



FRANKLIN COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Volume 24, Number 2, March/April 2019

Website: <http://www.fcha-online.org>

Date: March 4 - **NO POTLUCK** - Hosts will provide meal

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Program: Shellie O'Neal – “This Is My Story, This is My Song”

An Evening With Fanny Crosby

Place: Mt. Vernon Music Hall, Mt. Vernon, corner of Yates and Leftwich Streets

Hosts: Joel & Laurie Dihle, B.F. Hicks, Frankie Cooper and Ken Greer

Shellie O'Neal has long been inspired by the life and work of Fanny Crosby: she first learned of Mrs. Crosby in a Sunday School class when she was 7 years old. Thirty-one years later, while Shellie was writing a children's religious play, she encountered Fanny's story again and felt God leading her to write a play she could perform about this remarkable woman. O'Neal penned this play after conducting research which culminated in a trip to New York City, where she visited the New York Institution for the Blind where Crosby received her education and served as a teacher. She also visited the New York Public Library and viewed Crosby's personal scrapbook; the Bowery Mission where Crosby did social work; and Plymouth Church, where Crosby listened to her favorite preachers. O'Neal has written 24 plays, two of which have won Texas state playwriting competitions. This is her first one-woman show.



Dr. O'Neal received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Theatre from The University of Texas at Tyler and her Ph.D. in Theatre from Louisiana State University. She taught for three years at U.T. Tyler and for the past 15 years has served as Director of Theatre at Navarro College in Corsicana, where she has directed over 50 productions. She is a member of St. John's Church in Corsicana where she sings in the choir.

Shellie has performed her play about the life of Fanny Crosby in a variety of venues and locations in Texas, including Corsicana, Carthage, Frost, Gilmer, Turnertown, the Woods and Snap communities, Lampasas, Kerens and Troup. She celebrated her fortieth birthday by performing this play at the Bowery Mission in New York City, a mission where Fanny often ministered to those less fortunate than she.

2019 FCHA Membership Programs and Events

March 4 – 6:00 p.m.

Shellie O'Neal – “This Is My Story – The Life of Fanny J. Crosby”

Mt. Vernon Music Hall

Hosts: Joel & Laurie Dihle, B.F. Hicks, Frankie Cooper and Ken Greer

Refreshments provided by hosts.

March 23rd —Night at Museum, 5th & 6th grade students, Cotton Belt Depot, sponsored by FCHA

May 6—6:00 p.m.

Keith Kridler -

Cultural Arts Center

Hosts: Cynthia Loftis and John Bradberry, Karen Smith, Linda and Tim Philhower, Randy Cates, Scott Harvey

Pot Luck

May 9th—6:00 p.m. Civil War Journal Banquet

Honoring Students and Families for Excellence in History; Special event;

all active members of FCHA are invited; must RSVP; Venue – TBD

May 13th—First grade classes tour museums, FCHA-sponsored pizza lunch at Dupree Park

May 14th—Second grade classes tour museums, FCHA-sponsored pizza lunch at Dupree Park

May 15th—Third grade classes tour museums, FCHA-sponsored pizza lunch at Dupree Park

July 1—6:00 p.m.

Preston Ware with the Oklahoma Historical Society – American Music up to the Civil War Community Center, Hagansport, Texas

Hosts: Norm & Carol Horn, Bob & Donna McFarland, Lisa Lowry, Paul and Victoria Fletcher

Pot Luck

Sept. 2—6:00 p.m.

Paul Benson - TBA

Masonic Lodge, Mt. Vernon

Hosts: Lillie and Nathan Reves, Jerald and Mary Lou Mowery, Jeanne Pamplin, B.F. Hicks

Pot Luck

Oct. 12 – CountryFest / Paper Quilts Exhibit

Nov. 4—6:00 p.m.

Robert S. Long

Railroad Depot – Franklin County, Texas: Our Artists and Their Work

Hosts: Pat and Sid Hudson, B.F. Hicks, Gail Reed, Jason and Alyssa Burton

Refreshments provided by hosts.



Thank You Docents!

FCHA would like to thank all the docents who regularly donate their time by volunteering at our museums. Regular docents at the Fire Station Museum include Ken Greer, Frankie Cooper, Kathy Shelton, Kathy Rhoades, Elaine Thomas, Cindy Stutts, Paul and Victoria Fletcher, Don Easterling, Richard Hamrick, Johanna Deal and Ruby Neeley.

At the Cotton Belt Depot Jerald and Mary Lou Mowery, Lauren Herman, Linda Philhower, Tommie Smith, Cynthia Loftis and John Bradberry volunteer to run the model train exhibit during First Saturdays on the Square and at other special events throughout the year.

Without you, our doors wouldn't be open to visitors. We are so appreciative of all that you do for our organization.

If you would like to join our team of docents to volunteer for a few hours at the museums each month or at the Parchman Visitor's Center, please call 903-537-4760 to let us know. We'd love to have you as part of our team!

Memorials & Honorariums

Donated By:

George & Reba Lunsford
Gary & Karla Haynes
Joe Jancosek & Jenny Dennis
Carolyn Sortor
Paul & Victoria Fletcher

Donated By:

Kay Frazier
George & Reba Lunsford
Dorothy Lynn Brooks
Joy Stone
Gary & Mary Ann Davis
Robin Sanders
Robin Sanders
Linda Moses

In Honor Of:

Robert Long
B. F. Hicks
B. F. Hicks
B. F. Hicks
B. F. Hicks

In Memory Of:

Gene Frazier, Clay Penny
Dorothy Long
Penn & Brooks Families
Hugh Stone
Manton & Dorthy Nations
Andrew & Ora Cody
Bill & Emogene Proctor
Howard & Lou Cargile

A Story – The Sugar Wagon

Throughout the summer of about 1942 from the front porch of our little house on a hill in the Flora Bluff Community in East Texas, I could look out east, onto a patch of growing sugar cane on our neighbor's property. In the previous Fall, we had watched as "stems" from "sugar cane stalks" were planted in a patch of moist creek bottomland by our Neighbor. Each stem included two or three "joints" of the stalk, from which "sprouts" eventually grew, with the sprouts growing into new "stalks" of sugar cane which grew upward out of the ground into maturity.

It was now approaching late Fall of the year later, since the cane stems had been planted. And, the Neighbor was making plans for stripping and cutting the new cane stalks down and transporting them to a "roller-mill" where juice was "squeezed" out of each stalk, with the juice then "cooked" in a large, open-pan, down into a syrup which tasted great over hot biscuits, butter and pork sausage at breakfast on cold, winter mornings. So, in the coming days the Neighbor, with my Dad's help, did just that, with the new sugar cane stalks carefully placed in my Dad's farm wagon, with the wagon hitched to a farm tractor that our Neighbor had borrowed from another neighbor.

And, early one early November morning my Mother and I watched from our front porch as the Neighbor started the farm tractor motor, and towed the loaded farm wagon down the unpaved country road and over the far hill, out of sight with my Dad sitting and waving from atop the wagonload of fresh sugar cane stalks.

The wagonload of sugar cane was finally enroute to a "mill and cooking area," located several miles away. Then, throughout the day, of that day, my Mother and I would sit on our front porch for long periods of time and anxiously watch for the returning tractor and empty wagon rig. But the tractor and wagon did not return that day until just about dark, when we finally saw the lights of the tractor as it passed over the final hill before reaching ours and the Neighbor's houses.

Our Dad, who was really "worn out" after a long day of delivering and unloading the sugar cane at the mill and cooking area, was finally able to sit down to a supper of "hot bacon and bean soup and cornbread", that my Mother had waiting for him. Then, a couple of days later, the Neighbor and my Dad had to return to the mill and cooking area to pick up the now-canned ribbon cane syrup. But the men were able to return earlier in the day on the tractor and wagon rig after this second trip.

EPILOGUE: My parents were Leta Lois (Mattingly) and Roger Joe Banks, and the "little house on a hill" was located in the Flora Bluff Community, northeast of Mount Vernon, Texas, in east Franklin County, Texas. The "Neighbor" who grew the sugar cane, was Forrest Suggs. The "mill and cooking area" was located on Old Highway 67 (later Farm to Market Road 899), east of Winfield near the Community of Farmers Academy, almost to Mount Pleasant, Texas. This mill and cooking area apparently operated until the 1950's until farmers in the area finally quit raising sugar cane.

Ralph K. Banks
Austin, Texas

Label used
on local
syrup
marketed for
sale. The
Cane Press
on Depot
Grounds was
moved from
the J.M.
Hicks Farm.



The Shadow

by Kay Howell

One summer day as Mother and I were about to leave the post office, a lady whom I recognized as a member of our church pushed open the door. "Well," she said as she entered the building, "I see you still have your shadow with you."

"Yes, I do," Mother replied. She smiled at the lady, but she tightened her grip on my hand and pulled me through the door and down the sidewalk. It was another of those times when I had to run to keep up.

Finally Mother slowed down. As soon as I caught my breath I looked up at her and asked, "What's a shadow?"

Mother stopped and dropped my hand. "Look over there. See the black outline of you on the ground and the outline of me beside you? That's our shadows."

The explanation wasn't enough. "Does everybody have a shadow?"

"Yes, when the sun is shining everything has a shadow. Our house, the trees, the animals and birds, everything has a shadow."

"Then why did that lady say you still had a shadow?"

"That's a little bit different." Mother reached down and took my hand. "We'll talk about it when we get home."

During the rest of our walk I watched my shadow as it disappeared when we walked under a tree and then appeared again when we were in the sun. I watched it follow my moves as I waved my arm or jumped on one foot.

As soon as we were in the house Mother helped me change into my play clothes and then gave me a glass of milk and a sugar cookie. She sat down at the kitchen table with me and waited until I sipped the milk before she spoke.

"I saw you playing with your shadow while we were walking. It always stayed right with you, didn't it?"

I just nodded because my mouth was full of cookie.

Mrs. Hill was calling you my shadow because you're always with me."

"Whaf's wong wif that?" I said around my mouthful of cookie.

"There's nothing wrong with that. But Mrs. Hill thinks I'm being mean when you walk to church with me and the weather is really cold or to the post office when it's really hot. She says I'm not taking good care of you."

I swallowed hard and sipped my milk. "But I like to go to Sunday School with you."

"And I like to take you. Anyway, that's what Mrs. Hill meant. Just remember you're more than just a shadow." I had to think about that for a while.

The next morning I woke to the sound of running water in the kitchen. Mother was washing tomatoes in the sink, and she looked up as I walked in. "I just brought these tomatoes in from the garden. They are so nice, I thought I'd can a couple of jars."

“No, I wailed, “it’s Tuesday. We have to iron.”

“We can do both. Go get dressed while I fix breakfast.”

I dressed myself pretty well except for buttons in the back and getting the right shoe on the right foot. When I went back to the kitchen Mother rebuttoned my dress and put breakfast on the table. It was oatmeal with a spoonful of strawberry preserves instead of sugar. I liked raisins better, but we didn’t have them very often because of rationing.

While Mother washed dishes I set up my ironing board. It was a child-sized replica that Fred Pritchard, a skilled carpenter and our neighbor, made for me. Mother padded the wooden top with cotton batting and anchored it in place with a piece of denim from the leg of a pair of worn-out overalls that had been washed so any times they were almost white.

I had a little iron, too. I think it was probably made of steel like the Tonka trucks the little boys played with. My iron had a silver soleplate, and the top was painted bright red. Mother warmed my iron on a burner of the kitchen stove with the flame turned very low. In spite of the wash cloth she wrapped around the handle, I occasionally burned a finger or two. Consequently, my ironing skill improved quite rapidly. I endured the pain of a burned finger because I wanted to do everything Mother did. She gave me the job of ironing the flat pieces in the laundry like handkerchiefs, napkins, and pillowcases.

Although she had an electric iron, Mother used a sadiron that she heated on the kitchen stove and ironed heavy fabrics like cotton duck or canvas. By the time I was old enough to ask her why she used the sadiron instead of her electric iron, she had suffered a severe stroke and did not remember or even understand what I was asking. But I have a theory. I think she believed she needed a heavy iron to press the wrinkles out of heavy fabric. I remember watching her push down hard on her iron when there were deep wrinkles; so, of course, I pushed down on my iron, too.

Mother’s electric iron had a thermostat which she did not use. Instead she plugged the iron into the electric outlet until it was hot enough and then unplugged it. When it cooled off, she plugged it in again. She ascertained if it was hot enough by spitting on the index finger of her left hand and very quickly popping in on the soleplate of the iron. If it cracked or sizzled, the iron was hot.

Since I wanted to do everything Mother did, I tried that, too. Yep, another burned finger. I only tried it once.

Why did Mother not take advantage of an electric iron with a thermostat? I’m not sure she understood that the iron would heat up to a certain temperature and then shut itself off. I do know that she resisted change and preferred to do things the way she knew how to do them. To her credit, however, she did enjoy the use of the telephone and the radio.

Mother sprinkled the starched clothes with clean water two hours or so before she began ironing. This was in the days before flexible plastic bottles or pump sprayers like we use with Windex were available. Mother used a sprinkling bottle.

It was a tall glass bottle with a fairly long neck and a circumference small enough that she could grip it comfortably. The top was made of silver metal and about the size and shape of a standard round drawer pull on kitchen cabinets. There were holes on the top and a strip of cork around the shank that held the top firmly in place when it was pushed into the mouth of the bottle. Mother sprinkled the clothes with a little water and wrapped them in an old sheet. When she was ready to iron, the clothes were uniformly damp and easy to smooth with her iron.

There is one more tool Mother consistently used, a small branch of fresh cedar she broke off a cedar tree in our yard. Whenever her iron did not glide easily over the garment she was ironing, she rubbed the hot

soleplate on the fresh cedar. Not only did it smell good, it either lubricated or cleaned the bottom of the iron.

Many years later, as college graduation loomed near, one of my friends stopped me after class. She whispered that she was getting married soon. She felt she needed to learn how to iron a shirt, and would I teach her. I told her of course I would, and we agreed to meet later.

The lesson on ironing took a little over an hour. As I walked back to my dorm room, I thought about my little red iron and my burned fingers. I concluded that being Mother's shadow was not a bad thing at all. At least I learned how to iron a shirt.

Note: Sadirons have been around a long time. Their name comes from dialectical use of the word "sad" to mean "heavy," and they certainly are a heavy chunk of iron. That's really not so farfetched when you think of a phrase like a "heavy heart" or a "heavy burden," both of which imply sadness.



Maintenance and Conservation

The Franklin County Historical Association maintains a large collection of items, from buggy blankets to wooden school desks in the organizations four museums. However, simple ownership this does not mean that things do not require maintenance and conservation.

FCHA Curator Robert Sterling Long is seen oiling the historic shoes on display in the Majors-Parchman House headquarters. Once each year, the shoes receive several applications of oil to preserve them.

"When you are dealing with leather items over a hundred years old, you must oil, let it soak in, oil again, over a period of several days, especially for these things which are on display in the heated and air-conditioned building," Long said as he began the annual process.

Long is working on shoes belonging to his great-grandparents, Thomas Sidney Carpenter, who died in 1912, and May Lillian Simpson Carpenter, who died in 1926, along with a fancy pair of high top, button shoes, which belonged to Emma Holder Ramsay, when she was a young woman. Mrs. Ramsay lived to be 104 years old.

Items in the FCHA collection require constant upkeep to maintain them in good order in the stewardship of the organization for the community.



FCHA Joins CASETA

In a move to better recognize the organization's art collection, the Franklin County Historical Association has become a member of the statewide art group CASETA (Center for the Appreciation and Study of Early Texas Art), which includes well-known museums and universities across the state of Texas, as well as area chapters. The FCHA will be the only county historical organization in CASETA.

CASETA, whose membership includes the University of Texas, SMU's Bywaters Collection, the Old Jail Museum in Albany, University of Houston, and the Tyler Museum of Art, among other members, provides a group interested in early Texas art - at least 40 years old - and which can have a local or statewide emphasis on the participating organization's holdings and activities.

"By becoming a member of CASETA, the FCHA art collection will become better known on a statewide and further basis," Curator Robert Sterling Long explained. "The FCHA is uniquely positioned with its art collection to become a destination point for people interested in Texas art and artists. Several years ago, we completed cataloging the collection of paintings, drawings, posters, and photographs, and published a brochure giving information on each of the artists in our collection. No living artists are included in the collection, and they must be from Franklin County or have Franklin County ties. The earliest Franklin County artwork shown is is an oil "Books and Pen", painted in 1869 by Mrs. J. W. Stringer."

There is one earlier painting, a circa 1830 painting of Amanda C. Wright Johnson, wife of Joshua Foster Johnson, who voted against secession, but it was not painted by a Franklin County artist. This is a painting of her as a child and is on display in the parlor in the Majors-Parchman House. The painting was a gift to the FCHA by Mrs. Dean (Fannie) Maxton, who was a descendant of the Johnsons.

"Many people do not realize the history of art, art classes and teachers in Mount Vernon and Franklin County's history," Long continued. "During Victorian times, before 1900, artists and instructors would be brought from St. Louis for seminars and workshops at the Franklin Institute, and there is a lineage of teacher to student - who then became a teacher - throughout many generations in Mount Vernon, continuing to the present day. This legacy is unusual in Texas, especially in such a small town as Mount Vernon."

CASETA holds an annual conference, and Long will be representing the FCHA in Austin this year, providing copies of the art collection brochure and presenting information to those attending.

"We hope this will stir tourism for Mount Vernon and Franklin County," Long said, adding to the other collections of the FCHA, including the Don Meredith Exhibit, the Historic Bird Egg and Butterfly Collections, presented by the Nations Family, and the Easterling Caddo Indian artifact collection, all of which draw their own groups of tourists. With the reopening of the Wilkinson Texana Library, the FCHA has many offerings for out of town visitors."

The art collection is mainly on display in the Majors-Parchman House which serves as the organization's headquarters, and is available for viewing during regular hours.



"Books and Pen" painted by Mrs. J. W. Stringer in 1869. The daughter of James M. and Mary Petty, Mary Virginia Petty, Stringer was born in 1858 and married J. W. Stringer. She was a student at the Franklin Institute (the building was located on the parking lot adjoining the First Baptist Church on the south side) in 1869 when she completed the work.

Vintage Irons on Display

Strike while the irons are hot - and the collection of antique irons which were donated by the Frank and Christine Hughes Hicks Estate - illustrate how those irons were used.

Now on display in the Thruston House Bankhead Highway Visitors Center, this selection of antique irons run the gamut from small pressing irons, which would have sat on a wood stove or at the edge of a fireplace getting hot to be used for pressing clothes, all the way through irons which were coal oil or kerosene powered.

The heaviest of the grouping weighs several pounds and makes modern people appreciate no-iron, wrinkle free clothing.

There is one set which has a removable wooden handle, which can be transferred to another iron base when the one you were using started getting cool.

Perhaps the most intriguing of the group are two irons which open up and can be loaded with coals. While it would seem that these would have trouble being a constant temperature, as the coals burned and cooled, no doubt Victorian homemakers would have thought this an advancement in housekeeping chores.



These remarkable antique irons are displayed adjacent to the front bedroom at the H.C. Thruston House. The house, which also serves as the Mount Vernon Visitors Center, is one of the premier properties of the FCHA. The bedroom itself is beautifully furnished and wonderfully appointed with amazing handcrafted quilts. In addition, an ironing board is out with an iron at the ready.

Call our offices to arrange your tour at the Thruston House to check out this latest exhibit. Open free for members and friends.

Books Presented to Wilkinson Library

Trilla Nordyke Pando presents Wilkinson Texana Librarian Robert Sterling Long with two books - "Great Roundup, the Story of Texas and Southwestern Cowmen," and "Cattle Empire, The fabulous story of the 3,000,000 Acre XIT," written by her father Lewis Nordyke, longtime Texas newspaperman, Dallas Times Herald columnist, and wide-ranging Texas historian.

Pando, who along with her husband Bob, is very involved in arts and history in Houston and in Texas, is a docent at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, and is an active blogger and a former professor. Bob is about to lead a tour of Houston's historic Evergreen Cemetery, where many of Houston's and Texas' earliest founding families and notables are buried. When he leads his tour, the visitors will see the graves of Anson B. Jones, last president of the Republic of Texas, famous Texas families including that of former longtime Lieutenant Governor William P. Hobby, Howard Hughes, and 1940's actress Gene Tierney.

Trilla Pando's father, Lewis Nordyke, was born in West Texas in 1905 and died in 1960 in Marfa. He worked for the Stephenville and Amarillo newspapers, before joining the Dallas Times Herald. He was with the Associated Press for many years in Dallas, Houston and Amarillo. Besides the two books presented to the Texana Library, he also published books on outlaw John Wesley Hardin, essays on Texas and a book of memoirs.

His book on the XIT Ranch in the Panhandle, telling the story of the 3,000,000 acres given to pay for the building of the Texas State Capitol Building in Austin, was on the New York Times best seller list. It joins several other volumes on the XIT Ranch in the Library's holdings. The "Great Roundup" tells the story of the organization of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association.

The books will be available in the Wilkinson Texana Library in the Fire Station Museum in Mount Vernon for use by researchers.

"We are very pleased Trilla Pando has honored the Wilkinson Library by presenting it with copies of her father's books. These will add depth to the Library and brings a new voice to the Collection,"

"She told me she had relatives in Paris, and we hope she and her husband will come and visit Mount Vernon and see her father's legacy on the shelves, available for the education of future generations," Librarian Long said.



Vintage Glassware Donated to FCHA

By Robert S. Long

A collection of clabber, or buttermilk goblets, has been given to the Franklin County Historical Association from the collection of the late Virgie Beth Hughes, long-time Mount Vernon teacher and one of the original members of the FCHA.

The dozen goblets or glasses are all in different patterns, and some are early flint glass which has a high lead content and turns purple over time when exposed to sunlight.

Clabber is a type of soured milk. When unpasteurized milk is allowed to sour or ferment, it thickens and curdles. This produces a type of yogurt which has a strong and sour flavor. Like yogurt, it could be eaten with a spoon and special utensils were made for serving it.

Before the days of refrigeration, especially in the American South, it was eaten at breakfast, sweetened with molasses or brown sugar, and if available, nutmeg and cinnamon. Some would have it with fruit, or cream and black pepper.

It was also a regular evening meal—in the buttermilk stage before it totally "clabbered" with cornbread. Before the days of baking soda, it was used in baking for leavening bread. Even today, in areas without refrigeration, it is still popular.

The Ulster Scots who settled in the Appalachian Mountains brought clabber with them when they immigrated to America. They brought the clabbered milk along as they moved from the Carolinas to Tennessee and finally on to Texas.

With the coming of pasteurization and the demise of the family farm, the making and use of clabber ended. Today, the closest to clabber involves taking pasteurized milk, adding several tablespoons of buttermilk or sour milk to a glass of milk.

"Aunt Virgie spent several years gathering the collection of clabber glasses," Hughes nephew B. F. Hicks said.

The collection has been placed in the china cabinet at the Majors-Parchman House.



Easterling Presents Program

The Mount Pleasant Cub Scout Troop was treated to a program on Native American artifacts presented by Don Easterling on Monday, February 12th. Located in the on the second floor of the Fire Station Museum, the extensive collection of tools, arrowheads and pottery is on loan to FCHA by Mr. Easterling. All the artifacts are from one site located at his ancestral farm in the northeastern corner of Franklin County. The presence of artifacts spanning a 10,000 year period indicates almost continuous human occupancy in Franklin County.

Most of the collection is from the Caddo Indian tribe with earlier items from the nomadic hunter-gatherer stage before the Indians adopted a village lifestyle. The Caddo adopted settled lifestyles in this region. Their population declined through exposure to diseases brought by the Spanish, French and English explorers and traders. The Indians had no natural cure or resistance for these diseases. The last Caddo in this area were removed under the anti-Indian policies of Mirabeau Lamar, President of the Republic of Texas in the early 1840s.

These artifacts were collected near the banks of the Sulphur River by Mr. Easterling. He is a retired Junior High Science teacher with the Talco-Bogata School District and a graduate of East Texas State University.

Present for this program were Scout leader Kat Belew, assistant leader Barbie Cruz with Bear Scouts Sullivan Belew, Makai Cruz, and Owen Johnson. Lion Scouts included Ben Dykes and Jasper Belew.

If you would like to schedule a time for your group or organization to tour the many exhibits on display in our museums please call 903-537-4760 to schedule an appointment.



One Egg Cake

By Emma Ramsay

1 Egg
1 C. Sugar
½ C. Crisco or oleo
2/3 C. Milk

1 Tsp. Vanilla
1-1/2 C. Flour
1 Tsp. Baking Powder
Dash of salt

Mix all ingredients together.

Bake in 8-inch greased and floured pan or make 6 muffins.

Bake at 350 degrees for about 30 minutes or until done.

Emma Eliza Holder Ramsay was born August 8, 1878 in Franklin County, the daughter of Thomas A. and Mary Elizabeth “Mollie” Barrett Holder. She was the granddaughter of David H. Holder and Eliza Parker Holder. Eliza Parker Holder was kin to Cynthia Ann Parker, captured by the Comanche Indians as a young girl, whose son, Quanah Parker was the last great Comanche chief.

Thomas Holder was born in Alabama in 1856, and moved to Texas in 1874, marrying Mary Barrett in 1877. They originally lived and farmed in Glade Springs. Thomas moved the family to Mount Vernon and built the Holder House (now the Holbrook Bed and Breakfast) in 1903. He was one of the first directors of the First National Bank and one of the original owners of the electric light plant.

Emma married Henry Ramsay, originally of South Carolina, in 1891 and they had three sons.

Samuel Roy Ramsay married Faye Franks Ramsay of Saltillo. Roy Ramsay and his wife, Faye, lived in Mt. Vernon, and are buried in the Mount Vernon City Cemetery.

Henry Elgan “Lucky” Ramsay married Wilma Dean Agee Ramsay of Mt. Vernon. Lucky and Wilma had two daughters, Anna and Dana.

Anna Ramsay Pepper Thompson married Jerry Pepper of Winfield, now deceased. Anna and Jerry had two sons, David Pepper and Matthew Pepper, both of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Anna then married Richard Thompson of New Orleans, Louisiana.

Dana Ramsay Barton married Dr. Fred Barton of Mt. Vernon (son of Jesse and Marie Barton). Fred and Dana Live in Franklin County, Texas.

The shoes that belonged to Emma Holder Ramsay are on display in the Majors-Holbrook House. They passed through this line and were given to the Franklin County Historical Association by Anna and Dana.

Landon Ramsay married Mozell Coe, had four children, Tom, Lanny, Rosalind and Cynthia. Landon and Mozelle are also buried in the Mount Vernon City Cemetery.

Thomas Donald Ramsay, former State Representative from Franklin County, is married to Laurie Manning Ramsay, originally from Dallas. They have four children: Michael, Mark, Allison and Jordan.

Lanny Rolf Ramsay is a former District Judge. He and his wife, Katherine “Kitty” Clyde Ramsay of Tyler, live in Mt. Vernon and have three children: Whitney, Will and Landon. Cynthia Ramsay Woodall married Kirk Woodall of Dallas. They had three children: Ramsay, Mary Miles and Ryan.

Rosalind Ramsay Bell married Paul Bell, now deceased. Paul and Rosalind had four children: Rebecca, Kenley, Landon and Preston. Rosalind now lives in Mount Vernon in the former home of State Representative Neal Solomon and his wife, Barbara Connally Solomon.

Emma’s grandchildren called her Gram, and all tell stories about their grandmother who could do anything, from milking a cow to sewing a prom dress without a pattern

Judge Lanny Ramsay said when Gram moved into Mount Vernon at 85 years old after Henry passed away in 1954, her sister-in-law Grace Holder drove up and found Emma planting trees at her new home in town. Grace told her she would never live to see them grow. Emma told her sister-in-law to just wait. Emma lived to be 104 and died in 1982.

Rosalind Bell says she was told Gram was under her house at 98, trying to level it!

This recipe for a one-egg cake has been used extensively and successfully by Mrs. Ramsay’s family and friends, and continues to be enjoyed by her many descendants and members of the First Baptist Church, where her husband Henry was an early deacon.



Emma Ramsay pictured with her children Roy, Landon, and H.E. Ramsay

Carpenter Family at Hopewell Cemetery

Thomas and Lillian Simpson Carpenter (whose shoes are on display at the Majors-Parchman House) are seen in this circa 1902 photograph, also on display in the Judge's Bedroom in the Majors-Parchman House. The photo, whose original is hand tinted as well as a panorama, was probably made by Praytor Photography Studio, which at this time had studios in both Mount Vernon and Mount Pleasant.

The Carpenter family had three daughters before their son, Henry, was born in 1901. He died within six months and was buried in the Hopewell Cemetery, where other Simpson family members are buried.

Pictured from left to right, Mary Carpenter Davis, mother of the Rev. Thomas Carpenter Davis, Violet Carpenter Bray, Nona Carpenter Williams, mother of Dorothy Williams Long, long-time music teacher and one of the original members of the FCHA, May Lillian Simpson Carpenter, and Thomas Sidney Carpenter. The family is in the Hopewell Cemetery, across from the Hopewell Cumberland Presbyterian Church, where they were members.

The infant's gravestone came from Jefferson and was purchased from the Burgen Monument Company which had locations across Northeast Texas.

May Lillian, born in Texas after the family came from Mississippi, died in 1926. Her husband, Thomas Sidney Carpenter, died in 1912 from an appendicitis in the Crutcher Hospital in Mount Vernon, located where the Cake Lady Bakery and the building formerly housing Teague Chevrolet was located.



Texas Parks & Wildlife Training Session at Daphne Prairie

Clifford Shackelford, Texas Parks & Wildlife staff: State Ornithologist for Non-game Birds organized a training session for Franklin County - Feb. 5-7 - for staff wildlife biologists from across north Texas. Shackelford lives in Nacogdoches but travels state-wide. Out of the biologists attending training in Mt. Vernon, representatives from Corsicana, Sherman, Van and other cities participated and assisted in a grassland bird count. In one session, the biologists walked through a field of prairie grass and raised over 50 LeConte's Sparrows, a tiny tawny-colored grassland sparrow which will hover under the grass cover rather than fly in order not to become prey. Several other species of grassland sparrows were counted.

The primary training was conducted on the Daphne Prairie Preserve operated by B.F. Hicks. Hicks operates the preserves under mandates complying with a state-approved wildlife management plan. About 550 acres in the 922 acre preserve had been burned over the two-week period preceding the Parks and Wildlife Training Session. In one burned field over 150 mourning dove were feasting on the seeds released by croton plants scorched in the fires. Substantial flocks of meadow larks were counted and the numbers were heartening given the declines in this species with habitat loss across much of the heartland of America.

Shackelford was joined by the top-ranking State Botanist with the Parks and Wildlife Department, Jason Singhurst. Singhurst reports that he has documented 108 species of grass on the prairie preserve and about 280 species of forbs. He identified one new plant species which has been documented as occurring in only six of the 254 counties of Texas.

Representatives from Texas Master Naturalist and Master Gardener groups ranging from Longview and Tyler north to the Red River were in Mt. Vernon for various activities conducted during the workshop. In the preceding two weeks, representatives of the National Wild Turkey Federation and Native Prairies Association of Texas have visited the property along with birders working on their life lists from Corpus Christi and Austin.

In the bird count for one weekend in February 2018, over 550 birds from over 40 species were logged. The visitors always want to take time out and stop by the Fire Station Museum to pay their respect to the Passenger Pigeon, Heath Hen, and Carolina Parakeet - with only eggs now residing in our county which once hosted the living ancestors. A lone Carolina Parakeet was documented in Texarkana as recently as 1897; many writers recount the booming of prairie chickens across our county as they entered the spring mating season; and Col. DeMorse in Clarksville says that the flocks of passenger pigeons flying over our skies brought darkness in mid-day. Our mission is to preserve our natural and cultural heritage and we strive to enhance appreciation of the natural environment with our field trips to the preserve and to Dupree Park.

Come join your organization on May 13, 14 and 15 when we host the first, second and third grades from Mt. Vernon Public Schools for field trips in our museums and for a picnic and walk at Dupree Park. Call our office for more information. 903-537-4760



Stock photo of visitors and enthusiasts walking Daphne Prairie.



Texas Parks and Wildlife biologists tour the Bird Egg Exhibit in the Fire Station Museum.

**FRANKLIN COUNTY HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION**

WE NEED YOU!

**Volunteers don't have the
time, they just have the heart.**

**CALL US AT 903-537-4760 IF
YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP!**

Spring is an incredibly busy time for FCHA with our annual Night at the Museum, Civil War Journal Banquet and end-of-year elementary school tours. If you have a day you would like to volunteer helping with any of these events. We would love to have you!

