

CHAPTER ONE

The Harrison County Historical Resource Survey is a thesis project that provides updated research and visual, descriptive, and historical documentation in a format accessible to the public and in a manner that allows and encourages the public to take part in the identification and preservation of the historical resources, cultural landscapes, and built environments of Harrison County. Although notable resources were documented in the 1960s and 1970s, it was done in a piecemeal fashion based on tourism and local histories at the time rather than as a comprehensive review. That previous work is neither up-to-date for the structures recorded at that time nor is that previous work easily accessible. The purpose of a historic resources survey is to identify extant resources. Once a historic resources survey has been completed, preservationists know which types of structures and landscapes (vernacular, industrial, religious, government, etc.) or which groups of broader society (laboring, lower class, rural, or minorities) were not represented in previous preservation efforts (such as National Register nominations, historic markers, or tour routes) and thus where future survey and preservation efforts should be focused.

Therefore, while this project provides updated condition and description information and additional historic research on previously identified significant structures in Harrison County in a format accessible to the public, it also makes the public aware of

future areas to research. Because the first priority of thesis was to provide online access to the wide range of previous preservation efforts in Harrison County, it skewed the survey in several ways that would not be part of a completely new survey program. First, the majority of the properties in the survey date to the late 1800s and early 1900s. This project began with properties that had already been researched with the purpose of updating the condition of each structure and conducting additional research. This is the standard first step in any historic resources survey. However when originally researched and recorded for inclusion on the National Register and for placement of markers by the Texas Historical Commission, the “fifty-year rule” meant that the cutoff date was in the 1920s. Forty years later, more current surveys are now examining resources created through the 1960s. The majority of the historical research of Harrison County specifically has been focused on the antebellum period thus there has not been much recognition of later resources.

Another problem is that the majority of resources included in the survey are those of upper class and upper middle-class white men (or their wives/daughters by default). There is also a lack of racial, ethnic, or class diversity. The thesis began with the brochures created by local historian Max Lale in the 1970s. The usual criteria for preservation work in the 1960s and 1970s were resources owned by famous people (white upper class men) and culturally constructed ideas of what pretty buildings were. In addition, many of the structures that have been preserved were those constructed of higher quality materials to begin with or owned by families or businesses better able to

maintain them over the decades. Vernacular structures were more likely to be reused, dismantled, or abandoned thus less likely to survive.

The primary goal of this thesis is to provide public access to updated condition reports and research about the resources previously documented. This thesis strives to encourage future preservationists to continue the work within Harrison County. Although the Harrison County Historical Resource Survey addresses mainly resources constructed in the mid- to late-1800s, it does include additional resources such as homes, businesses, schools, churches, roads, and graveyards. A specific effort was to include at least one resource from each community in Harrison County thus expanding beyond the previous focus on Marshall. Each entry is supplemented with current photographs as well as historic photographs and background research on the resources and their owners whenever possible. Some resources have been well preserved while others are in disrepair and in need of maintenance. Regardless of the resources' condition, however, each one contributes to the history of Harrison County. This survey brings together whenever possible local, state, and national resources for each surviving individual historic resource to create an accessible web site centralizing information for public use. Local resources include old photographs and county deed records, state resources include Texas Historical Marker files and Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, and National resources include information gathered from the Historical American Buildings Survey and National Register files. The result is an architectural history of Harrison County in East Texas told through its built environment.

Established in 1839, Harrison County had previously been inhabited by the Caddo Indians. According to all of the records researched for this survey, it seems that a consistent stream of Americans had begun moving to the area in the 1820s and 1830s as a result of land grants. Not much remains of the Caddo Indian mounds and little is known about the earliest American arrivals. Nevertheless, according to Randolph Campbell in *A Southern Community In Crisis*, once the Texas Revolution broke out in 1836, the area was well under way to being developed according to the accounts and records of many established families such as the Scotts in Scottsville, the Blockers in Marshall, and the Websters in Leigh.¹ In the 1850 US Census, Harrison County was ranked first among the state's counties in total population, containing 5,604 whites, 5 free blacks, and 6,213 slaves, making a total of 11, 822 residents within the county, with slaves making up 52.6% of the county's population.² Prior to the Civil War, Harrison County featured a mixed landscape of small farms, large plantations, and several towns: Elysian Fields, Hallsville Harleton, Jonesville, Karnack, Leigh, Marshall, Nesbitt, Scottsville, Uncertain, Waskom, and Woodlawn.

Each community within Harrison County went through a similar developmental process. Those who established the towns immigrated from the United States and many of them received land grants from the newly founded Republic of Texas. The founder of Marshall, Peter Whetstone, for example, acquired a grant from the newly established

¹ Randolph B. Campbell. *A Southern Community in Crisis* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1983), 49.

² Ibid., 20.

government of Texas in 1838.³ The plantations nearby grew, producing immense quantities of cotton and patterning themselves after the neighboring southern states, as evident in plantations such as the W. T. Scott, Samuel Scott, Henry Ware, and Sloan-Haynes Plantation. Antebellum Texas had an overwhelmingly agricultural economy similar to the Old South, but only one third of the Texas population owned slaves. The planters who owned slaves produced ninety percent of the state's cotton, much of which came from Harrison County.⁴

The antebellum period resulted in many families rising to prominence such as the Scotts who had a large number of slaves and grew massive cotton crops which resulted in Harrison County becoming one of the wealthiest counties in Texas. During the 1840s and 1850s, expansion occurred in East Texas, including Harrison County, as the economy continued to grow. Historian Lewis C. Gray, in *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860*, argued that planters ruled the wealth-producing and most influential areas of the Old South.⁵ That idea was challenged by Frank L. Owsley in the 1940s in *Plain Folk of the Old South* when he stated that slaveholding planters had created an incorrect view of antebellum society, arguing instead, that there was a large non-slave holding middle class who owned and operated successful farms as well.⁶

³ Randolph B. Campbell, "Marshall, TX," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hem01>), accessed April 24, 2013.

⁴ Campbell, *Gone to Texas*, 209.

⁵ Lewis Cecil Gray. *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States in 1860*, "A Companion To The American South", ed. John B. Boles (Malden, Maine: Blackwell Publishing, 2004).

⁶ Frank L. Owsley. *Plain Folk of the Old South*, "A Companion To The American South," ed. John B. Boles (Malden, Maine: Blackwell Publishing, 2004).

Harrison County's society resembled Gray's view, in that the largest families in power were slave owners, which resulted in their wealth and high standing within the communities they established.⁷ The Scott family, who owned the largest number of slaves in Harrison County, was a prime example. They had the first church and school built, and gave land for a graveyard in the community that is now known as Scottsville.⁸ The planter families also had more influence within the towns since the communities were centered around these plantations and their families. The middle class did not gain prominence within the town's communities until after the Civil War.

Towns began to evolve as a result of their growing populations and the development of large plantations in Harrison County. The following towns' brief histories are included because the survey includes at least one historic resource from each even if in 2013 the town now longer resembles the size and scope of its nineteenth century heyday. Captain Edward Smith and his family established the site of Elysian Fields in 1837. The post office began in 1840, officially organizing the town.⁹ In 1885, James A. Furrh, influential in the town's development and owner of the first Elysian Fields general store, became the postmaster.¹⁰

⁷ Randolph B. Campbell, *Wealth and Power in Antebellum Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1977), 4.

⁸ Scott Family File, Harrison County Historical Research Library.

⁹ Pam Nordstrom, "Elysian Fields, TX," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hle16>), accessed April 24, 2013.

¹⁰ *Record of Appointment of Postmaster, 1832-Sep.30, 1971*, (ancestry.com) accessed March 20, 2013.

Hallsville, first known as Fort Crawford, began in 1839 by William C. Crawford to protect the area from Indian raids. *The Far Western Frontier-Texas in 1840*, written by an immigrant newly arrived to Texas, describes the Native Americans in East Texas as “mostly civilized Cherokees with some slightly more aggressive Comanche tribes.”¹¹ According to the immigrant’s account, the local tribes had left the white settlers alone until after Texas defeated the Mexicans and opened the Republic to new arrivals. This resulted in Indian raids, thus the necessity of forts.¹² In 1849, the fort contained a post office and a church. When the railroad arrived one mile north of the fort in 1869, the surrounding community migrated towards the railroad, thus, creating the community of Hallsville. Soon the town thrived with businesses, but when the Texas and Pacific Railroad came to Longview and Marshall in 1872, Hallsville, just as quickly as it had evolved, began to disappear as people moved elsewhere for business opportunities.¹³ Today, Hallsville maintains a population of 2,722 which has been growing in recent years due to the town’s school system.¹⁵

Jonesville, once called Border, had its first post office from 1847 to 1849. By 1884, largely because of the efforts of Dr. Samuel Floyd Vaughan, the town had a steam cotton mill and a general store. Today, the town consists of twenty-five people, according

¹¹ Ray A. Billington, *Texas in 1840, Emigrant’s Guide to the New Republic* (New York: Arno Press, 1973), 252.

¹² Billington, *Texas in 1840, Emigrant’s Guide to the New Republic*, 250.

¹³ Sallie M. Lentz, "Hallsville, TX" *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hjh02>), accessed April 02, 2013.

¹⁵ 2010 US Census - <http://www.census.gov/2010census/> Hallsville’s entry is: <http://www.census.gov/2010census/popmap/ipmtext.php?fl+48>

to the 2010 census, and the only business remaining is the General Store.¹⁶ Karnack, organized in 1898 by Thomas Jefferson Taylor, father of Claudia Alta Taylor, better known as “Lady Bird” Johnson, wife of President Lyndon B. Johnson. The Taylor home is in excellent condition and visible from Highway 43.

According to *Texas Handbook Online*, Leigh began sometime before 1900. The town evolved from a three thousand acre plantation called Mimosa Hall built in 1844 by John Johnston Webster.¹⁷ According to historian Randolph Campbell in *A Southern Community in Crisis*, Webster had had eighty slaves in 1850 who not only constructed Mimosa Hall, but also continued to maintain the plantation until the Civil War.¹⁸

Marshall, established in 1839, and named after Chief Justice John Marshall, lives at the center of Harrison County and became the county seat in 1842. Marshall became the wealthiest town in Harrison County due to the railroad, which is evident in the large number of historic homes that still stand. Today, Marshall is still the largest town in the county, and continues to hold the largest population of 26,000, according to the 2010 census.¹⁹ Scottsville was officially formed in 1865, although the founder, William Thomas Scott, his family, and his slaves, had lived in the area since 1840. According to Campbell in *A Southern Community in Crisis*, Scott was the county’s largest property holder. In 1850 he also owned 103 slaves, and continued to be the only one in Harrison

¹⁶ 2010 US Census – <http://www.census.gov/2010census/> Leigh’s entry is: <http://www.census.gov/2010census/popmap/ipmtext.php?fl=48>

¹⁷ Sallie M. Lentz. "Leigh, TX," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hll33>), accessed April 24, 2013.

¹⁸ Campbell, *A Community in Crisis*, 35.

¹⁹ Campbell. “Marshall, TX” *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed April 02, 2013.

County to own more than a hundred enslaved people.²⁰ Uncertain, Caddo Lake community, was established in 1861. The people thrived on hunting, and fishing which continues as the main source of income to this day. The population was never large, and today the town only consists of ninety-four residents according to the 2010 census.²¹

Waskom began in 1850 as Powellton, but was changed to Waskom in 1881 in honor of John Waskom who played an instrumental part in bringing the Southern Pacific Railroad through the town. Although not built until 1941, the Winston-Taylor home, located in Waskom, is an excellent example of the Neoclassical style. Today Waskom remains a rural community with a population of about 2,169 as of 2011.²²

Smaller communities within the county include Harleton, established in 1892, Nesbitt, established in 1896, and Woodlawn, established in 1874. Thomas Whitfield Davidson, Marshall's City Attorney from 1907-1913 and elected Governor of Texas in 1922, grew up north of Harleton in a community known as Smyrna. His political success continued as he served in the Texas Senate in 1920, and then as the U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Texas in 1936 until his retirement in 1965.²³

The steady growth of Harrison County's population and economy stemmed from a variety of transportation options beginning with the stagecoaches that rambled through

²⁰ Campbell, *A Southern Community in Crisis*, 34.

²¹ US Census, <http://www.census.gov/2010census/popmap/ipmtext.php?fl=48> (accessed April 19, 2013).

²² City-Data-Waskom, Texas, <http://www.city-data.com/city/Waskom-texas.html>, (accessed April 2, 2013.)

²³ *Building Our History-Celebrating the 100th Birthday of the Harrison County Courthouse*. (Marshall: The Courthouse Preservation Council of Harrison County, 2002), 30.

the piney woods on dusty cut out tracks like the Marshall-Shreveport Stagecoach line, steamboats that meandered through the Spanish moss of Caddo Lake, and eventually the railroad lines that connected East Texas to Dallas, Houston, and cities to the north and east. Like other developing counties in Texas, the railroad brought the most change within Harrison County. The Southern Pacific Railroad as first to come through East Texas in the 1850s, connected Marshall to Swanson's Landing on Caddo Lake, then on to Shreveport, Louisiana. The Texas and Pacific Railroad replaced this line in the 1871. That year, the railway received a charter under an act of Congress to construct a line through Marshall. When the Texas and Pacific Railroad arrived in Harrison County, it located the main offices in Marshall and built a depot to serve the growing population. The railroad advertised throughout the East Coast claiming that Marshall had plenty of jobs provided by the railroad's many workshops and storehouses. In addition, the county had a large rural population whose labor made it the largest cotton producing county in Texas.²⁴ The 1880 census reported that 25, 172 people lived within Harrison County, almost a two-thirds increase from 1860.²⁵ According to a *Galveston News* story in 1878, Marshall owed "its growth to the railroad."²⁶ In 1878, the Jefferson Division of the Texas and Pacific ran from Marshall to Jefferson and on to Texarkana. Marshall had rail

²⁴ *Marshall News Messenger*, "Charter Given to T&P 75 Years Ago," Sunday, March 3, 1946.

²⁵ U.S. Census, 1880, ancestry.com. (Accessed April 2, 2013).

²⁶ *Galveston News* article, quoted in *Marshall News Messenger*, September, 1878.

connections on an east-west line from Shreveport to Dallas as well as lines to northeast Texas and the Midwest.²⁷

The Civil War had ruined many plantation owners so the railroad business and other businesses became crucial means of rebuilding Harrison County's economy.

Harrison County, like much of the South had been heavily dependent on slave labor. Yet unlike the rest of the South, Harrison County, like the majority of Texas, had escaped major invasions from Union troops.²⁸ Therefore, although the planters lost their workforce, they still maintained ownership of much of their land.²⁹ This resulted in Harrison County remaining primarily agricultural but with a larger proportion of African Americans taking jobs as farm laborers on much smaller farms.³⁰ During Reconstruction, the county's economy began to rise with the arrival of the Texas and Pacific Railroad. The railroad changed the landscape and built environment of the county as people began to move from the outlying rural communities into Marshall.³¹

The cotton industry continued to do well in Harrison County due to the railroads that allowed plantation owners access to more markets which resulted in making Texas the leader of cotton production throughout the entire United States by 1890.³² Marshall contributed to this through its former plantations that, despite an overall decrease in size

²⁷ Campbell, *A Community in Crisis*, 375.

²⁸ By the end of the Civil War, Marshall had a large Union garrison that occupied the town, hence the reason for no invasion.

²⁹ Campbell. *Gone to Texas*, 259.

³⁰ Campbell. *A Community in Crisis*, 375.

³¹ Campbell, "Harrison County," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed April 02, 2013.

³² David G. McComb, *Texas: A Modern History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989), 94.

and number, still produced cotton through the 1930s, using the share crop system.³³

According to historian David McComb in *Texas: A Modern History*, a rise in general farming and ranching throughout Texas accompanied the arrival of the railroad and began fueling the state's economy.³⁴ This trend occurred in Harrison County too, for example, J.B. Henderson, owner of the Stagecoach House, and his sons replaced their stagecoach business with raising horses and cattle. J.B. Williamson, owner of the Dial-Williamson House, replaced cotton crops with peach orchards and cattle, and the Sloans, owners of the Sloan-Haynes Plantation, transformed their plantation into a cattle ranch.³⁵

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Marshall flourished due to an influx of new citizens arriving by rail. It was not so much the railroad arriving in Marshall, but rather the railroad getting out of Marshall that attracted so many people. Marshall was about the furthest north that was not considered "frontier" in the mid-nineteenth century, and the town was well established which created easy trade routes East and West resulting in a natural hub. Some were new European immigrants who made their way to Harrison County after arriving by sea through the Galveston Port. Others, such as the Weismans, Hirschs, and Ginocchios followed the railroad and established businesses in downtown Marshall to serve its growing population. During World War I, Marshall men served at home and abroad with the armed services. East Texas Baptist College, established in 1912 in Marshall, turned its campus into a training

³³ The Scott Family File, Harrison County Historical Research Archives.

³⁴ McComb *Texas: A Modern History*, 98.

³⁵ J.B. Henderson File, J.B. William File, Sloan-Haynes File, Harrison County Historical Research Archives.

camp for pilots during 1917 and 1918.³⁶ After the war, Texas experienced a rush of prosperity through the discovery of oil, which McComb considered “the most important event in modern Texas history.”³⁷ Although Marshall had no oil at that time, this event, which occurred close by in Kilgore, brought another large wave of people into the area, including Harrison County. Department stores such as Joe Weisman & Company experienced a large growth in business. Since there was not enough lodging elsewhere in the oil field, many Harrison county home owners received the benefits as well by taking in renters such as William and Naomi Wheat, owners of the Todd-McKay-Wheat house.

Although land prices increased as a result of oil speculation, Harrison County remained mostly agricultural. Agencies of the New Deal programs arrived in Texas in 1933. In 1938 the Farm Security Administration (FSA), established the Sabine Farms in Harrison County. Although many FSA programs were segregated, the Sabine Farms was primarily a project to help African Americans within the county, and as a result, resettled seventy-five families. Sabine Farms included nineteen acres of land, a community center, as well as many other buildings such as a cannery, a general shop, a doctor’s office, and a baseball field. Sabine Farms continued to run until 1944, when the government sold the farm area to Bishop College who used it to meet the educational needs of low income families.^{39/40}

³⁶ East Texas Baptist College Files, East Texas Baptist University Archives.

³⁷ David G. McComb, *Texas: A Modern History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989), 117.

³⁹ Denise Cheney, *Texas C-Bar Bulletin*, “New Deal Programs,” Spring 2007. Texas Community Building With Attorney Resources: <http://texasobar.org/> accessed April 24, 2013.

World War II helped Texas recover from the Depression due to massive federal spending on government training camps and prison camps throughout the state. In 1942, the Longhorn Army Ammunition Plant was established to manufacture dynamite, munitions, pyrotechnic devices, and solid fuel rocket motors. In 1989, according to Mark Odintz in the *Texas Handbook Online*, “the plant site was designated to fire and destroy Pershing IA and II missiles under the terms of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union, which was completed in 1991.”⁴¹

As integration and the civil rights movement began to sweep through Texas after World War II, Harrison County remained segregated and county leaders had no desire to change. This was exemplified by the monumental restoration and expansion of the 1929 Hotel Marshall completed in 1957 by Bobby Manziel. As the tallest building in Marshall and Harrison County, it became a major attraction in East Texas and the center of all social events.⁴² Although many hotels had been forced to close throughout Texas in 1929 and in the 1930s due to the Depression, the Hotel Marshall had thrived since its opening coincided with the East Texas Oil Boom.⁴³ But it was also a reminder that Marshall continued to remain segregated because African Americans were not allowed through the front entrance. Still, Marshall stood at the center of the civil rights movement. Both Wiley College and Bishop College, which had been developed in the early 1870s by the

⁴⁰ Some of the cabins on the Sabine Farm still stand today. Bishop College moved to Dallas in 1961 and closed in 1988.

⁴¹ Mark Odintz, "Longhorn Army Ammunition Plant," *Handbook of Texas Online* <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/dml03>, (accessed April 02, 2013).

⁴² *Texas Centennial*, 23 August 1936. Harrison County Historical Research Library Archives.

⁴³ *Marshall News Messenger*, "Landmark's future in Economic Limbo," September 13, 1981.

Methodist Episcopal Church for newly freed slaves, became intellectual centers for civil rights leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., James L. Farmer, Jr., and Jesse Jackson. According to Campbell, many white Texans during the mid-twentieth century considered the lifestyles of blacks a threat to proper social order.⁴⁴ This was no different in Marshall. Melvin B. Tolson of Wiley College, for example, as a renowned Texas poet in the Harlem Renaissance, sadly received little attention from the white community of Harrison County.⁴⁵

By the 1970s, when the larger Texas metropolises were growing rapidly as the result of post war boom times, Marshall and the rest of Harrison County remained much as it had during the early-twentieth century. Marshall remains the biggest town in the county with over 26,000 inhabitants. The surviving surrounding towns maintain their identities through their schools, and churches, but Marshall is the only town that has gained in economic growth and population. The county remains rural today. As the preservation movement swept the country in the early 1960s and late 1970s, Harrison County history enthusiasts did their part too. But like much of history and preservation during that time, only major events and prominent individuals were considered significant, with very little written or preserved about race, women, and lower economic groups. Although this project does not delve into those areas, it is a step in the right direction by providing full access to the public and identifying future preservation and research areas.

⁴⁴ Campbell, *Gone to Texas*, 364.

⁴⁵ Campbell, *Gone to Texas*, 365.