

## Early Texas Nurserymen

Here's a snapshot of Texas in the mid-1800s

Texas became a State in 1845

It was a time of urbanization, industrialization, immigration, and expansion of education. Cotton was King, Agricultural pursuits including gardening were an important part of the life of a Texan.

Locally Baylor was growing having started in 1845. (Jujube trees still survive where once planted by Baylor's students). Klatter land to the south of Men's campus

Borders of Oxbloods lilies still reveal original geometric patterns where once planted by the Baylor columns

Later, The Morell act of 1862 brought money for Texas agriculture and the start to Texas A and M.

Independence has The Oldest Baptist church had started in 1834 with Sam Houston converting in 1854 at Rocky Creek. "General Marquis James reports a friend as saying to Houston: I hear your sins were washed away..... 'Houston replied but if they were all washed away, the lord help the fish down below".

After 1836 into the 1860s Coles settlement saw an influx of settlers... Heros from the battles of San Jacinto and Gettysburg were reported. Population of Independence had grown to around 2000

Mr. Hairston built an impressive home facing south with the Baylor campus across the street. Brenham Banner Press reported in 1916: Mr. Hairston had a brilliant and cultured mind, having received his education at Baylor University. He attended this splendid institution of learning when it was located in Independence, then a prosperous and flourishing town, and the center of Baptist education and influence in Texas. He saw hard service in the Confederate Ranks during the entire 4 years of the war between the states, being a member of the Company 1 'Fifth Texas infantry in which captain T.T. Clay of Independence was commander. His son built the house in which the kitchen still remains as a focal point of the Antique Rose Emporium.

The Hairston/McKnight house had an interesting history associated with the widow.

Antique Rose Emporium copied some of the planting schemes of period gardens of that time. A republic of Texas Garden, native plantings, and roses that were authentic to the period.

I found a rose in MS Meyers Yard

Lorenzo d Zavala was a minister to France when Texas was a republic. As a gift from France he received roses They were planted by his wife Emily at his home near the San Jacinto River. Adina de Zavala, her granddaughter chronicled these roses in a 1936 article by DR. Asbury at Texas A&M. Cramoisi superior, yellow banksia and Old Blush were reported (found in cemeteries)

Folklore of Yellow rose of Texas (Emily Morgan)

Thomas Affleck

"Thomas Affleck as a young boy and as soon as he could handle a hoe and rake was with boyish pride to place on his mother's table the earliest vegetables, the finest fruits, his

flowers and strawberries and other productions of his little garden. He was self-educated by books, and for the most part actual gardening.'

Originally from Scotland he immigrated to Pennsylvania in 1837 at the age of 29. Tragedy followed him as he lost his wife, his son, two brothers and his mother within three years.. Despite the depression, he moved to Kentucky where he started an editorial position at the Western Farmer and Gardener in 1840 'his accurate knowledge, his fluent style and above all his untiring energy soon gave it wide circulation and popularity.'" Attending a fair in Natchez Mississippi he fell in love both with the land and his new wife /Anna Dunbar Smith and married. She was the niece of Jane Long, Mother of Texas. With the marriage came plantations and debt in equal degree. worked at all thing nursery...infatuated with the silkworm and grew hundreds of mulberries from which they thrive but failed at this as well. In debt most of his life he was still able to start Southern Nurseries Natchez Mississippi. His writing acumen allowed his to flourish from the number of articles written for various columns on agriculture. He was able to ship plants from his Southern Nurseries throughout the east coast from Galveston and New Orleans barges. At the age of 43 in 1855 he moved his nurseries to New year's creek (Glen Blyth), stating that the soil was too sandy in Mississippi to be productive.

He spent 3 dollars an acre for the land. He proceeded to move and establish main house a cotton gin, a hospital, church, saw mill, smithy, and winery all necessary to a plantation of the times. Livestock, farm machines and equipment to boot in adequate supply.

Debt and difficulty followed him though as the last and most valuable shipments of plant (many rare) taking two weeks by three men to pack on a boat (Charmer) which then burnt down on its way to Galveston.

Despite this difficulty on his 3400 acres near Independence, he was able to produce thousands of shrubs, fruit, berry and grape varieties for sale.

Most importantly he wrote the Southern Rural Almanac and plantation and Garden Calendar. In it we find interesting discussion on all aspects of living in the south. Use of manures, ways to compost, vegetable and plant selections were all presented.(This was years before the United States Dept of Ag was in existence). As a result, he became the most respected authority in agriculture in the nation.

Highlights from his almanac:

Roses were featured (may be a lot of the same roses we find still living in cemeteries that led to the AREs offerings 150 years later)

The use of Cherokee roses for living hedges. (from cuttings, intertwining, animal proof. "Plantations of those times were without timber enough to build fences and used this as a substitute.

A rose with 50 varieties was budded and blooming all at once was recorded.

He suggested feeding chickens with doses of Nox vomica, strychnos nuxvomica), or strychnine used in 19 century medicine, a central nervous system tonic thus rendering them systematically toxic to hawks without harming the chickens.

Ads in the almanac had Dirteater's cure 5.00\$

Mustang wine for 5.00\$ barrel

William Watson

William Watson came to Brenham in 1854, founding Rosedale Nursery in 1860. He was born in Ireland in 1835 sailed between Europe and America numerous times before arriving in Galveston in 1859. Moved to site 2 and ½ miles east of Brenham.

“We have within our borders enough to make Texas a paradise. It takes money and time to get up fine specimens of landscape gardening, But Rome was not built in a day”

Watson’s holdings eventually grew to around two hundred acres. Mrs. Reese Lockett of Brenham recalls that in her youth there was still evidence of Rosedale in Gun and Rod estates. His catalogue listed thousands of plants 100s each of fruit (pears apples peaches etc) ornamentals, trees, grapes ‘

Of significance though:

Was Watsons relationship with Kew Gardens (maintaining a relationship with other Brits (Victorian Club of Brenham)

Kew was a delightful retreat of the Royal Highness the Prince and Princess of Wales. In 1700 Sir Joseph Banks financed plant exhibitions to other countries to bring back to Kew making it a renowned repository and learning center of horticulture for the world.

The 1800 saw Kew grow with reputation as a learning scientific institution. Students of Kew were sent out to other countries to garden around the world. Watson enticed these prestigious students to come to Brenham (Victorian Club)

William Falconer arrived in 1874.

Of his observations:

‘Horticulture is very backward here; true I saw one little greenhouse in Galveston and a few Oranges and oleanders but in country places, poultry and pigs reign supreme where Daffodils and other flowers ought to grow.”

He stated “Galveston is the Liverpool of Texas, Houston the Manchester, Austin the capitol, Brenham the Nursery, Dallas the best city in the north and San Antonio is in the south west.”

“Horticulture outside of some of the cities is nowhere: in fact the farmers don’t even raise vegetables in necessary quantity, let alone flowers, but that is not because they cannot, but because they don’t want to be bothered.”

Falconmer was very complimentary to Watson though “Great credit is due to Mr. Wm Watson the proprietor of Rosedale Nurseries, as a pioneer of horticulture in Texas, for together with Mr Affleck he laid the foundation of true gardening.”

Falconer wrote many articles stating that Texas was second to no other State other than California as a grape growing country. He commented that the Germans bestow considerable pains on the grape Vines and make a great deal of wine much more so than the Americans.

He lasted 2 years in Texas moving to Massachusetts to work at Harvard as superintendent of the Botanic Gardens.

William Yates was then invited to Texas

Watson also brought in William Yates in the early 1880s a few years after Falconer. He worked for Watson for a while until opening up his own =nursery “Highview” in 1892.

He was must more complimentary of Texas in his writings stating Whenever we see, on passing through the suburbs of our towns and cities, a residence surrounded by tastefully

laid out and well kept gardens, we at once think of the owner as man of superior culture and refinement.”

He became Washington county’s first extension agent in 1917. He was responsible for planting the PECAN TREES ON Washington on the Brazos in 1928.

He wrote extensively about agriculture for the Banner press, writings even including poems that he wrote.’

”A new Deal for the farmer is promised  
No cards will against him be stacked  
And the theory that farm life is pleasant  
Let us hope will ere long be a fact”

He perhaps did more than any other n one person in landscaping and planting at schools and other public places and at hundreds of Brenham Homes.

He lived in Brenham where St Mary catholic church now resides.

In addition to Yates and Falconer, two other British horticulturists worked for Watson at Rosedale. William Baker and his brother James. But 4 years later moved to Ft Worth to establish Baker brother nursery. They found the Texas association to Nurserymen.

Watson, yates and the Baker brothers along with Falconer, who chose a different horticultural career, were some of our pioneer horticulturists who with a little help from Kew gardens led us down our garden path and made Washington County the most respected horticultural hub of the south.

#### Of note

T.V Munson from 1880-1910 collected, classified and bred grapes found in Texas. He single handedly saved the European wine industry.

American varieties of grapes were resistant to phylloxera which were wiping out European varieties. Munson gathered rootstock from Bell to Bexar counties collecting 15 wagon loads of dormant cuttings to send to southern France. The rootstocks throughout the world today originated from these cuttings from Texas. He was needless to say a hero in France receiving the Chevalier du Merite Agricole.

Fj Lindheimer, Peter Henry Oberwatter, George Engelmann, and Ferdinand Roemer, and Johann Leyendecker were German naturalist collecting and recording plants in Texas at this time.