



**TEXAS RESEARCH RAMBLERS
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER**
Volume XVI, No.8, August 15, 2006 Bryan-College Station, Texas

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OFFICERS for 2005-2006

President: Daniel Castillo
Vice-President: Mary Elizabeth Dresser
Secretary: Georgianne Bigam
Treasurer: Sue Foy
Corresponding Secretary: Helen Wolf

LAST MEETING

Our July 26, 2006, business meeting was short so we could combine a brunch with sharing ideas on research. It was good to see guests Lorne Dunham and Joe Ellison as well as members Trey Holt, Maureen Davis, and Mary Hamlin.

After the meeting, we enjoyed a delicious brunch, which is an *appetizing* way to discuss genealogical tips.



We sat at tables with those who had a common regional *palate*, such as the south central region.



Once we finished eating, we *relished* family histories that members brought, such as this beautiful scrapbook by Mary Hamlin.



We had the opportunity to *savor* Henry Hanson's display, a map of Jutland (Denmark). Lucy Patton appreciated the Danish tidbits of Henry's dis-



TREASURER'S REPORT

Sue Foy reports the ending balance as of /2006 was \$ 9,306.35.

FYI: GUESS WHAT? It's time to pay our dues for next year. Due date is **September 8, 2006**, and Sue Foy will be happy to accept your **\$20/person** or **\$35/couple** check to Research Ramblers, which you can send to her at 804 Vine St., Bryan, Texas, 77802-4349 or give your check to her at the next meeting.

Circle August 23 on your calendar, the date of our **9:30 a.m. workshop on DNA**. Max Blankfeld from Houston is coming to share ideas on DNA in genealogy.

NEXT MEETING DATE AND PROGRAM

We will meet at the College Station Utility Service Center, located at 1601 Graham Rd. in College Station, on August 30, 2006, at 9:30 a.m. The speaker, Marc Hamlin from the District Clerk's Office, will describe the work his office is doing that genealogists will be interested in, such as online records and scanned land records.

FUTURE SEMINARS AND TRIPS

- Every **2nd Wednesday** of the month: a trip to Clayton Library in Houston. Meet at Sam's Club Parking Lot prior to 6:45 a.m. \$7.50 to your driver. Sack lunch. Contact person: Bliss Wolfe, 696-0170 or (even better) cell ph# 255-2429.
- Every **3rd Wednesday** of the month: Computer Genealogy Users Group will meet at the Exit Teen Center, 1600 Rock Prairie Rd., at 9:30 a.m. Everyone is invited to eat at a local restaurant after the meeting.
- Every **last Wednesday** of the month: Research Ramblers will meet at College Station Utility Service Center at 9:30 a.m. Everyone is invited to eat at a local restaurant after the meeting.
- Every **4th Monday**, Roots Magic Users will meet at the Bryan Public Library on the second floor from 9:30-11:00 a.m.
- For workshops around the state: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~txgenweb> , which will give you the full information on seminars/conferences around the state.
- August 16, 2006**, Exploring History Lunch Lecture: Women's History at Texas A&M University, Presented by Dr. Sara Alpern, 11:30-1:00 p.m.
- August 23, 2006**, Education Workshop at 9:30 at CSUSC. Max Blankfeld from the Family Tree DNA lab in Houston will be the speaker. A question/answer period will answer all your questions about DNA testing. Some of our members will share their experiences.

SUCCESS STORIES

Dean Duncan has some special railroad stories about his family working on the Kansas City, Mexico, and Orient railroad that he has shared with us. He wrote, "My father, Damon Duncan, at about age 24, went to work for the KCM&O in 1914 in Fort Stockton, Texas, (west of San Angelo). The intent of the KCM&O project was to connect the markets of the central United States (Kansas City) to the Far East (Orient) via the Mexican port of Los Mochis. There was already a line from Kansas City to San Angelo, Texas, but during Damon Duncan's time on the KCM&O, the line was only extended to Presidio, Texas. Damon Duncan worked for the railroad till about 1926 when he went to work in the newly discovered oil fields of West Texas. I wasn't born until 1932."



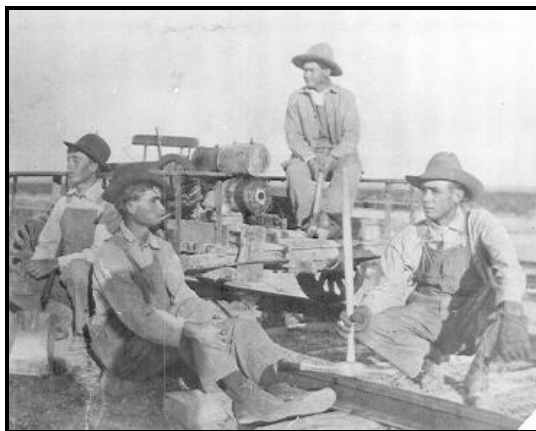


Photo courtesy of Dean Duncan

This circa 1915 photo shows where the railroad workers lived. The tent was occupied by “gandymen” or “gandy dancers” including Dean’s uncle, Lester, and cousin, Cecil. Standing in front of the boxcar home are some workers and Dean’s father, mother, and oldest brother Ray (baby in arms) when they lived in Belding, Texas, west of San Angelo.

Dean’s mother provided “board” for the men, did their laundry, etc., for a fee. According to Ray, some other things she and the others had to deal with were having to carry water for all uses some 75 yards by the bucket from a cistern near the railroad, doing washing by hand on a rubboard, cooking on a wood stove (wood was chopped up railroad ties), ironing clothing with a flat-iron heated on the wood stove, light by coal-oil lamps, minimal communication with the outside world: letter or telegram, not to mention living in a box car with the interior walls papered with newspapers to keep out the cold, dust, bugs, etc.

Insight into the railroad life comes from brother Ray’s history of the family years later. Ray wrote, “In 1923 there was a little town every 30 miles or so along the Kansas City, Mexico and Orient Railroad between San Angelo and Ft. Stockton. From San Angelo there were Mertzon, Barnhart, Big Lake, Rankin, Girvin, Ft. Stockton, [and] then about 60 miles to Alpine. These little towns were mostly cattle shipping centers and water stations for the railroad.”



In this picture, Dean’s dad on the right and the other workers get a breather. Notice their clothing, tools, and the motor car to carry them and their tools along the track. .

Many thanks to Dean for sharing his history and pictures.

Photo courtesy of Dean Duncan

WEBSITES

<http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/KK/eqk5.html> is the site where you can find out more information on the Kansas City, Mexico, and Orient railroad at the Texas Handbook Online.

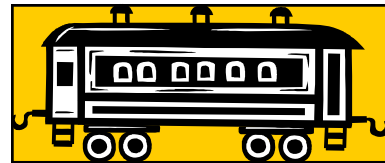
<http://www.texasescapes.com/WestTexasTowns/FtStocktonTx/Fort-Stockton-Texas-RR-Depots.htm> is the site where you can find pix of Fort Stockton, TX railroad stations.

<http://hold.cstx.gov> is the Project HOLD (Historic Online Library Database) that College Station is working on to preserve valuable pictures of College Station history.

<http://cushing.tamu.edu> is the site of the Cushing Memorial Library: Historic Images Collection, where you can purchase some wonderful pictures of TAMU, like the one I purchased of the depot.

www.mapquest.com is the site to find the railroad in Navasota, Just search for “Navasota TX” and zoom in and you will see the railroad.

<http://www.topozone.com/map.asp?lat=30.9499&lon=-95.9116> is the site for the end of the track in Madisonville. Just maneuver to the right once you're there.



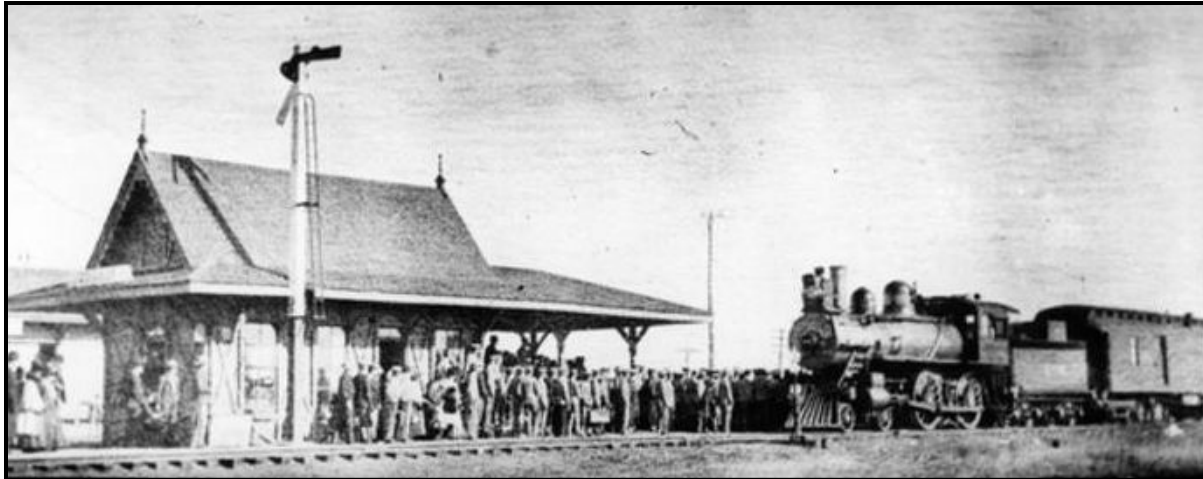
HISTORICAL MOMENT

Now, put n your memory cap and think back to a memory of being on a train or watching one. How old were you? What do you remember? I bet each of us has a special memory of a train time in our lives. What a book we could write!

Transportation, according to *Handbook of Texas Online*, was a major challenge facing early settlers in Texas. As late as 1850 the settled area of the state was largely confined to the river bottoms of East and South Texas and along the Gulf Coast. Texas rivers were not deep enough for dependable year-round transportation.

On December 16, 1836, the First Congress of the Republic of Texas chartered the Texas Rail Road, Navigation and Banking Co. to construct railroads. Although several projects were underway in the following years, most came to an abrupt halt with the beginning of the Civil War.

The Houston and Great Northern Railroad Co. was the first major new railroad company to start construction after the war. It merged with the International Railroad Co. Their merger, newly named **International and Great Northern**, had completed a line from Hearne to Austin by 1876.



Old Houston and Texas Central Railroad depot in College Station

According to the “Transportation” section of the Sesquicentennial Edition of *Brazos County History*, p, 421, “College Station became a regular passenger stop when the H&TC built a depot in 1883.” In addition, from 1890 to 1890 the H&TC Railroad was joined by the Gulf, Colorado, and Santa Fe in the southern part of Brazos County, and by the Hearne and Brazos Valley RR in the northwest part of the county. Increasing pressure for a better transportation network led leading citizens to persuade the International and Great Northern Railroad to come through Bryan and Brazos County. The author concluded, “It was with great hoopla that the first I&GN train arrived in Bryan on 30 August 1900.”

It seems that railroads have their own genealogy. According to Jim Boone, “the corporate structure of railroads was very complicated. After starting out as small railroads, constant bankruptcies and mergers created a hodge-podge of larger, ever-changing railroad companies.”

Are you ready for this? Jim explains that the Union Pacific now owns the Southern Pacific, which owned Sunbeam railroad. The Southern Pacific line that went through College Station was the Texas and New Orleans Railroad (T&NO), which was originally the Houston & Texas Central Railroad (H&TC).

In an effort to increase passenger traffic from Dallas to Houston, Southern Pacific, according to Jim, built some beautiful, comfortable, stream-lined locomotives, the **Sunbeam**, whose only scheduled stop was College Station, and the **Hustler**, which made more stops. The **Missouri Pacific** lines (**I&GN**) also had several day and night trains through College Station. The **Zephyr** went through North Zulch between Houston, Fort Worth, and Denver.



Jim Boone took this picture of the **Sunbeam** and the **Zephyr** at the Bush Museum exhibit of model trains. Thanks to Jim for his pictures and information. At our next meeting ask Jim about his “ghost trains” project.

Speaking of locomotives, I hope you saw some of the Locomotives on Parade around town. In case you want one for your very own, such as this one, you can go online now and bid for your favorite one.



Then on September 29, 2006, the Bush Museum will hold an auction of the locomotives and you can take part in the real time auction also. In conjunction with the auction will be the opening of the next exhibit, 100 Tall Texans of the 20th and 21st Centuries. Clint Black, one of the Tall Texans, will perform at the outdoor Tall Texan Gala, featuring a dinner. If you buy a ticket for the meal and the auction, you will be invited to the opening night exhibit. For more information, go to

<http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/events.php>

Happy Bidding!

GENQUIP



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