

## CHAPTER ONE

### The History of Nacogdoches

As a form of civic boosterism, in the 1980s locals began to call Nacogdoches the oldest town in Texas. These promoters focused on the city's role in the Spanish mission system and as the site of some of the first shots of the Texas Revolution. Tourism materials also focused on the city as the home of early Spanish, European, and American colonists, signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence, veterans of the Battle of San Jacinto, delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1836, other antebellum politicians and businessmen.

While previous interpretations of Nacogdoches history have ended at the Republic of Texas, this thesis begins with the Caddo and extends to the present. Tourists come from around the state and beyond to visit local historic sites to learn about Nacogdoches's past. Most tourists explore downtown Nacogdoches without realizing that the people whose homes and historic markers they have visited, lie in Oak Grove Cemetery, just a few blocks away. Apart from visiting the graves of notable Nacogdoches citizens, a tour through Oak Grove Cemetery can teach visitors about the broader history of Nacogdoches and its citizens.

#### The History of Nacogdoches and its Citizens

In order to utilize Oak Grove Cemetery as a heritage tourism site that goes beyond the usual presentation of Nacogdoches's pre-1845 significance, the

following pages will present a condensed history of the city from its settlement as a Spanish colony to the present.<sup>1</sup>

According to legend, there was once a Caddo chief whose tribe lived along the banks of the Sabine River.<sup>2</sup> Upon his deathbed, the chief called his two sons, Nacogdoches and Natchitoches, in to hear his final will. The chief directed his son Nacogdoches to take his followers and travel one day in the direction of the sunset and where their day's journey ended, they were to settle. Natchitoches was to do the same but in the opposite direction, towards the sunrise, and where he and his followers reached by day's end, that was to be their home. This is the legend of how the Nacogdoches came to be.

It is unknown which European nation was the first to arrive in Nacogdoches. According to his diary, Cabeza De Vaca arrived in Southeastern Texas in 1528 and explored that area of Texas for six years.<sup>3</sup> There are no records of De Vaca making it to Nacogdoches but his expedition was the first of

---

<sup>1</sup> For more information about East Texas history consult George Louis Crocket's *Two Centuries in East Texas: A History of San Augustine County and Surrounding Territory from 1685 to the Present Time* (Dallas: The Southwest Press, 1932). Although it was written in the early 1930s, this book is considered one of the best accounts of East Texas history, because Crocket travelled around the area collecting primary documentation and interviewing local sources. Another local history is Joe E. Ericson's *The Nacogdoches Story: An Informal History* (Bowie, Maryland: Hertiage Books, Inc., 2000). Ericson made a career of researching, writing, and publishing accounts of East Texas history. Randolph B. Campbell's *Gone To Texas: A History of the Lone Star State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) offers an overview of Texas history starting from the time of the Native Americans to the present. Campbell is a professor at the University of North Texas who specializes in nineteenth-century Texas history and has authored multiple publications on Texas history.

<sup>2</sup> Martha Anne Turner, *Old Nacogdoches in the Jazz Age*, (Austin, Texas: Madrona Press, Inc., 1976), 2.

<sup>3</sup> Alvar Nuñez Cabeza De Vaca, *The Journey and Ordeal of Cabeza De Vaca: His Account of the Disastrous First European Exploration of the American Southwest*, translated and edited by Cyclone Covey (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2003), 67.

many to explore the eastern region of Texas. Luis de Moscoso de Alvarado and his followers, members of Hernando De Soto's failed mission, arrived in Nacogdoches in 1542 and claimed the area for Spain.<sup>4</sup> Others state that René-Robert Cavalier Sieur de La Salle came to Nacogdoches or very close sometime around 1698, either searching for the Mississippi River or while trading with local Caddo tribes, thus claiming the area for France.<sup>5</sup> Regardless of who was the first to arrive, both the French and Spanish claimed the Nacogdoches area, a territorial dispute that brought both countries trouble for over a century.<sup>6</sup>

To protect their claim in East Texas, the Spanish established a string of missions, one of which was in Nacogdoches. In 1716, the Spanish established Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de los Nacogdoches, which was documented to be at the junction of Lanana Creek and Banita Creek, though no remnants of the structure have been found.<sup>7</sup> Due to its distance from Mexico City, drought, disease, famine, Indian raids, the constant threat of a French invasion, and the Caddos' lack of interest in converting, the mission at Nacogdoches was abandoned in 1719, reestablished in 1721, and finally given up by 1772.<sup>8</sup>

In May of 1773, those who had made the area surrounding the mission home were given one week to move from their homes in East Texas to San

---

<sup>4</sup> Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story: An Informal History*, 3; Richard W. Haltom, *The History of Nacogdoches County, Texas*, (Austin: Jenkins Publishing Company, 1880), 3.

<sup>5</sup> Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story: An Informal History*, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story: An Informal History*, 11.

<sup>7</sup> Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story: An Informal History*, 6; Haltom, *The History of Nacogdoches County, Texas*, 5; Crocket, *Two Centuries in East Texas*, 19.

<sup>8</sup> Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story: An Informal History*, 7-8; George Louis Crocket, *Two Centuries in East Texas*, (Dallas: The Southwest Press, 1932), 8-44.

Antonio.<sup>9</sup> The East Texans, led by Antonio Gil Y'Barbo were unhappy with their new home in San Antonio and having to leave behind family members who were too weak to travel. The group petitioned the Spanish government to allow them to return to East Texas.<sup>10</sup> The East Texans were allowed to move back but they were required to settle at least three hundred miles from Natchitoches.<sup>11</sup>

After briefly living in Bucareli, in current Madison County, inhabitants abandoned the town and returned to their former homes near Nacogdoches in 1779 without permission from the Spanish government.<sup>12</sup> Y'Barbo petitioned the government to allow the East Texans to remain in Nacogdoches and the government consented, making Nacogdoches an official pueblo with Y'Barbo appointed the Lieutenant Governor of Nacogdoches.<sup>13</sup> It was at this time that Y'Barbo constructed the Stone House to serve as a trading post, his headquarters, and his home.<sup>14</sup> By 1800, the town of Nacogdoches had grown around the Stone House and was the second largest Spanish town in the state of Coahuila y Tejas, thanks to its location on El Camino Real, which made it one of the few gateways into Texas.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story: An Informal History*, 11.

<sup>10</sup> Crocket, *Two Centuries in East Texas*, 48-49.

<sup>11</sup> Randolph B. Campbell, *Gone To Texas: A History of the Lone Star State*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 73-74.

<sup>12</sup> "Bucareli," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ueb05> (accessed July 3, 2013)

<sup>13</sup> Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story: An Informal History*, 15-17.

<sup>14</sup> Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story: An Informal History*, 18; Crocket, *Two Centuries in East Texas*, 54.

<sup>15</sup> Crocket, *Two Centuries in East Texas*, 19-22.

The Spanish cemetery of Nacogdoches was established in 1800 near the site of the mission. It is unknown whether the site had been used as a cemetery during the time of the mission.<sup>16</sup> The cemetery was used for several decades and was the resting place of early leaders such as Antonio Gil Y'Barbo, who was buried there in 1809. When the fourth Nacogdoches County courthouse was constructed in 1911, remains from the Old Spanish Cemetery were exhumed and reinterred in Oak Grove Cemetery.<sup>17</sup>

In the early nineteenth century, Americans and Europeans gradually began to enter the eastern area of the Province of Coahuila y Tejas, some on legal land grants with *empresarios*, and some as squatters.<sup>18</sup> Those living in East Texas did their best to get along with one another and to follow the laws of Spain, but the newcomers often butted heads with Spanish families who had been in the area longer.<sup>19</sup> This tension resulted in not only verbal disagreements but also in physical conflicts including the Fredonian Rebellion of December 1826 through January 1827 and the Battle of Nacogdoches in 1832.<sup>20</sup> Oak Grove Cemetery was established after the Texas Revolution in 1837 and many individuals who were involved in the struggle for Texas's Independence were

---

<sup>16</sup> Texas Historical Commission, "Old Spanish Cemetery," Historical Marker, Nacogdoches, Texas.

<sup>17</sup> "Historical Site is described in Story by Blake: Local Historian Tells of Cemetery Located Here in Early Days," *Daily Sentinel*, 1936, 10<sup>th</sup> in the series, Vertical File, Nacogdoches County, CA-CE, cemeteries General East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

<sup>18</sup> Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story: An Informal History*, 23.

<sup>19</sup> Crocket, *Two Centuries in East Texas*, 99-101.

<sup>20</sup> Please see Appendix B for information about the Texas Revolution.

buried there including Thomas J. Rusk, Kelsey Harris Douglass, Hayden Edwards, William Clark, Adolphus Sterne, and Robert Irion.<sup>21</sup>

Not all citizens of East Texas were pleased with the result of the Texas Revolution. In 1838, rumors spread that a large number of Mexican Texans and local Native American tribes had joined forces and planned to attack Nacogdoches and San Augustine.<sup>22</sup> While these reports startled locals, there was no proof of this alliance, so they went about their lives as usual.

On August 4, 1838, the Mexican citizens of San Augustine, led by former Nacogdoches alcaldes Vincente Cordova and Nathaniel Norris, started an uprising.<sup>23</sup> The rebels sent a letter to President Houston stating that they refused allegiance to Texas. Thomas Jefferson Rusk called up the militia of East Texas but before the militia could put down the uprising, the rebels dispersed and went into hiding. On August 20, 1838, Pedro Julian Miracle was killed and on his body was found letters from the General of the Mexican Army Vincente Filisola giving directions for an uprising and a diary documenting visits with the local tribes and plans to incite an insurrection.<sup>24</sup> In May 1839 Lieutenant Manuel Flores, a member of the Cordova Rebellion 1838, was killed and on his body were found letters from the Mexican army discussing the involvement of specific Native American tribes in East Texas and their directions to terrorize the white settlers,

---

<sup>21</sup> McKinney, "Oak Grove Cemetery," Texas Historical Marker Application, 1997.

<sup>22</sup> Crocket, *Two Centuries in East Texas*, 189.

<sup>23</sup> Crocket, *Two Centuries in East Texas*, 190.

<sup>24</sup> Crocket, *Two Centuries in East Texas*, 189.

their payment would be clear title to their lands.<sup>25</sup> These two findings, among others, were what President Lamar used as an excuse to conduct an “exterminating war on [Texas Indian] warriors; which will admit no compromise and have no termination except in their total extinction or total expulsion.”<sup>26</sup>

The exact events that led to the Cherokee War of the summer of 1839 are uncertain because the motives of some of its leaders were less than noble. One account states that the Cherokee tried to assimilate but when the government found out about their part in the Cordova Rebellion they were forced out of town.<sup>27</sup> Another version states that the Texas government sent emissaries to purchase the tribe’s land but the tribe refused so the militia was sent in and after two days of fighting the Cherokee were pushed out of Texas.<sup>28</sup> The Cordova Rebellion and Cherokee War were significant events for Nacogdoches and its citizens because of the rebels plans to terrorize East Texans, as well as the involvement of Nacogdoches citizens, including Thomas J. Rusk, in pushing the Cherokee out of East Texas. The Cherokee War resulted in a smaller population of Native Americans in the Nacogdoches area.

Another obstacle Texans faced during the Republican era was annexation to the United States. Though Texans voted to be annexed, the United States refused to bring the republic into the Union because it was not acknowledged as

---

<sup>25</sup> Crocket, *Two Centuries in East Texas*, 191; Campbell, *Gone To Texas*, 167.

<sup>26</sup> Campbell, *Gone To Texas*, 169.

<sup>27</sup> Campbell, *Gone To Texas*, 169-170

<sup>28</sup> Haltom, *The History of Nacogdoches County*, 25-26

independent by Mexico. Because of this, annexation of Texas by the U.S. would mean war with Mexico and unbalance the Union's slave and free states.<sup>29</sup> The first President of Texas, Sam Houston, supported annexation while the second president, Mirabeau Lamar, did not.<sup>30</sup> Though France, the Netherlands, Great Britain, and Belgium recognized Texas as an independent republic, Mexico refused to acknowledge Texas's independence stating that it was "not aware of the existence of a nation called Texas, but only a horde of adventurers in rebellion against the laws of the government and of the republic."<sup>31</sup>

Houston returned to the Texan presidency in 1841 and again pursued annexation.<sup>32</sup> On March 1, 1845, Congress and the House of Representatives passed a joint resolution for the annexation of Texas with the conditions that Texas had to settle its boundary dispute with Mexico, turn over all public defenses, keep its own debts and funds, and could be divided into four states.<sup>33</sup> Texas Congress and a meeting of delegates, including president of the convention Thomas J. Rusk, voted for annexation on July 4, 1845. Texans ratified the annexation with 7664 votes for annexation and 430 votes against

---

<sup>29</sup> C.T. Neu, "Annexation," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/mga02> (accessed June 30, 2013).

<sup>30</sup> Campbell, *Gone To Texas*, 163-165, 173.

<sup>31</sup> Campbell, *Gone To Texas*, 173.

<sup>32</sup> Neu, "Annexation."

<sup>33</sup> Texas State Library and Archives Commission, "Joint Resolution for Annexing Texas to the United States, Approved March 1, 1845," Texas State Library and Archives Commission, <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ref/abouttx/annexation/march1845.html> (accessed July 31, 2013).



annexation.<sup>34</sup> The Texas Congress drafted a new constitution, which was accepted by the United States Congress on December 29, 1845, and Texas officially entered the Union on February 19, 1846. After more than ten years, the dreams of Nacogdoches's revolutionaries were realized.

Antebellum Nacogdoches was much like the rest of the South in the fact that its economy was primarily agricultural and some farmers used slaves to get work done in the fields. The state census of 1847 showed that Nacogdoches County had a population of 4,172 individuals, 1,228 of them were slaves.<sup>35</sup> After other Southern states began to secede from the Union, a state secession convention met in Austin on January 23, 1861 and in February, it passed an ordinance of secession.<sup>36</sup> On February 23, the state submitted the ordinance to the people of Texas and it passed with 39,415 votes for secession and 18,841 votes against. Though some prominent citizens such as Sam Houston, were against secession, including those who had fought so hard to see Texas's independence from Mexico and the struggle for the state to enter the Union, they were outvoted 317 to 94.<sup>37</sup> According to the Texas Declaration of Causes of Secession, Texans felt that they had done everything asked of them by the United States in order to be annexed, and the state was admitted into the U.S. as

---

<sup>34</sup> Texas State Library and Archives Commission, "Ratification of Texas Annexation, 1845 Vote Totals," Texas State Library and Archives Commission, <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ref/abouttx/annexation/voters.html> (accessed July 31, 2013).

<sup>35</sup> Joe E. Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story*, 72.

<sup>36</sup> Haltom, *History of Nacogdoches County*, 35.

<sup>37</sup> Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story*, 79; Crocket, *Two Centuries in East Texas*, 332.

a slave state, but the U.S. was not upholding their part of the annexation agreement, therefore Texas had to leave the Union.<sup>38</sup>

When the Civil War broke out, fifteen hundred men from Nacogdoches volunteered for the Confederacy, making up thirteen companies of volunteers.<sup>39</sup> It is unknown whether any men from Nacogdoches volunteered for Union forces because admitting to be a Union sympathizer was dangerous in a Confederate dominated area. While no battles took place in Nacogdoches, a Confederate hospital was set up in Washington Square to serve those injured in the battles of Sabine Pass, Galveston, and Sabine Crossroads near Mansfield.<sup>40</sup> The Nacogdoches economy, much like the rest of the South, suffered during the war due to blockades and the shortage of men at home.<sup>41</sup> The people of East Texas were accustomed to getting their supplies from the market in Shreveport but when the supplies ran out, the markets closed, so people had to make everything that they needed.<sup>42</sup> Many veterans of the Civil War can be found in Oak Grove Cemetery, some with stone markers that are engraved with their service information and others with the Southern Cross of the Confederacy.

---

<sup>38</sup> Texas State Library and Archives Commission, "Declaration of Causes: February 2, 1861, A Declaration of the Causes Which Impel the State of Texas to Secede From the Federal Union," Texas State Library and Archives Commission, <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ref/abouttx/secession/2Feb1861.html> (accessed July 31, 2013).

<sup>39</sup> Joe E. Ericson, Foreward to *The People of Nacogdoches County in the Civil War*, by Carolyn Reeves Ericson (Lufkin, Texas: Pineywood Printing, 1980), xi.

<sup>40</sup> Texas Historical Commission, "Washington Square," Historical Marker, Texas Historical Commission, Nacogdoches, Texas.

<sup>41</sup> Archie P. McDonald, *Nacogdoches: Wilderness Outpost to Modern City, 1779-1979*, (Burnet, Texas: Eakin Press, 1980), 68.

<sup>42</sup> James A. Day, "Oldtimer Writes of Civil War Days in Nacogdoches," *Yesterdays*, Vol. IX, No. 2, Nacogdoches Genealogical Society, 1989, 42.



Figure 1.1 Southern Cross of the Confederacy on the grave of Richard Coke Gramling (1845-1928).

After the war, not only did local veterans return home but also other families arrived, mostly from Southern states, to make Nacogdoches their new home.<sup>43</sup> Along with these individuals, Union troops arrived in the state in June of 1865 to enforce Reconstruction and to emancipate the slaves.<sup>44</sup> On June 19, 1865, General Gordon Granger declared the slaves of Texas free, and though this information took time to spread, most slaves in Texas had been released

---

<sup>43</sup> Ericson, *The People of Nacogdoches County in the Civil War*, xi.

<sup>44</sup> Randolph B. Campbell, *Grass-Roots Reconstruction in Texas, 1865-1880*, (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 103.

from their duties by the end of that year.<sup>45</sup> Granger advised the freedmen to stay where they were and work for wages. Although some followed his advice, others went in search of their families, and some moved to other plantations to get away from their previous owners.

Nacogdoches was not exempt from Reconstruction and Union troops camped along Banita Creek, while they served as a policing force in the local area.<sup>46</sup> The field office of the Freedmen's Bureau located in Nacogdoches assisted freedmen in their transition from slaves to citizens, teaching them their rights as citizens, and helped them to find jobs.<sup>47</sup> While whites resented having to pay their former slaves wages, the concept of tenant farming and still holding control over these newly freedmen was appealing.

When Reconstruction ended in 1876, Nacogdoches local Richard Haltom stated that the "negroes made better citizens than had been expected," though this did not mean that freedmen always received better treatment than they had before the war.<sup>48</sup> Freedmen continued to struggle for their legal rights as citizens, enduring institutions such as Jim Crow and the poll tax, which were invented by whites to prevent freedmen from achieving equality in society. In the last two

---

<sup>45</sup> Campbell, *Gone To Texas*, 268-269.

<sup>46</sup> Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story*, 83.

<sup>47</sup> Carl H. Moneyhon, "Reconstruction," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/mzr01> (accessed June 30, 2013); "Records of the Field Offices for the State of Texas, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1870," The National Archives, <http://www.archives.gov/research/microfilm/m1912.pdf> (accessed July 18, 2013).

<sup>48</sup> Campbell, *Grass-Roots Reconstruction in Texas, 1865-1880*, 26; Haltom, *The History of Nacogdoches County*, 36.

decades of the nineteenth century, white men, such as members of the Ku Klux Klan and even the Texas Rangers, used intimidation and terror as a means of political control, and lynching as a form of retaliation and punishment.<sup>49</sup> Though Oak Grove Cemetery did not admit African-American burials, it does provide an opportunity to address the difficult transformation from slavery to freedom because some of the individuals buried in the cemetery were slaveholders and all were affected in various degrees by emancipation.

The Houston, East and West Texas Railway, occasionally referred to by locals as the “Hell Either Way Taken,” arrived in East Texas in 1882.<sup>50</sup> For many years, the citizens of Nacogdoches had struggled to get their crops to market, depending on unreliable roads or hauling their freight to riverboats on the Angelina River. After the Civil War, other railroads had begun to lay lines connecting East Texas towns and the lumber industry to national markets. Nacogdoches was a late addition to the network. The timber industry boomed in the early twentieth century as entrepreneurs established lumber processing facilities near these railroads.<sup>51</sup> In 1890, lumber production had become the

---

<sup>49</sup> Arnold De Leon and Robert A. Calvert, “Civil Rights,” *The Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/pkcf1> (accessed June 30, 2013).

<sup>50</sup> Christopher Long, “Nacogdoches, Texas,” *The Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hcn01> (accessed July 2, 2013); James V. Reese, “Economic Growth of Nacogdoches,” in *Nacogdoches: Wilderness Outpost to Modern City, 1779-1979*, ed. Archie P. McDonald, (Burnet, Texas: Eakin Press, 1980), 83.

<sup>51</sup> Robert S. Maxwell, “Lumber Industry,” *The Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/drl02> (accessed June 30, 2013).

state's largest industry. In Nacogdoches County alone there were six saw mills.<sup>52</sup>

Thanks to the railroad and the growth of the lumber industry, the population of Nacogdoches doubled to 24,663 between 1890 and 1900.

The United States enter the Spanish-American War in February 1898 after the *U.S.S. Maine* was sunk in the Havana harbor.<sup>53</sup> President McKinley called for volunteer regiments to fight the Spanish in Cuba and the Stone Fort Rifles volunteered, becoming Company B of the Second Texas Volunteer Infantry Regiment.<sup>54</sup> The Stone Fort Rifles never fought in Cuba but were sent as far as Mobile, Alabama and Miami, Florida.<sup>55</sup> Veterans of the Spanish-American War can be found throughout Oak Grove Cemetery and information about their service can be found on some of their gravestones.

The city of Nacogdoches continued to grow. In 1903 Charles Hoya co-established the Stone Fort National Bank to hold not only the funds from his surveying business, but also the wealth of others.<sup>56</sup> Another individual who found

---

<sup>52</sup> Campbell, *Gone To Texas*, 309; James V. Reese, "Economic Growth of Nacogdoches," *Nacogdoches: Wilderness Outpost to Modern City, 1779-1979*, 85.

<sup>53</sup> Tom McKinney, "The Stone Fort Rifles, 1887-1907," *East Texas Historical Journal*, 51, (Spring 2013), 38.

<sup>54</sup> Tom McKinney, "The Stone Fort Rifles," 38; "Jubilee...a celebration of our past," Vertical File, Nacogdoches County, Stone Fort Museum – SZ, Stone Fort Rifles, East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

<sup>55</sup> Tom McKinney, "The Stone Fort Rifles," 45-48; "Letters from Mobile, The Soldier boys are Healthy, Happy and Harmonious with their Neighbors. They Send Greetings of Undying Appreciation to their Generous friends at Home," June 18, 1898, Vertical File, Nacogdoches County, Stone Fort Museum – SZ, Stone Fort Rifles, East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

<sup>56</sup> Captain Charles Phillips, "Charles Hoya Left Mark on Country," *Daily Sentinel*, June 4, 1986, Vertical File, Biography, HAS-HT, Hoya, Charles, East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

success in the early 1900s was Diedrich Rulfs, who constructed churches, such as Christ Episcopal Church, businesses in downtown Nacogdoches, and homes around the city. Another example of post war growth and success in Nacogdoches is the Mahdeen Company, co-owned by Frank Aikman, which became a successful international hair tonic company.<sup>57</sup>

After years of lobbying and improvements to the city, on April 4, 1917 the thirty-fifth Texas Legislature created Stephen F. Austin State Normal College.<sup>58</sup> Unfortunately, two days later the United States entered World War I and the state repealed the appropriation for the school. Nearly 200,000 Texans volunteered or were drafted for service in the military.<sup>59</sup> The war made it necessary for Texans to maximize their output of crops and goods while minimizing the amount that they used in the home. At home, families undertook food conservation by using as little fat and sugar as possible while also taking part in wheatless Mondays and Wednesdays, meatless Tuesdays, and porkless Thursdays and Saturdays.<sup>60</sup> The American economy profited from the war because the United States

---

<sup>57</sup> Thomas W. Baker, Charles Bright, *The Daily Sentinel*, Mr. and Mrs. Jack R. McKinney, L.D. Pate, Dianna Smith, and Pyrtle Teutsch, "Jubilee...a celebration of our past: Jack McKinney," Vertical File, Nacogdoches County Business (M), East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

<sup>58</sup> "Education in Texas: Its History and Development: Stephen F. Austin State Teacher's College," *The Texas Outlook*, Vol. 21, No. 5, (May 1937), 34, Vertical File, SFA, Hi-Ho, History, East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

<sup>59</sup> Robert A. Calvert, Arnoldo De Leon, and Gregg Cantrell, *The History of Texas*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 2002, 302.

<sup>60</sup> Ralph W. Steen, "World War I," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qdw01>, accessed February 3, 2013; Chad Williams, "African Americans and World War I," *Africana Age*, New York Public Library, <http://exhibitions.nypl.org/africanaage/essay-world-war-i.html> (accessed June 24, 2013); Campbell, *Gone To Texas*, 353.



supplied most of the Allied Army's weapons and food.<sup>61</sup> Those in the lumber industry of East Texas profited from the Great War as prices for lumber soared to two to three times their usual amount and farmers profited when the Allied Army paid higher prices for their crops.<sup>62</sup> An area near the front of Oak Grove Cemetery was set aside for those who perished in World War I, and veterans of the war can be found throughout the cemetery.



Figure 1.2 World War I plot for those killed in action

In 1921, the thirty-sixth Texas Legislature approved the construction of Stephen F. Austin State Normal College and appropriated \$175,000 for buildings

---

<sup>61</sup> David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 93.

<sup>62</sup> Calvert, De Leon, Cantrell, *The History of Texas*, 296; Kennedy, *Over There*, 242-243.



and equipment.<sup>63</sup> Construction of SFA began in 1922 but was not completed by the Fall of 1923, when classes were set to begin, so classes were held in a quickly constructed wooden building called “The Shack” and at Nacogdoches High School.<sup>64</sup> That first semester, two hundred students registered for classes.<sup>65</sup> Since its establishment, SFA has continued to grow in population, faculty, programs, and buildings with its only period of decline during the late years of the Great Depression and during World War II.<sup>66</sup> Some of the faculty and supporters of SFA can be found in Oak Grove Cemetery, including Karle Wilson Baker who served as a professor of English from 1924 until 1934, and Frank Aikman who donated funds to construct the school’s first gymnasium.<sup>67</sup>

When the Great Depression hit in 1929, much of Texas did not immediately feel its effects because the state economy relied on products that came from the land such as agriculture, oil, and lumber.<sup>68</sup> Robin Langston of nearby Hot Springs, Arkansas remembered that her family always had food during the Depression but they had little money and eventually could no longer

---

<sup>63</sup> “Education in Texas: Its History and Development: Stephen F. Austin State Teacher’s College,” 34.

<sup>64</sup> Mrs. Birdwell, “Early History of College Recalled by Mrs. Birdwell,” *Daily Sentinel*, October 20, 1958, Vertical File, SFA, Hi-Ho, History, Early History, East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

<sup>65</sup> Mrs. Birdwell, “Early History of College Recalled by Mrs. Birdwell;

<sup>66</sup> “A Brief History,” An Academic Convocation Celebrating the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Year of the Opening of SFASU, Stephen F. Austin State University, Vertical File, SFA, Hi-Ho, History, SFA 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

<sup>67</sup> Sarah Ragland Jackson, *Texas Woman of Letters, Karle Wilson Baker*, (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2005), 52.

<sup>68</sup> Campbell, *Gone To Texas*, 360.

afford electricity.<sup>69</sup> Emma Tiller, a resident from the region of West Texas, stated that though her family had little, they tried to share food and clothing with those less fortunate than themselves.<sup>70</sup>

The lumber industry in Texas began to suffer as early as the 1920s, as overproduction by many timber companies exhausted their supplies in East Texas and required them to move their production elsewhere in the state.<sup>71</sup> In 1930, a high producing oil field was struck in East Texas near Kilgore.<sup>72</sup> These wells produced so much oil that the market was flooded and the price dropped from one dollar a barrel in 1930 to eight cents in 1931.<sup>73</sup> Farmers also felt the effects of the Depression due to a decrease in crop prices after World War I. During the war, farmers produced enough goods for home markets and to sell to the Allied Army, which paid top dollar for their goods, after the war, farmers continued to grow just as much though it was not needed, which resulted in deflation.<sup>74</sup> The Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 attacked this problem by instructing farmers to limit the number of acres they planted and paying farmers

---

<sup>69</sup> Robin Langston, *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression*, ed. Studs Turkel (New York, New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), 89.

<sup>70</sup> Emma Tiller, *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression*, ed. Studs Turkel (New York, New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), 44.

<sup>71</sup> Maxwell, "Lumber Industry."

<sup>72</sup> Roger M. Olien, "Oil and Gas Industry," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/doogz> (accessed June 30, 2013).

<sup>73</sup> Ben H. Procter, "The Great Depression," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/npg01> (accessed June 30, 2013); Campbell, *Gone To Texas*, 378.

<sup>74</sup> David M. Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War 1929-1945*, (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 17.

to plow under some of their fields.<sup>75</sup> By limiting the output of crops, a larger demand for the product was created, which meant farm income rose. The Civilian Conservation Corps helped the timber industry and its workers by hiring men to plant new forests and fighting forest fires.<sup>76</sup> By the 1940s the lumber industry rebounded to its status as one of the largest industries in the state.<sup>77</sup>

Another source of depression relief was through New Deal programs such as the Public Works Administration who hired skilled workers to build civil projects such as bridges, schools, and sewage plants.<sup>78</sup> The work of the Public Works Administration may be seen around Nacogdoches in sites such as Wisely Hall on the campus of SFA and the Banita Creek Bridge. The Works Progress Administration hired over 600,000 unskilled workers of all genders and races to perform jobs such as laying sidewalks, building park structures, and writing travel guides.<sup>79</sup> Another New Deal Program was the Historic American Buildings survey, which took photographs of historic structures in Nacogdoches such as the Sterne-Hoya house, the Y'Barbo house, and Nacogdoches University building. In spite of the depression, McKinney Drilling was established in 1940 and thanks to wartime and post-war growth, flourished.

---

<sup>75</sup> David M. Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War 1929-1945*, 144.

<sup>76</sup> David M. Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War 1929-1945*, 144-149.

<sup>77</sup> Maxwell, "Lumber Industry."

<sup>78</sup> Campbell, *Gone To Texas*, 383.

<sup>79</sup> Campbell, *Gone To Texas*, 388.

About 750,000 Texans either volunteered or were drafted into the military to serve in World War II.<sup>80</sup> World War II veteran John Moore stated that he did not exactly understand what the war was really about, he “felt like we were forced into it and it was the thing to do, and, of course, there was lots of patriotism, even the boys who were drafted were patriotic...I had no idea when I joined that army that I would be in war.”<sup>81</sup> Another veteran, George Burton of Nacogdoches, stated that he entered the military because he wanted to travel and see some of the world.<sup>82</sup> Texans fought in both the European and Pacific theatres of war and many received accolades for their service during the war.<sup>83</sup> Those who were killed in action, missing in action, as well as veterans of World War II are buried or memorialized throughout the cemetery.

Texans did what they could to help the war effort by purchasing war bonds, rationing, growing Victory Gardens, and hosting scrap metal, paper, and rubber drives.<sup>84</sup> Goods such as meat, butter, coffee, sugar, tires and gas were rationed during the war. Like during World War I, families had to alter their menus

---

<sup>80</sup> Calvert, De Leon, Cantrell, *The History of Texas*, 351.

<sup>81</sup> John H. Moore, interviewed by Bobby H. Johnson, Fort Worth, Texas, August 31, 1983 <http://digital.sfasu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/OH/id/97> (accessed June 24, 2013) East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

<sup>82</sup> George Burton, interviewed by Bobby H. Johnson, Nacogdoches, Texas, June 30, 1983 <http://digital.sfasu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/OH/id/82> (accessed June 24, 2013) East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

<sup>83</sup> Ben Proctor, “Texas from Depression through World War II,” *The Texas Heritage*, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed., eds. Ben Proctor and Archie P. McDonald, (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 2003), 176.

<sup>84</sup> Ben Proctor, “World War II,” *The Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/npwn> (accessed June 18, 2013); John Lee Hunt, “Ordinary People During an Extraordinary Time: Nacogdoches County During World War II,” (master’s thesis, Stephen F. Austin State University, 1999), 45-46.

and their lives during wartime.<sup>85</sup> This war, like World War I, brought a demand for food, munitions, transportation, and textiles from the Allied Armies. The increased money flow into the United States help to pull the country out of the Great Depression.<sup>86</sup> War also brought wealth to the state through the establishment of military bases, petroleum plants, steel mills, aircraft factories, shipyards, and rubber plants on the Gulf Coast.<sup>87</sup> In spite of rationing, most individuals began to enjoy a better quality of life than they had during the Great Depression and were able to go to the movies, open new businesses, and construct new homes with amenities such as electricity and indoor plumbing.<sup>88</sup>

As men left Nacogdoches to join the war, Stephen F. Austin State Teacher's College struggled to remain open, so in February of 1943, the school became the home of the Women's Army Auxillery Corps, later called the Women's Army Corps.<sup>89</sup> The WACs trained for six weeks in administrative services and learned skills such as stenography, translation, typing, telegraphing, and clerical services.<sup>90</sup> SFA did what it could to accommodate the WACs such as giving them priority use of classrooms, having professors hold college courses

---

<sup>85</sup> David M. Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War 1929-1945*, 645; John Lee Hunt, "Ordinary People During an Extraordinary Time: Nacogdoches County During World War II," 33.

<sup>86</sup> David M. Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War 1929-1945*, 363, 617.

<sup>87</sup> Proctor, "Texas from Depression through World War II," 176-177; Campbell, *Gone To Texas*, 403.

<sup>88</sup> David M. Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War 1929-1945*, 646.

<sup>89</sup> Jan Dobbs Barton and Peggy Arriola Jasso, *Images of America: Nacogdoches in World War II*, (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2011), 55.

<sup>90</sup> Barton and Jasso, *Images of America*, 47.

elsewhere, and by moving students to housing in town so that the WACs could stay in dormitories on campus.<sup>91</sup> The WAC program ended at SFA in 1944 and is credited with keeping the college open during the war years.<sup>92</sup> Congress passed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, or the GI Bill, in 1944, which encouraged returning service members to attend college.<sup>93</sup> The number of students enrolled at SFA increased from one thousand students in 1946 to fifteen hundred in 1949, and thirty percent of those students were veterans.

After World War II, the economy of Nacogdoches continued to grow. While timber and cotton continued to be important industries in other areas of East Texas, in Nacogdoches former timber and cotton lands were converted for pursuits such as raising beef, poultry, and dairy.<sup>94</sup> Stephen F. Austin State Teacher's College continued to grow as men and women returned from war. Due to the economic growth of this post war era, in the early 1950s, Jack McKinney, the owner of McKinney Drilling, proposed the Hotel Fredonia to accommodate businessmen and the families of SFA students. This growth also meant a building boom in Nacogdoches. This threatened the city's historic structures so Mrs. Lera Millard Thomas established Millard's Crossing and helped to save some of these structures from demolition. In 1969 Stephen F. Austin State

---

<sup>91</sup> John Lee Hunt, "Ordinary People During an Extraordinary Time: Nacogdoches County During World War II," 91-92.

<sup>92</sup> Barton and Jasso, *Images of America*, 45; John Lee Hunt, "Ordinary People During an Extraordinary Time: Nacogdoches County During World War II," 86.

<sup>93</sup> Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story*, 158-165.

<sup>94</sup> National Park Service, "National Register of Historic Places: Multiple Property Documentation Form: Historic and Architectural Resources of Nacogdoches, Texas," (National Park Service, 1990),15.

Teacher's College was redesignated as a state university, which brought about an expansion in the programs the school offered and therefore attracted more students to the city.<sup>95</sup>

Texas, much like the rest of the United States, was divided over the Vietnam War.<sup>96</sup> Unlike prior wars where locals hurried to volunteer and locals did all that they could to aid the war effort, the Vietnam War was received with skepticism and protest.<sup>97</sup> Stephen F. Austin State University's student population remained steady and apart from soldiers and their families, the lives of Nacogdoches's citizens remained mostly the same.<sup>98</sup> In 1975, SFA made national headlines for streaking occurring on campus, which Professor Jim Towns believes was the students' way of protesting everything from the war to feminism.<sup>99</sup>

Since the 1970s, the economy of Nacogdoches is no longer solely reliant on agriculture, timber, and education but is also the home of new manufacturing,

---

<sup>95</sup> C.K. Chamberlain, "Stephen F. Austin State University," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/kcs19> (accessed July 18, 2013).

<sup>96</sup> Calvert, DeLeon, Cantrell, *The History of Texas*, 408.

<sup>97</sup> "Vietnam War Protest," Photograph Collection, Digital Archives, <http://digital.sfasu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/EastTEXRC/id/11954> East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

<sup>98</sup> Jim Towns, interview by author, Nacogdoches, Texas, November 21, 2011; Ericson, *The Nacogdoches Story*, 240.

<sup>99</sup> SFA History: The SFA Story, "Interview with Early Regents," Stephen F. Austin State University, [http://cets.sfasu.edu/story/decades/1960-70s/Nov15/Regents-Perkins\\_Wright.html](http://cets.sfasu.edu/story/decades/1960-70s/Nov15/Regents-Perkins_Wright.html) (accessed November 27, 2011); Jim Towns interview.

distribution, and a service economy.<sup>100</sup> The city is home of chicken processing plants, such as Pilgrim's Pride, which as of March 2013 employed 1725 workers and brings millions of dollars to the Nacogdoches economy.<sup>101</sup> Another large employer in the city is Stephen F. Austin State University, which as of March 2013 employed 1609 individuals, and as of 2010 had a student population of 12,954.<sup>102</sup> Other large employers in the county include Nacogdoches Independent School District, which employs 985 individuals, Nacogdoches County Hospital District with 694, and Etech Global Solutions with 455 individuals. The city has grown in population from 59,203 in 2000 to 64,524 in 2010.<sup>103</sup>

Though there are many more facets of Nacogdoches history, this overview covers the major historical events and turning points that affected the citizens of Nacogdoches who are buried in Oak Grove Cemetery and explored in this thesis. In the future, this project could be expanded to include other cemeteries in Nacogdoches. The scope could be expanded to further explore the city's history

---

<sup>100</sup> Nacogdoches Economic Development Corporation, "Major Employers," Nacogdoches Economic Development Corporation, <http://nedco.org/community-profile/major-employers> (accessed July 21, 2013).

<sup>101</sup> Reese, "Economic Growth of Nacogdoches," 88; Nacogdoches Economic Development Corporation, "Major Employers."

<sup>102</sup> Public Affairs, "SFA Quick Facts," Stephen F. Austin State University, <http://www.sfasu.edu/pubaffairs/129.asp> (accessed July 3, 2013); Nacogdoches Economic Development Corporation, "Major Employers."

<sup>103</sup> Nacogdoches Economic Development Corporation, "Community Profile," Nacogdoches Economic Development Corporation, <http://nedco.org/community-profile/demographics-population> (accessed July 21, 2013).



and its citizens' roles in topics such as the Civil Rights movement, twentieth century immigration, and recent wars.