declaring judicial counties unconstitutional and all transactions of such null and void. When this happened, the people of the town and the area were greatly disturbed and highly critical of the action of the court. Many vexing and even embarrassing questions were raised. People who were married under the jurisdiction of Burnet County were uncertain of their status. Many remonstrances were sent to Judge Ochiltree of the district court in session at Nacogdoches whose order had gone out in support of the action of the Supreme Court. Mr. Alexander E. McClure,

Chief Justice of Burnet County, was sent with the people's protest, fully signed, against Judge Ochiltree's decision. The judge, upon hearing of Mr. McClure's mission, sent him word not to present the petition, as it would be considered an act of resistance to the law and would probably lead to Burnet County's Chief Justice being committed to jail. Thus ended both the people's wrath and Burnet County. All acts and transactions under its jurisdiction were still legal and binding under the authority of Houston County and the Nacogdoches district.¹¹

¹¹ S. P. Allen and an unknown collaborator, History of Palestine, 5-6.

The importance of Fort Houston as a frontier town, and as a social and political center was attested to by two acts of the Texas Congress. A territory practically coinciding with that now included in Anderson County was designated as the Northern Judicial District of Houston County, and Fort Houston was named as the Seat of Justice of the district.¹² This was done in 1844, two years before

¹² Sayles & Sayles, Early Laws of Texas, 1731-1876, Volume II, 270.

Anderson County was established when the seat of justice was moved to Palestine.

There seems to be some disagreement as to the exact time of the building of the fort in the settlement--whether in 1835 or in 1836. T. C. Richardson says that Fort Houston was established in 1836 as a protection against the Indians and that it was an important post in the "Upper Trinity" country until the Indians were driven out of the country in 1839.¹³ W. Y. Lacy says that when he left Bean's Saline in

¹³ T. C. Richardson, East Texas, Volume II, 803.

the southwest part of Smith County in March, 1836, that there was not a white settlement within the bounds of Anderson County (then the Nacogdoches District) but that when he returned in 1837, he understood that one had been formed at Fort Houston and that Major Jewell was stationed there.¹⁴

¹⁴ W. Y. Lacy, in Lone Star State, 233.

The editors of William Bollaert's Texas have this statement in a footnote: "Fort Houston, a stockade and a block house, was built in 1835, about two miles west of Palestine, Texas. The fort was an important point of the frontier defense from 1836 to 1839, but was abandoned in 1842."¹⁵

¹⁵ W. Eugene Hollon and Ruth Lapham Butler, (eds.), William Bollaert's Texas, 306.

Mr. C. L. Greenwood of Austin, Texas, grandson of Garrison Greenwood and great-grandson of Joseph Jordan, one of the original donors of land for the town in the Fort Houston Settlement, made this statement in October, 1941: "The block house, afterward called Fort Houston, was built in the fall of 1835 by the settlers, and the stockade was built later by the soldiers. . . ." ¹⁶ This statement was

¹⁶ Letter from C. L. Greenwood to Mary Kate Hunter, October, 1941, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," in the Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas.

based on the papers of Garrison Greenwood in possession of C. L. Greenwood. Garrison Greenwood had been commissioned by the Council, sitting at San Felipe, to range the country east of the Trinity as protection of the frontier settlements against possible Indian uprisings during this troubled period in Texas. ¹⁷ There is no mention made of any fort or

¹⁷ Eugene C. Barker, (ed.), "Journal of the Permanent Council," in The Texas State Historical Quarterly, Volume VII, Number 4, 260.

place of rendezvous for Greenwood's company of Rangers but there is much evidence that he was in and about the fort. He married the daughter of Joseph Jordan, who lived at the fort, and deed records show transfers of land from Joseph Jordan and his wife, Elizabeth, to Garrison Greenwood and

his wife. James T. DeShields refers to J. H. (G. H.?) Greenwood holding a "quasi command at Fort Houston to watch the movements of Indians during the war."¹⁸

¹⁸ James T. DeShields, Tall Men With Long Rifles, 109.

Tradition in Anderson County has it that Sam Houston ordered the fort built as a part of the frontier defense after he was chosen Commander in Chief of the Texas armies. The writer has been unable to find anything in writing or print to verify this. We are certain that Houston was aware of the need for the fort, this settlement being the farthest outpost on the Cherokee frontier, for Houston was a prominent member of the Consultation at San Felipe which authorized the establishment of the three companies of rangers for the better protection of the frontier.

In 1835, Texas was in a state of virtual chaos; a goodly number of the people were still hopeful that the Mexican people would rise in revolt against the government of Mexico and restore the Federal Union; another group, referred to as the "War Party," demanded that Texas declare independence and they were ready to fight if necessary. The General Council at San Felipe had degenerated into a "riot" and Governor Smith was removed from office. It was a known fact that Santa Anna, at the head of the Mexican armies, was

on the march to invade Texas and bring the state under subjection. Every available man was brought into service to repel the invasion. All along the Indian frontier from the San Antonio to the Sabine, women and children were left with only the old men and the boys for protection. Clarence Wharton says that if the Cherokees had gone on the warpath against the settlements at this juncture--early in 1836--the Americans would have been wiped out in one week.¹⁹

¹⁹ Clarence H. Wharton, The Republic of Texas, 140.

Sam Houston--himself a Cherokee Chief--was not unaware of the danger. He made use of the weeks preceding the meeting of the March Convention at Washington, to go in person among the red men. In November, 1835, Houston had influenced the Consultation, which was then the provisional government of Texas, to issue a declaration to the Cherokees that they should be guaranteed the "peaceable enjoyment of their rights to their lands as we do our own."²⁰ It is believed that this

²⁰ Ibid., 196.

action together with the treaty of February 23, 1836, with the Cherokees, effected by Houston and John Forbes, kept the Indians from aiding the Mexicans in the Revolution. So,

understanding the situation as he did, it is not improbable that he did order Fort Houston constructed.

Whether it was built in the fall of 1835 or in the spring of 1836 there is no record, but it is sure that it was built before May 19, 1836, for it was on that fateful day that the horrible massacre of the Fort Parker settlers took place in Limestone County, 65 miles to the west, and Fort Houston played a vital role in that story, which will be told in a later chapter.

As to the size and structure of the fort, again we find conflicting stories, or to be more exact, varying stories. No actual maps, charts or drawings have been located. Andrew Jackson Fowler, an early resident of the fort, gives this description of it:

. . . preparation was made for the erection of "The Fort," or species of citadel to which the soldiers and all the families might retreat for safety and defense, when attacked by a strong force. This building, often seen by the writer, was similar in construction to most frontier forts, common among the settlers of the western country. A building made of heavy hewn logs, about twenty-five feet square, ten feet high, with but one entrance, strongly barred from within. On top of this structure was placed a second story, about eight feet high, jutting over the first about two feet all around, with portholes (for rifles) for directing fire latterly, also sufficient openings between the lower and upper story through which to shoot, perpendicularly, any daring savage who might approach the wall,

either for the purpose of entrance or firing the building. Such a bulwark would enable a small body of armed men to repel the attack of a very strong force, armed with such weapons as the Indian had at command. The fort, named in honor of the "hero of San Jacinto," Fort Houston, was completed in the spring of 1837, by Capt. Michael Costley's Company of Texas Rangers. This fort was never attacked by an Indian force, although many raids were executed by the savages into the settlements for plunder and murder in which many lives were lost.²¹

²¹ A. J. Fowler, "Historic Sketch of Anderson County," edited by Kate Efnor, in American Sketch Book, Volume V, 73, State Archives Bldg., Austin, Texas.

According to a statement made by Jeff D. Reagan, the stockade enclosed about an acre, being approximately 200 feet by 180 feet, the long side running north and south. He stated further that his father, John H. Reagan, said there were two walls or stockades around the fort, built of hewn logs eight inches square and pointed on top, put in the ground six feet. He said the walls were ten feet apart, leaving room for wagons to be driven through and stationed at the portholes. From these a watch could be kept and through the holes the guards could shoot if necessary. When the men were in the fields the women stood guard. Mr. Reagan quotes his father as saying that he was a visitor at the fort in the early "forties" and that in his opinion the

fort was the best type of a stockade fort.²²

²² Statement from Jeff D. Reagan to Mary Kate Hunter, August 20, 1939, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," in Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas.

There are other stories of the fort which indicate that there were really two forts, several hundred yards apart, the one on the east being smaller and less important. It was used as a slave cabin under the ownership of Shelby Crawford after the fort had been abandoned as a fortification. Fielding Taylor, who grew up near the fort, says that LaMora Crist told him that he had stood guard many nights under the old cedar tree that stood east of the fort. Taylor also quotes Judge Reagan as saying that there was a street one hundred feet wide between the fort and the cedar tree. Taylor continues by saying that sometime after Fort Houston was abandoned, the fort was moved into the lot of the home of Shelby Crawford, who owned the home later occupied by Judge Reagan, and used as a stable. As a boy, Fielding Taylor, was in and around the fort many times, even peeped through the portholes and examined the way they were fashioned.²³

²³ Statement from Fielding Taylor to Mary Kate Hunter, June 12, 1923, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas.

W. Y. Lacy, an early resident in Palestine, wrote that Fort Houston, "unlike Fort Boggy in Leon County and Fort Parker in Limestone County, which were family forts, was a fortification--one of the earliest of the young Texas Republic."²⁴

²⁴ W. Y. Lacy, in Lone Star State, 232.

There are many human-interest stories concerning life in and around the fort; some of these will be recounted in a later chapter.

Following the Cherokee wars, when the Indians had been quieted or driven westward and there was no longer any need for troops at Fort Houston, it was inevitable that it would be abandoned as a military fortification, but it remained an important center of the settlement in both the business and the social life of the people. Fort Houston was listed as a post office with Mr. W. McDonald as the postmaster as late as 1843.²⁵ The population of North

²⁵ Post Office Papers, Archives of Texas, Austin, Texas.

Houston County was growing rapidly at this time and the people of Fort Houston together with the people of surrounding settlements petitioned for a new county to be

created. This was effected in 1846, by an act of the first legislature after the annexation of Texas by the Union and the establishment of the State of Texas.²⁶

²⁶ Sayles & Sayles, Early Laws of Texas, 1731-1876, Volume II, 22.

In petitioning for the new county there arose two questions: what to name the new county and where to locate the county seat. The first was answered when the Fort Houston people chose to name the new county, Anderson, honoring Kenneth Anderson, Vice President of the Republic of Texas in 1844, but the second question posed a more difficult problem.

Fort Houston, having already served as the legal center of North Houston County Judicial District claimed the privilege as its birthright; but then there came another petition for the honor from Mound Prairie, a settlement some six to eight miles to the north and east of Fort Houston. John Parker, James Box, and Micam Main--all big land holders in the county--were appointed as a board of Commissioners to settle on the location, secure the land, and lay out the county seat. To these gentlemen Fort Houston and Mound Prairie each offered a site for the courthouse and about half of the vacant lots in the town.

William Bigelow and J. R. Fulton owned 500 acres of

land where Palestine now stands and operated a general store in a log building near the site of the jail in Palestine. These two enterprising merchants, seeing the opportunity before them of increasing the value of their holdings, bid for the location of the new county seat at their store location by offering the Commissioners 100 acres of land on which to build the town. The Commissioners were not favorably inclined toward this offer at first; they had refused Mound Prairie as an "unhealthy" location and had about decided upon Fort Houston as the location when the act of the legislature creating the county was passed. The act, supposedly influenced by citizens of Mound Prairie, declared that the county seat of Anderson County should be located within three miles of the geographic center of the county.²⁷

²⁷ Sayles & Sayles, Early Laws of Texas, 1731-1876, Volume II, 23.

The Commissioners then suspended action until a survey of the county which was being made by Wm. S. McDonald, then deputy-surveyor of Houston County, was completed. From this survey the center of the county was located on the farm of A. J. McFarlane, about two miles north of Bigelow and Fulton's store. When a direct line run from the center to Fort Houston disclosed that the fort was three and one-quarter

miles away, the Commissioners decided in favor of the Bigelow and Fulton offer and Mr. Johnston Shelton was employed to survey and lay out the new town. This was done and Mr. Shelton's map was filed in the county clerk's office in August, 1846.²⁸ Fort Houston had lost its future by a

²⁸ S. P. Allen, History of Palestine, 7.

distance of one-quarter of a mile.

As the new town of Houston took shape, one by one the families in and around the fort moved into the new county seat where they built places of business and opened professional offices around the courthouse square. Today there is no trace of the old fort or the town of Houston (Anderson County's); they are known only by the stone marker erected by the Texas Centennial Commission in 1936, and by the almost-forgotten stories told occasionally by the few "old-timers" still remaining.

It has been the writer's purpose to stick faithfully to the history of the original Fort Houston and the settlement which grew up around it, and yet, the site of Fort Houston has been doubly illustrious and a note about its later fame seems in order.

On the original 500-acre donation made in 1835 for the town of Houston, believed to be on about block 20,

there stood for many years the home of John H. Reagan, which also was called "Fort Houston." From the time of the War Between the States until the present, people of Palestine and the surrounding area speaking of "Fort Houston" usually had reference to this place, the home of the "Grand Old Man" of Texas, sometimes called the "Old Roman."

In 1850, the site of the original fort and some 600 acres of land surrounding it were sold by W. K. Payne, administrator for Elizabeth Jordan, widow of Joseph Jordan, to Dr. C. Kendrick, a minister of the Christian Church. In 1855, Shelby Crawford bought it and built the home later occupied by the Reagans and called it "Fort Houston." In 1857, the place passed to William Smith from whom John H. Reagan and his wife, Edwina Nelms Reagan, bought it just as the War Between the States began.²⁹ The Reagans did not

²⁹ Deed Records of Anderson County, Book J, pp. 47, 638; Book K, p. 181.

occupy the house until after the war because Judge Reagan was called into the cabinet of Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America, and his duties took him and his family to Richmond.

Mrs. Reagan died during the war and was buried in Richmond. Her body was later moved to a family burial plot in the garden of the home and still later to East Hill

Cemetery in Palestine. When the family returned to Palestine after the war the house was enlarged and beautified and in the course of time Judge Reagan married Molly Ford Taylor, daughter of John F. Taylor, who had settled near Fort Houston in the early 1840's. The home then became a center of social activity as the people of Palestine as well as Judge Reagan's political associates were entertained there. Four children were born and grew up within its walls.

Throughout the years, as Judge Reagan pursued a very active political career as a Congressman from this district, as a Senator in the halls of the National Congress, and as Chairman of the first Texas Railroad Commission, he still maintained his home at Fort Houston. He died there in 1905, followed by Mrs. Reagan in 1917. The home was then occupied by Mr. Jefferson Davis Reagan and his wife, Eoline Word Reagan. The house was razed in 1946 following the death of this last owner. Some of the lumber from its walls was moved to Beaumont, Texas, and used to build a library onto the home of Jeff D. Reagan Jr. which houses many of the treasures from this last "Fort Houston." The Texas Society, Daughters of the American Colonists, assisted by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, dedicated a stone marker on the home-site in 1951.³⁰

³⁰ News item in Palestine Herald-Press, February 13, 1951; see Appendix D.

And so, this "fort" too has passed away. The crepe myrtles and the yupon, the red birds and the lilac bushes, along with the marble slab remain on this "old house-place" to speak of its housing an illustrious citizen and two happy families that produced valuable and prominent citizens who have served this and other communities in the state.

CHAPTER III

FORT HOUSTON AS A FRONTIER POST

Conditions in Texas during the spring of 1836 were highly unsettled even after the glowing victory at San Jacinto and the capture of Santa Anna, the "Napoleon of the West." Rumors that a new Mexican invasion was about to begin continued to fly about. Letters from Texans at Metamoras spoke of "four thousand who are to leave here for Goliad and as many more in fifteen or twenty days from Vera Cruz to land at Copano or Velasco. . . ." ¹ Manuel Flores,

¹ T. C. Richardson, East Texas, Its History and Its Makers, Volume I, 91.

a Mexican agent, was known to be among the Indians attempting to enlist them on the side of the Mexicans. Fear spread like a flame all along the frontier. Many families moved from the danger zones back inside the line of well-defended settlements, but the Fort Houston people decided to stand their ground and petitioned General Houston to send troops for their protection. In accordance with their request, Captain George W. Jewell was sent shortly after September 19, 1836, at the head of his volunteer company of Tennesseans,

to be stationed at the fort.²

² Amelia W. Williams and E. C. Barker (eds.), The Writings of Sam Houston, Volume I, 498; see Appendix E.

But Act One of Fort Houston's role as a barricade against the red man and a place of refuge for the pioneer settler opened before the coming of the soldiers. It began close upon the heels of the battle of San Jacinto when James Parker arrived at the home of Captain Carter, near the fort, with the news of the barbaric massacre at Fort Parker on the Navasota, seeking aid for his little company of survivors. For six weary days the refugees from that devastated fort had struggled to reach Fort Houston, traveling partly at night and sticking to the rough bottom lands to evade the Indians who might be on their trail. The party had halted a day's journey from Fort Houston and made camp because the women and children were exhausted and suffering from lack of food. James Parker had been elected to go on the remaining thirty-five miles alone to get help to bring the others to safety. Captain Carter and Jeremiah Courtney hurriedly prepared five horses and, returning with Parker to the camp, brought the party of eighteen persons into the fort on May 25, 1836. The next day James Parker's son-in-law, L. T. M. Plummer, arrived at the fort supposing that

all others than himself had been lost.³

³ Elder Ben Walston, "History of Pilgrim Church and Fort Parker Massacre," (mimeographed pamphlet), 20, 21.

In telling the Fort Parker story, Wilbarger says that the settlers from Fort Parker, forced out by Indians and Mexicans, fled the fort once before and started for Fort Houston. They were compelled to camp on the Trinity because the river was out of bank, and while there they received word of the Texans' victory at San Jacinto. This would make it safe for them to return to their abandoned homes, but they continued on their way to Fort Houston where they stayed for a few days procuring supplies and then made the return trip to Fort Parker.⁴ If Wilbarger is correct, Fort

⁴ J. W. Wilbarger, Indian Depredations in Texas, 304.

Houston was well known to the Parker group.

Within a few days a company of twelve Fort Houston men was recruited to return with the others to Fort Parker where they buried the dead and drove off the stock. In the company of refugees were Abram Anglin and his father Elisha Anglin; David Faulkenbury and his son Evan; Seth Bates and his son Silas; Mrs. Silas Parker and her two children (two older children, Cynthia Ann and John had been carried away

by the Indians, and her husband had been killed in the massacre); Grandmother Parker; L. T. M. Plummer (whose wife and two-year old son were carried into captivity by the Indians); Mrs. Samuel Frost (whose husband and son were killed in the fort); Mr. G. E. Dwight; Mr. Nixon; and Mr. Lunn. There were also some small children whose names are not given.

W. Y. Lacy says in his report on the Parker Massacre that David Faulkenbury and his son-in-law Abram (or Adrian) Anglin and Seth Bates had moved their families to Fort Houston earlier; but that these men and Silas Bates, a boy of seventeen or eighteen, had returned to Fort Parker to work their crops when the attack came.⁵

⁵ W. Y. Lacy, in Lone Star State, 235.

Part of the Parker clan settled in Houston County and built Fort Brown near the present town of Grapeland; others went west; and Daniel Parker and his family later settled near Elkhart in Anderson County where they built Old Pilgrim Church.⁶

⁶ T. C. Richardson, East Texas, Its History and Its Makers, Volume II, 803.

Act Two of the Indian drama is laid in 1837, opening in January of that year when Abram Anglin, David Faulkenbury

and his son Evan, and Columbus Anderson left Fort Houston to search for some horses that had strayed. One writer of this story adds James Hunter and Mr. Douthet to the group and says they were in search of hogs instead of horses.⁷ The

⁷ John Henry Brown, Indian Wars and Pioneers of Texas, 55, 56.

men found some of the strayed animals east of the Trinity and sent them back by Hunter and Douthet, who were to return the next day with a canoe in which they might cross the river. Deciding not to wait, however, the men built a raft of logs, crossed the river, and continued their search but without success. Returning to the meeting place late in the afternoon, they did not find the men with the canoe, but they did find Indian signs. They assumed the Indians to be friendly, and being exhausted from their day's tramp, lay down to rest. In a short while they were awakened from sleep by warwhoops and gunfire to find themselves surrounded by about thirty Indians, some armed with guns and some with bows and arrows.

In a very few minutes the entire party was wiped out with the exception of Abram Anglin. He threw his gun in the river, plunged in, and swam across with Indian arrows sniping at him all the way. Coming out with only superficial wounds, he made his way up the opposite bank where he met James

Hunter returning with the canoe. Anglin climbed behind Hunter on his horse, and leaving the canoe, they reached Fort Houston in safety. Men from the fort returned to the river the same night to look for the rest of the party but did not find them. The next day they found the bodies of all except Evan Faulkenbury. His tracks were found along the edge of the water, and although the men searched for his body in the river, they were never able to retrieve it.⁸

⁸ D. W. C. Baker, A Texas Scrapbook, 201;
J. W. Wilbarger, Indian Depredations in Texas, 347,
348.

John Henry Brown says that the Indians afterward said that he "fought like a demon, killed two of their number, wounded a third, and when scalped and almost cloven asunder, jerked from them, plunged into the river and about midway sank to appear no more."⁹

⁹ John Henry Brown, Indian Wars and Pioneers of Texas, 56.

A story of some interest, if not importance, in Fort Houston's role as defender is told by Judge A. J. Fowler. This, too, belongs to the events of 1837. For some reason, not stated, Captain Jewell with his company had been ordered to join General Thomas J. Rusk's command in Cherokee County.

The departure of the soldiers left the people practically defenseless, since only eleven men remained at the fort. The citizens proceeded to send a petition to President Houston, then at Nacogdoches, for such aid as he could give. The General replied that he was unable to order any men to the relief of the fort but stated that he believed they could secure a large gun at Fort Jessop, a United States post east of the Sabine. He asked that the people provide the necessary teams for transportation, which they did, and he sent along an order or request to be presented to the Commandant of the fort asking that he furnish them with the gun. A twelve-pounder, weighing 963 pounds, was presented to the men of Fort Houston, and the gun was quickly transported to the fort and properly mounted. The story of this gun spread abroad and many believed that its presence accounted for the fact that the Indians never made a direct attack upon the fort.¹⁰

¹⁰ A. J. Fowler, Historic Sketches of Anderson County, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas.

The Third Act of the drama began in the summer of 1838 and ended with the expulsion of the Cherokees in July, 1839. After this there were scattered visits of the red men in the neighborhood of the fort, but they may be called an

epilogue rather than an act in the play.

Indian authorities agree that the Cherokees were probably the most enlightened of all the North American Indians. They had an alphabet and something that could be called a literature. Their tribal government was highly developed, and their moral standards were high as compared with those of the Comanche and other tribes. Some of them owned slaves; they recognized individual property rights, and according to Clarence Wharton, those who came into Texas in the 1820's were as well qualified for citizenship as the Mexicans of that period. The Cherokees were native to western Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia, and large numbers of them had come into Texas at the time of Austin's colonization. The Mexican government had promised them lands, but for one reason or another, had never furnished them with proper titles. This failure on the part of Mexico created distrust and made the Cherokees suspicious of any promises made by the Mexican agents. This distrust, together with their high regard for Sam Houston, no doubt, led them to treat with him in February, 1836, just prior to the meeting of the Convention at Washington, on the Brazos.

When the Congress of the Republic refused to ratify the Houston-Forbes treaty, the Indians were again in a state of suspense and uncertainty. Since most Indians distrusted the white man more than they did the Mexican, they were

willing to listen to Mexican agents sent among them to stir them against the whites, the result being a series of raids upon the settlements in which they plundered, killed, scalped and captured.¹¹ Henderson Yoakum laid this outbreak of

¹¹ Clarence H. Wharton, The Republic of Texas, 197, 198.

hostilities to the opening of the land offices early in 1838 and the appearance of surveyors and land speculators in the Indian country.¹²

¹² Henderson Yoakum, A History of Texas, Volume II, 248.

These attacks on the frontier settlements must have been frequent and terrifying to the people by the late summer of 1838, if we may judge by a letter written from Fort Houston to President Houston under date of August 25, 1838, bearing the signatures of twenty-five men of the fort. The letter was an urgent appeal to the President for help and protection at the fort. The signers reported that their property was being stolen, their homes surrounded, and their families alarmed by Indians believed to be principally Kickapoos. They expressed great fear that unless "active and energetic measures" were adopted for their protection

they would be compelled to desert their homes and property. The letter ended with an earnest request for an "early answer."¹³

¹³ From "Original Rusk Papers," Stephen F. Austin Library, Nacogdoches, Texas; see Appendix F.

In response to this appeal, Major L. H. Mabbitt with two companies of cavalry was assigned to Fort Houston.¹⁴

¹⁴ W. Y. Lacy, Lone Star State, 239.

The Comptroller's record shows him to have been on duty there as early as September 27, 1838, commanding 1st Battalion, 3rd Brigade, Volunteer Rangers.¹⁵ Further evidence

¹⁵ Comptroller's Service Records, Texas State Library.

that President Houston took immediate action in defense of the frontier is found in a letter dated October 1, 1838, written by General Thomas J. Rusk, Secretary of War, and addressed to the citizens of Houston County. This letter authorized the raising of from two to three hundred volunteers "to defend the country and chastize the Indians."¹⁶

¹⁶ From "Original Rusk Papers," Stephen F. Austin Library, Nacogdoches, Texas; see Appendix G.

The general regretted that he could not be with these volunteers as they visited punishment upon the Indians, but, he said, "engagements" denied him that "gratification." Undoubtedly, the engagements the general referred to were the activities of Vincente Cordova and Nathaniel Norris of Nacogdoches, who had staged a rebellion against the government in August, 1838. Organizing a company of about two hundred Mexicans with some Biloxi and Ioni Indians, they had pitched camp on the Angelina River and were engaging in acts of pillage and murder against the thinly scattered settlers. When General Rusk with some six hundred volunteers approached the camp, the rebels moved into the Cherokee country and attempted to form an alliance with Chief Bowles of the Cherokees. In this they failed, but they picked up some discontented Cherokees and Cooshattos and moved on into present-day Anderson County where they enlisted some Kickapoos. General Rusk followed them about forty miles from their camp on the Angelina and abandoned the chase, supposing that they had left the country. Rusk then returned to Nacogdoches and disbanded his force except the two companies of cavalry commanded by L. H. Mabbitt sent to Fort Houston.¹⁷

¹⁷ T. C. Richardson, East Texas, Volume I, 106; John Henry Brown, Indian Wars and Pioneers of Texas, 56.

On the same date as the above mentioned letter, October 1, 1838, General Rusk wrote to Major Elisha Clapp of San Augustine, authorizing him to raise one hundred and fifty volunteers for the protection of the frontier and to go on an expedition against the Indians. Clapp was instructed to rendezvous at Fort Houston on Monday, October 15, where he was to be joined by General K. H. Douglas and such volunteers as he had been able to recruit. Clapp's reply to this letter, dated October 5, reports good response to his efforts to raise a volunteer force. It would seem that the men were eager and anxious to organize, had even been somewhat restive because they had lacked official approval to do so.¹⁸

¹⁸ From "Original Rusk Papers," Stephen F. Austin Library, Nacogdoches, Texas; see Appendix H.

General Rusk had no sooner disbanded his men than he was compelled to reassemble them. Cordova had returned to the Neches area and made his stand at Kickapoo Springs. Rusk then directed Mabbitt to leave Fort Houston and meet him at Fort Duty four miles west of the Neches. Mabbitt, together with some volunteers under Captains W. T. Sadler, James E. Box, Snively and Bradshaw started on their way. About six miles from Fort Houston some of Mabbitt's men in the rear of the company were attacked by some Mexicans and Indians from Cordova's force. Before anyone could come to

their rescue, Bullock, Wright, and J. W. Carpenter were killed and McKenzie and Webb were wounded. Upon Mabbitt's approach the enemy fled. This was on October 11 or 12, 1838.¹⁹ W. Y. Lacy, who was with the command, said that

¹⁹ John Henry Brown, Indian Wars and Pioneers of Texas, 56.

Carpenter in all probability killed the Caddo Chief as the two were found lying within thirty yards of each other half a mile from the main battlefield. It is supposed that the men killed here were carried to Fort Houston cemetery for burial since the company returned to the fort that night. They remained there the next day, reorganized, and took up the march the following day for the Kickapoo village. Lacy reports their number to be six or seven hundred.²⁰

²⁰ W. Y. Lacy, in Lone Star State, 240.

General Rusk left Nacogdoches with about one hundred and fifty men and was able to pick up to about two hundred on his way. He marched first to Fort Houston as a strategic move to confuse the enemy. Here he laid in some supplies and then recrossed the county toward the Neches, leaving Fort Houston on October 14. In a letter to his brother at Nacogdoches, written just before his departure from Fort

Houston, the general appeared apprehensive of the outcome of his mission and somewhat disgruntled toward President Houston and "others" as being responsible for the small force now in his command. He accused them of engaging in unsavory land speculations. He also seemed worried about the possibility of leaving his family ill-provided for in the event of his death in this prospective encounter, and called his brother's attention to the fact that James Smith owed him four hundred acres of land for which he had no "writing" to show ownership.²¹

²¹ Thomas J. Rusk to David Rusk, October 14, 1838, original in possession of Ed Rusk, grandson of Thomas J. Rusk, copy in the Texas State Library; see Appendix I.

Rusk's forces were attacked in the early morning of October 16, at Kickapoo Town. The morning was misty, which made it difficult for the men to see their attackers; also they were in an area of large trees which afforded the Indians the opportunity of fighting from cover. But the enemy was a motley gang of Mexicans, Cooshattos, Caddoes and Negroes with a few Cherokees, estimated all the way from one hundred and fifty to three hundred, and when General Rusk ordered a charge they were quickly routed. The Indians lost eleven dead and about thirty wounded; while General

Rusk had eleven men wounded, one of them being James Hall who afterward died of his wounds.²² Lacy's account of the

²² Col. Hugh McLeod to Gen. M. B. Lamar in The Papers of M. B. Lamar, Volume II, 265-266.

Kickapoo fight says that the wounded were carried to Fort Houston on litters. Among them were Dr. E. J. DeBard of Nacogdoches and John Murchison of Murchison's Prairie in Houston County. He reports also that Dr. W. G. W. Jowers took part in the battle. All of these men were prominent in county affairs later.²³

²³ W. Y. Lacy, in Lone Star State, 240.

When the San Jacinto veteran, Captain W. T. Sadler, and his company of volunteers left their homes on the San Pedro in Houston County to join Mabbitt and Rusk from Fort Houston, they left their women-folk in the care of four old men of the community. For greater safety they all went to the Edens home, which was often referred to as a fort, though it was actually only a double log house. Four days after the Kickapoo fight the little group was attacked by eleven well-armed, mounted Indians, supposed to be Anadar-koes. In the butchery and destruction perpetrated here Captain Sadler's young wife was killed, also Mrs. John Edens

and Mrs. John Murchison. Four children were captured or killed (they were never heard of afterward), Mrs. Robert Madden and Mrs. James Madden were tomahawked and left for dead, but both survived, owing their lives to the care of a faithful Negro slave named Patsie. When the massacre was over, the Indians set fire to the house which burned to the ground. The Edens' tragedy might have been prevented had the housing arrangement of the little group been different. The men occupied one room of the house while the women were across an open hall or porch and all the guns were in the room with the women. The Indians discovered this before they attacked and blocked the men so that they were unable to get to the guns. Being unable to defend either the women or themselves, they escaped into the woods and saved their own lives, for which they were afterward criticized. This raid, known as the Edens Massacre, is not a part of the Fort Houston story except that it shows the nature of the fear and the danger which all the people of the frontier faced.²⁴

²⁴ John Henry Brown, Indian Wars and Pioneers of Texas, 57.

The Edens Massacre closed the engagements with the Indians in this area in 1838, but there were outbreaks in the West that same month which meant that, as Richardson says,

"Houston's term closed in an atmosphere of active hostility between whites and reds."²⁵

²⁵ T. C. Richardson, East Texas, Volume I, 106.

On December 9, 1838, Houston's first term as President of the Republic ended and he was succeeded by Mirabeau B. Lamar. These two men held wholly different beliefs as to how to deal with the Indians and followed policies just as different. Houston had believed that with the establishment of trading posts among the tribes and the appointment of capable and honest agents to handle the trade and other dealings, peace could be maintained and that eventually the Indians would accept the civilized way of life.²⁶ Lamar, on

²⁶ J. L. Clark, A History of Texas, Land of Promise, 274.

the other hand, believed in Andrew Jackson's theory that the only good Indian is a dead Indian. He considered Houston's policy of friendship and honesty unrealistic, and he had no patience with those who felt that the Cherokees had a claim to lands, a claim which had not been honored. In his first message to the Congress in December, 1838, he said, "As long as we continue to exhibit our mercy without showing our

strength, so long will the Indians continue to bloody the tomahawk and move onward in the work of rapacity and slaughter."²⁷ He recommended the establishment of a line

²⁷ Charles Adams Gulick, Jr., in collaboration with Katherine Elliot (eds.), The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, Volume II, 352.

of military posts along the entire Indian frontier with all negotiations between the whites and reds under the strict supervision of the government. The majority in Congress were evidently in sympathy with the President's policy, since "when the regular session of the Third Congress adjourned, the new Indian policy was well established and measures for both defensive and offensive war had been passed." Martin Lacy was appointed agent to the Cherokees, Shawnees, and other tribes.²⁸

²⁸ Anna Muckleroy, "The Indian Policy of the Republic of Texas," in Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Volume XXVI, 133.

One act passed by this Congress on January 1, 1839, which affected the defense of Fort Houston directly, appropriated five thousand dollars for the purpose of raising and supporting a company of fifty-six rangers for three months, to be commanded by Captain John Wortham, whose duty was to

be the ranging of the frontier of Houston or any frontier counties and the protection of the settlements.²⁹ A letter

²⁹ Gammel's Laws of Texas, Volume II, 31; see Appendix J.

written by William S. McDonald, under date-line, "Fort Houston, January 23rd, 1839," locates Captain Wortham at that place on that date. The letter was addressed to the people of Houston County via Brownsville (the community around Fort Brown in Houston County), to the care of Captain Slater, and contained the following important and urgent items of news: a call for help to the fort from Captain Snively at the Neches Saline in anticipation of an expected Indian attack there, the departure of Captain Wortham that morning in response to the call, the news of the ghastly and shocking massacre of the Campbell family within a mile of the fort, and the extreme anxiety at the fort for fear it might be the next to be attacked. A postscript to the letter requested that the letter or a copy of it be forwarded to Nacogdoches, to Crockett, and "if possible one in the direction of the city of Houston."³⁰ The same fear was expressed, and the

³⁰ McDonald to people of Houston County, original in Wortham Papers, in possession of Mrs. Hortense Sweet, 711 Houston Ave., Crockett, Texas, granddaughter of Captain John Wortham; see Appendix K.

same urgent call for help reached the President from another frontier post some seventy-five miles to the west of Fort Houston at almost the same time. The people of Franklin, Robertson County, sent a petition "in extreme haste" on February 6, 1839.³¹

³¹ Gulick and Elliot (eds.), The Papers of Mirabeau B. Lamar, Volume II, 436; see Appendix L.

Judge A. J. Fowler's account of the Campbell massacre agrees with the facts given in the McDonald letter but gives more detail. Charles C. Campbell had settled one mile southwest of Fort Houston in 1837. It would seem that he had no fear of the Indians for his family did not go into the fort at night when there were Indian signs about as other settlers did. The family consisted of Campbell, his wife, a son, Malathiel, about 20 years of age, Pamela, 17, Huldah, 14, Fountain, 10 or 12, and George, aged 4. Mr. Campbell had two Negro men servants.

Early in 1839, Mr. Campbell died. A week after his death the raid occurred. About ten o'clock on a bright moonlight night the approach of intruders was signaled by the disturbed neighing of the horses. Moments later the Indians began their attempts to force open the door being held close by the members of the family, finally chopping at it with tomahawks. Mrs. Campbell, pulling up one or two

loose puncheons from the floor, directed Pamela to take little George and go beneath the house, charging her to take good care of the baby. The family made a valiant fight, but the Indians succeeded in breaking in the door and carrying out their evil purposes. Mrs. Campbell was killed first, then Huldah, and Fountain. Malathiel, attempting to escape through the open door, was shot down a hundred yards from the house. Under cover of the partial darkness of night, Pamela with her small brother made her escape, though she received an arrow wound in the head which she carried through her long life lived out in the vicinity of the fort. These two reached the safety of the fort that night and were cared for by the women there. The two Negro men also made their escape through the hole in the floor, though it is said that Indians seldom harmed Negroes.

The Indians ransacked the Campbell house, ripping open six feather beds and scattering the feathers far and wide. They took with them clothing, bedding, a trunk containing four hundred dollars in silver and some paper money, and a keg of gunpowder. A hastily-organized pursuit party were unable to follow the trail of the fleeing red men, but about a mile from the Campbell house they found the abandoned trunk, scattered paper money, but no trace of the silver.

Nearby was the empty keg, its gunpowder missing.³²

³² A. J. Fowler, Kate Efnor (ed.), "Historical Sketch of Anderson County," in The American Sketchbook, Volume V, 77-79. Judge Fowler is said to have had this story from Pamela Campbell after she was married and living in the neighborhood. Judge Fowler was married in the Campbell house just one year later.

It was events such as these, together with developments in the Cordova-Flores activities, which played into President Lamar's hands at this time, making it possible for him to carry through his dream--the expulsion of the Cherokees from Texas. Fort Houston's role in this was a minor one, but since it felt the repercussions to the end of its time as a fort, the story seems pertinent to the Fort Houston story.

When Vincente Cordova and his rebels were driven out of East Texas in 1838, they moved onto the headwaters of the Trinity where they continued their activities in arousing the "wild Indians" against the white people. There was evidence that they kept in touch with both the Cherokees and the Mexican authorities along the Rio Grande. Cordova wrote to Manuel Flores at Matamoras, and the two arranged a meeting to discuss their plans and movements. Cordova was discovered and attacked by Edward Burleson and his men near Austin on March 26, 1839. About a third of Cordova's party of seventy-five were killed. Flores with about twenty-five

or thirty men was overtaken in Williamson County, and in the fight which followed, Flores was killed and the Cordova correspondence was found on his body. This correspondence disclosed that these two had been commissioned by the Mexican authorities to "harass the Texans persistently, burn their habitations, lay waste their fields, steal their horses, and pursue and punish all Indians friendly to the Texans and all Mexicans who traded with them."³³

³³ T. C. Richardson, East Texas, Volume I, 116.

These disclosures gave President Lamar the courage to follow his convictions. For this purpose he appointed a commission to treat with the Cherokees concerning their removal from Texas. Authorities do not seem to agree on the personnel of this commission. One names David G. Burnett, James S. Mayfield, Thomas J. Rusk, Albert Sidney Johnston and J. W. Burton, and states that they were to notify the Cherokees that they must move north of the Red River, that if they would not go peaceably, they would be removed by force.³⁴

³⁴ Anna Muckleroy, "The Indian Policy of the Republic of Texas," in Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Volume XXVI, 136-137.

The most colorful story of this commission and the negotiations as well as the fight which followed, names Martin Lacy, Indian agent, as the commission and states that he was accompanied by John H. Reagan, a youth of twenty-one at the time.³⁵ Reagan says that he accompanied Lacy and that

³⁵ Clarence H. Wharton, The Republic of Texas, 198.

Dr. W. G. W. Jowers was the other member of the trio.³⁶

³⁶ John H. Reagan, Memoirs, 30.

According to this story, Lacy and his party went in June, 1839, to carry the President's ultimatum to the Cherokees. It was that they must go north of the Red River for these reasons: They had assembled on the San Antonio Road during the revolution ready to attack the Texans in the event Santa Anna should be successful; they had massacred a number of white people and stolen their horses; and they had plotted with the Mexicans to aid in their prospective invasion of Texas. The Indians were to take their movable property with them and, if they would leave the country peaceably and surrender their gun locks, the President would pay them for any improvements they had made which could not be moved. Reagan says that when they reached the home of

Chief Bowles, he invited them to a fine spring near his house where they were seated on fallen tree trunks as the President's message was read to him and interpreted. The Chief was allowed ten days in which to consult with his people and learn their wishes.

When the group returned for the answer, Bowles told them the young men were willing to fight for their lands and thought they could win. He said he knew that in the end the whites would win over them, but he asked that they be allowed time to gather their crops. Since Lacy was not empowered to grant this request, Bowles, of course, told him it would have to be war. He said he had no choice; if he voted for peace his own people would kill him, if he voted for war the whites would kill him. He added that he was eighty-three years old and would not live much longer anyway but that he was concerned over the future of his wives (he had three) and children. The consultation between them ended with the understanding that the war was about to begin.³⁷

³⁷ John H. Reagan, Memoirs, 30-32; Clarence H. Wharton, The Republic of Texas, 198, 199.

Three regiments were already in the field: one led by Thomas J. Rusk from Nacogdoches, another called Landrum's Red Landers out of East Texas, and Edward Burleson's Regulars.

Burleson was accompanied by Vice-President, David G. Burnet; Secretary of War, Albert Sidney Johnston, and others. The entire force was under General K. H. Douglas. During the early negotiations, General Rusk and Chief Bowles agreed upon a neutral line which neither was to cross without giving the other notice. At sunrise on July 15, John Bowles, son of the Chief, and Fox Fields, son of the former Chief, rode in to notify Albert Sidney Johnston that they were ready to move north across the neutral strip. Reagan says that Johnston thanked them and told them the Texans would cross the Neches after them.

In the battles of the next two days the Indians fought valiantly. The most colorful figure on the field was that of "Chief Bowles on horseback wearing a military hat, silk vest, handsome sword and sash which had been presented to him by President Houston. He was a picture of barbaric manhood," and was "the last to leave the field when the Indians retreated." He was wounded and Reagan would no doubt have received his surrender had not his Captain, Bob Smith, mistaking the signal, shot Bowles in the head, killing him instantly.³⁸

³⁸ Clarence R. Wharton, The Republic of Texas, 199, 200; John H. Reagan, Memoirs, 34.

In these battles the Texans had five hundred men against eight hundred Indians; the Indians losing more than one hundred killed as compared with five Texans lost. The Indians who survived fled the country, going north where eventually they were joined with remnants of their once powerful tribe. Their trail was followed for several days by the Texans who passed many Indian villages and corn fields, all of which they destroyed. The pursuit was abandoned on July 25. The troops returned home and were mustered out.³⁹

³⁹ H. H. Bancroft, History of Texas, Volume II, 323-24; J. W. Wilbarger, Indian Depredations in Texas, 172; Henderson Yoakum, History of Texas, Volume II, 270.

This interesting commentary on the aftermath of the Cherokee War was made in a story written by R. W. Davis, who lived at Fort Houston for a time after this war:

In 1839, the Cherokees were driven from their homes near Nacogdoches. . . The following year I moved to what was then called Fort Houston. The Cherokees being much incensed at having been driven away from their lands, for several years made frequent forays upon the settlers, who occupied their old hunting grounds, for the purpose of murder and robbery. They stole horses and killed several families. Fort Houston being on the line in going and returning, their trail was frequently discovered by the few persons who had settled at this (then) frontier post. . .⁴⁰

⁴⁰ R. W. Davis, "An Incident of Texas on the Frontier," in Texas Pioneer, Volume 3, No. 9, September, 1922, 15.

The epilogue to Fort Houston's role as a frontier fort covers these scattered visits of the red men between 1839 and 1841 when the following account seems to write "finis" to the story.

Judge Fowler, writing for the Trinity Advocate, calls the following the "Last Indian Raid" in the Fort Houston settlement. Sometime in the latter part of 1841, some Indians crossed the Trinity from the west, entered the village of Fort Houston, and stole some horses from the people, one from Judge McClure. When the theft was discovered in the morning, a pursuing party was quickly organized. William Frost, who had made his escape from Fort Parker in 1836, was in the party. The searchers overtook the thieves at the east bank of the Trinity. The Indians plunged the horses in the river to swim across with the citizens firing at them as they went. A shot from the opposite bank caught William Frost as he was firing and killed him on the spot. He had survived through Fort Parker only to die at the hands of the deadly enemy here on the Trinity. If any Indians were killed in the encounter, their bodies were borne away in the waters.⁴¹

⁴¹ A. J. Fowler, Kate Efnor, (ed.), "Historical Sketch of Anderson County," in The American Sketch Book, Volume V, 79, 80.

In all these troubled times Fort Houston's stout walls afforded a refuge to which the people could fly for safety if and when the alarm was sounded. Also, the soldiers and the men of the settlement went when and where they were needed to do their share in the defense of nearby settlements against the savage. Just how much East Texas owes to the fort cannot be estimated, but certainly, the presence of its block house and the stockade with the portholes manned by riflemen or women told the Indian that these white men would not stand aside or be driven back. These were the people who had come to carve homes from this wilderness or die in the attempt. This was the advance guard, the progenitors of the "Tall Texan" who opened the way for the advancing hordes of immigrants who were to people the prairies of the Lone Star Republic, bringing civilization, culture, and a way of life to become known around the world.

CHAPTER IV

THE LIFE OF THE PEOPLE

In the early years of the settlement around Fort Houston, life was almost as primitive as it was for the settlers two centuries earlier on the banks of the James River in Virginia. The commonest necessities of life in our time were scarce or missing altogether. Four things seem to have been considered essentials: the rifle, seed for planting, water, and salt. The first two they brought with them; the other two they sought out before making a location. The native forest furnished materials for their cabins, their food supply, and some of their clothing.

Many of the first settlers brought no plows with which to prepare the soil nor was there any iron out of which they could be fashioned. Because they were light in weight, they did bring spades and hoes, and no doubt axes, and with these they cleared the land and prepared the soil for planting. Charles C. Campbell, who settled about a mile southwest of Fort Houston and whose family were almost wiped out by the Indians later, is said to have dug up a fifteen-acre field with a spade to plant his first corn crop in the spring of 1838.¹ Cultivation, too, had to be done with inadequate

¹ A. J. Fowler, "Historical Sketch of Anderson County," in the Trinity Advocate, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas.

tools, but the land was new and the yield was abundant. In addition to the spade and the hoe the settlers must have brought stout axes and froes and also knives for they notched the logs for building and split them for puncheon floors, doors, shutters, tables, and benches. They rived the boards for roofs and cut out the portholes for the muzzle of the gun. Since they lived by the rifle, we may be very sure they brought bullet molds and a generous supply of powder.

Until the first crop was raised no one had corn either for the teams or for their own bread supply. The people lived principally on meat supplied from the surrounding forest; so, it is not difficult to picture a family's enjoyment of that first corn crop. In another "Sketch" Judge Fowler says that all Texans were poor alike, then, living principally from the fruits of hunting--"the little bread they got was procured from Nacogdoches, a distance of eighty miles."²

² A. J. Fowler, "Historical Sketch of Anderson County," in the Trinity Advocate, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas.

The forests around the fort and the creek bottoms yielded game in abundance--deer, wild turkeys, and bear were plentiful. Buffalo meat was also available, but it was more dangerous to hunt the buffalo on account of the Indians.

W. B. Waldron said, "Worlds of wild turkeys like blackberries stayed on the branches of the creeks, and thirty or forty deer in a herd were not uncommon. There were many wolves and bears to be found in places; but we didn't kill turkeys except in winter."³ Dr. James Hunter, writing to his father

³ Statement by W. B. Waldron to Mary Kate Hunter, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas.

in North Carolina, reported that there were a great many deer in the woods and "turkeys innumerable." He reported killing as many as five in one evening. In the same letter he told, too, of killing a very large panther, measuring eight feet from the nose to the tip of its tail. "We have the finest trout," he said, "also perch, bass, buffalo, etc. and as plentiful as leaves on the trees."⁴

⁴ Letter from Dr. James Hunter to Col. A. R. S. Hunter, January 12, 1840; see Appendix B.

By the middle of the 1840's we find stories of wagons going to Shreveport for such provisions as sugar, coffee, flour, and molasses. Since the river town of Magnolia had been established before then, however, it is safe to assume that such a long journey as that was undertaken only in the seasons when the river was low. The bulk of evidence shows

that the diet of the settlers suffered from a lack of variety. W. M. Killion gives some idea of that deadly sameness when he spoke of the women preparing a "big dinner" for the house-raising in the neighborhood, consisting, he said, of "corn-bread and meat, and maybe coffee."⁵

⁵ Statement by W. M. Killion to Mary Kate Hunter, February 4, 1934, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas.

Canning fruits and vegetables was unknown in that early day, but pickling, salting, and drying were the methods used. Meats were prepared by all three methods, while fruits were dried or preserved in stone vessels. Pork was pickled or salted, but beef, venison, and bear meat was hung high in the air to cure. It was a common sight to see strings of pumpkins, peeled, sliced, and hung to dry, also peppers and many kinds of herbs.⁶ "Granny Jordan" cultivated

⁶ Statement of T. J. Starr to Mary Kate Hunter, November 16, 1941, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas

an herb garden and furnished all the households in the settlement. As years passed, the fame of this garden spread, and people came from miles around to get these prized

seasonings, medicinal herbs, and roots.⁷

⁷ Statement by Mrs. Jeff D. Reagan, personal interview, June 10, 1958, Palestine, Texas.

All of the early houses were log houses, and none of them had glass windows--only wooden shutters which, like the doors, were provided with a means to bar them against Indians. All houses had portholes on all four sides for the muzzle of the rifle. The floors, generally, were dirt, packed hard. From day to day the women poured hot, greasy dish water on the floor and packed it down so that, eventually, it became as hard as flint and could be swept without stirring up any dust. Some cabins we know had puncheon floors, for all who tell the story of the Campbell massacre tell of the escape of Pamela and George Campbell through a hole in the floor where the mother lifted two puncheons which were loose. As time passed and the people grew prosperous in cotton, corn, salt, and hides, building materials were brought in and better houses began to appear. Mr. Fielding Taylor tells of the Yelverton place being "framed with mortise and tenon pinned together."⁸ The "Granny"

⁸ Statement by Fielding Bush Taylor to Mary Kate Hunter, June 12, 1923, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas.

Jordan house, outside the fort a short distance, is described as a really pretentious frame building, weatherboarded and lathed and plastered with beautiful white plastering such as was used back in the "old States." The lathing was rived out of native trees with hand implements and represented a vast amount of work. The rooms of this fine old home were twenty feet square, and the long porch on the south side extended the entire length of the front. The house has rotted away and is no longer there.⁹

⁹ Statement by Mrs. Jeff D. Reagan, personal interview, retelling stories told to her by Mrs. John H. Reagan, now deceased.

Just as there was no room for heavy farm implements in the wagons of those who moved long distances, so there was no room for household furniture. Those who came by boat had to leave treasured "household gods" at home also. They did bring bedding, usually feather beds, which could be rolled with the covers and tied in bales. Oakboard tables, chairs with rawhide bottoms, and bedsteads were made as the log cabins were being built, and every cabin had a fireplace. There were no cookstoves among the earlier settlers; the fireplace skillet and oven, the iron pot on a hook, and trammel were the utensils common to every household. W. D. Small tells that when his family was moving to

Texas, cooking utensils were so scarce that three families in their party cooked in the same skillet and it with a broken handle.¹⁰ The people brought boxes or stout chests

¹⁰ Statement by W. D. Small to Mary Kate Hunter, June 23, 1923, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," in Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas.

in which many family possessions were stored for the journey. These became pieces of furniture in the pioneer cabin, serving as extra chairs and as storage bins or cupboards or trunks. Some of these hid treasured pieces of china, silver, and even some linens. Buffalo robes served as floor covering on the smooth dirt floor; the choicest of these were used for bed cover. A loom and a spinning wheel was almost "standard equipment" in every settler's cabin, but the sewing machine had not yet made its appearance. Some settlers who came in the middle forties and later tell of bringing furniture. When the wagons were loaded, chairs were stuck in the sides of the wagons upside down, and in the tops of these chairs were placed buckets and other small articles to save space.¹¹

¹¹ Statement by Mrs. Puss Bailey Jolly to Mary Kate Hunter, January 5, 1923, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas.

When the first settlers ventured into the area this far from established communities, there were no roads except

Indian trails, and there were no bridges over the streams. It was even some time before ferry boats were built and operated. Where it was possible, river traffic was of the utmost importance. As early as 1843, Galveston and Houston advocated the improvement of the Trinity and the opening of a road from the Three Forks to Fort Houston to carry on the trade when the waters of the Trinity were too low to allow navigation above that point. Magnolia was the head of navigation in 1843.¹² The river was not navigable the year

¹² R. E. Mills, Navigation of the Trinity River, an unpublished Master's Thesis, Sam Houston State Teachers College, Huntsville, Texas, 1943, 18.

round. Travelers by boat sometimes had to wait days or even weeks for high water before proceeding on their journey.¹³

¹³ Letter from Randolph Clark to Mary Kate Hunter, September 15, 1923. Mr. Clark had to leave a river boat and wait in Huntsville for several months before he could proceed on his way to Magnolia, due to low water in the Trinity.

Fort Houston was only six miles from Magnolia, and the people profited greatly when their goods could be shipped in and out by this route. A Fort Houston resident, R. W. Davis, is said to have built and launched the first flat-boat ever to make the journey down the river to Galveston

from Magnolia.¹⁴ As years came and went, many plantations

¹⁴ Statement by W. D. Small to Mary Kate Hunter, September 8, 1922. W. D. Small worked in various capacities on river boats from Magnolia to Galveston over a period of years.

were settled on both banks of the Trinity, increasing Magnolia's importance as a shipping point and as a town. Magnolia was referred to as the "young New Orleans" and Parker's Bluff as a "sort of St. Louis." Merchant boats plied the river as regularly as the waters would allow. Many plantation owners built private wharves, but the farmers and merchants in and around Fort Houston shipped through Magnolia, hauling their cotton, hides, salt, and other goods in ox-wagons. These were exchanged for the sugar, coffee, flour, liquors, powder, molasses, and some clothing brought by the boats from Galveston. Alexander Joost, Fort Houston's first real merchant, had a well-established credit with these Galveston firms which he maintained for many years after his removal to Palestine in 1847.¹⁵

¹⁵ Statement by Laura Joost Phillips to Mary Kate Hunter, January 2, 1923, "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas.

Whether the people came by covered-wagon, by horseback or by boat, they came in increasing numbers in the late

thirties and early forties. Often several families from the same community would form a caravan and move together, camping at night, cooking over campfires, the women and children sleeping in the wagons, the men taking watches during the night. The journey to Texas required four to ten weeks depending on the distance people had to come and the season, though some are known to have been on the road as much as four months. This tide of immigration was principally from the southern states, Tennessee seeming to furnish the largest number of settlers into Anderson County according to individual family accounts, though Alabama immigrants lead in most of East Texas.¹⁶ The increasing

¹⁶ Barnes F. Lathrop, Migration Into East Texas, 1835-1860, 64.

numbers of immigrants entering the state may be accounted for in several ways: there was a panic in the United States in 1837; Texas had established her independence from Mexico and land agents were advertising Texas in glowing terms in the publications of the South; the Indians had been, or were being, quelled or run out; and last, but not necessarily least, the slavery issue was rising in the United States. Texas seemed to be the answer to many of the problems of the times. Whatever the reason for their coming, the Fort

Houston Settlement drew its share of newcomers.

Mail service in and out of the settlement was haphazard, irregular and unsatisfactory. However, there was a post office at the fort as early as 1840,¹⁷ and one as late

¹⁷ William Kennedy Esq., Texas, 732.

as 1843, with W. McDonald as post master.¹⁸ The Aldrich

¹⁸ Post Office Papers, Archives of Texas, Austin, Texas.

History of Houston County says that "the northern mail for Fort Houston was sent whenever there was a chance, and then generally in the crown of a hat." Dr. James Hunter, writing to his father in North Carolina, complained that they scarcely ever saw a newspaper and never got a letter. At the time of writing he had been at the fort a month and had not seen a paper from the States since his arrival.¹⁹ As

¹⁹ See Appendix B.

time passed and roads were established from one "Crossing" to another, this condition improved. In the Crockett Printer, December 6, 1853, this ad appears:

NOTICE TO TRAVELERS--Travelers and emigrants going West are informed that the best

and most direct road from Shreveport and other points on the Red River to Austin and San Antonio is through the town of Rusk in Cherokee County. From the latter point an excellent road of twelve miles leads to Stinson's Ferry at which place ferry boats cross the Neches River constantly, causing no detention at any stage of water. Wagons, carriages, et. are landed on high and dry roads without any mud or river bottom to pass through.

This is on the (mail route) main and principal road leading to Crockett, Hall's Bluff . . . and from thence to Austin . . .²⁰

²⁰ A. A. Aldrich, The History of Houston County, Texas, 41, 42.

This road to Hall's Bluff led straight through Palestine and Fort Houston, which tells us that the mail service was improving greatly.

In spite of all these primitive conditions and deprivations which the settlers had to endure, most of those who came into these parts were people of above average education, culture and means. Contrary to a widespread supposition in more recent times that all frontiersmen were poor, it required some means for a man to move his family from a settled community in the States to the frontier, even though he did not arrange to haul family "finery." The teams, the wagons, provisions for the road, seed for a crop, necessary tools, and clothing could not be provided by a man of no means. Some of the finest of the old southern families were

represented among those moving west in search of new land and better opportunities than the "Old States" offered. As we have said before, they could not bring much in the way of fine furnishings, but they did bring the traditions, ideals, and genteel manners of a cultivated society and established a high order of citizenship here in a wilderness. Dr. James Hunter reported that Fort Houston had a very good school and a Sabbath school with forty pupils. He said, further, "We have a very orderly community. I have not seen a drunk man since I have been here."²¹ The number of men and women from

²¹ See Appendix B.

the fort who took a lead in the political, social, and civic affairs of Houston County first, and later, in Anderson County and Palestine, is impressive and serves as an index to the high quality of the Fort Houston people.

The first minister of the Gospel known to have been at the fort was the Reverend Peter Hunter Fullinwider, a staunch Presbyterian missionary who, with his wife, emigrated from Connecticut in 1834, coming first to Austin's colony on the Brazos where he and his wife both taught a school. Mr. Fullinwider is known to have held religious services in the homes there, also, although it was contrary to Mexican law to do so. He was in the vicinity of Fort

Houston as early as 1835, aiding the Reverend J. W. Kinney in a camp meeting on Caney Creek in North Houston County in the summer of that year.²² He and Sam Houston were personal

²² Texas Almanac, 1857-1860, 93.

friends, and, according to both family tradition and church history, General Houston sent Mr. Fullinwider to Fort Houston just before the battle of San Jacinto to care for the families assembled there. He was ordered to supply the people with provisions, protect the women and children from the Indians, and, if need be, lead them to safety across the Sabine.²³ Before this last became necessary, news came of

²³ William Stewart Red, Texas Colonists and Religion, 1821-1836, 84.

the victory of the Texans at San Jacinto, and the people could again breathe freely. The Fullinwiders stayed on at the fort for a time and taught a school. Their baby, born at the fort, died in infancy and was buried in Fort Houston Cemetery.²⁴

²⁴ Statement by Eva Fullinwider Link to Mary Kate Hunter; Statement by Frances Fullinwider, personal interview; Statement by John E. Holmes to Mary Kate Hunter, September 22, 1941. Mrs. Link and Miss Fullinwider were granddaughters of P. H. Fullinwider.

There is no record of a Presbyterian Church being established at the fort, but there was a meeting of the Presbytery there in 1840 or 1841, called for the purpose of considering the organization of a Texas Presbytery separate from the Mississippi Presbytery under which Texas ministers of the church had been functioning.²⁵ For some unknown

²⁵ J. DeCordova, Texas: Her Resources and Her Public Men, 61, 62.

reason the matter was postponed. It is interesting to our study that they met here for it indicates that there was active leadership of the church in the neighborhood.

The minutes of Old Pilgrim Church established by Elder Daniel Parker some three miles south of present-day Elkhart, Anderson County, show that a Baptist Church was "constituted" at Fort Houston on the "22d day of October 1840 . . . on the articals of faith that this church is united on known by the name of the Regular Baptist Church at Fort Houston." The minutes state that Daniel Parker was assisted in the performance of this act by "Brethren John Grigsby, Isaac Parker and Elder Allin Samuel in council," and it states further that the parent church "gave up fore members to said constitution (Viz) Stephen Crist Annay Crist Nancy Faulkenbury and Elizebeth Frost as formeley, but now (Delap) . . ." Letters of "Dismission" were given also to

"Brother James Jorden" and "Sister Lucindy Parker with the assistance in Part of Elders Greenwood and Brittain."²⁶

²⁶ "Records of an Early Texas Baptist Church," in The Quarterly of the Texas Historical Association, Volume II, October, 1907, 119.

According to A. J. Fowler, the Jordans had joined the Pilgrim Church on their way to Texas in 1833, having fallen in with the Parker caravan along the road.

This church functioned at the fort until after the War Between the States, after which time the membership met in the old school house near the Chambers place on the Middle Crockett Road until about 1881. It was finally merged with the original Pilgrim Church south of Elkhart.²⁷

²⁷ Letter from B. B. Walston to T. J. Starr, December 16, 1926; Statement by J. W. Miller to Mary Kate Hunter, May 30, 1939, "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas.

The story of the first organization of Methodists at the fort was told at "Aunt Bee" Small's funeral, according to Miss Fannie Gooch. The gist of her story follows: About 1841, a missionary came to Fort Houston and finding no church organization, located eight people who were willing to organize a Methodist Church. Times were so precarious, and Indians so troublesome, that while four in the fort were

organizing, four on the outside stood guard with their rifles, and in turn, the four inside went out to guard while the four outside came in to join the church. The church had no pastor then, but one of the members conducted services each Sunday. These lay services continued until the church was moved to Palestine where a circuit rider was provided. Five of these first members of the church were: "Aunt Bee" Small, Judge A. J. Fowler and his wife, Judge A. E. McClure and his wife.²⁸

²⁸ Statement by Fannie Gooch to Mary Kate Hunter, September 22, 1922, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas.

In 1843, there were a number of camp meetings held in Texas, particularly among the Methodists. Three of these were held in Houston County: one near Crockett, one on the Neches, and one at Fort Houston. "With such recruiting," says T. C. Richardson, "the Methodists were increasing rapidly."²⁹

²⁹ T. C. Richardson, East Texas, Volume II, 702.

Fort Houston's service in pushing back the wilderness and winning this fine country for homes and a livelihood for future generations may be her finest gift to the life of

this great state. Without question its next contribution has been the sons and daughters who have come forth from its walls to take their places in the political, social, and civic life of the communities where they have made their homes. Unfortunately, we do not have a complete roster of all who lived there, but we do have many, and their names and their record are a part of the proud heritage of the youth of our time and of this community. A brief account of those whose records are available seems to be the best way to let the people speak for themselves. Many have been mentioned earlier in this work but only incidental to some other phase of the story. Many whose names are known cannot be included in this section for lack of sufficient data.

Jordan

The name of Joseph Jordan looms large in the annals of Fort Houston, but little is known of his history or that of his wife, Elizabeth. Mrs. Laura Jordan Bennett, granddaughter of Joseph Jordan, made a statement at the ripe age of 94. In this she said that her grandfather came to Texas in 1833 with the Parkers who were on their way from Illinois; that her father (Levi Jordan) and mother and their family (including herself), were at Fort Houston for a short time, also her uncle, James Jordan and his wife, Bessie. Anderson County deed records show the names of five of Joseph Jordan's

daughters and their husbands: Nancy and William Frost, Elizabeth and Garrison Greenwood, Mary and Ignatius Gatewood, Malinda and Oliver Morris, Galitha and James J. Dodds.³⁰ According to John E. Holmes, Jr.,³¹ great grandson

³⁰ Mrs. Laura Bennett to M. K. Hunter, June 19, 1923, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas; Anderson County Deed Records, Books B and C.

³¹ Statement by John E. Holmes, Jr., personal interview, July 7, 1958.

of "Mowry" Crist, "Granny" Jordan taught the children of Fort Houston and the neighborhood. Her school stood a few hundred yards down the Magnolia Road after it intersects the old Bonner's Ferry Road.

Smith

General Nathaniel W. Smith came to Texas in the fall of 1838, bringing with him his wife, Martha, and eleven children, two of whom were already married, viz: Mary, wife of Dr. James Hunter, and Martha, wife of Thomas J. Metcalfe. The caravan consisted of overseers, and a number of slaves. They came directly to Fort Houston, then Houston County, from Athens, Tennessee. Tradition in the family of General Smith has it that he came to Texas before bringing his family and that he and a trusted slave, Squire, helped to build Fort

Houston on that trip. General Smith, as a young First Lieutenant in the 39th Regiment, U. S. Infantry, fought in the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, in the War of 1812, along with Sam Houston, a Second Lieutenant, at the time.³² General Smith

³² Records of War Department in Family Papers; in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter."

fought in the Seminole War in Florida with Andrew Jackson, and young John H. Reagan was a volunteer in his command at that time.³³

³³ John H. Reagan, Memoirs, 36.

Shortly after the arrival of General Smith at the fort, Sam Houston arrived there and the two were reunited after many years of separation. For some days they visited, played cards, and caught up on their letter writing. There is an interesting story about the table around which Smith and Houston sat as they visited together at the fort. It had fallen into the hands of Colonel A. E. McClure, who lived at the fort for a time, and passed in his family to a granddaughter, Mrs. Annie Laura Smith, of Montalba, Anderson County. In 1935, Mrs. Smith gave the table to Miss Kate Hunter, a great granddaughter of General Smith. Miss Hunter had the table moved to the John H. Reagan home which stood,

at that time, on the site of Fort Houston. In 1946, when the Reagan home was razed, the table was sent to Huntsville, Texas, by Mrs. Jeff D. Reagan to be placed in the Sam Houston home there.³⁴

³⁴ Palestine Daily Herald, January 7, 1935; see Appendix L; Statement by Mrs. Jeff D. Reagan, personal interview, July 6, 1958.

General Smith's will shows him to have been a wealthy man, particularly in land. His son-in-law, Dr. James Hunter, spoke of his owning fifty thousand acres in the Trinity Valley.³⁵ This would seem to lend credence to the story of

³⁵ See Appendix B; Smith will in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas.

his having come to Texas earlier, since thirty or forty days between his coming and the doctor's letter would hardly have given him time to negotiate the purchase of so much land. After spending the winter at Fort Houston, General Smith bought and operated the saline about four miles away, afterward known as the Salt Works.³⁶ Two interesting commentaries

³⁶ Statement by Georgia McMeans, personal interview, July 3, 1958; Miss McMeans is a great-granddaughter of General Nat. Smith.

on General Smith by people outside his family serve to give the impression that he was a born-leader. Anthony Cannon, an ex-slave who lived to the age of 93, said, "General Nat Smith and his family lived at the fort. He was one of the big men and was Commander of the fort . . ." Mrs. Sammie DeBard Phillips, whose father was at the fort for a short while said, "He was a man with what they call vision."³⁷

³⁷ Statement by Anthony Cannon (ex-slave) to Mary Kate Hunter, personal interview, September 24, 1922; Statement by Mrs. Sammie DeBard Phillips to Mary Kate Hunter, July 27, 1922, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas.

The Smith's last child, Texana, was born at Fort Houston. Both General Smith and his wife fell victims of the "fever" in the fall of 1841, and are buried in Fort Houston Cemetery.

Hunter

Dr. James Hunter arrived at Fort Houston in December, 1839, some twenty days behind the caravan of his father-in-law, General Nathaniel Smith. He had married Mary Smith in 1836, and they had two sons, the youngest but four months old when they set out for Texas. The letter he wrote to his father, Col. Archibald R. S. Hunter at Murphy, North Carolina, is a rich source of data about the country around

Fort Houston as well as the living conditions there. Dr. Hunter practiced medicine in the Fort Houston settlement. T. C. Richardson speaks of him as "the first practicing physician in what is now Anderson County (grandfather of Mary Kate Hunter, poet and publicist)." ³⁸ He, too, fell

³⁸ T. C. Richardson, East Texas, Volume II, 804; A. A. Aldrich, The History of Houston County, 161.

victim to the "fever" and died September 26, 1840, less than a year after his arrival, and was buried in Fort Houston Cemetery.

Gibson

Maria Ann Gibson Worley was born in Fort Houston, March 14, 1841, the daughter of Wm. M. Gibson and Cynthia Gibson who came to Texas in covered wagons from Tennessee. Mrs. Worley made a statement for Miss Kate Hunter on January 14, 1925, in which she told a few interesting things about both the fort and her own family. She remembered hearing her father say many times that none of the people left the fort to live until after the Indians were run out. She remembered hearing the stories of men at the fort plowing with rifles strapped to their backs; also that sometimes the Indians would come and steal the corn when the crop was made.

William Gibson moved seven miles east of Palestine

after the fort was abandoned and bought land. He became Anderson County's first tax collector and assessor. He would ride horseback over the county collecting the taxes and then on to Austin the same way carrying the money, mostly silver and gold, in his saddle pockets.³⁹

³⁹ Statement by Maria Ann Gibson Worley to Mary Kate Hunter, January 14, 1925, "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," Anderson County Records, Palestine, Texas.

Taylor

John F. Taylor came from Todd County, Kentucky, and bought a place one mile west of Fort Houston from Roland Box, sometime in 1840 or 41. He returned to Kentucky and brought his wife, Rebecca Walker Taylor, and two children (Fielding Bush and Lucy). Two other children were born after they came to the Fort Houston settlement: Molly Ford (later Mrs. John H. Reagan), and Irene. John F. Taylor engaged in farming on this place all the rest of his life. He was instrumental in founding the First Christian Church in Palestine a few years after the town was established.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Statement by Fielding Taylor to Mary Kate Hunter, May, 1922, "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," in Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas.

Wright

William Wright came to Fort Houston from Georgia in the fall of 1839, bringing his wife and two children, Mahlon and Thaddeus, and they lived in the fort for the six months of their first winter in Texas. Mr. Wright is quoted by members of his family as saying there were not more than a dozen families living in the fort at that time. In the spring of 1840, Mr. Wright and Joseph Pinson settled two miles north of present-day Palestine, some five miles from the fort, and built log houses for their families. Here they made boards from the red-oak trees. They covered their houses and the out-buildings with pine-board shingles which made a considerable show at a distance. His place was never attacked by the Indians, and Mr. Wright learned from friendly Indians many years later that the place looked so much like a fort it frightened the Indians away.

Wright and Pinson built the first cotton gin in this part of Texas, and through the years ginned cotton that came from fifty miles around. They later added a grist-mill to their establishment.

Mr. Wright was married four times and reared four groups of children. The third wife was the daughter of General Nathaniel of Fort Houston. Mr. Wright became one of Anderson County's first Commissioners in 1846. His

descendants have been people of ability and prominence in Palestine, Anderson County, and in the state as well. Probably the best known was Colonel George Anderson Wright of Palestine.⁴¹

⁴¹ Statement by Georgia McMeans (granddaughter of William Wright), July 3, 1958, personal interview.

DeBard

Dr. E. J. DeBard was a resident of Nacogdoches when Thomas J. Rusk recruited his force of volunteers to face the Indians and Mexicans at Kickapoo Springs, in Houston County. He joined this volunteer force and was painfully wounded in the battle at Kickapoo. The next day he was removed to Fort Houston along with the other wounded. His wife, learning of his condition, packed provisions and, accompanied by a faithful Negro slave, came on horseback to the fort to nurse her husband back to health. They later moved to the fort where the doctor and General Nat Smith were close friends. General Smith gave the doctor a very beautiful walking cane which remained in the family for many years. It is now in a trophy case in the Carnegie Library in Palestine, Texas. When the fort was abandoned, Dr. DeBard moved to Palestine where he practiced medicine.⁴²

⁴² Statement of Sammie DeBard Phillips to Mary Kate Hunter, July 27, 1922, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas.

Link

Henry Harnsbarger Link, another Tennesseean, came to Texas via Alabama, where he had been engaged in teaching to make money enough to pursue his study of medicine. The steady flow of families moving to the Republic of Texas gave the young teacher the urge to follow in their wake. By horseback and by river boat he made his way to Fort Houston in 1846 where he continued to teach. The children at the fort and the few scattered in the neighborhood were his pupils. An outbreak of yellow fever at the fort and the encouragement of friends, particularly Mr. John F. Taylor, at whose home the young man boarded, caused him to begin practicing medicine here where doctors were so badly needed. Four years he continued, at the fort and in the new town of Palestine, becoming the family physician for people over a wide area. In 1850, he went to Louisville, Kentucky, where he re-entered medical school and remained until he was graduated. From there he proceeded to his brother's home in Rush County, Illinois, where Miss Hypatia Magee had waited for him five years. The young couple were married and set out for Texas at once, traveling by stage and by river boat. They landed at Magnolia on the Trinity, eight miles from Fort Houston, where they were met by John F. Taylor with two saddled animals, a horse and a mule. The

bride rode to her new home, Mr. Taylor's house where they were to board for a time, by mule-back. The people had moved from the fort by this time, and Dr. and Mrs. Link soon became a part of the new town of Palestine.

Dr. Link's "little black bag" had many medicines which were herbs and roots gathered from forest and swamp. Blackberry cordial was a favorite remedy for summer complaint; slippery-elm bark was prescribed for nausea; cherry bark in whiskey, for chills; dried May-apple roots, powdered, for a purgative. Senna tea was prescribed for children's ailments, and sassafras tea was recommended to both old and young in the spring to thin the blood.⁴³

⁴³ Henry Link, "Saddlebag Doctor," in The Junior Historian, Volume XVI, No. 3, 26; Paxson Link, The Link Family, 157.

Dr. Link continued to serve the people of the Fort Houston settlement until his death in 1890. Old settlers tell that his favorite topic of conversation wherever he called on the sick was his experiences in and around Fort Houston, and that people never seemed to tire of hearing them. The first session of the Anderson County court was held in a log house a very short distance from the old fort (there being no houses on the site of Palestine yet), and Dr. H. H. Link served on the first jury, and the deliberations

of the jury were conducted under a tree near the Fort Houston spring.⁴⁴ This incident would indicate that Dr. Link

⁴⁴ Statement by Fielding Taylor to Mary Kate Hunter, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas.

took his duties of citizenship as seriously as he did his professional duties.

Dr. and Mrs. Link had three sons and a daughter. Two of the sons, "Dr. Ed" and "Dr. Henry," followed in their father's footsteps, practicing medicine in Palestine throughout their lives.

Joost

Mr. Alexander A. Joost, native of France, settled at Fort Houston late in 1844 or early in 1845. He engaged in the mercantile business with two other men named Buford and Simpson. After a year Mr. Joost bought the interest of his partners and continued to operate the business. He married Miss Nancy Lee of Nacogdoches in April, 1846, and brought his bride to Fort Houston. Here a daughter, Laura Lee, was born to them in 1847, and three weeks later Mr. Joost moved his business and his family to Palestine, just then being laid out as the new county seat. Mr. Joost's daughter tells that she often heard her father say that he used the old

Fort Houston for a warehouse for his merchandise and also for cotton during the year he operated his business there.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Statement by Laura Joost Phillips to Mary Kate Hunter, January 2, 1923, "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter."

Like so many of the Fort Houston people, Mr. Joost was one of the most highly respected citizens both at the fort and later in Palestine. When Alexander Joost died, November 2, 1878, W. Y. Lacy wrote a tribute to his memory for the Palestine Advocate, in which he described him as "just, honorable, directed upon principle, worthy," and in other similar complimentary terms. His descendants are still people of integrity and a high type of citizenship.

Crist

The name Crist appears in many of the stories laid at Fort Houston, in the deed records and on the land maps of the area, and in Fort Houston cemetery. Daniel LaMora Crist married Elizabeth Childress, and their son William was born in the fort during its early days, although the exact date is not available. Daniel L. Crist's brother, Stephen, married Annie Parker, and their daughter, Sarah (Sally) was born in the fort May 25, 1839. John Crist is listed among the first settlers to come to the settlement from Nacogdoches

but no information could be found concerning his residence or his family. William Crist, born at Fort Houston, was a soldier in the Civil War, and is buried in Fort Houston Cemetery. His daughter, Elizabeth, married John E. Holmes. There is a community just south of the Fort Houston Cemetery known as the Holmes Chapel Community. Its Methodist Church is called Holmes Chapel Church. The present County Judge of Anderson County is John E. Holmes, Jr., great-grandson of Daniel LaMora Crist.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Statement by John E. Holmes, Jr., July 3, 1958, personal interview.

Glenn - Fowler - McClure

Captain Nathan Glenn, veteran of the War of 1812, with his family, two sons-in-law--George Gresham and A. E. McClure, and many slaves reached Fort Houston in the fall of 1840. They had come by way of Red River County, camping at Clarksville for a time to give the family some rest. Andrew Jackson Fowler, attorney and Chief Justice of that county, visited at the camp getting the news from the States and became well acquainted with the Captain and his family. When the caravan prepared to move on to the southward, the young attorney found he had business in San Augustine and Nacogdoches and rode with them to their new home. It soon

developed that a large part of the "business" was fifteen-year-old Martha Glenn. By the time they reached Fort Houston the "fever" had attacked the cavalcade, both the family and the slaves. Two of the Glenn children, Virginia and William, died and were buried in Fort Houston Cemetery. Several of the slaves died also and were buried in the section of the cemetery reserved for the slaves.

The only available house in the settlement was the abandoned cabin where the ill-fated Campbell family had been massacred the year before, but the Glenn family moved in. Soon after their arrival when the fever had abated somewhat, Martha revealed that she and Jack Fowler had made plans for a spring wedding.

In order that his daughter might have a proper wedding Captain Glenn sent several of his trusted Negroes to Austin's colony on the Brazos for hogs and other supplies. On the return trip the meal and other things were packed on mules, and the hogs were driven along the Indian trails and the old San Antonio road. Fort Houston's corn crop had been carried away by the squirrels and crows that year, and the people had again resorted to game for food.

When the taxes had been collected in Red River County, about the first of February, the young chief justice, Jack Fowler, travelled by horseback from Clarksville to Austin to deliver the saddlebags of gold and silver to the treasury

of the Republic. From there he rode to Crockett, the county seat of Houston County, for his marriage license. As he turned toward Fort Houston on the morning of February 10, 1841, one of the "blue northerners" Texas was famous for blew in and with it a freezing rain. By the time the prospective bridegroom reached the Glenn home his Mexican blanket was a solid sheet of ice about him. He had to be lifted, bodily, from his saddle and thawed out before time for the wedding.

From the chests of family heirlooms brought from Virginia a wedding dress of handsome silk had been fashioned for the bride; and so, these two were wed--taking their vows on the charred spot left in the floor by Mrs. Campbell's firebrand as she struggled to fire the gun which might have saved her family two years before. Following the wedding came the feast, and great was the rejoicing of the family and their neighbors from the fort when the wedding supper included such delicacies as "fatty-bread," "shore-'nough" coffee, and hog-meat. The coffee had been brought by the family from the States.

This wedding must have been a momentous occasion, as well as a "royal" feast for all the people at the fort and the "environs," for no other single event has been told and re-told so many times by the old settlers and their descendants in Anderson County. This couple lived through forty-four years together and reared eight children to maturity.

A. J. Fowler was a Kentuckian who had served as chief justice of Red River County, and he represented Lamar County, which had been set up out of Red River County, in the Texas Congress in 1841. In 1846, when Anderson County was created, he moved to Palestine where he practiced law and was associated with others in the publishing of the Trinity Advocate, the first regular newspaper in the county.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Mrs. J. J. Arthur, Annals of the Fowler Family, 175-179.

Captain Glenn and Mr. Gresham moved their families from Fort Houston and settled farms on Ioni Creek in the southeastern part of Anderson County. They were not directly associated with Fort Houston thereafter except as members of their families intermarried with those at the fort. Their descendants are among the substantial citizenry in all of Anderson County and in Palestine now.

Judge A. E. McClure and his wife lived at the fort until Palestine was established. One son, Bobby McClure, was born to them at the fort. In Palestine Judge McClure practiced law and edited the Trinity Advocate. In his later years after the death of his wife, Judge McClure married Mrs. Bee Small.

Pioneer Women

No account of the people at Fort Houston would be complete without a tribute to the pioneer woman and the part she played in the drama of the frontier. It is difficult to picture the courage and the fortitude it required for young women, reared in the comparative ease and luxury of a southern plantation home, to follow their men-folk into the wilderness of this unknown country. But come they did, and having come, they were equal to the tasks they found to do.

They were wives and mothers first, but in addition they stood guard at the portholes of the fort when the men were away, they nursed the sick, bandaged the wounded, befriended the orphan, comforted the bereaved and taught the children to read and write. The multiplicity of their household chores was staggering--they cooked and cleaned and washed and ironed; they spun and wove and sewed and knitted. They dripped the ashes to get the lye for soap, they took a hand at the drying and salting and pickling of the winter's food supply, and many helped in the fields by day and did the inside chores by night. They presided at religious services when necessary, and through it all they upheld the genteel manners to which they were born and to which their children were heirs. It might well be that it was the work of the pioneer woman which gave rise to the saying:

"Man's work is from sun to sun
 Woman's work is never done . . ."

Two of Fort Houston's women, "Aunt Bee" Small and Mary M. Carr, are mentioned over and over in statements gathered from Old Settlers as being remarkable for their contribution to the life of the fort and of the community after the fort was abandoned. There were others, no doubt, who deserve mention, but for lack of information these two will complete this record.

Mrs. Louisiana Catherine (Bee) Small

"Aunt Bee" as she was familiarly known, came to Texas from Georgia with her husband, John Small, and one child, Georgiana, in 1839. In their party were her two brothers, H. Clay and Richard W. Davis, and her mother, Mrs. Catherine Davis. They were on the same boat on the Red River with John H. Reagan, who said afterward that except for the encouragement and advice of H. Clay Davis he would have turned back at the border and probably never have come to Texas.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ John H. Reagan, Memoirs, 27.

At San Augustine, Bee Small joined the First Methodist Church organized in Texas, and here, too, her mother died. The rest of the party came on to the Neches River and stopped at Fort Duty, a family fort near the river, but

because the Indian raids were so numerous, they moved on to the protection of Fort Houston.

Here Bee Small assisted in organizing the First Methodist Church in Anderson County, as related earlier in this chapter. One child, R. H. (Dick) Small, was born at Fort Houston. The Smalls had nine children in all, seven of whom lived to be grown.

Bee Small was described by her friends as: "generous to a fault, lavish with her flowers for the sick and the dead in a day when there were no florists, one of the best-informed women in the community, a fine nurse, and a real Christian."

When Anderson County was established, the Smalls, together with most of the other Fort Houston settlers, moved to Palestine where Bee Small lived the rest of her life. She was left a widow in 1852 with these small children to raise, but with all that she still found time to assist in every good community movement. In 1862, she was married to Judge A. E. McClure, who, with his family, had been a Fort Houston resident in the 1840's. Bee Small died August 23, 1895, at the age of seventy-nine, having been a resident of the county fifty-six years.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Statement by W. D. Small to Mary Kate Hunter; Statement by Fannie Gooch to Mary Kate Hunter; Statement by Sammie DeBard Phillips to Mary Kate Hunter, "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," personal interviews.

Mary M. (Hunter) Carr

Mary M. Carr, daughter of General Nathaniel Smith and his wife, Martha, came to Texas in 1839 at the age of nineteen with her husband, Dr. James Hunter, and two small sons, Nathaniel Wyche and Malcolm Kenmore, the younger only four months old. They traveled in a carriage, and it took three months for the trip from Athens, Tennessee, to Fort Houston, Texas. They came at a time when Indian trouble had been very bad around the fort, but with the Cherokee War just over things were improving.

Mary Hunter lost her husband within a year and both her father and her mother the following year, all of a malignant fever which besieged the fort in those years. This left her with two small children of her own, an infant sister born at the fort, and a large family of brothers and sisters not yet grown to care for. In these next few years she was often called "Old Hickory" by her friends, because she showed the type of staunch courage displayed by Andrew Jackson, under whom her father fought in the War of 1812.

In a few years she married Colonel James Carr, a lawyer in Crockett, Texas, but this was not a happy marriage, and it lasted only two years.

Mary Carr was both mother and father to the children in her charge. A scholar herself, she helped with their

education when teachers were not available. Like Bee Small, she was a skillful nurse and was often found at the bedside of the sick. When Palestine was established, she moved from the fort and made her home there.

Mary Carr rode over the country, horseback, with some of the children, managing her father's vast estate. She made several trips to Washington, D. C., alone, in the days before railroads, attending to the business of the estate.

Later, when one of her sisters died, she took five of the orphaned children and was mother to them also. She outlived all of her brothers and sisters by many years and even helped to rear her son's family of seven children.

Mary M. Carr has been called the mother of St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Palestine, because she assisted so ably in organizing the little band of half a dozen members into a unit. There is a plaque inscribed to her memory in the church now. She died in her seventieth year on January 27, 1890.⁵⁰ She was the grandmother of Mary Kate

⁵⁰ Mary Kate Hunter, "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas; Hunter Family History.

Hunter, of Palestine.

And so Fort Houston lived, served, and is no more,

but "it can never die as long as the memory of its brave deeds are told and retold by the generations of its descendants."⁵¹

⁵¹ Mary Kate Hunter.

CHAPTER V

FORT HOUSTON CEMETERY

Today the most concrete evidence of the one-time existence of old Fort Houston is the Fort Houston Cemetery. Here in the quiet and peace of the rural countryside sleep many of the pioneers alongside their wives and children. This quiet resting-place is in strange contrast to the busy, heroic lives these people must have lead as they transformed a wilderness inhabited by Indians and wild animals into a safe and happy community. The dates on such headstones as can be read bear mute testimony to the fact that life here in this early colony was hard, for many died young. There was no chapel here, other than the giant oaks, no sexton nor any mortician to preside when loved ones had to be laid to rest. More than likely the funeral service had to be read by a neighbor or a member of the family until such time as a circuit-rider or a visiting minister might come this way. No lots were sold in this graveyard. People selected a spot and buried their dead without the formality of a permit. They planted cedar trees and such flowers and shrubs as grew in their own door yards, and each family kept its own graves in order.

Jeff D. Reagan, son of John H. Reagan, was born at

the Reagan home (called Fort Houston after the original fort was abandoned) in 1870, and his recollections on the cemetery give us our best account of it. He says that as a boy ten or twelve years of age, he frequently rambled through the graveyard. There were no fences then; graves were scattered, most of them unmarked, or marked with stones or blazed trees. There was no system by which burial plots were selected, but in one location there were a number of graves placed side by side as if there had been a purpose there. This group was said to have been the graves of Texas soldiers, and there were seventeen of them. This, he said, was "neighborhood talk," but that it had been repeated from one generation to another and that its correctness had never "been questioned locally."¹ At the time Mr. Reagan made

¹ Statement by Jeff D. Reagan to Mary Kate Hunter, November 5, 1941, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," in Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas.

the above statements, he was still living in the house where he was born. He helped to locate the graves of the soldiers and supervised the placing of a very large native boulder in the vicinity of the graves to serve as a monument to these heroes. The Fort Houston Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas had the marker inscribed to the memory of "The Soldiers of the Republic of Texas buried herein."

Mr. J. E. Holmes, also born in the neighborhood and grandson of Captain Daniel Crist, one of the earliest Fort Houston settlers, made this report concerning the graves of the soldiers:

I fenced the cemetery, about seventeen acres, and I know the exact location of the plot where the Texas Revolutionary soldiers are buried. They were eight feet apart. I think there were only seventeen, though some say twenty-seven.²

² Statement by J. E. Holmes to Mary Kate Hunter, September 22, 1941, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," in Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas.

Mr. Holmes made these additional statements concerning those buried in the cemetery:

1. David Fortenbury is buried in Fort Houston Cemetery with the arrow in his breast that killed him. He was buried on the west side, and there are four sinks where there have been graves--these are probably the graves of his companions--south of his grave. David Fortenbury's grave is on the dividing line between the white and Negro cemeteries. A big stump marks his grave.

2. Other victims of Indians on that expedition and whose bodies were found must have been buried there also. There was no other place but the cemetery.

3. They were bound to have buried Malathiel Campbell in the cemetery--no other place.³

³ Statement by J. E. Holmes to Mary Kate Hunter, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter."

The Daughters of the Republic of Texas, who had the cemetery fenced in 1941, also had native-rock gates built, and on Decoration Day, 1942, there was held a joint ceremony dedicating the stone gateway, the memorial stone at the graves of the seventeen soldiers of the Texas Revolution who are buried there, and the memorial stone on the site of Fort Houston. This ceremonial was carried out with military honors--the American Legion and the Anderson County Defense Guard both participating with their rituals. Out-of-town honor guests present and participating were Mrs. Madge W. Hearne, granddaughter of Sam Houston; Mrs. Hally Bryan Perry, great-niece of Stephen F. Austin; Mrs. Marion N. Chrestman, State President, U. S. Daughters of 1812; Mrs. F. Schenkenberg, retiring President Daughters of the Republic of Texas; Mrs. Ben E. Edwards, President of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas; and Judge A. A. Aldrich, author of the History of Houston County. Miss Mary Kate Hunter, Palestine's historian, poet, and civic leader, presided over the ceremonies, speaking briefly both at the cemetery and at the Fort Houston marker. Standing on the grounds of the Fort Houston Cemetery, she said:

By the building of the gateway and the placing of a boulder and marker to the Texas soldiers buried in Fort Houston

Cemetery, it has been lifted from the oblivion in which it has lain for the hundred years of its existence, and comes into its own.⁴

⁴ Mary Kate Hunter, speaking at the dedicatory ceremonies at Fort Houston Cemetery, May 30, 1942; see Appendix N.

At least eight of the Texas heroes buried in these hitherto unmarked graves are known. They are Julius Bullock, John W. Carpenter, and _____ Wright, killed in the Indian encounter just prior to the Kickapoo fight; James Hall, mortally wounded at Kickapoo; William Frost, David Faulkenbury, Columbus Anderson, and Colonel Richard Sparks.⁵

⁵ Mary Kate Hunter, "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter," in Carnegie Library, Palestine, Texas.

The fever epidemics which struck Fort Houston in 1840 and 1841 were particularly deadly, carrying off some of the fort's finest citizens. Among these were General Nathaniel Smith and his wife; their son-in-law, Dr. James Hunter; Virginia and William Glenn, children of Captain Nathan Glenn, whose family and slaves contracted the fever on their way to the fort; also some of Captain Glenn's slaves whose names are not known. All of these are buried in the cemetery, and, except for the slaves, their graves are marked.

The insignia of the National Society, Daughters of 1812, marks the grave of General Smith. It was placed there on November 9, 1939, by representatives of the James Asbury Tait Chapter of Houston, Texas. The ceremonies on this occasion were simple and again under the sponsorship of Mary Kate Hunter, great-granddaughter of General Smith, together with the Palestine chapters of D. R. T. and D. A. R.⁶

⁶ Palestine Daily Herald, November 9, 1939; see Appendix O.

Joseph Jordan and his wife, Elizabeth, founders of the fort and donors of the land for the town of Houston laid out here, are buried in the cemetery;⁷ also Mollie Crist

⁷ Statement by Laura Bennett to Mary Kate Hunter, June 19, 1923, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter."

Farris, daughter of W. H. Crist, another of the original settlers; and "Percy Fullinwider's infant baby, who was born in the fort and filled the first grave in the cemetery."⁸

⁸ J. E. Holmes to Mary Kate Hunter, September 22, 1941, in "Unpublished Papers of Mary Kate Hunter."

The Fort Houston Cemetery is still used by a few

neighboring families, descendants of the pioneer settlers. It is well tended. Depending largely on native shrubs and trees for beauty, the quiet hill where sleep the veterans of six wars is a point of interest to visitors in the area as well as to the home people.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

In the years prior to the Texas Revolution, which began at Gonzales in October, 1835, and ended with the famous and decisive battle of San Jacinto, April 21, 1836, Mexico had a very liberal land policy for immigrants coming into Texas. Americans were a land-hungry people, and free land in Texas was a magnet which drew many settlers across the Red and the Sabine rivers, along the Gulf coast and up the fertile valleys of all the Texas rivers. By 1835 the population of Texas was between thirty and forty thousand people.

From around Nacogdoches, the oldest settled area in East Texas, families moved into the upper Trinity valley in what is now Anderson County, about two miles west of the present city of Palestine, and established the first white settlement in this area in 1835. A town called Houston was laid out, and lots were sold, but this project never really developed. A log fort and a stockade were built--some say by the order of General Sam Houston--which was called Fort Houston. A mill was built south of the fort on a creek, a cemetery plot was laid off, some business was established, farms in the area were cultivated, the settlement grew and

prospered, protected by the stout walls of the fort and the soldiers stationed there.

The Fort Houston Settlement was begun under the jurisdiction of the Nacogdoches district, but when Houston County was established in 1837, the settlement lay within the new county. An unsuccessful effort was made to create Burnet County, which included the Fort Houston Settlement, as a judicial county. When judicial counties were declared unconstitutional, the North Houston County Judicial District was set up within Houston County with Fort Houston designated as its center. From 1844 until Anderson County was established in 1846, court was held at regular intervals at the fort.

By an act of the first legislature under the new state of Texas, Anderson County was set up to meet the needs of a rapidly-increasing population. By this act Fort Houston was made ineligible to become the county seat of the new county, because it lay one-quarter of a mile too far from the center of the county. The new town of Palestine became the seat of justice. As the new county seat grew and all business moved there, Fort Houston became a ghost town and ceased to exist except as a rural community.

As a unit in the defense of the frontier against the Indians, Fort Houston had a very active career from 1835 to 1842, serving as a refuge for the people of the settlement

and sending its soldiers and citizens out in defense of other settlements whenever there was need. The fort played an important part in harboring and aiding the refugees from Fort Parker following the famous massacre there on May 19, 1836. Fort Houston never received a direct attack from the Indians, but the people of the settlement were in almost constant danger of attack from 1837 until late 1841 and had to be constantly on guard. Many of the settlers were killed by Indians when they were away from the fort on various expeditions, and the Campbell massacre--one of the worst in Texas during these years--occurred within a mile of Fort Houston. Troops and volunteers from the fort participated in the battles between the Texans and the Cordova-Flores-Indian rebels and also in the expulsion of the Cherokees from Texas in 1839.

Today there is no trace of Fort Houston or of the town of Houston which was laid out there. All that remains on the ground is the stone marker erected in 1936 by the Texas Centennial Commission. In the community and in Palestine, where most of the original settlers moved after 1846, there are many stories of life in the community, of Indian raids and depredations, and of the people who lived at Fort Houston during its short life. The spot where the old fort stood is only a worn-out field, as quiet as the lonely,

shaded cemetery over the hill to the south where sleep many of the pioneers who blazed the trail and opened the way into these lands.

Conclusions

From the facts presented in this study the following conclusions may be in order:

1. Forts along the frontier in the years when the white people were moving into the Indian lands were a very real necessity.

2. Those forts occupied by troops, as Fort Houston was, functioned much better than the family forts such as Fort Parker, in Limestone County, and Fort Duty and Fort Brown in Houston County.

3. The Congress of the Republic of Texas was quick to respond to call for troops and rangers to defend the scattered settlements.

4. From the coming of the white man into the Indian country, the days of the Indian were numbered for they lacked the skill and military genius of the whites.

5. The policy of the government in establishing new counties for the convenience of the people is apparent. The

legislature was quick to act upon the petitions of the people in this matter.

6. This study points up a very real need for accurate county histories in Texas and, where they exist, a need to have them kept up to date. Under present conditions it is extremely difficult to reconstruct the living conditions of earlier generations with accuracy. Without more adequate local histories, the task will become increasingly difficult, if not impossible, as more time passes.

"A people that takes no pride in the noble achievements of remote ancestors will never achieve anything worthy to be remembered by remote descendants."

---Macaulay

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

From the files of Palestine Daily Herald, Monday, February 8, 1932.

HISTORIC FORT HOUSTON SCENE TREE PLANTING

Historic Fort Houston, an immortal monument to the memory of Anderson County's first white citizens, was the scene of a memorial tree-planting Sunday afternoon, when more than one hundred patriotic historians gathered to honor the old fort and its first defenders.

Members of the Fort Houston Chapter, Daughters of the Republic of Texas, sponsored the fitting program, and Miss Kate Hunter, president of that organization, performed as master of ceremonies.

Fort Houston once stood on what is now known as the John H. Reagan property about three miles west of Palestine. The program was participated in by descendants of John H. Reagan.

Boy Scouts of Troup 1 hoisted the Texas flag as the opening number on the program, and ladies of the D. of R. T. responded with a formal salute. A cedar tree was planted, with D. of R. T. members and others taking part.

Talks were made by Col. George A. Wright, one of the county's earliest settlers; Bonner Frizzell, superintendent of the public schools; S. E. Reed, mayor of Palestine; and Jeff D. Reagan, son of John H. Reagan. Mr. Reagan discussed a map of the old fort.

From the minutes of Fort Houston Chapter, Daughters of the Republic of Texas:

List of Contents of the bottle buried at the planting of the cedar tree on the site of Fort Houston, February 7, 1932.

1. Lindberg Stamp
2. Air Mail Stamp
3. Stamps--Mt. Vernon 1932, Washington bi-centennial:
½, 1, 1½, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 -- U. S.

- Washington Stamps
4. Stone Mountain Half-Dollar
 5. Lincoln Penny
 6. Five cent piece
 7. Dime
 8. Victory Liberty Loan War Medal
 9. War Y. M. C. A. pennant
 10. Chinese coin
 11. Dime-1857
 12. Clipping of the Program for the occasion

Note: The newspaper story of February 6, 1932, stated that the bottle to be buried during the ceremony would contain the names of the members of the Fort Houston Chapter of D. of the R. T.

APPENDIX B

Copy of a letter written by Dr. James Hunter from Fort Houston, (Anderson County) January 12, 1840, to his father, Col. Archibald R. S. Hunter, Murphy, North Carolina, Cherokee County.

* * * * *

Fort Houston, January 12, 1840. Dear Father: I write by the first opportunity of sending a letter to the United States. Mr. Rutherford returned to Tennessee and will convey this as far as Athens (Tenn). I arrived here about the 12th of December last, having been about 80 days on the road. I was detained about 21 days besides coming about 250 miles out of my way. Had I come directly here it would have taken me about 45 days. No serious accident of any kind happened to us on the road. We traveled as far as the Mississippi river without rain.

We suffered somewhat for water but not much. At the Mississippi river our money gave out and we were at a loss for a few days how to get along but a gentleman from Alabama who was camped there, moving to Texas, offered to advance the funds necessary to take me on. I accepted them and came on in his company. He was taken violently ill on the way and I had it in my power to repay his kindness in part by attending him. I waited on him 12 days and got him safely to this place where he is yet.

I did not overtake General Smith. He got here about 20 days before me. He could not wait for me in Tennessee but left \$500.00 for me in Tennessee with his brother-in-law.

He was absent when I was there and I did not hear of it until I got to Mississippi and I could not then leave my family to go back and get it. He has furnished me with some and will advance enough to commence business here.

We are about 8 miles from the Trinity River near the 32nd degree North latitude. The climate is the most pleasant I have ever experienced, although the weather is so warm in winter it is (I am told) pleasant in summer. There is always a breeze stirring even on the most sultry days that render a fan unnecessary. The soil is extremely productive and good land in abundance.

Dr. James Hunter to Col. A. R. S. Hunter, January 12, 1840, p. 2

The expense and trouble of clearing is entirely done with. In the prairie lands you have to do nothing but fence and in the woody lands you have to do nothing but fence still.

The lands are so open that you may start your ploughs in them. No shrubbing to do at all. All that is necessary is to belt the timber and burn the grass. The crop will average upland 1500 pounds of cotton and river bottom 3000 pounds to the acre. One hand will make about as three can save. The river lands are inferior to those of the Brazos, Navasota, Colorado but they are better watered and timbered. Steam boats can run some distance above this place. The water here is excellent; the finest bold running springs as you ever saw are all over the country. It is all nonsense about there being no good land.

General Smith owns over fifty thousand acres of land which he has paid for. They are lands principally on the Trinity River. He will locate some of it in the Cherokee Nation which lies directly above us between the Neches and Angelina Rivers.

All danger from Mexicans we apprehend is at an end. All we have to fear is incursions from small bodies of Cherokee Indians, burning and pillaging the frontier settlements. I have had one brush with them since I have been here. Eighteen of us, General Smith among the number, went up to their country to look at lands. We were too careless, thinking they would not attack us. They fired on us about 8 o'clock at night before we had stationed our sentinel. We returned the fire as soon as we could gather our arms and establish some order charging them in the dark and driving them off. There were seven lying in a tent and they fired at us about 30 feet distant right into the mouth of the tent. Eighteen balls were shot in a row directly above our heads right through the tent. One man was wounded. General Smith had a ball to pass through his coat sleeve, another through his saddle which he was using as a pillow. Several had balls through their hats and clothes. I had one bullet through my overcoat and ten or twelve buckshot or slug holes through the same. I never knew of so many close ticks given and so little damage done. We could not ascertain whether we killed any of them or not as it was in a cane brake and they had opportunities of carrying off their dead and wounded. It was pretty scary times for a while but we come off safe but one man, a Mr. Dunniger from Kentucky who received a rifle ball in his thigh. He is now

Dr. James Hunter to Col. A. R. S. Hunter, January 12, 1840, p. 3

under my charge and will recover of it, I hope without more danger. It is about 40 miles above here.

We have a fort here and also settlers around it. There are about 100 men capable of using arms so that we apprehend no danger from any force they can bring against us. We can defend ourselves if necessary against one thousand Indians and less danger from Mexicans than there is in the States.

One may risk something to gain such a country as it is. We are about 150 miles from the Sabine river, directly west from the Gulf and about 120 miles east of Austin, the present seat of government. The country south of us is thinly settled mostly by emigrants from the States. There is a vast extent of country north in which not a white man lives. Nothing but Indians and buffaloes and horses. It is by far the best part of Texas. The soil is more fertile and the climate is better adapted to the growth of wheat, corn etc. Water also is better and the timber more plenty. Lands are rising rapidly. The unprecedented emigration during the past fall has enhanced their value very much. Uplands are selling from \$2.00 to \$3.00 per acre. Improved lands rent from \$8.00 to \$10.00 per acre.

The best chance to get good lands is to buy the claims of individuals and locate them yourself. This is the way General Smith has obtained the fine settlements on the Trinity which he has. You may buy a claim to a league (4,605 acres) for about \$500.00. If you buy smaller claims they cost more. Every acre you can put in and cultivate well is worth from \$50.00 to \$60.00 per acre. The soil is the easiest to cultivate in the world. One or two ploughings and one hoeing is all it requires to make a crop. The range for cattle is the finest I ever saw. You may ride miles through gama grass as high as your head; thousands of acres are covered with it. Immense cane brakes on every water course and the river prairies are covered with wild rye of the best kind. The cattle are fat at all seasons of the year. Fine cows are selling from \$18.00 to \$20.00. Steers are worth \$30.00 to \$35.00 per head. Hogs are high, pork worth 10¢ and plenty at that price. I have seen some hogs killed this winter 18 months old which weighed 250 lbs. and had never tasted corn. I think that it cannot be beat for hogs in the world. They never think of fattening pork but drive them from the woods and kill them right away. Corn is worth \$1.00 per bushel though it is sold in the fall

Dr. James Hunter to Col. A. R. S. Hunter, January 12, 1840, p. 4
at 40¢ a bushel. Plenty can now be had at Nacogdoches at 50¢.

There are a great many deer in the woods and turkeys innumerable. I have killed as many as five of an evening. I helped to kill a very large panther last week about three miles from town. There were three of us in the same cane brake shooting turkeys when our dogs started it and treed it within a few hundred yards of us; we shot four balls into it before we could kill it. It measured 8 feet from the end of its nose to the tip of its tail. There are lots of bears. Buffaloes are very numerous 25 miles from this place but it is dangerous to hunt them on account of the Indians.

There is a very good school here. We have a Sabbath school also, forty scholars. We have a very orderly community. I have not seen a drunk man since I have been here. I have not been here long enough to become acquainted with the exact state of the country. We who are very recently here from the old settled parts scarcely ever see a newspaper and never get a letter. I have not seen a paper from the States since my arrival.

I did not mention fish. We have the finest trout, perch, bass, buffalo, etc. in the world and as plentiful as leaves on the trees.

General Smith will be in Athens (Tenn.) in March or April and will see you if possible, if not will write you. I shall write again by him and shall expect a letter from you before he leaves. All his family are well. Mary and the children are in excellent health and desire to be remembered to mother and yourself. . . .

(Personal messages to members of his family)

General Smith and family send their love to all.

Yours truly,

James Hunter

Original letter presented to the library of the University of Texas by Mary Kate Hunter, granddaughter of Dr. Hunter.

Donation of the

Town of Houston

Surveyed and plotted
by M. J. McDonald



APPENDIX D

From the files of the Palestine Herald-Press, February 13, 1951.

MARKER TO GIVE REAGAN TRIBUTE

Daughters of the American Colonists will pay tribute to the late John H. Reagan by dedicating a granite marker in his honor Wednesday afternoon two miles west of Palestine.

Reagan, one of the South's outstanding statesmen during the latter part of the nineteenth century, lived on the site after he returned from service in the Confederate cabinet during the Civil War. He died in 1905.

Inscribed on the marker will be the following:

John Henniger Reagan, 1818-1905, jurist and statesman, postmaster general of the Confederate States of America, United States senator, first chairman of the Railroad Commission of Texas, erected by Texas Society of Daughters of the American Colonists.

Leaders of Southwestern historical societies are scheduled to participate in the dedication. They include Mrs. H. H. Hawley, national honorary vice president of the Daughters of the American Colonists; Mrs. Henry R. Wofford, state president, Daughters of the Republic of Texas; Miss Mary Ethyl Walters, state regent, Daughters of American Colonists; Mrs. Frank G. Trau, national vice president, southern division, Daughters of American Colonists; and Mrs. D. S. Collins, state chairman for marking historical spots for Daughters of American Colonists.

The program is scheduled to begin at 1:30 o'clock at the old Reagan homesite. Special music by the Palestine High School Band, under direction of Roy B. Wallace, will follow an assembly call.

The principal address will be given by Dr. Bonner Frizzell. Reagan Ferguson is scheduled to give a biographical sketch of Judge Reagan, his grandfather.

Officials said the program will last one hour. They invited the public to attend.

APPENDIX E

Capt. Jewell

Capt. George W. Jewell was a resident of McMinville, Tenn., in 1836. He was a man of considerable property and had a profitable business. After the disasters at the Alamo and at Goliad in the spring of 1836, he became so greatly interested in Texas affairs, that he raised a company of volunteers at his own expense and with this company left McMinville on Aug. 16, 1836, arriving in Texas on Sept. 11th and entered the service Sept. 19th, 1836. He served for six months. He enlisted as Capt. of his volunteer company, and was sent immediately to Fort Houston.

There being more soldiers at that post than were ordinarily enrolled in one company, it was ordered that there should be two companies formed with a major commanding both. George Washington Jewell was elected major of the post, and later, in 1837, remained at the same post as major of a ranging company stationed there. Besides a considerable sum of money expended in raising and transporting his company of volunteers from Tenn. to Texas in 1836, Major Jewell furnished wagons, & teams for the Texas army. In 1856 his heirs applied to the Texas Govt. for payment for this service, and were granted relief to the amount of 320 acres of land. See Comptroller's Military Service Records, Texas State Library.¹

¹ Amelia W. Williams, and E. C. Barker, (eds.), The Writings of Sam Houston, Vol., I, 498.

APPENDIX F

Letter from the citizens of Fort Houston to the President of the Republic of Texas, Sam Houston.

From Original Rusk Papers, Stephen F. Austin Library, Nacogdoches, Texas.

Fort Houston, Aug. 25, 1838

To his Excellency, the Pres.

Sir

We the undersigned citizens of the town of Houston (Houston County) & its vicinity, beg leave respectfully to represent to your excellency that our property has been stolen, our houses & farms infested and surrounded, our families alarmed & ourselves compelled to desert our homes on account of depredations committed by our Indian neighbors. We would further beg leave to suggest as our settled conviction that from our isolated situation and sparseness of our population, this settlement will be compelled to desert our property & homes unless some active & energetic measures are adopted to secure our property & protect our women and children from the tomahawk & scalping, or more cruel horror of Indian captivity. This subject is most respectfully submitted to the consideration of the Executive & some protection earnestly but strongly solicited in our truly unpleasant & distressing situation. The Indians who are doing mischief in this neighborhood are supposed to be principally the Kickapoes. An early answer is requested as we do not feel safe to remain with our families in our present situation unless prompt measures are taken for our relief.

We have the honor to be

With great respect etc

Your Obt Sevts

P. C. Lumpkin	Leroy McKinzie	John Crist
W. L. McDonald	R. C. Dixon	William Smith
A. McKinsie	A. G. Person	John Smith
C. F. McInza	Spencer Hobs	
John S. Delay (p)	G. H. Duncan	
W. B. Shearer	L. Roberson	

William Craigheay	J. M. (?) Carpenter
Stephen Crist	W. M. Frost
Jacob C. Morrow	H. Ussury
M. Theo Carter	B. Person
John T. Brown	Geo. W. Browning

Addressed to His Excellency Samuel Houston
Nacogdoches, Texas

APPENDIX G

Hd Quarters Nacogdoches
1st October 1838

To the Citizens of the County of Houston

In consequence of the information received of the hostilities of the Indians up on your frontier and the depredations committed upon your citizens I have authorized raising of from two to three hundred volunteers to defend the country and chastize the Indians the repeated depredations the thefts and sundries which have been committed in your county by a faithless and insignificant foe has called loudly for exemplary punishment upon the Indians and you are loudly called upon by every consideration of regard to your country and your frontier of helpless women and children to shoulder your arms and chastize the enemy-- You have more than once given sufficient evidence of your devotion to your country and your readiness to encounter any danger in his defence and the undersigned entertains full confidence that those who have heretofore bared their bosoms to danger and on from this immediate hour will not be found wanting when called upon to expel from their very doors a savage foe who has for years paped by their savage war whoop disturbed the midnight slumbers of your women and children

Nothing would afford the undersigned more pleasure than to be with you but engagements which he cannot leave denies him that gratification.

With Great Respect

Thos. J. Rusk

APPENDIX H

From the Original Rusk Papers, Stephen F. Austin Library,
Nacogdoches, Texas.

At Home. Fri eve Oct 5 1838

Gen'l Rusk

Sir

. . . On this day we had a meeting of the neighborhood
& out of forty men thirty six turned out as volunteers.

I have not heard from Fort Houston since you received
express from Maj Mabbitt, I have no doubt but that the Indi-
ans and Mexicans are embodied near Kickapoo village and in
all probability we can get a fight near home. We are in the
need of ammunition & cannot effect a campaign without it.
I would like to hear of Maj Douglass success in raising
volunteers. It may be that we need all that we can get. I
would go against them myself but I do not think it would be
a prudent measure unless I have a larger force. Your order
to raise men for our protection I must inform you met with
universal hallelujahs & hurrahs it being the first legal
order of the kind ever sent forth officially to our
country. . . .

Elisha Clapp

APPENDIX I

Original of this letter in possession of Ed Rusk, grandson of Thomas J. Rusk; copy in the Texas State Library.

Head Quarters

Fort Houston

14th Oct. 1838

Dear Brother

I am just about taking up the line of March from this place to the place where the Indians are said to be encamped which is about twenty five miles from here their numbers are variously estimated at from one hundred and fifty to six hundred warriors my effective force will be under two hundred men - I know well that should I succeed no one will find fault but should I fail I shall be abused for imprudence. If General Houston and some others had been guided by feelings of Patriotism and not by low & selfish purposes I should have had in the field at least five hundred men but let success or misfortune attend my efforts I have the consolation of knowing that all my efforts have been directed to my Country's good. If the Indians are not routed the frontier will be laid in ruins & if that is done the people of Texas will have to fight two thirds of the Indians on the U S frontier. Towards the people of Texas I have no unkind feelings they have more than remunerated me by their good feelings for all the sacrifices I have made and the Services I have rendered them. To a few demagogues and speculators who while I was doing all I could for the Country were slandering me and speculating on the resources of the Country I wish no greater harm than that they may be changed into honest men. If cut off I shall leave my wife and children much less than many men have sold lots for in the City of Houston who never paid anything for them except a sacrifice of principle.

Four days will bring you the news

Truly Yours

Tho J Rusk

I would write more but have not time as we are just starting

James Smith owes me four hundred acres of land out of the South West Corner of the tract he lives on for which I have paid him but have no writing.

J T R

(Addressed:)

Mr. David Rusk

Nacogdoches

Express Texas

APPENDIX J

1st Session of the Third Congress

AN ACT

Entitled an Act for the protection of a portion of the Frontier

SECTION I. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Republic of Texas in Congress assembled, that the sum of five thousand dollars be and the same is hereby appropriated for the purpose of raising and supporting a company of fifty-six rangers for three months, to be commanded by Captain John Wortham, whose duty it shall be to range on the frontier of Houston, or any frontier counties, and to protect the settlements, which said sum shall be at the disposition of the President.

SECTION II. Be it further enacted, That it shall be the duty of the captain of the company herein created to report at least every two weeks to Brigadier General K. H. Douglass, and keep him advised of his movements.

John M. Hansford

Speaker of the House of Representatives

S. H. Everitt

President pro tem. of the Senate

Approved, January 1, 1839.

Mirabeau B. Lamar

APPENDIX K

From Wortham Papers, in possession of Mrs. Hortense Sweet,
Crockett, Texas.

Addressed to the people of Houston County

via Brownsville (Fort Brown

to the care of Capt. Slater,

Fort Houston Jan'y 23rd, 1839

Captain Slater,

Sir

Yesterday late in the evening an express arrived at this place from Capt. Snively, who was at the Neches Saline, stating that he expected to be attacked this morning by a strange Indian. The name of the tribe, we learn from a gentleman that bore the express, to be "Nencogges," which we understood to be Creeks or Seminoles. Capt. Wortham had left this place on the 22nd for Hall's trading house on the Trinity River, 12 miles distant from this place. An express was immediately dispatched after him. On the reception of the express from Capt. Snively which overtook him before he (Capt. Wortham) had crossed the river, he returned to this place about 3 o'clock this morning and left for the Neches Saline about 9 o'clock A. M.

This day some of our citizens discovered the tracks of horses in different directions in the neighborhood of this place, and about 2 hours ago, which was 10 o'clock P. M., Mrs. Campbell's negro man alarmed the citizens by giving a relation as near as he could relate of the massacre of Mrs. (left blank but presumably Mrs. "Campbell") family.

The eldest daughter and youngest son of Mrs. Campbell have reached this place without any serious injury, except a slight wound the young lady received from an arrow on her forehead in attempting to make her escape. There are yet four of the family missing. The negro man gives an account of one of the women that is missing, being shot and falling and suppose he heard her agonizing and struggling. He thinks the remainder of the family that are missing were killed.

The young lady informs us that she remained in the house until the Indians, about fifteen in number, burst open the door, when she made her escape by getting under the floor. She thinks that the missing members of the family were all in the house when she left it, and if so, we have no doubt that they were all killed.

If Capt. Snively fought the Indians this morning the result is uncertain. We will perhaps get intelligence of that fact some time tomorrow morning. If they have been successful we are in no danger of attack from the Indians, but if Snively should be whipped, we look for an attack in less than two or three days from the sign that has been discovered. They have no doubt had their spies in our neighborhood. We think our situation is quite critical, and would like to get as much assistance as can be afforded us.

Your friend

W. S. McDonald

N. B. You will please forward this or a copy of it to Nacogdoches and one to Crockett and if possible one in the direction of the city of Houston.

Awful Massacre

We have learned since I wrote the foregoing that the fate of the widow Campbell's family that was not known of or what had been their fate, were all killed in the house or near it. I saw them myself, and such a scene I never saw before.

W. S. McDonald

Jan 24th 1839

APPENDIX L

1839, Feb. 6. Citizens of Franklin -- Petition

Franklin Robertson County February 6th 1839

At a large and respectable meeting of the citizens of this place after going through a routine of resolutions etc., It was ordered by a unaniamous voice that the County Clerk Harrison Owen through the medium of a letter transmit to your Excellency the true situation of our present distressed condition hoping you in answer to the same may give us at least some advice.

We are perhaps farther North than any Town in the Republic that of Fort Houston excepted which is supplied with a guard of Two Hundred Men. We about twenty families in this place have commenced on last summer too late to make a crop we have our provision to haul at least twenty five miles and it appears the Indians are determined to take the Our Frontier We have at least twenty widows in this county and 3/4ths of their husbands have been killed by the Indians besides young men women and children the Indians were heard on Sunday last about eight miles North of us had we our provisions at this place we might do much better. We however are determined to stay (if possible) until we ascertain whether we get any assistance from the Government. The last encounter we had with the hellish Indians Occasioned the death of Eleven of our Worthy County men. Six men of Families Should this place break the Citizens of Robertson County must break up and leave their homes. We therefore pray for as much assistance as will give security to our most exposed settlements until a regular Campaign is fitted out against the Indians. We therefore request of your Excellency a few lines in answer to the above and should you from circumstances think it advisable to break up and leave this place Write and give us the advice you would to a new and respected relation under similar circumstances. Should you think it advisable to stand our Ground write also Should your Excellency condescend to answer the above address H. Owen the P. M of this place and we will ever venerate and respect in extreme haste,

Yours with due respect

Citizens of Franklin

APPENDIX M

From the files of the Palestine Daily Herald, January 7, 1935.

HARDWOOD TABLE ON WHICH SAM HOUSTON

PLAYED CARDS AND WROTE LETTERS

PRESENTED TO HOMESTEAD

A Hardwood table more than 100 years old and used by General Sam Houston at the historic fort west of here was a Christmas present to the Reagan homestead from Miss Kate Hunter, widely-known local historian and poet.

The presentation was made before the new Texas legislature takes action on an offer of Mr. and Mrs. Jeff D. Reagan, now owners of the celebrated homestead, to donate the home as a Texas historic shrine commemorating the memory of the beloved statesman and the heroes of the old Indian fort. If the state accepts the homestead, the table will be a part of the donation and will be forever preserved with the home and other valuable relics once owned by Judge Reagan.

In 1838 Fort Houston was the scene of a happy reunion. Two companions who had been young lieutenants in the same Tennessee company during the Seminole War were reunited after many hectic years. Both had become generals. One, Nathaniel Smith, was commander of the Fort; the other, Sam Houston, had the fort named in his honor.

For days Sam Houston visited with General Smith at Fort Houston, and it was there that he played cards and wrote letters over the table which came into the possession of Miss Hunter. She obtained the relic from a granddaughter of Col. A. E. McClure, pioneer Anderson County newspaper man, who resided at the Fort Houston at the time of Sam Houston's visit.

"I carried the old table home, where it stays forever," said Miss Hunter. It was placed in care of Mr. and Mrs. Jeff D. Reagan.

Miss Hunter has recently presented the University of Texas library with numerous letters from Sam Houston to her grandmother Mary M. Carr, who stood at the guns of Fort Houston and fought Indians while the men were away.

APPENDIX N

From the files of the Palestine Herald-Press, Sunday, May 31, 1942.

TEXANS AGAIN FACE CRISIS,
DEDICATION SPEAKERS DECLARE

Rock Gateway to Fort Houston Cemetery,
Spur Highway Formally Dedicated by D. R. T.

Daughters of the Republic of Texas, in a befitting Memorial Day program, Saturday, dedicated new monuments to the memory of illustrious forefathers who fought and died for freedom which Americans of today are again seeking to preserve.

To the memory of those dauntless pioneers who fought and died for Texas more than a century ago, the Daughters formally dedicated a new native rock gateway to the 107-year-old Fort Houston Cemetery, and later dedicated a spur highway connecting U. S. Highway 79 with Fort Houston, the old homeplace of John H. Reagan, now the property of his son, Jeff D. Reagan.

History of the old cemetery, in which many soldiers who fought with General Sam Houston at San Jacinto and others who fought elsewhere, was recounted by Miss Mary Kate Hunter, Palestine's own historian, poet, musician, and a great-granddaughter of one of the heroes, General Nathaniel Smith.

Following the invocation, colors were advanced by the American Legion, under command of S. W. O'Flynn. Then there was a Salute to the Flag, America, by Miss Annie Cutter and Mrs. Sims Colley, representing the Daughters of the American Revolution.

The Junior School band and the Texas Defense Guard also participated, lending a military air to the occasion.

A Salute to the Texas Flag was led by Mrs. Madge Hearne, granddaughter of General Sam Houston, and Mrs. Hally

Palestine Herald-Press, May 31, 1942 - page 2

Bryan Perry, Houston, a great-niece of Stephen F. Austin.

The formal dedication of the gateway was carried out by Jeff D. Reagan. Talks were made by Mrs. Ben E. Edwards, San Antonio, State President of the D. R. T.; Judge A. A. Aldrich, Crockett; Miss Hunter, Mrs. Perry and Capt. William H. Vaughan of the Texas Defense Guard.

Special guests introduced also included Mrs. F. Schenkenberg, Dallas; Mrs. Marion Chrestman, Dallas; Mr. and Mrs. Tate McCain, Commissioner Lemacks.

Boy Scouts placed a wreath on the graves.

At the dedication of the highway spur, held beneath the huge oak tree directly in front of the Reagan Home, Mayor R. H. McLeod welcomed the visitors and praised the D. R. T. for their work in preserving the history of Texas.

Miss Hunter thanked the Texas Highway department and General Robert Lee Bobbitt for building the spur.

Mrs. Hearne, Sam Houston's granddaughter, said it was a pleasure to see Fort Houston so well preserved.

"This is a sacred place," she said, "we know we are dedicating these gates and this highway to the brave and courageous men and women."

She paid a high tribute to Miss Hunter.

"We love her and we honor her . . . She is a devout patriot and a devoted American."

Judge Jim Moore paid tribute to the D. R. T. and the pioneer Texans who fought and died for Texas. He also thanked the highway department for building the highway spur and said the county commissioners' court would pass a resolution of appreciation at its Monday meeting.

Introduced was Mrs. Mae Ballowe, daughter of Congressman Alexander W. Gregg who served this district many years in Congress. Mrs. Ballowe contributed right-of-way for the spur road.

Lt. Col. Godfrey Rees Fowler, soldier, scholar,

lecturer and grandson of John H. Reagan [also grandson of A. J. Fowler who was married at the original Fort Houston] praised the spirit of "those grand old Texans who made this state the great state it is." "Once again," he said, "Texans find themselves at the crossroads of civilization." He predicted that Texans and Americans would show the same determination and courage displayed by their forefathers.

APPENDIX O

From the files of the Palestine Daily Herald, November 9, 1939.

UNVEIL MARKER TO MEMORY OF SOLDIER

Historic Fort Houston Cemetery, wherein lie the remains of many Texas pioneers, was the scene of a ceremony Thursday in which a bronze marker erected to the memory of General Nathaniel Smith, a soldier of the War of 1812, was unveiled and dedicated.

The ceremony was in charge of the Captain James Asbury Tait chapter, Houston, Daughters of 1812, and was carried out in the presence of state officials of that organization and members of the local D. R. T. and D. A. R. chapters.

Vita was removed during scanning