

## Dogwood Festival recreated history

By Dottie Johnson

As the lights came up on the historical play that brought the 1991 Dogwood Festival to its glittering end, there were only a few who knew that a second drama was unfolding right in the stands.

The pageant had come to a flowerful climax with the crowning of beautiful young Angela Blakeney of Woodville as queen. Family members were thrilled that this honor had been bestowed upon a young lady whose roots in Tyler County go back to 1837, when her great great grandfather N. B. Charlton came to Texas from Tennessee.

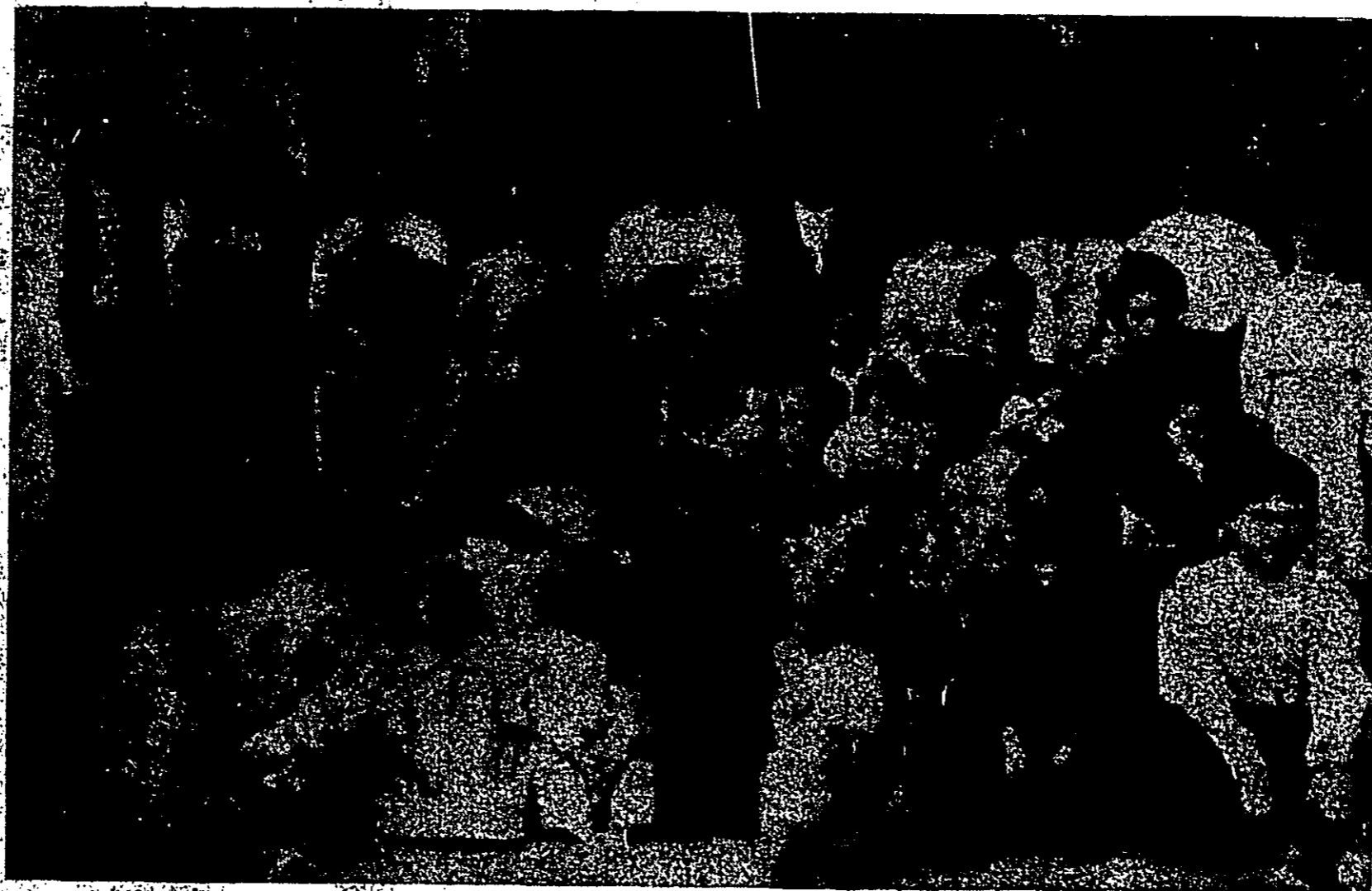
E. T. Blakeney Sr. and his wife, the former Hazel Poindexter, were in the crowd, applauding their granddaughter as she was crowned, but it wasn't until the play got under way that the true significance of it all caught Hazel by surprise.

The timing for the historical presentation was Woodville from 1846 to 1860, a period during which N. B. Charlton played a very important role in the selection and formation of the new county seat and later served as a state representative from Tyler County. And there he was. Or, rather, there was Jim Clark playing the role of Napoleon Bonaparte Charlton with Gayle Stevenson playing his wife, Susan Foster Charlton.

As the plot unfolded and members of the Charlton family were introduced, the romantic aspect of Aloha Freeland's drama, based on actual historical events, came into play. There was Josie Charlton, played by Mitzi Follmar, and Andrew J. Poindexter, played by Bobby Knapp. There were in love and planning to marry.

"Why, that's my grandparents," Hazel Poindexter told her daughter Wanda and son Troy Jr. "That's my grandmother and grandfather they're talking about. Josie and Andrew Poindexter. And, of course, she was right."

With all the young people who met and married during that period, it was pure coincidence that Aloha Freeland had selected this young couple for the romantic interest in her play. She had no idea there was a connection between them and one of the contestants for the queen's crown. But there it was, and very near day Wanda Farrell sat her mother



**A PICTURE WORTH REPEATING:** Andrew J. Poindexter and Josie Charlton were just two of the many characters portrayed in the historical play during the recent Dogwood Festival. Thanks to their grandsons, Ezra, shown seated in his mother's lap in the right center, we are able to once again print this wonderful reunion photo from 1988 that shows these two people with some family members 42 years after their wedding. Pictured top row from left are: Ed McElroy, John Charlton, Lee Smith, Zora Deaton, Ed Poindexter, Ben Charlton, Viola Poindexter, Paul, Clara and Maud Poindexter. Middle row, Joe McElroy, Andrew Poindexter, Missouri McElroy, Josie Poindexter, Florida McElroy with Wanda R., Viola Poindexter with Emma, and Lucy Poindexter with Ezra, the only person in the photo still living. Seated from left are John Poindexter, Odette Deaton, Lela McElroy, Zemma Poindexter, Willie Deaton, Everett Poindexter, Hubert and Bonnie Poindexter.

down and got some facts, which she passed along as the basis of this story.

A visit with Hazel and later with Ezra Poindexter and his niece, Nell Fowler, a look into the Tyler County Census Records of 1850, 1860 and 1870 and the cemetery records, plus a re-reading of Lou Ella Moseley's account of N. B. Charlton helped fill in some of the missing pieces, but not all.

Andrew Jackson Poindexter is listed in the 1860 census as 18 years old, born in Georgia and living with the family of James Moyer. No other Poindexters are listed. And nowhere in a history of the Poindexter family that can be found at

Heritage Village can he be found, so who his parents were we don't know. He settled in the Egypt community, where he met and married Josephine Bonaparte Charlton. They were married September 26, 1866. In the 1870 census they are listed as having two children, Mary E. and Charles F., ages three and one. How many other children they had we are not sure.

Some time later they had a daughter named Zora, who married Will Deaton, who was one of the early teachers at Cherokee. In 1878, their son John Poindexter was born. He married Lucy Gibson, and they became the parents of

Ezra Poindexter, who remembers his grandfather bringing home books for him and his sister Zemma, when they were youngsters. Ezra married Ruby McAlister and Zemma, Smith Fowler.

It wasn't until 1884 that Andrew and Josie's son, Napoleon Bonaparte Poindexter, better known as Bonnie (pronounced Boney), was born. Bonnie was a handsome young man, and he chose as his bride a beautiful young lady named Vinne Smythe. He worked in the logging industry, taking care of the horses. One of their daughters was Hazel

(Continued on 2A)

## Red-cockaded woodpeckers find home in Big Thicket

By Beth Houseman  
Park Ranger  
Big Thicket National Preserve

The red-cockaded woodpecker was once common in the pine-hardwood forests of southeast Texas. Today, the medium-sized bird with white cheeks is rarely sighted. Loss of habitat contributed to a large decline in species population, causing the bird to be declared an endangered species in 1970. To make their homes, red-cockaded woodpeckers need older, mature trees. Many of these older trees are infected with red-heart fungus, a disease that rots away the heartwood and makes excavation of the cavity easier.

As commercial logging began in this area, older trees were cut at an alarming rate, especially during the period from 1890 to 1920. Clear-cut areas were replanted, but not allowed to become a mature forest. Current practices remove trees before they reach 50 years and the growth rate slows. The resulting "tree farms" do not take the place of natural forests. The woodpeckers cannot make homes in the young trees and foraging areas are reduced.

Carving out a new cavity may take from months to years. The birds chip away bark from around the hole to keep snakes, who cannot travel across the smooth surface, from invading the nest. The birds also chip small holes, called resin wells, to allow pitch to flow around the hole. This serves either to warn off other red-cockaded woodpeckers and predators, or to help the birds find their cavities. A tree with a red-cockaded cavity is often called a "candle tree" because the oozing pitch resembles a dripping candle.

### ★ Festival

Poindexter.

But there's still another story behind the pageant scenes. Bonnie and Vinnie had another daughter, Dorothy, who married Clyde Johnson and now lives in Orange. Dorothy's great granddaughter, Karen Lynn Pentecost of Corseneil, was one of the queen's train bearers. She is the daughter of the Wayne Pentecosts, granddaughter of the Bobbie Pentecosts. Who knows? Some day Karen Lynn might carry on the family tradition and become queen herself.

What happened to the rest of the Charltons, we don't know. Although there are several listed in the Cemetery Book, there are no Charltons in the Tyler County telephone books. We only know that N. B. and Sarah had four other children besides Josie. There was Rachel, who married Mancel Crow; Catherine, who married Bill Richardson; James (1851-1894), who married Eliza Master-son (1851-1925); and Eddie (Mary E.), who married Bro. Roper, a Methodist Minister from Chester.

After Susan's death, Charlton was married twice more, first to Susan McAlister, who died shortly after the birth of their son Pole in 1874, and lastly to "the Widow Brown." Although Mrs. Moseley's story gives Hopewell Cemetery as the last resting place for N. B. and Sarah, family members believe they are buried at Magnolia Cemetery. Wherever, the Cemetery Book, which was compiled in the 1970's and is available in the Heritage Village Museum Store, has no record for either of them. Perhaps someone reading this can bring us up to date on the Charlton family.

Red-cockaded woodpeckers live in a group, called a clan, which consists of 2 to 9 birds, but only one breeding pair. The other adult males are "helpers," and there can be up to three helpers per clan. These one to three year old helpers are usually sons of the breeding male, who help incubate eggs, feed young, make new cavities and defend the clan from other clans. When the breeding male dies, one of the helpers may replace him. Adult females float from clan to clan, waiting to move in as breeders.

Only one red-cockaded woodpecker roosts per cavity. The clan nests and roosts in a group of cavity trees called a "colony." A colony may be from one tree up to twelve. A colony usually consists of cavities under construction, in use or abandoned. An average colony usually encompasses a circular area about 1,500 feet wide. Some colonies may occur within a 300 foot area, while others are up to one-half mile wide.

Nesting occurs from late April to July. The female lays two to four eggs in her roost cavity. The clan members take turns incubating the eggs during the day; the breeding male incubates them at night. When the eggs hatch in 10-12 days, the clan stays busy feeding the nestlings a diet of spiders, ants, insect eggs and larvae and occasional fruit. The young leave the nest in approximately 26 days, but may be fed by adults until the summer ends.

Big Thicket National Preserve incorporates a variety of projects to successfully manage the colonies within the preserve. Once a colony is identified, underbrush is removed or reduced to maintain an open foraging area.

(From Page One)

and give us some earlier background on Andrew Poindexter, so it can be added to the family data on file in the Genealogy Library at Heritage Village.

Meanwhile, some of the life and times of N. B. Charlton are revealed in his letter to W. W. Arnett, written in 1889, a copy of which came to us from his great granddaughter, Nell (Mrs. Austin) Fuller of Woodville.

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## Tyler County COMMUNITY CALENDAR

May 1991

**May 4: SHAPED NOTE MUSIC WORKSHOP**, 10 a.m. at Heritage Village Museum. Teacher, Charles Whitmer of Spring. Cost \$6. Call 283-2272.

**May 8: GRAND OPENING BESTWAY SUPERMARKET**, 3 p.m.

**May 11: EAST TEXAS BLACKSMITH ALLIANCE**, 10 a.m. Heritage Village Museum. **SACRED HARP SINGERS**, 10 a.m. to noon, Heritage Village Museum.

**May 17: WOODVILLE EIGHTH GRADERS**, all day tour of Heritage Village Museum beginning at 9 a.m.

**May 18: SPAIGHT'S BATTALION, SONS OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS**, 10 a.m. Heritage Village Museum.

**May 25: SACRED HARP SINGERS**, 10 a.m. to noon, Heritage Village Museum.

**May 27: MONTHLY MEETING, TYLER COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**, noon, Heritage Room, Woodville Inn.

**June 8: EAST TEXAS BLACKSMITH ALLIANCE**, 10 a.m. Heritage Village Museum.

**June 10-15: JUNIOR HISTORIANS WEEK** at Heritage Village. Hands-on history experience ending with a show-and-tell day for parents and friends on Saturday, June 15.

**June 21-22, 28-29: PLAN NOW** for the THIRD ANNUAL ENACTMENT OF "WHISPERS IN THE WIND" a historical outdoor drama at Heritage Village Museum. Special Dinner Theater tickets available, covering dinner at the Pickett House prior to play at 8:30 p.m.

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

The Cottage Rose; Bob's Photography Shop; James Rogers; Donaldson Chrysler; Stephen C. Bennett; DDS; The Medicine Shoppe; Bestway Supermarket; The Greenhouse Cafe; Mann Furniture Co.; One Unique Place; Evans Insurance Agency.

We had two Grand Openings, The Medicine Shoppe and Bob's Photography Shop. The Beautification Award was presented to Durham Saw Shop.

Join your Chamber and be part of the growth of our county!

### Chamber News

TYLER COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Paid For By The City Of Woodville Tourism Fund

## A love story remembered 62 years later

By Dottie Johnson

Clemmie Lee Pridgen Withrow has joined the Heritage Society, and we're delighted to have her. Although she's lived in Houston for the past 57 years, she has strong ties in Tyler County. Her mother, sister and husband are all buried at Mt. Pisgah.

In her letter to the Society, she wrote "So happy to learn about the Cherokee Church. It's a love story in my life."

And a story we asked her to share, when we called her at her Houston home.

On April 14, Mrs. Withrow made a trip to Woodville with her sister, Johnnie Ruth Farrar, and her family to visit the cemetery and recall old times. They ate at the Pickett House, but didn't go into the Village. But they did notice the new church on the grounds.

It wasn't until they got home and read

the story about Cherokee Church in the copy of the *East Texas Echo*, which they had picked up, that the sisters realized what church that was.

That's when Mrs. Withrow sat down and wrote her wonderful letter, which said in part: "I think the Tyler County Heritage Society is doing such a wonderful job in working to save so much of the dear things of the county."

The Pridgen family moved to the Doucette community when Clemmie Lee was only two years old. One of her good friends from school was Opal Shepherd of Cherokee, who in the summer of 1929 invited Clemmie to her church. The very first time she went to Cherokee, Clemmie met a handsome young man, and they fell in love. Throughout the summer the young couple, accompanied by Opal and her gentleman friend, Tommy Davis (whom she later married), went to parties

at the homes of friends, playing jockey and dancing. They attended services at the church and enjoyed the singings and dinners on the ground.

It was a wonderful summer, she remembers, until the young man asked her to marry him. For some reason, which she didn't care to reveal, her mother opposed the marriage, and their romance came to an end.

In 1936, Clemmie and a friend went to Houston to find work. The following year she met the man who was to be her husband for the next 38 years. But, she still recalls that wonderful summer at Cherokee and was so happy to read that the church will live on forever at

Heritage Village Museum.

Next time she comes to Woodville, she will definitely come the Village and visit the church that holds so many memories of that summer in 1929, when she was first in love with a handsome young stranger.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Withrow, who celebrated her 80th birthday on April 28, says she will keep up her membership in the Tyler County Heritage Society as long as she lives. We hope that will be a long long time.

Thanks for sharing your memories, Clemmie Pridgen. It was delightful visiting with you. We hope to see you soon.

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Texas Trees: a Friendly Guide By Paul W. C.

By Paul W. C. and Perry L.

The Natural World of the Big Thicket Photography by Mark P.

Realms of Beauty: the Wilderness Areas of East Texas

By Edward C. H. Photography by Jess A.

Tales from the Big Thicket By Francis E. Abernethy

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## Mayhaws—from the wild to the orchard

By Diane Morey Sifton  
Garden Editor

Collecting mayhaws in Southeast Texas is a spring ritual, like picking blackberries and brewing up sassafras tea.

Most old-timers remember piling into an old truck with their brothers and sisters and chugging through mud to the river bottom or slough where the mayhaws grew. In dry years mom spread sheets under the scrubby trees while dad shook the trunk. The kids scrambled underneath to pick out the tiny, apple-like fruit from the leaves, twigs and other debris.

In wet years, when the water was knee deep and running, someone waded upstream to shake the trees. Everyone else laid sticks across the water to catch the orange-red mayhaws as they floated on the current.

In those days mayhaw collectors, young and old, had one thing in common: They anticipated the flavor of mayhaw jelly spread thick across hot homemade biscuits more than they dreaded encountering snakes or sloshing through mud.

Today, although the wild-tart jelly is as esteemed as ever, the ritual of collecting mayhaw fruit is changing. Thanks to a handful of growers in Southeast Texas, fruit now can be collected on the high, dry grounds of U-pick orchards.



Mayhaws in bloom

The oldest cultivated U-pick orchard stretches across 1½ acres of sandy hills west of Jasper. Harvey Gaskamp, agricultural extension agent in Jasper County, planted the orchard in 1983.

"In their native range in Texas, mayhaws extend from the Gulf Coast up to Tyler, across to Huntsville, and down to Houston. You can find them in 17 counties in this state," he explains.

Mayhaws are small-to medium-sized trees. At maturity their canopy can

stretch to 30-feet in diameter. Clusters of white blooms appear in late February and early March. Mayhaws are in the rose family and hawthorn genus. The small, apple-like fruit ripens in late April and early May, which accounts for the common name mayhaw.

Although mayhaws can be tagged in the wild and transplanted in the fall, Gaskamp, like other growers in the area, cultivates grafted trees. "My trees are mayhaw selections that were grafted to native mayhaw rootstocks," he says.

The varieties most popular with growers come from trees that were found in the wild in Texas and nearby states.

Gaskamp gives a high rating to "Highway" from Buna and "Super Spur" from Louisiana.

Most of the growers became interested in raising mayhaws when they realized that area development was destroying trees. At the same time they realized that access to mayhaw sloughs was becoming restricted by fences.

"The area continues to develop and with that comes more clearing and more fences. It is increasingly difficult to get to mayhaws in the wild," says Ken Pelt of Pelt Pond Farm in Kountze.

Pelt's orchard contains 140 grafted mayhaw trees. He plans to harvest the fruit mechanically and market the jelly. All the growers agree that mayhaw culture is in its infancy. "We are in the same stage with mayhaws as we were in the early 1970s with Christmas trees. Growers experiment. They disagree. There are different stories. We only know what we have seen. We do not know what kid of yield can be expected from mature trees in a well-tended orchard," Gaskamp stresses.

For now, Gaskamp sees possible markets for mayhaws in roadside sales, mail order, and gourmet jelly. U-pick is growing in popularity as people discover the U-pick orchards.

The experience though isn't the same as collecting in the wild in the old days. People don't get their feet wet, and they don't get stuck in the mud. They do get the same great jelly-making fruit and a chance to use the owner's leaf blower to blow their mayhaws into a bucket.

## WEEKLY SPECIALS

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## Letter from Bill Stewart stirs another Cherokee memory

When it came time to dismantle the Cherokee Church and move it to Heritage Village, two men from Lufkin came down to help and in doing so learned a little more about their own history. Their teacher was Ernest Martin, who dropped by to check on their progress.

The men were Bill and Charles Stewart, whose great-grandfather William James Stewart settled in the Cherokee community in 1852.

Bill was born in his grandfather's home in Woodville on the site of the present Woodville United Methodist Church, but he spent his first five years near Chester.

Bill and Charles's paternal great grandfather was Calvin Stewart, who died in 1863 shortly after being discharged from the Confederate Army. Just before his death he sold his Cherokee farm and moved into Woodville.

Bill remembers as a boy of five walking from Chester to the Pleasant Hill community near Spurger with his maternal grandfather Charlie Meek, leading a milk cow all the way. They spent the night in Woodville with his other grandfather, William Harvey Stewart, before continuing to Pleasant Hill, where his father Ray Stewart had bought the farm. The family would live in for the next 7 years. They moved to Lufkin in 1938.

It was at this farm Ernest Martin told them that he had stayed on occasion, when he came to preach at the Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, the same Ernest Martin who pastored the Cherokee Church during its 50 years of

existence as a Baptist congregation.

And so Bill Stewart has become a friend of the Village. The following is a letter he wrote to Village Manager Marjorie Schultz, which should spur a lot of memories among early residents:

"Though late, I want to say thank you for inviting me to join the Tyler County Heritage Society. The Echo has already been worth more to me than the cost of membership."

"The December 5 issue started my mind rattling around the attic of time. Mrs. Johnson's article about Colmesneil, the Colliers and the old store brought a great many names to mind."

"S. E. Collier III has very deep roots in the Woodville, Cherokee and Colmesneil area. Mrs. Johnson mentioned that his grandfather was also named S. E. Collier and known primarily as 'Uncle Sil.' He was one of thirteen children in a family that moved to Texas from Mississippi in a wagon in 1865."

"Uncle Sil married a young lady who was raised in the Cherokee community. She was Sarah Francis Stewart and known as Fannie. Fannie was born in 1853 to William James and Lucinda Meadows Stewart. Her parents had bought a farm and moved from Tippah County, Mississippi, to Cherokee in 1852. At the time of this move there were six sons and one daughter."

"Calvin Stewart, the oldest child, married Mary Emily Pool, who was the step daughter of Harmon Frazer. James Monroe, known as Monk, was the grandfather of Lewis Bingham, who was shown in the picture of the Barber Shop

of S. E. Collier Jr. Monk Stewart was a very interesting gentleman, was active in the Cherokee Church and still has descendants living in the Woodville area."

"Another brother of Fannie Stewart Collier was Dr. Van Stewart, who practiced medicine in Colmesneil for many years. His grandson was Billy Van Ferguson who served as Tyler County School Superintendent."

"One brother, Thomas Jefferson Stewart, died at age 30 and left no descendants. A sister named Nancy was married to a Durham and later to Jim Bond. To my knowledge, their marriage produced no children."

"There were two other brothers, George Washington and Richard Alexander, who married sisters. George Stewart married Virginia Collins, and they had six children that I know of. George was a Methodist preacher, and I have lost track of him."

"Richard Stewart married Blountie Collins. They had a rather large family. Two of their sons were physicians. Dr. Charlie B. Stewart practiced many years at Huntington in Angelina County. Dr. Richard Preston Stewart practiced in Rockland and possibly at Colmesneil. He has descendants living in Woodville."

"It was not my intent to lose Uncle Sil and his side of the family. I know that he and Fannie have two daughters and at least two sons buried at Colmesneil. He is also buried there. Fannie is buried in the Stewart family cemetery at Cherokee as are her parents, sister Nancy and brothers Thomas and Monk."

"Uncle Sil had a younger brother named George. He married the daughter of Calvin Stewart, a niece of Fannie's. George began the practice of dentistry after completing one term at Baltimore College of Dental Surgery at the age of seventeen. His practice was a circuit of small towns. He carried his dental chair from town to town in a buggy."

"At 18 he married Mary Calvin Stewart, who was a teacher. His dental practice was continued at Corpus Christi, Uvalde and San Antonio, where he practiced more than 20 years across the street from the present Guenther Hotel."

"During his years in San Antonio he completed a one term, post-graduate course at the Chicago College of Dental Surgery in 1893 and received his certificate from the State Board of Dental Examiners in 1897. He served as president of the Texas Dental Association in 1909."

"I am pleased to have the Echo as a source to help me keep up with Tyler County."

"I am especially proud of the fine progress you have making with your effort to improve Heritage Village. It is my intent to give more of my time to the work you are doing. It is simply a matter of finding something I can do."

"Best wishes for continued progress."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thank you for the fine letter, Mr. Stewart. I think we have found something you can do and do very well: historical research and writing. We invite you to submit both to the East Texas Echo whenever you have something to tell.

## Mahaw Jelly

Ask a southeast Texas native to describe mayhaw jelly and he'll tell you it's the best tasting jelly in the world. Apart from that, the scarlet-colored treat is often described as sweet, tart, fruity and wild with hints of apples, plums, and blackberries.

Some people say that making the jelly is easier than describing it.

**Making Mayhaw Jelly with Sure-Jell.**

First, wash the fruit and place it in the bottom of a large pot. Add enough water to cover the mayhaws and bring to a boil. Boil until the color goes out of the fruit and the berries have burst. Strain the juice through cheesecloth or a jelly bag to remove the seeds, skins and pulp.

The juice can be frozen or used immediately to make jelly.

To make jelly measure 7 cups of juice into a large pot. Add one package of

Sure-Jell pectin and ½ teaspoon of butter or margarine.

Bring the mixture to a full rolling boil over high heat, stirring constantly. Add 9 cups of sugar all at once. Stir continuously while you bring the mixture back to a rolling boil.

Continue boiling for one minute, stirring constantly.

Remove from heat and skim. Pour the hot liquid into clean pint jars and seal.

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## An 1889 letter to W.W. Arnett

By N. B. Charlton

This will inform you that I received your interesting letter, which I have before me. I was pleased to receive it. You must excuse my writing. I am getting quite old, nervous and can't see very well.

I've been in Tyler County since you left here with the exception of a year I lived in Falls Co. You mention the death of Varnell, you inform me of the death of your first wife and your second marriage. You have had the responsibility of a large family attended with some misfortune.

I have married three times. Sara, my first wife was a Foster and gave birth to five children, all are living now in Tyler County and have large families. I have 33 grandchildren and one great-grandson. My second wife was Susan McAllister, living a little over a year, had one child and died. He will be 15 years old in May next. My last wife was the Widow Brown. She never had a child. She lived 13 years and died with congestion.

I am now living with my son-in-law Poindexter. I built me a little house outside of his yard. I stay in it and eat with the family. I had not heard of Captain Dodd's death. I had lost the run of him, never knew what had become of him.

I am glad to hear that you have been successful in your aspirations. Frank Mott died a number of years ago. Mrs. J. C. Arnett lives in Angelina Co. Rebecca married Monroe Burke. Mull married Hall. He is somewhere in West Texas. John Eli and John King of the old stock are dead. Jink we used to

call him, some where in West Texas. W. A. Furgason died several years ago in Jasper County. He left his wife and four sons.

Uncle Lewis and Polly Riggsby are alive and well, the old man is 84, Polly 74. Anderson Sapps has been dead a number of years. Bass was preaching in Louisiana the last time I heard of him. Jim was living in Madison County. The Parsons of the old set are dead, all but Edmond. The old man Crag, Tenith, Jacin, Elmonds live in Basque County, has one son in this county. G. W. Van Vleck is in Houston, writing for the Grand Chapter.

John Nolan's family are extinct, I think. The Hanks and old Wyatt moved to Liberty Co. several years ago. John the oldest of Wyatt is living in this county. Jim, who killed Barclay in Woodville years ago, is dead. I don't know whether he was killed or not. Dick was killed in West Texas, George is living in Trinity River alone. Two of John's sons have been killed in this county. Uncle George and the old lady died years ago. Young is living in Colmesneil in this county. He married Susan Hanks. They have several children living in this county here. Dr. Work died in Woodville, and his son lives in Kountz, Harden Co.

Jack Bean and all the old set of Barclays are dead except Amanda's son. Bill Gray and son drowned in Sabine River. All the McAllisters are gone. Grandpa Gregory died at the age of 100. Asa Dick is alive about 75 years old. The old set of Fulghams are dead but one Robert. George Pulliam and wife, Squire Cruise and Piety are all dead.

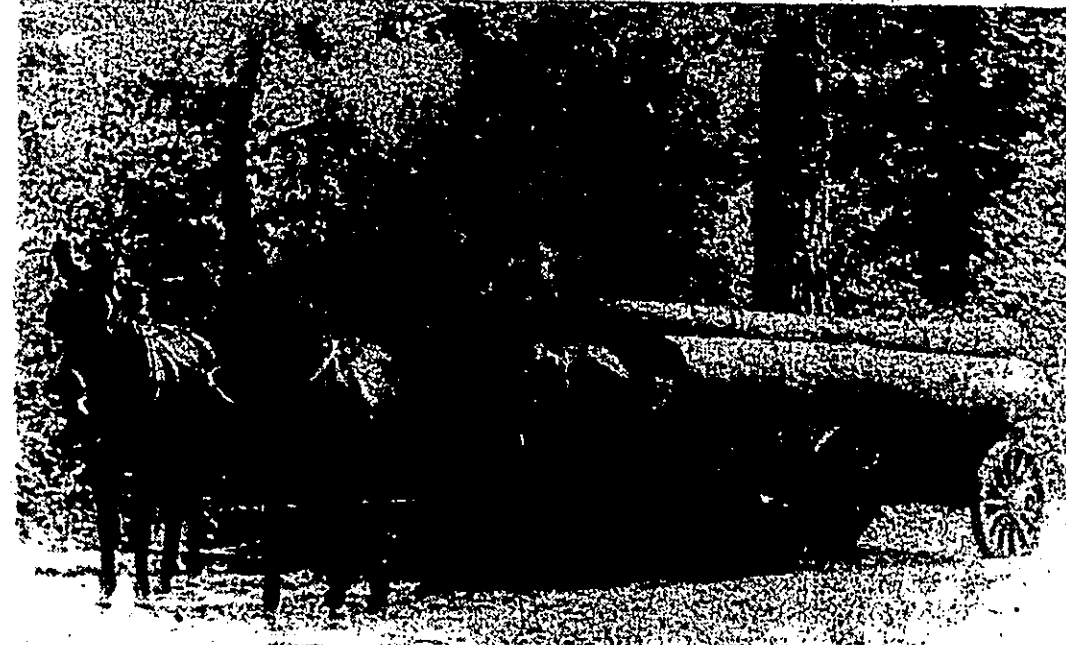
Now, Bill, I have tried to answer your letter as best I could. I was in politics from 1844 to 1864. My career closed when Jack Hambleton was sent to our State as Provisional Governor. I have lived an active life since I was made a Master Mason at Town Bluff in 1844 by Taylor, the author of Taylor Monitor.

I assisted in the organizing of the Woodville Lodge, lived with them a number of years, went west, returned and assisted in organizing a lodge at Hot (sic) on East River. I belong to the Austin Chapter. You mentioned Lucinda Terrell of San Antonio. I saw her about that time in Austin.

I will be 74 years old if I live to see the 13th of next May. I too will soon be numbered with the dead. I noticed your article in the paper you sent. I was pleased with it. I am trying to live the life of a Christian, but feel that I fall short.

William, I must close this long letter badly written epistle by hoping it will find you and yours in good health, and that you may prosper through the remainder of your life and that we meet in heaven where we are promised eternal rest, if we hold out faithful to the end. My respects to your family.

Fraternally,  
N. B. Charlton



N.B. "Bonnie" Poindexter



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WOODVILLE

## Felipe protects enemy on the border



By T. E. Phillips

When I entered the U. S. Border Patrol in 1922, prohibition was in full swing. Even though Pancho Villa had retired and moved back to Mexico, many of his followers remained behind, continuing to steal and smuggle. With his officers forming their own gangs, there were probably as many Villa followers living in Texas as in Mexico.

Prior to the establishment of the Border Patrol in 1924, the Texas Rangers tried to control traffic along the river. And, even though there is no doubt that the old time rangers were the best, there simply were not enough of them to do the job alone.

And so the Border Patrol was formed, taking from the rangers their top men as a base. I was one of the first officers selected by examination.

The Brownsville Border Patrol District consisted of 37 or 38 counties, running along the Rio Grand River from where Falcon Lake is today to the Gulf of Mexico, then north to Corpus Christi. This included Padre Island and Laguna Madre, where more than half of the smuggled liquor and dope came into this country. Sometimes boats were actually standing in line, and no one was out there to stop them.

My first station in the Border patrol was at Donna; my first working partner the man I've written about so often, the prototype for Zane Grey's "Lone Star Ranger." By now, this famous fighting man was more interested in talking about the good old days than in making them, but he was still a good man to have on the job.

During the years that ensued I had only two arguments with a fellow officer, one with an old timer, the other with a one-eyed hot shot. These I would like to tell you about.

After being accepted as an officer, I was allowed to go wherever I pleased. However, the one thing that was impressed on me from the very beginning was never to go south of the Military Highway with less than three men. The old timers knew that the land between the Highway and "Camino Real" and the river was strictly no man's land.

The reason the road was called the Military Highway was that it was used by the army units at Fort Ringgold in Rio Grand City and Fort Brown at Brownsville to patrol back and forth between the two installations.

The men at these two bases provided the only law enforcement we had at the time. And since they never went south of the Highway, the officers naturally claimed that land as their own.

The first argument I mentioned came after Charlie Wallis became my senior officer. He was a retired army officer and one of the finest men I ever knew. He had word from two old officers that

they had information they wanted to check out on the river, and they needed us to help. There were only two of them, and they needed at least three. Mr. Wallis decided to take me along, so we drove to Mercedes, where we met the two officers, then proceeded south to the highway, where we hid our car.

From there we walked about three miles to a river crossing we knew was used by smugglers. As usual, I walked on the right with my pistol ready. One of the old officers was in the middle with Mr. Wallis on the left, the three of us about thirty feet behind us and off to the left. As we reached the river, trying to look without being seen, a man started out in a tree took a shot at us, but our man bringing up the rear took care of him with one shot.

We then rushed out to the river bank to see four men trying to retrieve the liquor they had been loading on a big boat on the other side. It was in five gallon cans, each can in a sack with two sacks tied together. There was one man on the bank directing everything, two men trying to get the sacks of liquor back up the embankment and one kneeling down, aiming for a shot at us. One of our group beat him to it, while we took care of the other three.

Meanwhile, the man who had tried to shoot us was lying on the ground, calling for someone to help him. He couldn't stand up, and he couldn't use but one of his arms as he tried to crawl up the bank. A young woman came out of the brush and ran to his side. As she put her arms around him to help, the old man standing next to me raised his rifle to shoot her. I grabbed his rifle just as it fired, and the bullet hit the river. I let go of his rifle and, putting my rifle in my left hand, backed up three or four feet. I didn't know what he would do, probably shoot me, but I could not watch someone shoot an unarmed woman. Mr. Wallis jumped between us, turned me around and, putting his arm around my shoulders, walked me back to the car. Then we drove home. I never heard any more about the incident and happily never met that particular old officer again.

My second run in with an officer of sorts happened while I was in charge of the Mission Station. One morning, as I was returning to Mission from our headquarters in McAllen, I received a message, in code, to report to the Chief Deputy Sheriff in Hidalgo County for an emergency. The message gave the location as six miles north of Mission.

When I reached the cantina where the deputy and a group of officers were waiting, I found that the Assistant District Attorney had brought a prisoner to the cantina to re-enact a shooting, in which he had allegedly shot a woman. Although the prisoner was handcuffed and in chains, he had managed to jump out of the window and run into a large orange grove.

When the District Attorney called for help, all the officers in the county responded, including army, state and county. But he was waiting for me. I was recognized as a good woodsman and tracker, and he wanted me to track the man through the orchard. The officers for miles around. Now, these officers had recently been plowed. It had rained all night and was, in fact, still raining. There was no trouble seeing the trail, but I was wearing my best uniform and had

just had my boots polished. Still, I had no choice.

I had one of my men follow me with a sawed off shot gun as protection, so I could give all my attention to tracking, and we started out on a trot for about a mile. The mud was very deep, and it was hard going. After a while, I saw a place where the man had rested under an orange tree. He had removed his shoes and left his hat. We followed at half run and were gaining on him, when we found another tree where he had rested. At this point, he had obviously realized he was being followed, because he changed directions. And every time he came near a road, he had to change his course again, since all the roads surrounding the orchards were all covered.

Finally we came upon a spot where there had been a small house. The house had been moved, but some of the bushes that had been in the yard were still there. When I reached the edge of the clearing, I saw the man were chasing, kneeling down behind a bush. I walked up to a place, where I could find some solid ground to stand on and stopped, completely bushed. I had my man fire a shot as a signal, and immediately all the cars came to that spot, which was at the corner of two crossroads.

While most of the officers got out of their cars to come see the man, I stood my ground, waiting for the Chief Deputy to get there. About that time a big car with two men drove up, and the man on the passenger's side got out. And he was really something to see. A big white hat, coat, two pistols. I had no idea who he was, but he walked up to where the fugitive was still on his knees with his

hands covering his face. He was so tired, he could do nothing else.

The man from the car reached down and picked up the chain, doubled it up in his fist and hit the prisoner across the head. The poor man was wet and tired and the blood was running down his face, and as he tried to get up, the man hit him again. As the prisoner fell back, the man made ready to hit him a third time. That did it. I didn't know who the bully was, what authority if any he had or why he was there, but I did know that the fugitive was my prisoner until I turned him over to the Chief Deputy. And I was not going to see him brutally mistreated. So, I stepped up to the man with the chain in his upraised hand and told him very simply and quietly that if he hit the man again, I would kill him.

At the time I wasn't aware of how many other officers had reached the scene or that the Chief Deputy had arrived just before I made my statement. I just knew that the man looked hard at me and dropped the chain like it was on fire. He never made a move toward his pistols. Instead he turned, got in the car and left.

And then I saw what had happened. Very quietly, my five patrolmen had formed a circle around me.

When we got back to Mission, the man who had protected me on the trail and I went home, exhausted. The other four men went to the McAllen headquarters, where they must have made some kind of report. It wasn't that anyone acknowledged what I did or said. It was more the way they treated me after that, with a special kind of respect.

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# Heritage Village Museum: A Unique Collection Of Early Tyler County Artifacts

**1.—ENTRANCE & MUSEUM STORE:** Enter the Village through the Museum Store, where you'll find an intriguing collection of unique country crafts, an outstanding selection of books dealing with the history of the area, and many unusual gift items.

**2.—WHITMEYER GENEALOGY LIBRARY:** Research your Tyler County roots right here at the Village. Share information through our Genealogy Register, use our microfiche and microfilm readers, browse through our growing collection of family histories and books.

**3.—EXHIBITION ROOM:** Monthly exhibits are shown in this room to further explain the history of Tyler County that is being preserved in the Village.

**4.—KILLAM JEWELRY SHOP:** Talented jewelry designer John Killam demonstrates early methods of jewelry making for visitors, while operating his custom jewelry business. Many of his designs are found exclusively in the Museum Store.

**5.—JUSTICE OF THE PEACE:** The JP's duties once included assaying minerals, performing marriage ceremonies and handing out punishment to criminals. Former Woodville City Magistrate and Border Patrolman T.E. Phillips offers interesting evidence of his colorful careers for Village visitors.

**6.—PAWN SHOP:** Old time mechanical money banks in the window invite visitors inside, where a wide variety of treasures can be found that stir memories of days gone by.

**7.—WAGON SHOP:** Plans are under way for reworking this area into a wagon shop and Tack Room.

**8.—TEXAS DINNER BELL FACTORY:** The traditional triangle, which rang across pioneer lands both as an alarm and a chow time "come and get it", is made here for sale at the Museum Store and in specialty shops coast to coast.

**9.—POST OFFICE:** There really was a Pluck Post Office, and Willie Reinhardt was the last Postmaster for the little mill town near Corrigan in Polk County. Inside fixtures of our reconstruction came from the original.

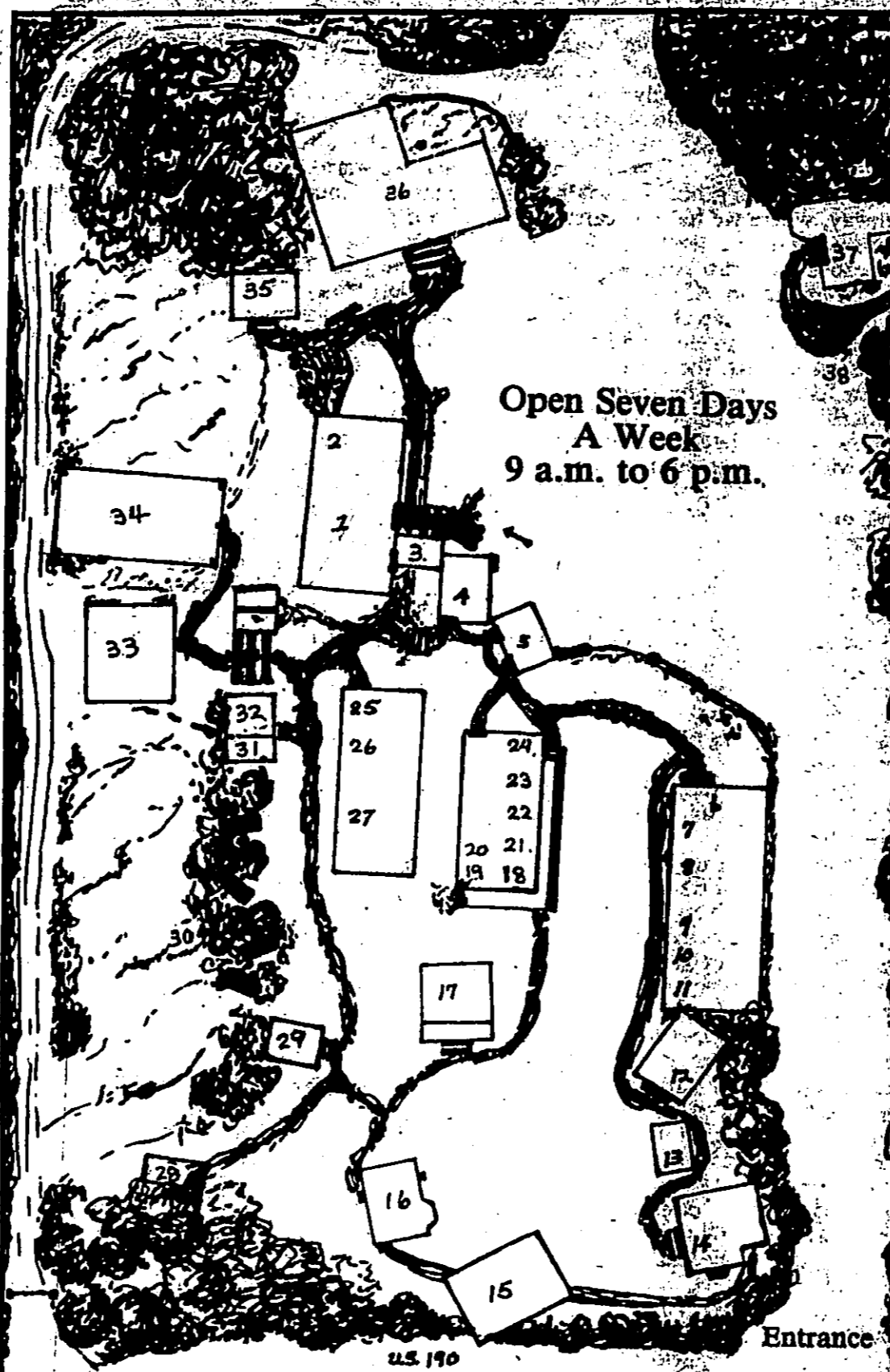
**10.—BARBER SHOP:** If you wanted a Saturday night bath, this century old barber shop could accommodate you in the back room. The 1836 copper tub once belonged to a Jefferson, Texas, blacksmith. The century old fixtures of the shop included two chairs, which could be laid back and revolved, but not raised or lowered.

**11.—SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND JAIL:** Every town had one, of course. The Village's offering is a replica of the type of facilities one might have found in early Tyler County days.

**12.—BLACKSMITH SHOP:** In use in Colmesneil in the late 1800's, this shop is now the home of the East Texas Blacksmith Alliance. Village Blacksmiths fire up the forge whenever a touring group is expected, inviting them to share in what was once one of the most important businesses in any town.

**13.—CANE GRINDER AND SYRUP MILL:** Horses or mules were used to turn the grinders through which sugar cane was squeezed before the slow process of cooking the juice into a delectable syrup. In the shed beyond is an old wagon donated by the late Gov. Allan Shivers, a famous Woodville son.

**14.—TOLAR CABIN:** Built by Robert Tolar for his bride in 1866 and donated by his ancestors, the cabin, where family members cooked their meals over the open fire well into the 1950's, was moved intact from near Hillister. It was awarded



ed the medallion of the Texas Historical Commission in 1964.

**15.—CHEROKEE CHURCH:** Established in 1860 and rebuilt in 1912, Cherokee Church served the entire community northwest of Woodville for many years. The church building, which served a Baptist congregation from 1936-1986, was dismantled and rebuilt at the Village in 1990.

**16.—RAILROAD DEPOT:** Materials for this depot came from the 1890 station in Hillister. The loop hanging on the outside wall held the Order Stick, which the Station Master would hold out to a passing train so orders, information and outgoing mail could be picked up without the train having to slow down.

**17.—COLLIER STORE:** Much of the original material and furnishings are included in the reconstruction of this general store, built in Town Bluff in 1863 by Zacharia Cowart Collier.

**18.—TURKEY CREEK INN:** A replica of what an early hostelry looked like in Tyler County. Furnishings are being assembled to accompany the handsome upright piano donated by Phebe Armstrong and her sister, Margaret Parker.

**19.—LAWYERS OFFICE:** Every so often, every one in town needed a lawyer, and it wasn't unusual to find him

officing off the lobby of the local hotel. **20.—SALOON:** Even a little town like Woodville once had a saloon. In fact at one time, it had several. But our Village will have only one, off the hotel lobby and behind the Apothecary.

**21.—APOTHECARY SHOP:** In an old time drug store, only prescriptions and home remedies were sold. The prescription counter here is from a drug store in Rockland, which was once a thriving mill town and the terminus of the railroad from Beaumont.

**22.—PHYSICIAN'S OFFICE:** Dr. and Mrs. Gayle Burton of Woodville are currently researching early Tyler County physicians to authenticate the refurbishing of this office.

**23.—SEAMSTRESS SHOP:** Recreation of an 1875-83 Shop, which in its day was a genteel way for a lady to earn a living. Joseph Gerretts and his mother, Martha Stark, of Houston are responsible for the research and furnishings of this shop, which offers a delightful look into the world of fashion a century ago.

**24.—OPEN DEMONSTRATION AREA:** Opening up the entrance to the Village, this area is used for a variety of demonstrations throughout the year, such as our white oak basket makers.

**25.—MUSIC SHOP:** Musical history memorabilia from the collection of Bubba Voss of Orange, who spent many years in a circus band, has been increased to include old sheet music donated by Fred Bennett of Woodville.

**26.—CHAIR FACTORY:** Dallas Miller operated this chair factory in Burkeyville until 1964, when it was donated to the Village by his family. Besides being the best chair maker in this part of the country, Miller was also a genius in fabricating the machinery he needed to make those chairs.

**27.—INDUSTRIAL AREA:** Soon to be the home of the Mattress Factory, Seed Separator and other early machinery needed to keep an early Village operating.

**28.—VILLAGE STILL:** Once shamefully located right outside the school house, the Whiskey Still is now back in the woods where it can turn out its moonshine without corrupting young souls at recess.

**29.—LITTLE RED SCHOOL HOUSE:** Typical of the one-room school houses where all grades were taught by one teacher and older students were pressed into service to help the younger ones with their lessons.

**30.—PICNIC AREA:** Nested in the woods is a delightful picnic area, where visitors who wish to "brown bag" it can relax and enjoy.

**31.—SHINGLE SPLITTING:** Under the overhang of the log utility shed you'll often find Ewell Woods, one of the Village's most faithful volunteers, who splits shingles to the entertainment of Village visitors.

**32.—LOG UTILITY SHED:** The Junior Historians, a group of middle and high school students sponsored by the Tyler County Heritage Society at the Village, dismantled and reassembled this sturdy log structure, which came from the Pleasant Hill Community near Spurger, southeast of Woodville.

**33.—CANTILEVER LOG BARN:** This 140-year old log barn once belonged to the family of famed timber and oilman, John Henry Kirby, at Peach Tree Village near Chester. It was moved log by log to the Village by a team of volunteers.

**34.—DEMONSTRATION BARN:** Since old time craft demonstrations are the life line of the Village, this open-sided pole barn offers a perfect spot for large demonstrations, outdoor gatherings and workshops.

**35.—THE COTTAGE ROSE:** Antique and miniature roses surround this delightful little shop, which is located outside the Village proper, up the hill from the Pickett House. In addition to beautiful containerized plants outside and an aromatic profusion of dried floral items inside, the mother-daughter owners offer demonstrations and help with making the Village more authentically flowerful to its depicted period.

**36.—PICKETT HOUSE:** Country cooking abounds in this world famous restaurant housed in a turn-of-the-century school house. Open daily with an all-you-can-eat menu that includes chicken and dumplings, fresh vegetables and fruit cobbler, the bright cheerful interior is decorated with colorful circus posters from the collection of Bubba Voss from Orange.

**37.—HAMM HOUSE:** Donated by the Hamm Family of Town Bluff, this century old home is currently being restored as a Nature Center at the head of the Big Woods Hiking Trails.

**38.—BIG WOODS HIKING TRAILS:** This 11.5 acres of well-marked hiking trails offer most of the treasures that can be found in the Big Thicket.