

# **ELDORADO**

## **A TEXAS RANCH OF 1881**



BY BILL RENFRO



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OF 1881**

JULY 2021

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# THE STORY

THIS BOOK IS THE STORY OF TWO MEN FROM UP NORTH WHO DECIDED TO START A SHEEP RANCH IN **TEXAS**, NOT KNOWING WHAT THE HEAT ROSE TO IN THE SUMMER TIME. NOT BEING A PROFESSIONAL WRITER I WILL REFER YOU TO THE GREAT WRITINGS BY **CECIL MATHEWS** AND IN NO WAY WILL I TAKE CREDIT FOR HIS PREVIOUS WORK.

MY INTENTION FOR WRITING THIS BOOK, IS THAT AS I APPROACH THE AGE 91 YEARS OLD, I FIND THAT I MAY BE THE ONLY PERSON WHO WAS BORN AND RAISED WITHIN THE ORIGINAL LIMITS OF THE **ELDORADO RANCH**, AND STILL REMEMBER MANY OF THE LOCATIONS OF THE RANCH BUILDINGS NAMED IN THE WRITINGS OF **CECIL MATHEWS**.

THE INTENTION OF THIS BOOK IS TO DESCRIBE WHAT I REMEMBER WHILE I STILL CAN. I WILL TRY TO DESCRIBE AS BEST I CAN, WHAT THE BUILDINGS THEMSELVES LOOKED LIKE AT THE TIME I WAS A YOUNG BOY.

I ALSO HAVE A SPECIAL REASON FOR THIS BOOK, FOR YOU SEE, FAMILY FOLKORE SAYS THAT MY GRANDFATHER **RENFRO** AND GRANDMOTHER, RAN THE FIRST **ELDORADO** GENERAL STORE. HERE IS THE STORY I REMEMBER. I DON'T WANT YOU TO FEEL YOU ARE READING A HISTORY BOOK, BUT RATHER YOU ARE LISTENING TO A STORY.

## TIME LINE

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| TEXAS WINS ENDPENDANCE<br>FROM MEXICO  | 1836      |
| TEXAS BECOMES THE 28 TH STATE  | 1845      |
| NAVARRO COUNTY ESTABLISHED   | 1846      |
| TOWN OF DAWSON IS ESTABLISHED<br>WITH 100 ACRE DONATION BY BRITT<br>DAWSON.  | 1847      |
| JOSE ANTONIO NAVARRO DIES<br>NAVARRO COUNTY NAMED FOR HIM.   | 1795-1871 |
| ELDORADO RANCH ESTABLISHED   | 1881      |
| BRITTON DAWSON HOME BUILT  | 1881      |
| SOUTHWESTERN RAILROAD BUILT<br>THROUGH DAWSON ON ITS WAY FROM<br>TYLER TO WACO. ( BETTER KNOWN<br>AS THE COTTON BELT RAILROAD ). | 1881      |
| UNION HIGH COMMUNITY ESTAB.  | 1900      |
| BRITTON DAWSON DIES  | 1817-1905 |

# THE ELDORADO RANCH

ELDORADO IS A MEXICAN WORD WHICH SPELLED IN MEXICO **EL DORADO**, MEANS “ THE PLACE OF FABULOUS WEALTH OR OPPORTUNITY “.

IN THE YEARS OF 1881 AND 1882, **B.J. WILLIAMS** OF **WHITSWATER, WISCONSIN** AND **JOHN D. PALLERSON** OF **GENEVE, NEW YORK**, PURCHASED 14,000 ACRES OF THE BLACKLANDS, SOUTHWEST OF **DAWSON, TEXAS**, FOR THE SUM OF ALMOST \$50,000 DOLLARS. THEIR INTENTION WAS TO ESTABLISH “ **WILLIAMS ELDORADO RANCH**”, A SHEEP RANCH ,ON THE RICH BLACKLAND SOIL. IN THEIR FIRST YEAR THEY RECORDED A LOSS OF \$ 50,000 DOLLARS AND EVEN MORE THE SECOND YEAR. THE COSTS OF BUILDING HOMES FOR THE WORKERS, BARNES FOR THE STOCK AND MANY MILES OF FENCING , SCHOOLS, CHURCHES AND MANY MILES OF FENCING WAS JUST TOO MUCH.

AFTER THE SECOND YEAR, AND MOVING THE SHEEP TO ANOTHER RANCH THEY OWNED, IN SOUTHWEST **TEXAS**, THE RANCH TURNED TO RAISING DRAFT HORSES FOR SELLING TO THE AREA FARMERS, THIS ALSO FAILED. THE OWNERS THEN DECIDED TO DIVIDE THE LAND INTO SMALL FARMS WHICH THEY WOULD SELL.

AS IT WAS, THE BLACKLAND WAS BETTER FOR FARMING THAN IT WAS FOR RANCHING.

AT THIS TIME I HAVE ONLY FOUND A SURVEY MAP THAT SHOWS THE NEW FARMS. THIS MAP IS OWNED BY THE **DOLPH BRISCO CENTER FOR AMERICAN HISTORY** AND ADMINISTERED BY THE **UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS**. THIS MAP IS ONLY AVAILABLE FOR RESEARCH ONLY AND CANNOT BE COPIED OR USED IN ANY OTHER WAY. WE WERE GIVEN A COPY FOR USE IN THIS BOOK, BUT CANNOT BE PRINTED HERE.

THE DATE SHOWN ON THIS SURVEY MAP IS 1897. THIS LEAVES A TIME GAP OF 15 YEARS BETWEEN THE RANCH RAISING HORSES AND THE TIME THAT THE RANCH WAS DIVIDED. WE FIND NO EVIDENCE OF HOW LONG THE HORSES WERE RAISED OR WHAT HAPPENED IN THE YEARS BETWEEN.

BUT I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO COORDINATE IT WITH THE EXTENTS WHICH THE RANCH HAD COVERED. I NOW KNOW THAT I WAS RAISED IN TWO OF THOSE LITTLE SPACES WHICH MADE UP THE ORIGINAL RANCH. THIS IS THE TIME I WISH TO REMEMBER. SINCE THE RANCH ONLY EXISTED FOR SEVERAL YEARS, THE HOMES, AND OTHER BUILDINGS WERE ALMOST NEW AND COULD LAST MANY MORE YEARS. I BELIEVE THAT THESE ARE THE THINGS THAT I MEMEMBER.

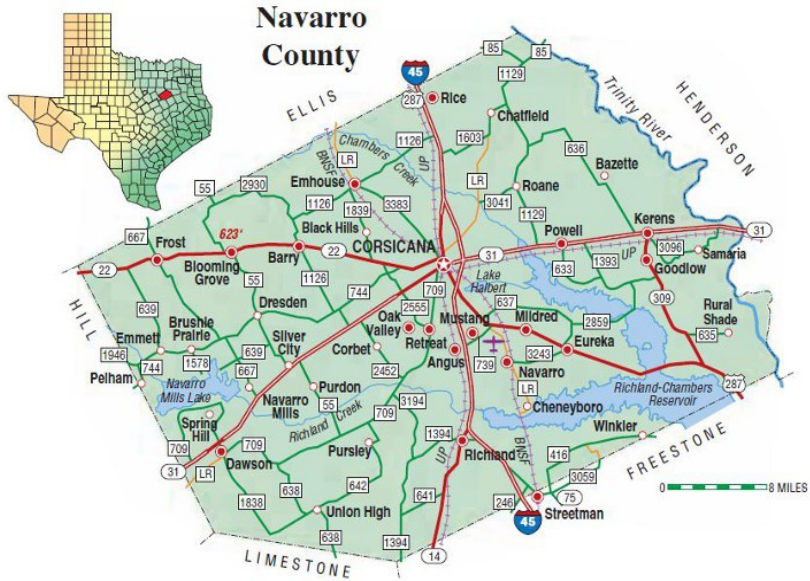




WHERE IS DAWSON, TEXAS  
ANYWAY ?







## NAVARRO COUNTY

**DAWSON IS AT THE LOWER LEFT BOTTOM.**  
 THE AREA SHOWN FOR THE **ELDORADO RANCH** IS A GUESS ON MY PART, BECAUSE AT THIS TIME WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO FIND A MAP OR SURVEY THAT SHOWS THE EXACT BOUNDRIES OF THE RANCH, ONLY THAT IT WENT FROM UNION HIGH TO 4 CORNERS AND THAT IT CONSISTED OF 14,000 ACRES. I KNOW THAT I WAS BORN AND RAISED WITHIN THESE BOUNDARIES, AND WANT TO TELL OF WHAT I REMEMBER WHILE I STILL CAN.



## **DON JOSE ANTONIO NAVARRO**

**T EXAS BORN MEXICAN WHO  
FOUGHT FOR TEXAS INDEPENDENCE  
FROM MEXICO AND BECAME A PATRIOT.  
HE SAID THAT HE HAD RATHER DIE AS A  
TEXAN THAN LIVE AS A MEXICAN.  
THE COUNTY OF NAVARRO WAS NAMED  
FOR HIM. HE WAS A SIGNER OF THE TEXAS  
DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.**

DON JOSÉ ANTONIO  
NAVARRO



FATHER  
OF  
TEJAS

Don Jose Antonio Navarro (1795-1871) was one of the only two native sons of Texas who signed the Texas Declaration of Independence. Due to his role in the 1813 Texas Revolution, Navarro was forced to flee to the United States. He returned in 1821 and became an expert in Spanish law and was both the State and Federal Representative of Texas.

*Created by: Vincent Tavares.*



*"I will die in prison before I will disgrace the cause of Texas...I have sworn to be a Texan..."*  
*José Antonio Navarro*



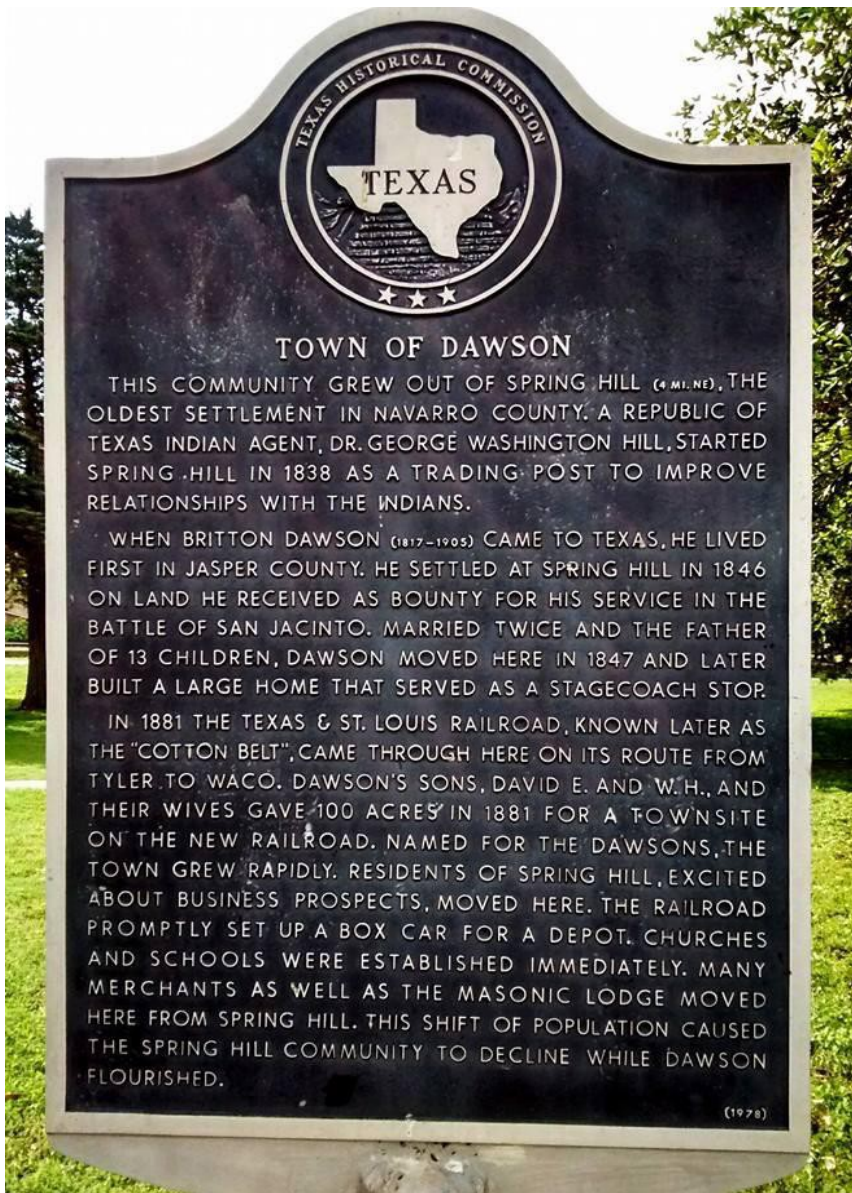
Republic of Texas Army Button



1839 Republic of Texas Uniform

But President Santa Anna offered Mr. Navarro his freedom if he would "cut the Lone Star buttons off his coat" and renounce Texas. José Antonio Navarro refused saying, "I will die in prison before I will disgrace the cause of Texas...I have sworn to be a Texan. I will not forswear."





DAWSON HISTORICAL MARKER



BRITTON DAWSON



THE OLD DAWSON HOME



## MR. AND MRS. BRITT DAWSON

MR. **DAWSON** AND HIS TWO WIVES HAD A  
TOTAL OF 13 CHILDREN. THEY ARE ALL  
BURIED IN THE **DAWSON** FAMILY CEMETARY  
EAST OF **DAWSON, TEXAS, NAVARRO CO.**





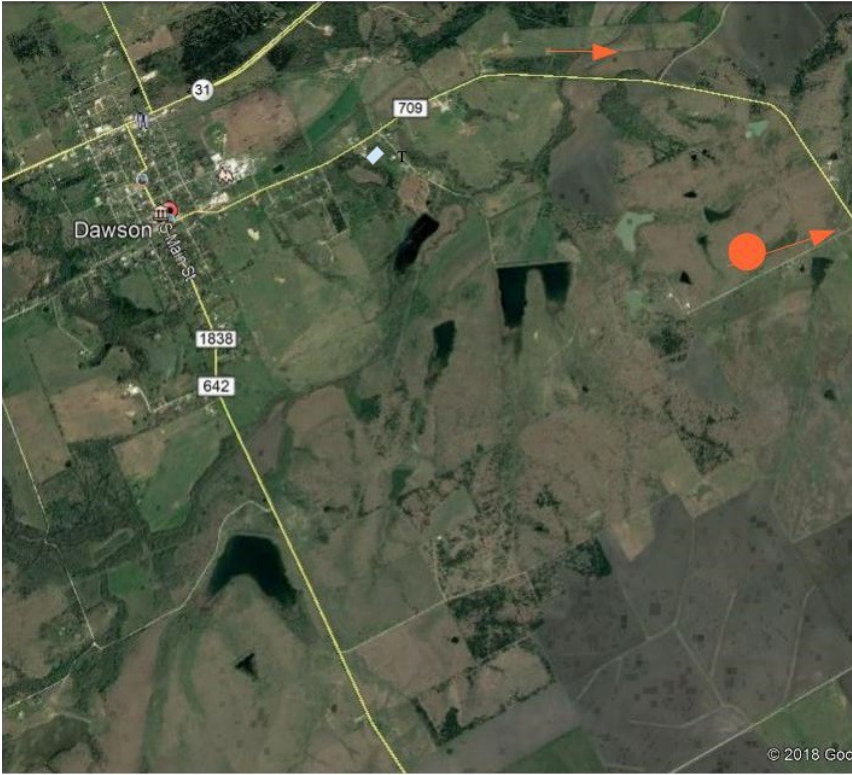
## **HENERY BRITTON DAWSON**

WAS A RICH LAND OWNER AND RANCHER WHO DONATED 100 ACRES OF LAND FOR THE BUILDING OF THE TOWN OF **DAWSON, TEXAS** AND LATER HIS SONS DONATED ANOTHER 100 ACRES FOR THE BUILDING OF THE RAILROAD THAT PASSED THROUGH **DAWSON**.

**BRITT DAWSON** HAD BEEN ONE OF THE EARLIER RESPONDERS TO **GENERAL SAM HOUSTON'S** CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS TO FIGHT IN THE COMING WAR WITH **MEXICO** FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF **TEXAS**. IT IS RECORDED THAT HE SERVED WITH **SAM HOUSTON** AT THE BATTLE OF **SAN JACINTO** AND HAD SERVED WITH GREAT VALOR.

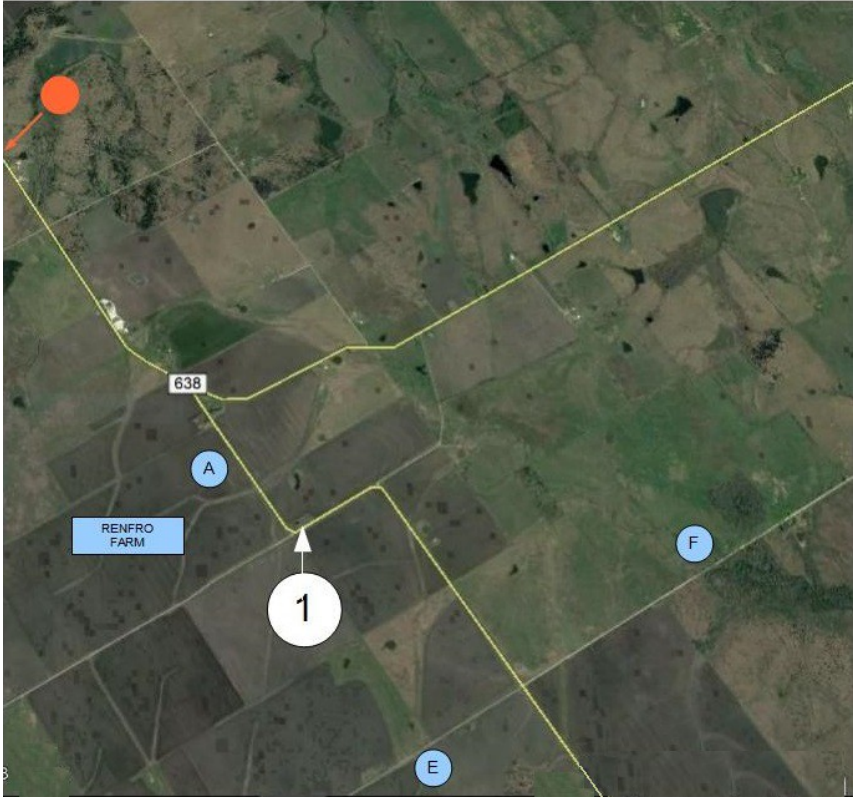
WE DO NOT KNOW THE EXTENT OF HIS LAND HOLDINGS OR HOW THEY WERE OBTAINED. WE DO KNOW THAT HIS SONS HAD AT ONE TIME SOLD 15,000 HEAD OF CATTLE TO ONE BUYER FOR THE AMOUNT OF ABOUT \$150,000, IN 1886. SO HIS LAND HOLDINGS WOULD HAD TO HAVE BEEN VERY LARGE. IT WAS SAID THAT AT ONE TIME HE HAD THE LARGEST HERD OF CATTLE IN **NAVARRO COUNTY**.

WE DON'T KNOW WHETHER OR NOT HE WAS GIVEN ANY LAND FOR HIS SERVICE IN THE **TEXAS** ARMY.



MAP FROM **DAWSON**, ON LEFT, TOWARD  
WHERE WE LIVED AND FARMED





THIS MAP IS A CONTINUATION FROM FR 708 TO WHERE IT JOINS FR 638 FROM **DAWSON** TOWARDS WHERE **BABE** AND I GREW UP AND WHERE WE LIVED AND FARMED FOR THE FIRST YEARS THAT WE WERE MARRIED.



ROAD TO 4 CORNERS ( LEFT )

## LEGEND AREA NO. 1

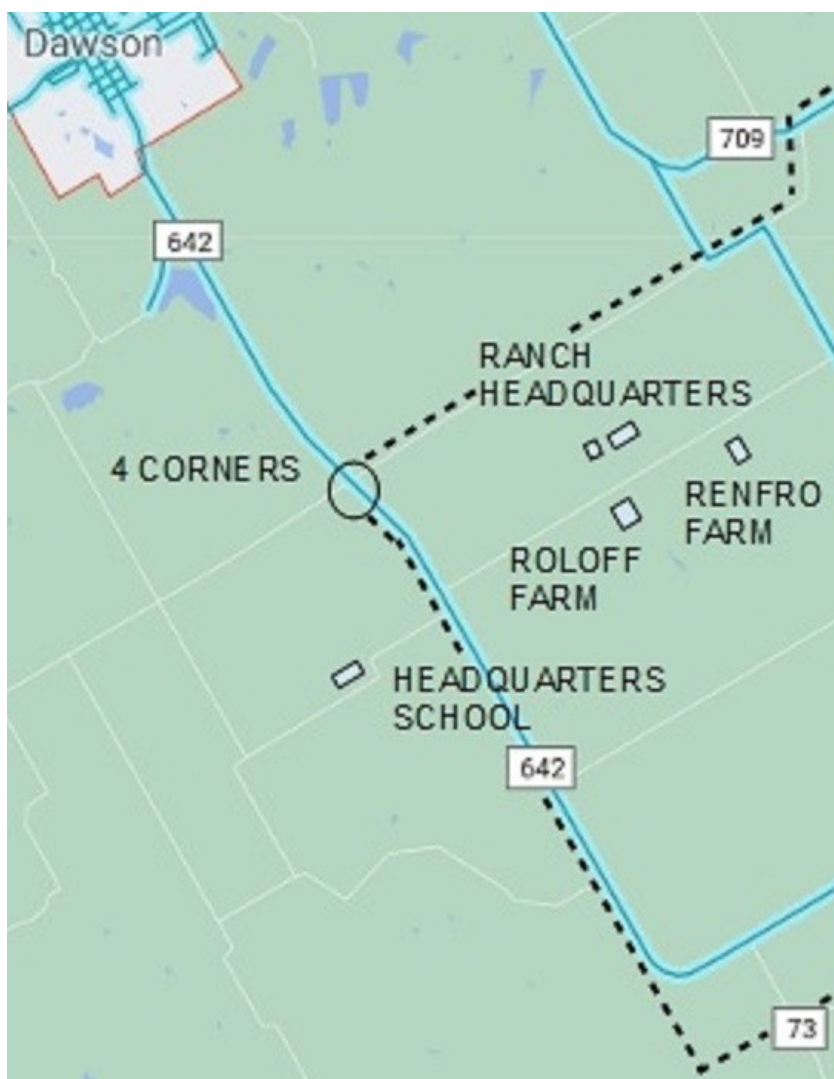
- A      **RENFRO** FA RM HOUSE.
- B      **SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH.**  
WHERE **BABE** AND FAMILY WENT.
- C      **HARMONY METHODIST CHURCH.**  
WHERE RENFRO FAMILY WENT.
- D      **RENFRO** FARM.
- E      AREA WHERE I GREW UP.
- F      AREA WHERE **BABE** GREW UP.

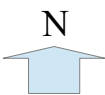


**MEMBERS OF SHILOW BAPTIST CHURCH**



**THE LADIES OF THE HARMONY CHURCH**





## THE ELDORADO RANCH

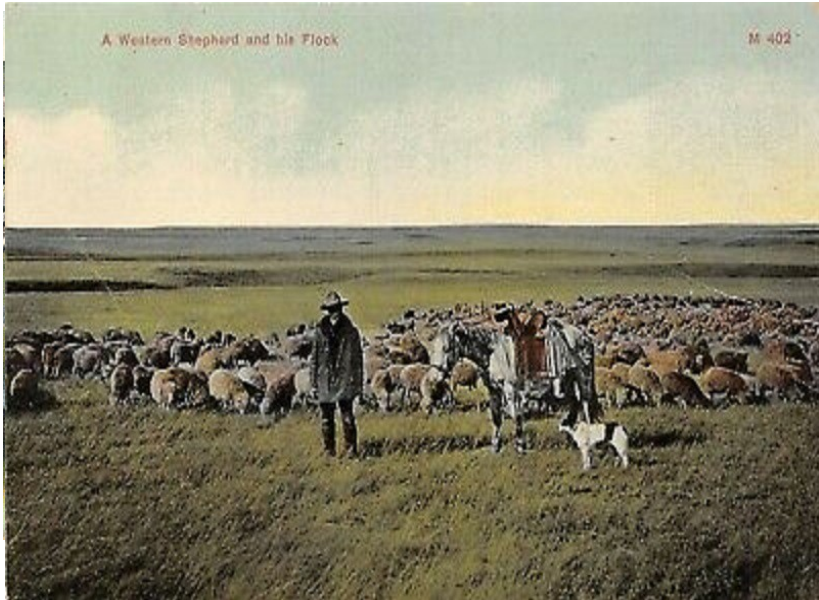


## RANCH HANDS





## SHEARING TIME







ONCE THE RANCH HAD BEEN SUB-DIVIDED,  
THE FARMING BEGAN WITH MULES.



THEN CAME THE TRACTOR.

## **BOARDTREE CEMETERY**



**TODAY, THIS IS ALL THAT  
REMAINS OF THE ONCE  
THRIVING COMMUNITY OF  
UNION HIGH**

## THE UNION HIGH COMUNITY

THE DOCUMENTS THAT I HAVE FOUND ARE NOT **ELDORADO RANCH**, ONLY THAT IT CONTAINED 14,000 ACRES OF LAND, AND ONLY THE BOUNDRY EXTENTS OF THE RANCH, EXTENDED FROM **4 CORNERS**, TO THE AREA OF **UNION HIGH**. SINCE **4 CORNERS** IS NOT A COMMUNITY, ONLY WHERE TWO ROADS CROSS EACH OTHER AND FORM **4 CORNERS** OF THE ROADS. THE LOCALS GAVE IT THIS NAME AS A WAY TO ESTABLISH A LOCATION. I HAVE NO IDEA WHEN THIS WAS STARTED, ONLY THAT ALL MY LIFE, THE AREA HAS BEEN CALLED **4 CORNERS**.

AT THE JUNCTIONS OF FARM ROADS ( FR ) 638 AND 632, EIGHT MILES SOUTHEAST OF **DAWSON** AND SOUTHWEST OF THE TOWN OF **CORSICANA**, IN SOUTHWESTERN **NAVARRO COUNTY, TEXAS**, IT WAS PROBABLY ESTABLISHED SOMETIME IN THE MID-1930s. IT HAD TWO CHURCHES, AND SEVERAL STORES, A CEMETERY , AND A COTTON GIN. ALSO A TWO STORY SCHOOL , AND MANY HOMES.

AFTER WORLD WAR II MANY OF THE RESIDENTS MOVED AWAY. BUT IN THE 1960s ONLY A CHURCH AND THE COMMUNITY REMAINED IN THE AREA. IN THE EARLY 1990s **UNION HIGH** WAS A DESERTED RURAL COMMUNITY.

AT THE TIME I WAS A BOY, THE RANCH HAD CLOSED AND MOVED TO WEST **TEXAS** AND THE LAND HAD BEEN SUB-DIVIDED INTO FARMS.



THE UNION HIGH SCHOOL AND  
STUDENTS IN 1936



A TYPICAL CLASSROOM OF THE DAY



# THE UNION HIGH SCHOOL

THE RANCH OWNERS BUILT THREE FAMILY NEIGHBORHOODS AROUND THE RANCH FOR THE FAMILY LIFE OF THEIR WORKERS, FIRST WAS A STORE , A SCHOOL, A CHURCH AND HOMES FOR THE WORKERS, BARNS AND PENS FOR THE ANIMALS, AND TANKS TO GATHER RAIN WATER AS WELL AS MILES AND MILES OF FENCES.

THIS SCHOOL WAS ONE OF THE FIRST BUILT, AND WAS SUPPORTED BY A GENERAL STORE, A CHURCH AND OTHER OUT BUILDINGS. MY WIFE AND HER OLDER SISTER WERE SOME OF THOSE THAT ATTENDED THIS SCHOOL. TODAY THE SCHOOL BUILDING AND THE GENERAL STORE ARE GONE, BUT THERE REMAINS THE CEMETERY ACROSS THE ROAD, WHERE MANY OF THE EARLY RANCH WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES ARE BURIED.

THE STRUCTURE WAS A TWO STORY WOODEN BUILDING AND HELD MORE STUDENTS THAN THE SINGLE SCHOOL THAT I ATTENDED ON THE S.W. CORNER OF THE RANCH. THE NAME OF THAT SCHOOL WAS HEADQUARTERS, WHICH I HAD ALWAYS THOUGHT WAS INSIDE THE RANCH LIMITS. THE MAP ACTUALLY SHOWS IT TO BE OUTSIDE . I STILL BELIEVE THAT IT TOOK ITS NAME FROM THE RANCH FOREMAN'S HEADQUARTERS.



## **THE ELDORADO CENTER COMMUNITY**

THE COMMUNITY BEGAN AS A SETTLEMENT FOR WORKERS ON THE LARGE **ELDORADO RANCH**. THE AREA WAS FIRST SETTLED AFTER THE CIVIL WAR, BUT THE FIRST BUSINESS, A GROCERY STORE, WAS NOT ESTABLISHED UNTIL ABOUT 1910. A SCHOOL WAS IN OPERATION AT **ELDORADO** BY THE EARLY 1900s , AND IN 1906 IT HAD AN ENROLLMENT OF 48. AT ITS HEIGHT, AROUND THE TIME OF WORLD WAR I, **ELDORADO CENTER** HAD A NUMBER OF HOUSES, A CHURCH, A COTTON GIN, AND A STORE. BY THE MID-1930s ONLY A STORE AND A NUMBER OF HOUSES REMAINED THERE. THE COMMUNITY'S ESTIMATED POPULATION IN 1936 WAS 50. THE STORE CLOSED AFTER WORLD WAR II, AND IN THE MID - 1960s , ONLY A FEW WIDELY SCATTERED HOMES REMAINED IN THE AREA. IN THE EARLY 1990s, **ELDORADO CENTER** WAS A DESERTED RURAL COMMUNITY.

THIS AREA I HAVE JUST DESCRIBED, SEEMS LIKE THE LOCATION OF WHAT I HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN AS **UNION HIGH**.

SOME MAPS AND WRITERS CALL THE OLD GENERAL STORE THAT I HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN AS THE **ELDORADO STORE**, AS THE **ELDORADO CENTER AND COMMUNITY**. BUT THEN IT WAS JUST A STORE AND NOT THE CENTER AND COMMUNITY.

## CONTINUED

I DO REMEMBER THE GENERAL STORE ACROSS THE ROAD FROM THE SCHOOLHOUSE, AND THE SCHOOL ITSELF, BECAUSE MY WIFE AND HER OLDER SISTER ATTENDED SCHOOL THERE. BUT THE ONLY NAME I EVER HEARD WAS THE NAME OF THE SCHOOL, **UNION HIGH**.

THERE ALSO MUST HAVE BEEN AT ONE TIME, A CHURCH THERE OTHERWISE THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO NEED FOR A CEMETERY SO CLOSE BY.

THERE WERE ALSO HOUSES NEAR BY, BUT ONLY AT FARMS. THE RANCH MUST HAVE DEMOLISHED THE UNUSED HOUSES THAT WERE BUILT FOR THE RANCH WORKERS, WHEN THE RANCH WAS SOLD AS SMALL FARMS.

I STILL BELIEVE THAT THE AREA I REMEMBERED AS **UNION HIGH**, WAS THE NAME OF THE SCHOOL ONLY, AND THIS WAS THE ORIGINAL LOCATION OF THE OLD **ELDORADO CENTER AND COMMUNITY**.

IF THIS HAPPENS TO BE CORRECT, WHY WOULD THE RANCH NOT HAVE ANY OF THEIR NAMES AROUND SOMEWHERE AND WHY DID THEY CHOOSE A LOCATION SO CLOSE TO THE CORNER OF THE PROPERTY INSTEAD OF IN THE CENTER ?, AND WHY WOULD THEY HAVE CHOSEN AN AREA THAT CLOSE TO THE **TEHUACANA INDIANS** ?

IF ANYONE CAN GIVE ME INFORMATION TO PROVE THIS TO BE WRONG, THEN I WILL REVISE THIS BOOK.



BILL AND MARY JANE KERBY RAN THE STORE IN THE EARLY 1950s.

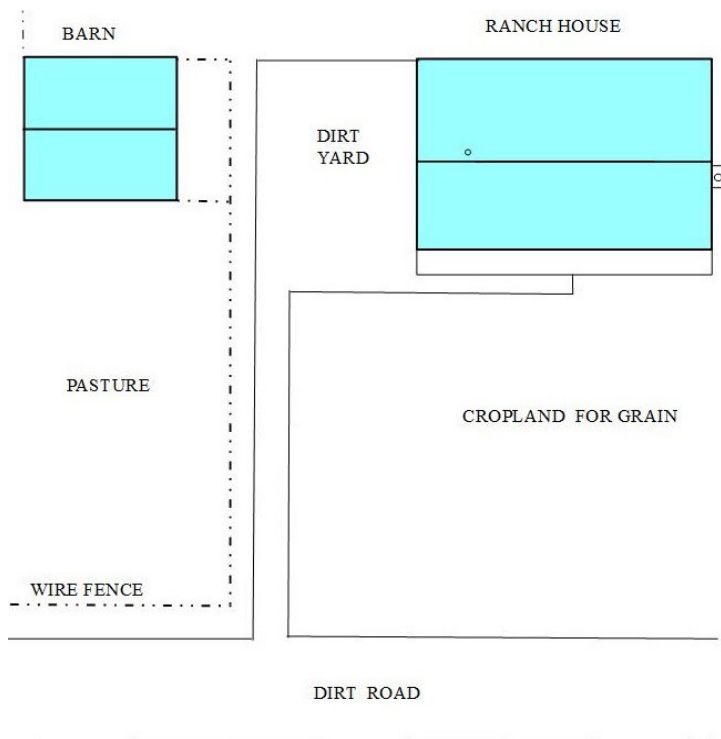
**NOT THE ORIGINAL STORE.**

## THE ELDORADO STORE

WHILE THERE ARE NO PICTURES LEFT THAT I KNOW ABOUT, THE ORIGINAL **ELDORADO STORE** LOOKED QUITE SIMILAR TO THIS ONE. I DON'T REMEMBER IT HAVING THE EXTRA HIGH FRONT WALL, BUT IT WAS TWO FLOORS HIGH AND I AM SURE THAT THIS IS WHERE THOSE WHO RAN THE STORE LIVED. FAMILY LORE SAYS THAT MY GRANDPARENTS WILLIAM AND HIS WIFE WERE THE FIRST TO RUN THE NEW RANCH GENERAL STORE. I CAN STILL SEE THE OLD STORE IN THE MEMORIES OF MY MIND. AT THE TIME THE STORE WAS BUILT TO SERVE THE WORKERS OF THE NEW 14,000 ACRE RANCH, I WOULD HAVE BEEN TOO YOUNG TO HAVE RECALLED BEING THERE, BUT SINCE THE RANCH ONLY LASTED TWO YEARS, THE NEWLY BUILT STORES, CHURCHES, SCHOOLS AND BARNES FOR TAKING CARE OF THE ANIMALS WERE ALMOST NEW AND OUTLIVED THE RANCH BY MANY YEARS. I ATTENDED **HEADQUARTERS SCHOOL** FROM GRADES 2 THRU 6 BEFORE THE DISTRIC WAS MERGED WITH THE **DAWSON** DISTRICT. THIS IS WHY I AM ABLE TO REMEMBER THEM AND THEIR LOCATIONS. I HAD BEEN IN MANY OF THEM AS A CHILD, AND REMEMBER THEM WELL, EVEN AT AGE 91. LOCATIONS OF THESE RANCH BUILDINGS ARE SHOWN ON THE ENCLOSED MAPS.

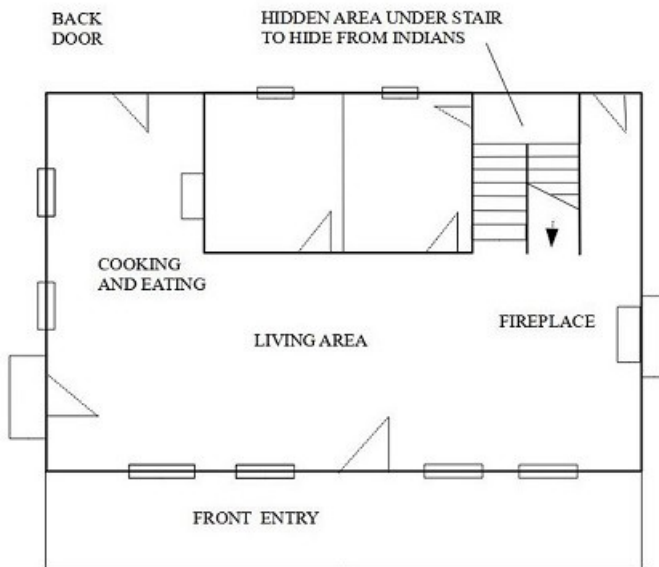
# THE RANCH HEADQUARTERS

**J. F. WILLIAMS** ARRIVED AT **ELDORADO** IN 1882 TO BE THE RANCH FOREMAN, AND IT IS BELIEVED THIS WAS THE HOUSE AT WHICH HE LIVED AND WORKED. IT IS BELIEVED THAT HE AND ONE OF THE ORIGINAL OWNERS WERE RELATED AND HAD BOTH COME FROM **WISCONSIN**. WE THINK THAT THE NEARBY SCHOOL WAS NAMED **HEADQUARTERS** BECAUSE THIS WAS THE RANCH HEADQUARTERS. THE HOUSE HAD A LARGE OPEN AREA ABOVE LIKE A LOFT THAT COULD PROVIDE SLEEPING AREA FOR SEVERAL PEOPLE.



# THE RANCH HEADQUARTERS

JUST TO THE LEFT WAS THE CREEK BRANCH THAT RAN BETWEEN THE RANCH HOUSE AND THE **ROLOFF'S**. IT IS BELIEVED THAT **MISTER WILLIAMS** AND **MISTER ROLOFF** MAY HAVE KNOWN EACH OTHER BEFORE COMING TO **TEXAS**, AND THAT IS THE REASON THAT THE TWO HOMES WERE SO CLOSE TOGETHER.



PLAN VIEW OF THE RANCH HOUSE

## OLD DAN

I KNEW ABOUT THE RANCH HOUSE AS THERE WERE MANY YEARS THAT I RODE BY THERE TWICE A DAY, WHEN SCHOOL WAS ON AND I COULD SEE IT FROM OUR HOUSE WHICH SAT ON HIGHER GROUND, AND NOT ONLY COULD I SEE THE RANCH HOUSE, BUT 8 OTHER FARM HOMES IN THE SAME DIRECTION.

I HAD BEGUN SECOND GRADE AT **HEADQUARTERS SCHOOL** BECAUSE WHEN I BEGAN IN THE FIRST GRADE, WE WERE IN THE DAWSON DISTRICT, SO I WENT THERE FOR MY FIRST YEAR. THEN WE MOVED TO A BETTER FARM, WHICH WAS IN THE **HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT**. AT THAT TIME, I WAS ONLY ABOUT 8 YEARS OLD, AND MY DAD HAD DECIDED THAT I WAS TOO YOUNG TO RIDE MY OWN HORSE. DADS BROTHER FARMED THE LAND NEXT TO OUR NEW LOCATION, WHICH MADE IT EASY FOR ME TO RIDE WITH MY COUSIN ON HIS HORSE. HE WAS TEN YEARS OLD AND COULD HANDLE AN ANIMAL BETTER.

OF COURSE, SINCE IT WAS HIS HORSE, HE GOT TO RIDE IN THE FRONT SEAT AND DRIVE WHILE I HAD TO SIT IN THE BACK. BUT THIS WAS A GREAT LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR ME. WE HAD A GREAT HORSE NAMED **OLD DAN**. **DAN** WAS A CHILDRENS' HORSE AND YOU COULD TELL HE LOVED KIDS. THEY COULD HANG ALL OVER HIM; OVER, UNDER, AND HE DIDN'T SEEM TO MIND ONE BIT.



WHY AM I TELLING YOU THIS STORY NOW?, WELL IT WAS **OLD DAN** WHO BROUGHT US ALONG THIS PART OF THE ROAD EACH DAY. AND THIS WAS THE ONLY THING I EVER SAW HIM AFRAID OF:

IT SEEMS THAT ON THIS DAY, IT HAD BEEN RAINING AND THE BRIDGE OVER THE CREEK THAT RAN BETWEEN THE RANCH HOUSE AND THE ROLOFF HOME , WAS A LITTLE SLIPPERY, SO DAN WAS TAKING IT VERY CAREFULLY, BUT AT ABOUT HALFWAY ACROSS, SOME OF THE BRIDGE PLANKING GAVE WAY AND **DAN** HAD ONE OF HIS FRONT LEGS FALL THROUGH THE BRIDGE AND HE WAS UNABLE TO PULL HIMSELF OUT. **MR. ROLOFF** HAD BEEN WATCHING AND SAW THIS HAPPEN AND CAME RUNNING, AND WITH HIS HELP **OLD DAN** SURVIVED WITHOUT ANY PROBLEMS.

FROM THAT DAY FORWARD, HE WAS ALWAYS AFRAID TO CROSS THAT BRIDGE, AND WHEN THE CREEK WATER WAS LOW WE ALWAYS WENT AROUND THE BRIDGE. DAN NEVER HESITATED TO CROSS THE BRIDGE WHEN ASKED, BUT HE WAS ALWAYS CAUTIOUS, AND WOULD END UP SHAKING ALL OVER IN FEAR IT MAY HAPPEN AGAIN.

OLD DAN WAS A LOYAL SERVANT AND A FRIEND OF THE FAMILY. HE REMAINED ON THE **RENFRO** PASTURE UNTIL HIS DEATH AT A GOOD OLD AGE.



REV. LESTER ROLOFF

## THE ROLOFF HOME

THE **ROLOFF** FAMILY HOME WAS LOCATED JUST DOWN THE DIRT ROAD FROM THE RANCH HOUSE AND THEY FARMED THE LAND. THE ROAD SLOPED DOWN TO A SMALL CREEK THAT RAN ACROSS THE ROAD AND BESIDE THE RANCH FOREMAN'S HOUSE AND BARNS, UNDER THE BRIDGE AND BY THE **ROLOFF** HOME. THE **ROLOFF** HOME WAS A PART OF THE ORIGINAL RANCH LAYOUT AND WAS ONLY PART OF THE FARMING COMMUNITY ONCE THE RANCH WAS MOVED AND THE LAND CONVERTED TO FARMS OF ABOUT 125-150 ACRES EACH.

**WILLIAM LUDWIG ROLOFF** 1861-1932 WAS ONE OF THE FIRST MANAGERS OF THE RANCH AND LIVED IN THE HOUSE WITH HIS WIFE **LOUISE MARY** 1863-1951.

AT THE TIME I WAS A BOY, THEIR SON **HARRY** AND HIS WIFE **SADIE ( MCKENSE ) ROLOFF** LIVED THERE. THEY HAD ONE SON NAMED **LESTER LOE ROLOFF** 1914-1982 WHO BECAME A PROMINENT RADIO AND BAPTIST EVANGELIST PREACHER UNTIL HIS DEATH IN A SMALL PLANE CRASH THAT TOOK HIS LIFE.

**LESTER** WAS OLDER THAN I AND I HAD NEVER MET HIM, BUT I REMEMBER HIS MOTHER AND FATHER WELL AND HAD BEEN IN THEIR HOME. I ALSO REMEMBER GOING TO HIS OUTDOOR CHURCH REVIVALS.



STUDENTS OF CLASSES 1 THROUGH 6  
AT THE BACK OF THE SCHOOL

## HEADQUARTERS SCHOOL

**HEADQUARTERS SCHOOL** WAS LOCATED DOWN THE DIRT COUNTRY ROAD ABOUT 3 MILES OR SO FROM THE **ROLLOF** HOME, TOWARDS THE SOUTH END OF THE RANCH PROPERTY, AT ONE TIME THERE WAS A GENERAL STORE JUST ACROSS THE ROAD FROM THE SCHOOL, BUT IT HAD BEEN TORN DOWN BY THE TIME I ATTENDED THE SCHOOL. THERE WAS ALSO A CHURCH JUST DOWN THE ROAD FROM THE SCHOOL, AND IT ALSO WAS GONE. ONLY THE HOME OF THE SUPERINTENDENT'S FAMILY REMAINED, ALONG WITH THE BOYS AND GIRLS OUTDOOR TOILET ROOMS AND A LONG SHED FOR ABOUT 20 HORSES. MOST OF THE STUDENTS RODE HORSES TO SCHOOL EACH DAY, WHERE THEY REMAINED IN THEIR STALLS UNTIL SCHOOL WAS OVER AND THEY GOT TO GO HOME, WHICH WAS USUALLY A FAST RUN. I BELIEVE THEY WERE AS ANXIOUS TO GET BACK HOME AS THE KIDS WERE.

THE BUILDING WAS A SINGLE STORY, 5 ROOM BUILDING WITH 4 CLASSROOMS AND A LARGER AUDITORIUM IN THE CENTER. AT THE TIME I ATTENDED, ONLY TWO OF THE CLASSROOMS WERE USED, EACH WITH 3 CLASSES, GRADES 1 THROUGH 3 AND THE OTHER, 4 THROUGH 6.

IN MY 7<sup>th</sup> GRADE, THE SCHOOL DISTRICT, ALONG WITH **UNION HIGH**, WERE CONSOLIDATED WITH THE **DAWSON** SCHOOL DISTRICT, SO WE WERE MOVED TO THE CITY. I AM IN THAT PIX ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE. CAN YOU TELL WHICH ONE ?

## END OF STORY ?

**THIS IS NOT THE END OF THE STORY, BUT ONLY THE BEGINNING. YOU SEE, THAT WHEN THE HEADQUARTERS SCHOOL AND THE UNION HIGH SCHOOL WERE MERGED WITH THE DAWSON SCHOOLS, THAT FROM UNION HIGH CAME THE ONE GIRL THAT I EVER FELL IN LOVE WITH , WAS MARRIED TO FOR 70 YEARS, WAS THE MOTHER OF MY CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN AND NOW A GREAT GRANDAUGHTER. AND WILL BE MY ONLY WIFE FOR ETERNITY. I AM TRULY BLESSED, BUT I LONG FOR THAT TIME WHEN I HEAR THOSE WORDS “ COME UP HERE.”**





BILL AND BABE RENFRO







# In Memory of

Wilma L. (Babe) Renfro  
March 8, 1932 -  
December 13, 2018



Ephesians 5:25  
Husbands, love your wives,  
even as Christ also loved the church,  
and gave himself up for it;