

THE SOUTHWESTERN HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

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JULY, 1949 TO APRIL, 1950

EDITOR

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Associate Editors

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A TRUE PHOTOCOPY

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

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THE TEXAS STATE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

AUSTIN, TEXAS

1950

On a weather chart of his own making:
The chief characteristic of weather in Texas is not variety but surprise.

In an autobiography:
Men can be scientific about everything but themselves . . . in that realm every man tries to be a poet.

In the margin of a newspaper:
One kind of history may well be written as it happens. Even on the day of the event, interpretation may confuse it. The next day, it begins to be obscured by time.

Fifty obscuring years have passed since Palm wrote that last sentence. Despite the half-century, essentials of his life remain clear. Surely few Swedes or Texans or scholars or men of any other stamp have left clearer signs of what they were and what they did than the Swanite Palm Library.

The Antecedents of Austin College

DAN FERGUSON

EVEN before Texas declared its independence from Mexico, Old School Presbyterian ministers had begun to work among the Anglo-American colonists. The first sermon delivered on Texas soil by an Old School Presbyterian was given by Reverend Henry R. Wilson in the fall of 1833 near present-day Doaksville.¹ Other Presbyterian ministers followed Wilson within a year, Reverend Peter Hunter Fullenwider and his wife entered Texas in 1834, settling near San Felipe de Austin, where the couple began teaching school.² In December, 1834, Reverend D. S. Southmayd and his wife arrived in Galveston. They settled between Harrisburg and San Felipe and began teaching school.³ That a minister on arrival in Texas should teach rather than preach was not unusual. Especially was this true prior to 1836, when the need for schools was urgent and the position of Protestant ministers actively engaged in preaching was not too secure, such preaching being forbidden by law.

The governing bodies of the Presbyterian Church took no official cognizance of Texas until 1837. While the Mississippi Presbytery in 1834 and the Mississippi Synod in 1835 claimed jurisdiction indefinitely westward, no action was taken except to set up an executive committee in 1835 located at Natchez and headed by Reverend Benjamin Chase. Through this committee all mission work in the region was to be channelled. In 1837 the Assembly's Board of Domestic Missions approved the action, stating that "under the especial patronage of the Synod of Mississippi whose Ex-Committee from their location at Natchez will have many facilities for the instruction [?] introduction] of good and faithful men into Texas."

Thus Natchez became a port of embarkation where missionary material was screened for the new country. Chase, who had

¹See William Stuart Red, *A History of the Presbyterian Church in Texas* (Austin, 1969), for a more detailed account of early Presbyterian work in Texas.
²*Ibid.*, 4.
³*Ibid.*, 5.

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cially interesting comments on the activities of the Galveston post office in the period of transition from Republic to statehood.

★ ★ ★

Chris Emmett of Houston has presented to the Association a collection of maps of Brazoria County. The maps, which have been deposited in the Archives, include four drawings and two printed surveys. The four drawings were hand-made on canvas, and their original color and detail are still well preserved, as they have been kept in a metal cylinder. They are quite large; the smallest, drawing No. 3, is four feet long and two and a third feet wide, and the largest, drawing No. 1, is twelve feet long and almost four feet wide.

The first drawing is a general plan showing the jetties at the mouth of the Brazos, the line of the Brazos and Northern Railway Company, the lands belonging to the Texas Land and Immigration Company, and the proposed site for the town of Brazos and the wharves along the river. The soundings shown were taken December 13, 1889.

The second drawing charts the Brazos River from Bolin Place to the Gulf.

The third shows comparative places of entrance at the mouth of the river at different dates: Fig. 1, entrance in 1858; Fig. 2, February, 1881; Fig. 3, May, 1882; Fig. 4, May, 1883; Fig. 5, May and June, 1887; Fig. 6, March, 1889; and Fig. 7, November, 1889.

The first three drawings were made to accompany Sir John Coode's Report, dated April 2, 1890. This brings up questions: Who was Sir John Coode, and where is his report?

The fourth drawing has no date, but it pictures the land of the Texas Land and Immigration Company in Brazoria County, Texas.

The first United States Coast and Geodetic Survey is Coast Chart No. 205, showing Galveston Bay to Oyster Bay, and is dated October 17, 1893.

The other United States Coast and Geodetic Survey contains Coast Chart No. 206, showing Oyster Bay to Matagorda Bay, and is dated May 31, 1892.

For these extremely valuable contributions to the full and complete history of Texas the Association extends sincerest thanks and appreciation to Chris Emmett and the Hon. Leo

Brewer of the law firm of Messrs. Brewer, Matthews, Nowlin, and Macfarlane, of San Antonio, Texas, who kept the documents for approximately fifty years and who gave the maps to Emmett.

★ ★ ★

Dan Ferguson of Dallas contributes to the religious and social history of Texas with a chronological list of excerpts derived from the archives of the American Bible Society. The items cover the ten-year period, 1831 to 1841, from the beginning of Protestant Anglo-American influx of immigrants until the middle years of the Republic.

Report for 1831

Thirty Bibles and seventy Testaments granted to E. R. Butler for sale or gratuitous distribution in Texas [page 8].

One hundred Bibles and Testaments in "different tongues" to be sent to a small colony of Americans and Swiss settled in Texas [page 58].

Report for 1833

For Col. Langworthy, for Texas, twenty-five Bibles and fifty Testaments [page 8].

The Mississippi Bible Society, for sending to Texas—fifty Bibles and fifty Testaments—in Spanish and English [page 36].

Report for 1834

Rev. Sumner Bacon, for Texas, one hundred Bibles and one hundred Testaments in English and fifty Bibles and two hundred Testaments in Spanish.

"To the Province of Texas, in Mexico, a grant of Spanish Bibles and Testaments has been made and also a few copies in the English tongue. These books were first solicited by our agent in Louisiana, Rev. Benjamin Chase, who made a temporary visit to Texas and found a lamentable destitution of the Scriptures to prevail. Application was soon after made for books by Mr. Sumner Bacon, a resident of the province, who felt deeply anxious that the word of God should there be distributed, and who offered his own services as Agent, even should it be without compensation. He had traveled extensively through the province, and learned the number and moral situation of its inhabitants. 'There are,' he says, 'in the jurisdiction of Nacogdoches, about six hundred American families and three hundred Spanish, and the households destitute of the Bible are nine to one. Therefore not less than 500 Bibles are wanted immediately towards supplying this jurisdiction alone. In the jurisdictions farther in the interior, where I am also personally acquainted, there are fewer copies of the Word of God in circulation than in this region.' Mr. Bacon, having been recommended by judicious men, as one who would well perform the duties of an Agent, your Board have cheerfully furnished him with a commission" [page 7].

Report for 1835

"Among the Auxiliaries formed during the year, two are of a new and deeply interesting character, being located in the province of Texas,

beyond our territory. They were both formed under the direction of the Rev. Sumner Bacon, an Agent of the American Bible Society, and from the character given of those who are to manage these Societies, there is reason to expect that they will be efficient, useful institutions. In former years boxes of Bibles have been entrusted to individuals in that province, from whom satisfactory returns have seldom been made. Your Board have learned of instances where the books entrusted have been sold, the pay received by the vendor, but never returned to your Treasury to enable the Managers to prepare other books" [page 18].

[Ferguson points out that apparently one of these auxiliary societies was the Coahuila and Texas Society of Mexico, recognized on May 7, 1835, with A. C. Ainsworth of Columbia as corresponding secretary.]

Records the recognition of the San Augustine Bible Society in Texas, September 4, 1834, with William McFarland as corresponding secretary [page 19].

Scriptures in Spanish and English, valued at \$102.72, granted to Sumner Bacon, and one hundred fifty Bibles and three hundred Testaments, in English and valued at \$184.53, sent to the San Augustine Bible Society. Record of a grant of English, Spanish, and German Scriptures to Rev. D. S. Southmayd for gratuitous distribution in Texas. Two hundred English Bibles and four hundred English Testaments, valued at \$182.50 to Sumner Bacon [page 25].

Report for 1836

"The Rev. Sumner Bacon, who was engaged as Agent in Texas, in the earlier part of the year, has been induced, partly on account of the present disturbed state of that country, to visit the United States. Should the state of that province continue in its present condition, Mr. Bacon will probably engage in behalf of the Bible cause in Arkansas Territory, where his services are much wanted" [page 50].

Report for 1837

The report shows that the San Augustine Society remitted \$172.87 during 1836 [page 119].

Report for 1838

Indicates that Bacon was no longer working in Texas, but that an unnamed Texas merchant was urging that Bibles be supplied. The San Augustine Society received two hundred Bibles and Testaments, yet the Cumberland Presbyterian Church at San Augustine urged the Society to increase its work and urged the appointment of an agent to organize local societies. Four hundred Bibles and Testaments had already been sent [page 49].

[Ferguson indicates that the report does not make clear whether or not this four hundred included those sent to the San Augustine Society.]

Report for 1839

Reports the appointment of Rev. Schuyler Hoes of the Methodist Episcopal Church as agent, with no reference to previous agents. In November, 1838, the Bible Society for Texas was organized at Houston. Hoes made a number of trips through the territory in 1838 and 1839 [page 42].

Report for 1840

Indicates that Hoes' appointment was not permanent as a proposal is made to appoint another agent "next autumn" for a somewhat larger region [page 47].

Report for 1841

Conclusion of the report on the Texas Bible Society: "The Board have been often solicited and have been desirous to send another Agent into that country (one was sent in 1838), but have not been prepared to do so until recently. The Rev. Mr. Banks, Agent for Arkansas, has been requested to spend a part of the coming year promoting the Bible cause in that republic" [pages 48-49].

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Among those receiving graduate degrees at the June Commencement of the University of Texas were the following:

MASTER OF ARTS

Dorothy Louise Fields—

Thesis: The Constitutional Principles of James Wilson.

Hildegard Schmalenbeck—

Thesis: A Study of the Literary Reputation of Alice French (1850-1934).

Zelma May Scott—

Thesis: The History of Coryell County, Texas, to 1920.

John Marion Skrivanek—

Thesis: The Education of the Czechs in Texas.

Mary Merle Weir—

Thesis: Nationalism in the Literature of the American West, 1830-1840.

WILLIS RAYMOND WOOLRICH, JR.—

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Willis Raymond Woolrich, Jr.—

Thesis: Economic Analysis of the Texas Fishing Industry.

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Herbert Pickens Gambrell—American History, European History, and Government.

Thesis: A Life of Anson Jones.

John Hugh Hill—Medieval and Early Modern European History, United States History, and English Literature.

Thesis: Raymond of Saint Gilles and the Provençals in the First Crusade.

George Portal Huckaby—United States History, Modern Continental European and English History, and Government.

Thesis: Oscar Branch Colquitt: A Political Biography.

Barton Holland Warnock—Botany and Zoology.

Thesis: The Vegetation of the Glass Mountains, Texas.

One Hundred Years Ago Today in Texas

Sept. 19, 1836.

By Clarence R. Wharton

The chief purpose of the great Centennial celebrations going on in Texas today is to do honor to the memory and pay tribute for the accomplishments of a hardy, worthy generation of men and women who wrought so well in the scheme of destiny 100 years ago. As far as possible and in almost every article of this long series of articles which were begun on Aug. 15, 1835, and which will close with the death of Austin on Dec. 27, 1836, I have selected events which have been chronologically 100 years ago today. Those men who played conspicuous parts and left written records of what they said and did during this hectic year have made it easy to record their doings and sayings. But then, as now, there was a population of obscure men and women who nobly did their deeds, the great inarticulate majority which makes it possible for leaders and leadership to attain worth-while ends.

"Let not the proud impute to these the faults
If memory o'er their tombs no trophies raise
And through the long drawn aisle and fretted vault

No swelling anthem sounds a note of praise."

Now and then from old letters and forgotten diaries we get glimpses of these obscure heroes who bore the brunt of the awful year whose glories and triumphs we are celebrating. I have received hundreds of letters from people all over Texas and from other States who are following these articles offering me material, telling me of this or that ancestor who did worthy things and who lies in a forgotten grave. None of them have so impressed me as a manuscript brought by J. W. Wilkinson of 206 Stratford avenue, Houston, which contains hundreds of pages of the letters written by a wonderful woman, Joanna Kent Southmayd, wife of a Presbyterian missionary, who came to Texas with her husband and two little daughters in 1834 and settled in Harrisburg. She was an educated woman, daughter of the Rev. Daniel Kent of Vermont, a soldier in the American Revolution. One of the letters in this long series was written to her brother in Boston, Sept. 19, 1836. The series as a whole is so replete with religious fervor, so full of pathos and tragedy and so illustrative of the terrible trials of womanhood 100 years ago in Texas that I must in tribute to her memory sketch them on this and the next succeeding days.

The purpose of this series of articles has been to give the people of Texas and especially the school children of the State who study my school histories a day by day account of what happened 100 years ago each day. Sometimes I have criticized men of that epoch when I deemed criticism due for I do not believe in imputing to mere men the attributes of sainthood when they were far from saints and would not have been happy in such a role. But to this good woman we might aptly impute all the attributes of saintliness. Into a land devoid of comforts, filled with hardships, she came with her husband and little daughters. She reached Harrisburg in January, 1835, and opened a private school with fifteen pupils, possibly the first school ever taught within the confines of the now great city of Houston. She was at Harrisburg when the Mexican army came in 1836 and was among the fugitives in the runaway scrape. Back they came after the Battle of San Jacinto to find their home burned and to live in a tent. In the autumn she and her sick husband and one of the little daughters (the other having died) went in an ox cart to the Brazos where at Fort Bend she opened a school, possibly the first ever taught in what is now Fort Bend County.

Bear with me these few succeeding days while I tell you from these letters the human story of a saintly mother whose sacrifices and sorrows, whose Christian fortitude and devotion, and whose womanly accomplishments make the laurels of the victor and the wisdom of the states-

One Hundred Years Ago Today in Texas

Sept. 29, 1836.

By Clarence R. Wharton

The letter of Sept. 19, 1836, written by Joanna Kent Southmayd from Harrisburg to her brother in Boston and referred to yesterday was one of a long series which began ten years before while she still lived in New England. Often a single letter would include a series of successive dates like a diary.

One dated in New York Dec. 16, 1834, tells that she and her family were about to sail on a little sailing vessel, the Whig, for Galveston Bay, a voyage which she says will take at least six Sabbaths. She continues it in diary form from day to day during these six Sabbaths of sunshine and storm and seasickness. Although they were all seasick almost unto death and lay on the cabin floor days and nights unable to undress, she was "overwhelmed with the goodness of God who cared for us in these dark waters." By the time of the fifth Sabbath they had so far recovered that she could read the Bible and this made her very happy. And she was also very

happy when the Whig entered Galveston Bay.

When on the following Thursday the boat reached Red Fish Bar and could not cross she was not so happy, but had no fear for had not God divided the Red Sea for his children.

For seven days the boat stuck on the bar and it was decided to take them ashore at Clopper's Point (now Morgan's Point) in a very little, shabby sailboat in which they sailed for Clopper's Point, ten miles distant. Night came on long before they covered the ten miles and they sat all during the winter night in a space too crowded for sleep, tossed by a boisterous bay. But fortunately the cold and hunger they suffered was so great that they had no fear for the danger of drowning for all of which she thanked God. Then in the late afternoon of a mild February day they were landed "at a warehouse in the woods at Clopper's Point." This was old Morgan's warehouse which was destroyed by Santa Anna's army a year later.

The tired father and mother and their little daughters tramped across the prairie a mile up and down the shoreline of our Bay Ridge of today and spent the night at Clopper's. "Mr. Clopper and his son were very kind to us."

The mild February day was followed by winds which kept the boatmen who brought them ashore a whole week before they could return to Red Fish Bar after the other passengers.

She talked to the hospitable Mr. Clopper about religion and his soul, and was shocked when old Morgan told her that people soon lost their religion when they came to Texas.

Clopper of Clopper Point loaned the Southmayd family a boat and manned it to take them to Harrisburg, thirty miles away, and they were again afloat up the then silent stream which we call the ship channel today, along which the commerce of the world from the seven seas and a hundred lands and a thousand cities comes and goes. Ten miles up they stopped a day with the citizen, Thomas Earle, one of Austin's old colonists who lived on his league of land. He had been in the country ten years, he told them. Earle had a large family and the oldest daughter who seemed quite intelligent appealed to Joanna Southmayd, who at once applied to her to know about her salvation and her soul. The young lady severely shocked the devout Joanna by telling her that only people who brought their religion into Texas had any and they soon lost it.

Joanna found out and noted that Earle was an Irishman and had come to Texas from Ohio and, worst of all, was a Roman Catholic.

After a day with the Godless Earles the Southmayds were on their way to Harrisburg. But Joanna was not yet discouraged, they had come to bring religion and distribute Bibles and she hoped and prayed for the best.

One Hundred Years Ago Today in Texas

Sept. 21, 1836. 22

By Clarence R. Wharton

Sept. 22, 1836.

The Southmayds, Joanna and her husband, and the little daughters had fled from Harrisburg at the approach of the Mexican army in April and were now back among the ashes of the village, and Joanna wrote her mother in Vermont. "I have just finished dressing my little Joanna for the grave," and she tells without complaint of the last weary months, how the child sickened from improper diet, for want of life-giving foods and from the terrible privations of those doleful days. She tells how the dear child had suffered for days and weeks and roused toward dawn after a night of coma and called for her little sister Maria and passed away.

They were living in a floorless tent and like their neighbors suffering from famine which had followed the Mexican invasion.

A month later to the day the second daughter, little Maria, succumbed to the same malady and the Southmayds, with an infant child, left the graves of their little girls at Harrisburg and went in an ox-cart driven by a drunken driver to Fort Bend on the Brazos. Southmayd was ill from his year of labor and privations and the hope was that the more salubrious air of the Brazos would benefit him, or at least a change would help.

In November after they had reached the Brazos Joanna wrote her mother from Fort Bend (this was before the town of Richmond had been named). All their chattel effects could now be put in one box which deposited in the cart which carried them and the driver. At the time they reached the Brazos they found the desolation almost as bad as that from which they had fled at Harrisburg.

The Bordens were rebuilding their homes up in the Bend and the Thompsons, the families of the sons of Big Jesse Thompson who had been killed in a fight with Thomas H. Borden the year before, received the Southmayds and treated them kindly.

There a few weeks later Daniel S. Southmayd died leaving his wife Joanna and an infant daughter penniless in a desolate land. He had come to Texas a year before, young and strong, but the hardships of the fron-

tier, his labors in an effort to improve the land the Government had given him, working without sufficient food to sustain him, had killed him.

Joanna's family in New England wrote offering to send money for her return, but she advised them she would stay in Texas and carry on the work of the Lord she and her husband had come to promote. She taught a private school at Fort Bend for a few months and then she and her infant daughter went down to Bailey's Prairie in Brazoria where she taught. She resisted the entreaties of her family to return to New England and two years later married another minister, a Yankee, who had come down South and for forty years lived in Texas and Louisiana.

She is a type of the women who came from the States to Texas in the pioneer days and the hardships she endured were the same that befell womanhood generally of the Colonial-Revolutionary period. Her character and fortitude, her sacrifices and sufferings, her long useful life in a rude country all show a heroism which is part of our best traditions. I have told of her in these four short stories so that the people of Texas of today may have a glimpse of pioneer womanhood.

The statesmanship of Austin, the heroism of Houston, the spectacular accomplishments of the Whartons, Bowies and Crocketts are minor when compared with the modest but heroic lives of the wives and mothers of the generation that redeemed Texas from tyranny and barbarism 100 years ago.

After reading Mrs. Southmayd's letters which disclosed the interesting and tragic facts outlined in the articles of this and the three preceding days, I called these facts to the attention of the board of education of the Houston Independent School District. This board out of grateful memory to the first teacher that ever assembled a school within the confines of what is now our school district, has named one of the elementary schools in Pecan Park the Joanna Southmayd School. Here within a few hundred yards of where she landed in 1834 and where she taught her first school this modern building bearing her name will stand as her monument.

One Hundred Years Ago Today in Texas

Sept. 21, 1836.

By Clarence R. Wharton

The picture which Joanna Southmayd gives of Harrisburg when she reached there at 8 o'clock on a February night, 1835, tells just how this little place looked and acted a year later. This was more than a year before the town of Houston was thought of or began.

When they were put off of the boat in the bushes on the bank of the bayou with their seven trunks which contained all their earthly belongings and 100 Bibles, the Rev. Mr. Southmayd left them sitting on a log while he went to find a vacant house where they could spend the night. Presently he returned to tell them he had found an empty shanty. Johanna says it was not much of a house, but adds it had walls and a roof. To whom it belonged did not matter. The father set to work and in a few days had built a chimney of sticks and mud and they had a fire now and then. She says when it rained the water came down the chimney and through the walls and roof and the February rains were very uncomfortable. A month later she wrote that she had not seen anyone who was connected with the house. "The fireplace was finished, so we had our first indoor fire on the next Sabbath and a sweet Sabbath it was."

The first months they lived on rice and corn meal and beef which was only 3c per pound. Flour which was only brought in now and then was \$10 per barrel. She says that at that time, February, 1835, there were not more than forty adults, men and women, living in Harrisburg and after several weeks they contacted one man from Connecticut who had religion and he would come over and pray with them, which they seem to have been busily doing all the time they

were not at their daily tasks. She writes that her children are happy and she has been reading the Bible daily.

In a few weeks she opened a school with fifteen pupils and Mr. Etersson was one of her chief pupils and they settled down to a daily diet of rice and potatoes.

They were now interested in getting their headright league which the Mexican nation was still giving free to each emigrant family, and the father left for San Felipe, forty miles away, to locate the land. He made many trips there, often on foot, while the mother kept her little school and looked after her little daughters and supervised their Bible reading.

The homestead league was located and titled but it had to be improved and lived on. Without money or other aid the good parson with a borrowed ax walked all the way to the Southmayd league and began cutting trees and splitting rails to enclose a six-acre farm where he hoped to plant corn and potatoes.

The twenty-five-mile walk across the prairie and the long weary hours of rail splitting with no food but potatoes and rice soon told heavily on the good man and before the summer was over he was ill and had so undermined his health that his days on earth were numbered. But neither he nor his wife lost faith in the goodness of God.

He tried to walk back to Harrisburg each week end to see his family, but was often ill and too weak to make the journey. In one of her letters Joanna tells her brother, "The children were grieved last night that their father did not come and it required all my Christian fortitude to convince them it was the will of God."