

Reminiscences

In one of your issues some months back I set up a few mileposts over the route I had traveled to and through Texas in 1860 - when her population was less than one ~~thent~~ tenth of present numbers - and savage tribes occupied more than half the vast territory of the State. I then intimated that at future dates I might fill in the open spaces with some of the vivid scenes that hang on "memories walls".

One volume would not contain even the more colorful pictures that pass before my vision as ~~79~~ 70 years are reeled off in a panoramic view covering the Territory from my entry port at Jefferson, Texas in 1860 to the nethermost parts of the Panhandle - to El Paso and to the lower Rio Grande and for hundreds of miles along the Gulf coast. The magnitude of the Territory, and the changes politically, socially and physically are startling, though I assume that the better contribution is one to historic progress.

After arriving at Jefferson by boat in March 1860 - and an excursion of eighty miles by wagon to Hopkins County, my family dropt (sic) back to Jefferson to remain until the summer of 1861. That part of the State was then sparcely settled and covered by forests of pine-oak and other hardwood timber - and there were deer in considerable abundance and much small game.

Lakes and streams yielded quantities of fish. Many farmers had slaves. The farm lands were fresh and fertile, and wild and arched fruits, grapes, berries, and nuts, were wastefully abundant.

Life was easy and the people were democratic and much given to hunting, fishing and social entertainment. Quail were abundant. Driving them into nets was the manner of catching them.

Jefferson was a thriving city of perhaps 8,000. At the head of navigation and the receiving and distributing point for a large interior territory. It possessed wealth and refinement and was never a wild reckless town.

In the Spring of 1861 the Civil War started and Jefferson was solidly with the South and quickly contributed by voluntary enlistment - Company "A" of First Texas Infantry, Captain Black in Command; then Mabry's Cavalry Company and Capt. Prats Artillery - these were only their initial contribution.

A brother of my mother with Co. "A" of First Texas Inf., Hood's Brigade, after being severely wounded four times, was one of two of the original company left to surrender at Appamatox.

J. F. Evans