SPARTA, TEXAS

TRADITIONS OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND COMMUNITY SOLIDARITY

A Thesis

by

CAROL FIORILLO MACAULAY

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

May 1998

Major Subject: Anthropology
SPARTA, TEXAS

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May 1998

Major Subject: Anthropology
ABSTRACT

Sparta, Texas

Traditions of Self-Sufficiency and Community Solidarity.

(May 1998)

Carol Fiorillo Macaulay, B.S. University of Texas

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. D. L. Hamilton

In the Cowhouse valley of western Bell County, the rural community of Sparta existed for one hundred years. Unlike many small communities that fell to the pressures of commercial farming and urbanization, Sparta remained a cohesive and vital community until the waters of Belton Reservoir inundated its farmland. Twelve historic farmsteads, located in the uplands surrounding the reservoir, were deemed historically significant, and thus, merited further investigation. Archival documentation of each site, such as deed and tax records, population and agricultural censuses, as well as a description of the artifacts collected, are presented here. Six oral histories were collected from former residents of the Sparta community. They gave testimony to life on the farm and involvement in the community. The data obtained from these three avenues of inquiry are synthesized within the community study model of Kolb and Snead (1997). This model focuses on three elements of community -- social reproduction, subsistence production and community self-awareness. Through its application, aspects of the community’s tenancy have come to light. Sparta’s families were economically self-sufficient, however, they participated in a system of mutual dependency. The bonds that sustained the life of
Sparta through three and four generations have been attributed to stability on the land, strong kinship ties, an active social life, a common vocation and a shared history.
DEDICATION

In loving memory of my mother, Ruth N. Fiorillo, Ph.D.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A year ago, I approached Dr. Donny Hamilton, the head of the Nautical Archaeology Program of the Department of Anthropology, a person known to me, not as a marine archaeologist, an archives guru, or as a conservator of sixteenth-century artifacts, but as one, like myself, interested in trivial historical events and obscure and forgotten people of Texas history. Living in Temple, Texas, a community 70 miles to the west, presented a problem for doing any archaeological research at the University. Dr. Hamilton suggested that I contact the archaeology laboratory at Fort Hood, Texas, for a possible research project.

Ms. Jennifer Stabler, the historical archaeologist on staff, took me on without hesitation and that is when my "training" in nineteenth- and twentieth-century historical archaeology began. I have never known one so patient and generous, as Jennifer was with me. She offered one of 26 historic communities that once flourished on the lands of Fort Hood as a possible topic. I chose Sparta, a nineteenth- and early twentieth-century farming community that once existed in western Bell County. Jennifer first took me to the basement of the Bell County Courthouse; we traveled to the State Archives and General Land Office in Austin, we examined the artifacts found at the Sparta sites, and we wandered into the middle of military training exercises in the field. Jennifer was there every step of the way, and if it were not for her, this thesis would never have seen the light of day. I cannot thank her enough for what she has taught me.

The process of writing and completing this thesis would not have been possible without the generous help of many people. I would like to thank Mr. Ian P. McGuire, the
Fort Hood Archaeological Laboratory curator, for his help in locating the artifacts and for scanning maps and photographs into the thesis, and to Dr. Kimball Smith, the Director of the Archaeological Research Laboratory for allowing me the opportunity.

Special thanks go to my committee members, Dr. Donny L. Hamilton, the chairman of my committee, who went well beyond his duties to help me make deadlines, Dr. Robert A. Calvert, who kept me on track and forced me to focus on what was important, and Dr. David L. Carlson, whose kindness and support was greatly appreciated.

Also, I would like to extend a “thank you” to Dr. D. Gentry Steele, who always made time for me, helped me through the mazes of university procedure and encouraged me along the way, and to Dr. Jeffery Cohen, who was always interested in my endeavors.

My indebtedness and sincere thanks also go to Mrs. Ernestine Humphrey, Mrs. Billie Thompson Wilson, Mrs. Bert Bounds, Mrs. Lorene Boren, Mr. T. A. Wilhite, and Mr. Bill Northam. They graciously invited me, a total stranger with lots of questions, into their homes. This thesis would not have been possible without them.

Finally, I would like to thank my family. My husband, Michael, provided me with both the intellectual and emotional support throughout this process. His encouragement and editing skills were instrumental in the completion of this thesis. My sons, Robert, Luke, Michael, Dane, and Thomas, provided the sense of humor necessary to keep this project in perspective. Without their love and support, this work would never have been completed.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The community of Sparta, was founded in the mid-1850s on the banks of Cowhouse Creek, a major tributary of the Leon River in Bell County, Texas. (Figure 1)

In the early 1950s, the lands of the Cowhouse valley were purchased by the federal government for the expansion of Fort Hood Military Reservation and the construction of Belton Reservoir. (Figure 2) In 1954, the grandchildren of Sparta's founding fathers, the last members of the community, left their homes for good. Appropriately named, the community has not relinquished its life -- it lives on in historical documents, archaeological remains, and in the minds of its people.

Purpose of Study

Strong pleas have been made by historical archaeologists in Texas for the pursuit of in-depth investigations of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century rural sites (Jurney and Moir 1987; Rabb 1982; Ferring and Reese 1982; Skinner and Conners 1979). They emphasized that historic properties reflected a life style no longer existent; and because of that, they should be given serious consideration. For instance, in 1890, two out of three households in the United States and six out of seven households in Texas were in rural communities, involved in farming or ranching activities (Eldridge and Thomas 1964). In 1890, 78% of the population of Bell County was rural. It was not until 1930 that the rural population fell below 50% of the total, and by 1950, it less than

This thesis follows the style of Historical Archaeology.
An 1885 map of Bell County shows many of the communities which are now ghost towns or no longer exist.

Figure 1. 1885 map of Bell County. (Limmer 1988)
Figure 2. Location of Sparta on Fort Hood, Texas. (Carlson et al. 1986)
30% (Lewis 1948:11).

Traditionally, history has been a written record of public events such as the passage of laws, the growth of institutions, and the process of economic development. Despite the tremendous wealth of written material on the recent past, very little is actually known about how most people lived, felt and interacted behind the public events (Nash 1983:1). The personal and technical aspects of a farmer’s daily life, the reasons why he decided to do one thing and not another can be addressed within the realm of historical archaeology. In reviewing the strengths of historical archaeology, A. E. Yentsch notes:

> the focus is on historical moments and repetitive events that convey information about a specific culture, the emphasis is on small-scaled and detailed examinations of specific, varied expressions of cultural meaning, on a small range of human activity that tells of ordinary social action, on the day-to-day behavior that in its particularity and complex texture reveals the meaning that gave form to peoples’ lives in a given time and place. (Yentsch 1996:274-275)

The unique potential of historical archaeology lies not only in its ability to answer anthropological questions, but also to provide data not available through documentation, especially on disenfranchised groups (Deagan 1996:35), or groups that lacked a certain historicity, such as small rural farming communities of a century ago. Historical archaeology as the “handmaiden to history” (Hume 1964) provides a supplement for the historical record of the past.

The purpose of this thesis is to enhance the understanding of the recent past of central Texas by examining the “infinitesimally small elements” within a framework of community study, integrating data extracted from historical, archaeological and
ethnographic sources. Archival research consisted of examinations of deeds, tax
documents, censuses, General Land Office records, state and county histories, newspaper
articles, and other records pertaining to the historic owners of the land in the Cowhouse
valley community of Sparta. Oral history investigations consisted of interviews with six
former residents knowledgeable about the history of the area. Archaeological studies
consisted of examination of the 1984 survey reports, aerial photographs, old maps, intact
features and artifact collections at each of the sites selected for this study.

Study Area

Archaeological surveys have been conducted on Fort Hood Military Reservation
since 1978 and continue to the present. These surveys are conducted in order to comply
with federal legislation designed to protect significant archaeological sites on federally
owned land. Over 1,200 historic sites have been recorded. In 1983 and 1984, the
Archeological Research Laboratory of Texas A&M University under the direction of
David L. Carlson, conducted a survey of the Eastern Training Area and recorded 220
historic sites. Fifty-two of these sites are within the geographical boundaries of the
community of Sparta.

Prior to the establishment and expansion of Fort Hood in the 1940s and 1950s,
26 rural communities existed within the 339 square miles of Fort Hood, located in
eastern Coryell County and western Bell County. The geographical boundaries of these
communities were established in the first two decades of the twentieth century, when
county schools were consolidated. The late Dr. Jack Jackson, archaeologist at Fort
Hood and presently, Ms. Jennifer Stabler, have grouped Fort Hood’s historic sites within
these community boundaries. They base this organization on the definition of community put forth by Oscar Lewis:

When asked to define their community, rural people invariably give the boundaries of the school district. This identification of the community with the school is due to the manner in which the school district lines are drawn in the early days. The county commissioners, ignoring the state law which required school districts to be not less than nine square miles in area, based the school district lines upon the limits of the then-functioning neighborhoods, the density of population, the condition of roads, and natural landmarks. Thus the school districts were actually natural communities from the beginning. (Lewis 1948:42)

The Sparta-Cedar Grove Common Consolidated School District #7 was established in 1919 by the Bell County School Board and it encompassed an area of approximately 15 square miles along Cowhouse Creek and Taylor's Branch in western Bell County. Figure 3 is a map of the Sparta-Cedar Grove Common School District. There are 52 sites recorded within the boundaries of the Sparta community, of which 35 were determined to be ranch or farm complexes and the remaining were defined as dumps. Twelve of the 35 homesteads contained significant information which could address a variety of topics relevant to the history of central Texas (Carlson et al. 1986). These sites were chosen for this study. The compiled archival, ethnographic and archaeological research compiled will be passed onto the Archeological Laboratory at Fort Hood for future use. These sites, along with two dumps that are located on the same property as the farmsteads, are included.

Artifacts collected during the initial survey were used to date the sites. Sites 41BL442, 41BL469, 41BL551, 41BL571, 41BL577, 41BL580, 41BL616, 41BL617,
Figure 3. Sparta-Cedar Grove Common School District #7 consolidation map.

and 41BL618 are dated to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sites 41BL574, 41BL578, and 41BL614 are dated to the first half of the twentieth century. Sites 41BL577 and 41BL580, belonged to the W. F. Sellers family, sites 41BL571, 41BL574 and 41BL578 to the Hallmark family, sites 41BL614 and 41BL617 to J. T. Wiseman, and the Doss family owned the farms represented by sites 41BL617 and 41BL618. The majority of the sites were owner-occupied, except for sites 41BL442, 41BL469, and 41BL551 which were tenant farms.
The framework of study applied here is taken from the discipline of sociology, but has been applied in ethnohistorical and archaeological pursuits in recent years. Referred to as the community study approach, it will focus on Sparta as a whole, examining 12 archaeological household sites (including two dumps) with archival and ethnographic information compiled on the occupants. These data will then be analyzed within a community model developed for application in archaeological research by Kolb and Snead (1997), who define community as consisting of three elements -- social reproduction, subsistence and community identity.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter I is an introduction to the study, a statement of purpose, a review of the project, and a brief summary of each chapter. Chapter II is a review of previous research in the study area, a presentation of archival, laboratory and ethnographic methodologies, the theoretical framework of the study and the research orientation. Chapters III through VI supply the data base for this study. Chapter III provides background information on the natural environment and history of Bell County. Chapter IV presents the archival research and archaeology of each site. Chapter V provides an overview of the material culture, in particular, the ceramic and glassware assemblages. Chapter VI combines the data collected from the informant interviews. These data are synthesized within Kolb and Snead's community study model in Chapter VII.
CHAPTER II

OVERVIEW OF PROJECT

This chapter covers first an overview of previous archaeological research that has been conducted on Fort Hood over the last 20 years, second, an outline of the research methodologies that were employed, and, finally, a review of the theoretical framework and research orientation of this thesis.

Previous Research

Archaeological surveys have been conducted on Fort Hood Military Reservation since 1978 and continue to the present. These surveys are conducted in order to comply with federal legislation (the National Preservation of 1966, Executive Order 11593 and the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974) designed to identify, document and protect all significant archaeological sites on federally owned land. The first archaeological surveys of Fort Hood were conducted in 1978 by Science Applications Inc. of California, under the direction of Dr. Fred Briuer. The Texas A&M Archaeological Research Laboratory conducted the surveys from 1980-1991. The contractor between 1991 and 1994 was Mariah and Associates, Inc., and the current contract is held by Prewitt and Associates, Inc. To date, over 1,200 historic sites have been recorded.

In 1983 and 1984, the Archeological Research Laboratory of Texas A&M University conducted a survey of the Eastern Training Area and recorded 220 historic sites. The Eastern Training Area consists of 96 square kilometers in Bell and Coryell Counties. (Figure 4)
Figure 4. Map of archaeological surveys conducted on Fort Hood. (Carlson et al. 1986)

The 220 historic sites represent the initial migrations into Central Texas by Anglo settlers beginning in the 1850s and ending with the purchase of the land by the government in the 1940s and 1950s. Recommendations regarding the research potential of each site was based solely on the surface features and surface collections. The sites are described in *Archeological Survey at Fort Hood, Texas, Fiscal Year 1983, The Eastern Training Area* (1986) by David L. Carlson et al.
A small number of historic archaeological studies have been conducted at Fort Hood. One study, Jack M. Jackson's master's thesis, *Okay: The Archaeological Reconstruction and Settlement Pattern Analysis of a Dispersed Hamlet in Bell County, Texas* (1982), examined the settlement pattern at Okay, a small community in southwestern Bell County. Jackson also made extensive use of archival records, particularly, the agricultural censuses and probate records in order to examine the economic base of the community. He demonstrated how this data could be used to establish settlement chronologies and how spatially separated sites were linked together. He also focused on cultural traits (in particular, architecture and folklore) that he traced to the states of the Upper South, the mid-Atlantic states and finally, to the British Isles, the ancestral home of many of the Okay residents.

In 1982, Jack M. Jackson, conducted a pedestrian survey and archival research on the Mayberry Park site (41BL165) located on Fort Hood to secure information for determining the eligibility for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Based on archival data and the examination of historic maps, he found that most of the structural remains of the site were actually less than 50 years of age. The site was identified as a 1950s boy scout camp, Camp Moonraker. Jackson did discover that the site originally had been a sheep ranch established in 1878 by Albert F. Hicks, who sold the 1,680 acre ranch to Elisha E. Graves in 1903; it was operated by Graves until his death in 1912. Jackson examined aerial maps, General Land Office files, the agricultural census of 1880, deed, probate and population census records to answer questions concerning the sheep industry from 1880 to 1910. He found that the ranch's poor
performance in the early twentieth century was the result of heavy use and overgrazing.

Shawn B. Carlson of the Texas A&M University Archeological Laboratory conducted archaeological excavations at the W. Jarvis Henderson site (41BL273) in Bell County, Texas in 1984. The investigation focused on the construction methods of two cisterns dating to the early twentieth century, shovel testing on a five meter grid across the site to collect data on cultural materials and sheet refuse patterns, and an interview with Mr. Henderson, who provided information on his life on the farm. The results of the investigations suggested that a nineteenth-century lifestyle lingered in western Bell County until the 1940s, largely due to the absence of such amenities as electricity, plumbing and gas heating (Carlson 1984).

Presently, Jennifer Stabler, historical archaeologist employed at Fort Hood, is conducting archival, archaeological and oral histories in the western portion of the reservation, acquired by the army in 1942 and 1943. She has completed archival research on 10 communities within the western portion of the reservation. She has passed this data on to Prewitt and Associates, Inc., who are presently under contract with the army to produce a historic context against which each site can be assessed for its information potential.

Research Methodology

Historical and Archival Research

The initial step in providing historical context to this study was understanding regional and local histories of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Tyler’s *History of Bell County* (1936) and Atkinson’s *History of Bell County* (1929) were combined with
information derived from a local history written by J. J. Bishop in 1954 entitled *The Rise and Fall of Sparta* and from *Story of Bell County, Texas* published by the Bell County Historical Commission in 1988. The latter contains information on a number of families that settled in the Cowhouse valley. A summary of the history of Bell County is presented in Chapter III.

Archival research also provides historic context. It provides specific information on the historic sites, such as occupation dates, socioeconomic status, relationships with others in the community, and reactions to physical, economic and societal conditions. The following paragraphs outline this process.

The 14 historic sites were first located and plotted on the Fort Hood 1954 acquisition maps prepared by the Army Corps of Engineers. These maps outline the initial surveys and provide abstract numbers. These sites are the remains of upland farms and ranches of the community of Sparta. Farmsteads that existed in the valley, including the hamlet of Sparta, are now under Lake Belton. Since the valley was the center of the community, references from historical sources are presented.

The Archives of the General Land Office of Texas were used to obtain information on the original land grantees. The General Land Office organizes its records by land district and survey name. All of the Sparta properties are located in the Milam Land District. These documents provide data on when the land was first homesteaded, information on the original grantee, such as participation in the Texas Revolution, length of residence in Texas, and improvements made to the homestead during the three year waiting period. The files also contain affidavits from neighbors testifying to this
information, notarized by the county clerk, and information as to whom surveyed the
land, the nearest neighbors, and a description of the property. Some field notes contained
maps of the acreage surveyed.

The Bell County Deed Records provided information of the properties under
investigation. Ownership was traced back through the records, beginning with the transfer
of title from the last landowner to the U. S. government. Clear title was often impossible
to trace and a search through the deed indexes was the only way to track a deed transfer.

After the deed history was established, the population censuses were examined.
Individuals that owned a particular property were sought. The great value of these
schedules lies in the fact that they enumerate complete households. Extracting
information for all persons listed under the father’s surname provides an understanding of
the family, its movements, marriages, births, and deaths. The census records are
invaluable in that they enumerate families along roadways. Often this was the only way
to determine who resided at a particular residence. Census schedules were available from
1860 through 1910 (excluding 1890) on microfilm at the Fort Hood Archeology
Laboratory and the 1920 Census, at the State Archives in Austin.

After extracting data from the deeds and census records on a particular family, the
county tax assessments were investigated. The Fort Hood Archeology Lab has on
microfilm the ad valorem tax schedules for the years 1850 through 1910. 1911 through
the present are on microfilm at the State Archives in Austin. Beginning with the date
established in the deed records, each individual landowner was located in the schedules
and his assets were recorded yearly in order to trace his economic activity. After 1910,
this information was obtained in five year increments. When the property changed hands, for instance, in 1922, the 1923 assessments were recorded.

The *ad valorem* tax schedules reveal information such as the number of acres owned, the value of the land, livestock, horses, wagons and farm implements. Improvements made to a property can be deduced by the value assessed to the property. During the 1930s, these records began to reference a house schedule, which meant that the house on the property was free of mortgage. This proved helpful in determining which property was the homestead when the landowner had multiple properties assessed.

Finally, the Bell County Agricultural Schedules provided more detailed information of a farmer’s assets. These are available on microfilm at the State Archives in Austin. Unfortunately, these schedules are only available for 1860, 1870, and 1880.

The site description and historical documentation for each site are presented in Chapter IV. A copy of the survey sketch map for each site is found in Appendix I.

**Archaeological Research**

The artifacts that were collected during the pedestrian survey in 1983 and 1984 are curated at the Fort Hood Archeological Laboratory. Two assemblages, glass and ceramics were examined. A number of the ceramic sherds had been removed from the collection and placed in a diagnostic collection that could not be located. Also, most of the artifacts from site 41BL614 and all of the artifacts from site 41BL551 could not be found. A listing of the 41BL614 artifacts were found in the data base, but the descriptions could have been supplemented with additional information through closer examination. With the help of Jennifer Stabler, many of the artifacts were reevaluated and described in
more detail for the new artifact data base being installed at the present time.

A number of reference books and reports were used to describe ceramic types and decorations, glass tableware and bottle manufacturing techniques, types of lips, seams, bases and shapes. Sources include Moir (1988), Lebo (1988), Price (1979), Carlson et al. (1986), Wilson (1981), McKearin and Wilson (1978), Toulouse (1972), Lorrain (1968), and Fike (1987). A description and analysis of the ceramic and glassware assemblages are found in Chapter V. The artifacts are compiled in tables in Appendix II.

The sites were located on four historic maps, the 1953 U. S. Government Real Estate Acquisition Map of Bell County, a 1936 Texas State Highway Map of Bell, County (Figure 5), a 1950 UTM topographic map, sheet 6446 II NE (Figure 6), and its corresponding aerial photographic map. In addition, the sites were located on the 1977 Soil Survey of Bell County.

Ethnographic Research

Oral histories helped in the interpretation of archaeological and archival data. Informants identified sites and described how they once looked and functioned, and who occupied them. Six informants gave testimony to aspects of past lifeways that produced no artifactual remains, such as food preferences, production, preparation and preservation. They gave accounts of their life on the farm and their family's involvement in the community. The data is synthesized in Chapter VI. The questionnaire used in this study is located in Appendix III.
Figure 5. 1936 Texas Highway Map of Bell County.
Figure 6. UTM Topological Map, Bland, Texas, with location of sites.
Synthesis and Evaluation

The data described above is combined with local histories and analyzed within Kolb and Snead's (1997) community model. This synthesis is presented in Chapter VII. The detailed model is described below.

Theoretical Framework

The community study can be one of the most productive approaches for integrating documentary and archaeological evidence to interpret the past (Cusick 1995:59). Such studies must first render a definition of the term "community." Forty years ago, George Hillery catalogued 94 different definitions of community within the discipline of sociology. He found that most of the definitions contained three common elements: area, common ties and social interaction (Lyon 1987:77-78). Defining the community in terms of people in a specific geographic area implies focusing on the relationship between the physical environment and the human population. Defining community as a specific territorial entity was developed by the "Chicago School," headed by Robert Ezra Park. Park (1936) viewed the human community in terms of ecology, focusing on the human relationships of competition, dominance and succession within the same habitat.

Defining community in terms of common social ties is rooted in Ferdinand Tonnies' (1988) Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft typology, Emile Durkheim's (1933) mechanical solidarity, and Robert Redfield's (1947) folk society. Hollingshead’s (1948) definition takes the form of group cohesion, solidarity and action centered around common and diverse interests and operating within a geographical area.


Collaborating to find a definition of community that has archaeological correlates, Kolb and Snead (1997) found the most appropriate definition for archaeological studies in Lipe's study of prehistoric Anasazi communities in southeastern Utah:

[A] community is a minimal, territorially-based aggregate, including individuals of two sexes and at least three generations, capable of maintaining itself through time, including opportunities for enactment of or articulation with the main social role present in the larger society, and including mechanisms for transmission from one generation to the next of the principle context of its culture. (Lipe 1970:86)
From this definition, and from what has gone before, Kolb and Snead extracted three elements of human communities: social reproduction, subsistence production, and community self-identification. In their article "It's a Small World Afterall: Comparative Analyses of Community Organization in Archaeology" published in *American Antiquity* (1997:609-628), they proceed to explain these elements: A community must possess a minimum demographic component composed of individuals who interact regularly and whose repeated interactions socially reproduce that group. This can occur even under conditions that appear to compromise the group, such as participation within the larger society. However, the community remains the principal arena of social interplay.

Subsistence strategies and production are essential elements of community life. The community generates conditions whereby subsistence production is possible, but does not necessarily serve as a unit of economic organization. Self-identification and recognition are rooted in social reproduction and economic practices. Communities create and maintain an identity and a sense of place; boundaries are both physical and symbolic. Members of the community share a sense of belonging.

By defining the community of Sparta as a spatially defined locus of human activity (as has been done with Oscar Lewis' definition) that incorporates social reproduction, subsistence production and self-identification, a model is provided in which data can be organized, examined and synthesized. Once this has been done, it can be interpreted within the confines of a critically self-conscious archaeology.
Research Orientation

The purpose of this thesis is to enhance the understanding of the recent past of central Texas. The aim of archaeology, according to Ian Hodder, is not to secure knowledge of the past for its own sake, but to secure knowledge of the past that is socially responsive in the present (1991:30). Archaeologists reconstruct the past in the present, their interpretations of the past are formulated within the cultural constructs of modern life. But the past also creates the present in that our modern culture has evolved from the past through tradition. Although objectivity is elusive in the pursuit of the past, Hodder works from the premise that the scientific process -- what Watson terms “soulless method” (Preucel 1991:11), with its hypotheses and its supporting data, is nevertheless, social and ideological. Perception and evaluation are linked to “frames of reference,” (1991:35), to our own cultural and historical constraints. The fundamental point is that analysis cannot be objective because interpretation is subjective.

The science of interpretation is hermeneutics. It had its beginnings in the discipline of philosophy through interpretation of religious texts and has evolved into a framework for understanding cultural phenomena (Preucel 1991:21). Hermeneutics was introduced to archaeology by Ian Hodder in the late 1970s. Hodder’s frustration with processual archaeology is thus expressed:

The dilemma apparent for archaeologists is that there is a widespread desire for science and objective tests, a fear of speculation and the subjective, and yet we want to say something about the past... Yet to say anything about the past, and past ideas, involves moving beyond the data to interpret them, and there can be no testing of these interpretations because the data themselves are part of the same argument as the theories. (Hodder 1984:28)
Hermeneutics involves understanding the details in terms of the whole and the whole in terms of the details (Hodder 1991:34). In archaeological studies, the details are the artifacts, the historical documents, the landscape and the memories. The whole is not only the historical, social, economic and cultural context of the details, but also is grounded in the sociopolitical and institutional viewpoint and personality of the interpreter.

The theoretical framework described above focuses on three elements of community: social reproduction, subsistence production, and community self-identity. By the very nature of these elements, a postprocessual viewpoint is necessary. Social reproduction can easily be viewed within historical context, by examining deed transfers and census records, affidavits and probate records, oral histories and family genealogies and through interpretation of material culture. Community self-identity can best be found in the examination of settlement clustering along waterways within a geographical area, oral histories, sociological studies, and published family histories. Subsistence has been successfully examined by archaeologists through processual studies, where faunal remains and vegetable residues were abundant. However, this study has no such remains, only a few bottles that once held food and drink, and documents that listed a milk cow and a hog or two. Therefore, speculation and examination of every avenue is necessary. A desperation to eke out the most minute details from the archaeological sample and historic documents falls within the realm of postprocessualism.

To return to Hodder’s statement that archaeology must secure knowledge that is
socially responsive in the present—this thesis has attempted to do just that. As a resident of Bell County, I have a responsibility to present the past as critically and honestly as I can, despite the limitations of interpretation. Much of my interpretation is based on the oral histories of six former residents who lived in Sparta from the early 1930s until 1953. Four of these residents were the children of tenant farmers; one was a tenant farmer and one was the owner of the Sparta store from 1944 to 1952. They answered questions (Appendix III) pertaining to family and community life. A number of themes emerged from the oral histories—working long hours at physically demanding labor (both men and woman), being basically self-sufficient in terms of subsistence, having neighbors that one could call upon for help, and living in a place that provided a sense of community, both social and emotional. The memories of these residents are no doubt cloaked in nostalgia, and it would be easy to interpret Sparta as an idyllic community belonging to the good old days, but the underlying fact is, in order to survive, these families had to depend upon the labor of their members and upon the good will of their neighbors.

Sparta was just one of the many small farming communities of Bell County that was founded in the mid-nineteenth century and died one hundred years later. Without examining the “infinitesimally small elements,” Sparta’s death may be attributed to the forces of agribusiness and urbanization that took the life of many of her neighboring communities. It is likely that Sparta would have suffered the same fate, but according to Lewis (1948), and those interviewed in this study, it managed to prolong its life for several decades. What this study proposes to do is present evidence of a way of life based on self-sufficiency and community solidarity, a way of life that persisted for so long, a way
of life not that far removed in time, yet, so far removed from our experience.
CHAPTER III
ENVIRONMENTAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Environmental Setting

Since the physical environment of Bell County played a major role in Anglo-American settlement of the mid-nineteenth century, and a knowledge of it is necessary to understand the human events that took place there. The county is centrally located within the state where it overlies two distinct geographic regions, the Blackland Prairie to the east and the Grand Prairie to the west. The striking differences in topography and soil of these two regions have produced significant differences in population density, types of farming, and levels of living (Lewis 1948:1). The community of Sparta and its affiliated farms and ranches were located in the Grand Prairie Region, in western Bell County.

Geology

The two regions are divided by a major fault line, the Balcones Escarpment, which runs north-south approximately through the center of the county. East of the fault line, is the Blackland Prairie, a treeless, level to gently rolling prairie of rich black sticky soils, known as the black-waxy (Lewis 1948:1). It is a distinctive strip of Tertiary alluvium marking the start of the low, flat coastal plain to the east and south-east (Carlson et al. 1986:5). Its lowest elevation is at 450 feet above sea level and is found in the southeastern part of the county (Atkinson 1929:2). The Grand Prairie, which occupies the western portion of the county, lies within the eastern portion of the Lampasas Cutplain, a physiographic subdivision of the Great Plains Province (Figure 7).
Figure 7. Physiographic regions of Texas. (Carlson et al. 1986)
The Lampasas Cutplain was once located on the floor of the Lower Cretaceous Sea dating 65 to 135 million years ago. It was uplifted and has subsequently been eroded and weathered by various rivers and streams which now run through Coryell and Bell Counties (Stabler 1996:3). Its elevations range from 500 to 1,200 feet above sea level (Carlson et al. 1986:5; Atkinson 1929:2; Hallock 1953:24).

The Lampasas Cutplain is characterized by three distinctive environmental zones, Uplands, Intermediate Slopes and Lowlands (Figure 8). The Uplands topography consists of flat-topped mesas and “mountains,” which rise 50 to 200 feet above the surface, forming the divides between the drainage systems. They have largely been resistant to erosion because of the dense massive Edwards Limestone caprock. An ancient shale formation that once covered the Edwards Formation is now found in pockets in the Uplands. Below the Uplands is an extensive area of gently rolling terrain incised by dendritic drainage systems that flow intermittently. The Intermediate Slopes consist of Comanche Peak Marl and Walnut Clay Formations which are highly erodible and have resulted in poor shallow soils that support meager vegetation. Below the Intermediate zone, are the major drainage systems, the Leon and Lampasas Rivers and Cowhouse Creek, which have formed the alluvial valley lowlands. The Lowlands consist of gentle slopes of rich Walnut Clay Soils (Carlson et al. 1986:5-7; Tyler 1936: xii).

The headwaters of Cowhouse Creek and its tributaries drain the Uplands and Intermediate Slopes of the Lampasas Cut Plain of western Coryell County. The creek flows eastward forming a lush and fertile valley through Bell County until it reaches the Leon River. The valley was two miles wide at its mouth and narrowed as it ascended.
westward. The community of Sparta was situated on the southern bank about six miles west of the mouth. Early pioneers first chose to settle along Taylor's Branch, a tributary of the Cowhouse, two miles west from the site of Sparta.

**Soils**

The soils of the lower Cowhouse valley and Intermediate Uplands to the north and south fall into six major categories. Most of the farmsteads are situated on tracts of land
that range from 50 to 100 acres in size; and therefore, encompass areas of two to three soil types. TAD (Tarrant association) soils are found on top of limestone hills. Limestone fragments up to two feet in diameter make up 40 to 60% of the surface. TAD soils are rated poor for grains, seed crops and grass but fair for livestock range. Sites 41BL578, 41BL580, 41BL614, and 41BL616 are located in this category. REF (Real association) soils are found in narrow strips along cannon walls with slopes of 12 to 25 degrees. REF soils are used for range land. Sites 41BL442 and 41BL551 are located in this soil category. The footslopes of hills and narrow valleys that drain the Uplands are the KVB (Krum) soils. Sites 41BL551, 41BL571, 41BL574, 41BL617 and 41BL618 are found in this category. They are rated fair for grains, grasses and legumes. BRE (Brackett association) soils are found on the lower two-thirds of the sides of hills and have a slope of 8-12 degrees. They have been rated very poor for grains and seed crops but good for grasses and legumes. Sites 41BL442, 41BL469, 41BL574, and 41BL618 are found in this category. DPB (Denton association) soils are found in saddles between hills and footslopes with a 1-8 degree slope. These soils have been rated fair for grain and seed crops, grasses and legumes and good for trees and shrubs and fair for livestock range land. DPB soils are found at sites 41BL577 and 41BL580. The final soil type along the Cowhouse is Bf soils (Bosque clay loam). This soil is flooded frequently and is found parallel to the stream channels, with a depth of 45 inches and a slope of less than one degree. It is rated fair and good for grain and seed crops and grasses. Site 41BL469 is the only site in this study found in this soil type (United States Department of Agriculture 1977:9-31,50).
**Climate**

Bell County lies between the subtropical and sub-humid climatic zones. The spring, summer and fall months exhibit moist, humid coastal climate, while the semi-arid climate predominates in the winter. Cold Arctic fronts from Canada occasionally dip into central Texas in the winter months. Temperatures in the winter average 49 degrees Fahrenheit while the summer averages 83 degrees Fahrenheit. The average frost dates are mid-November and mid-March and the growing season averages 260 days (Stabler 1996:3).

Average annual rainfall of Bell County is 33.4 inches and is well distributed throughout the year, although heaviest in April and May and least likely during the summer months. Snow rarely falls within this area and when it does, it melts quickly. Rainfall charges the fissure-type springs that occur at the juncture of the Edwards Limestone and Comanche Peak Formations in the region, producing significant quantities of water (Stabler 1996:3; Carlson et al. 1986:6-11). These springs attracted the first settlers to western Bell County, primarily along Taylor’s Branch, a tributary of Cowhouse Creek.

**Vegetation and Fauna**

The county lies in a transitional vegetation zone with elements of the Blackland Prairie in the east and elements characteristic of the Edwards Plateau in the west. The western portion of the county is characterized by dense oak and juniper forest and shrub. The upland plant life displays mottes of juniper, oak, and mesquite with an understory of Indian grass, little bluestem, switch grass, prickly pear and Spanish dagger. The alluvial
terraces and slopes support live oak, Spanish oak, hackberry, pecan, cedar and elm
(Carlson et al. 1986:11, Atkinson 1929:6-7). Cottonwood, bur oak, hackberry, American
elm, sycamore, willow, walnut and pecan are found along Cowhouse Creek (Hallock
1953:24).

Many wild animals inhabited the county before it became heavily populated.
According to numerous written accounts of early settlers presented at Old Settlers’
Association reunions at the turn of the century, there were herds of buffalo, deer, wild
horses, bear, wild hogs, antelope, cougars, wolves, rabbits, raccoons, opossums, squirrels,
ring-tail cats, and skunks. Among the birds were wild turkeys, prairie chickens, doves,
partridges and migratory ducks and geese. Road runners, martins, blackbirds, robins,
mockingbirds, orioles, larks, jays, crows and sparrows inhabited the prairies and
woodlands of Bell County. (Tyler 1936:xvi; Atkinson 1929:10-11; Hallock 1953:28).

The Cowhouse valley was named by early settlers who found herds of wild cattle
seeking shelter along the overhanging rock cliffs during storms and bad weather.
According to Isaac Williams, a pioneer who settled in the valley, hundreds of wild cattle
with “glossy skins, long horns...very ferocious, stayed in the cedar brake all day and fed at
night. They were a great nuisance if they got into a settlement, as they would break all
the fences down and mix with the domestic cattle until driven away.” (Tyler 1936: xvii;
Bishop 1954:1)
Historical Background

Robertson's Colony: 1834-1835

Robertson's Colony had its beginning in 1822 when a group of men from Davidson County, Tennessee organized the "Texas Association" in order to obtain an empresario land grant from the Mexican government just as Moses and Stephen F. Austin had previously done. Robert Leftwich was chosen as agent and was sent to Mexico to obtain a grant. On April 15, 1825, the State of Coahuila-Texas granted a track of land above the Camino Real to Leftwich. After much difficulty the contract was taken over by the Nashville Company and Sterling C. Robertson was appointed agent on October 1, 1830. However, the Mexican government annulled the contract by the Law of April 6, 1830 which suspended all contracts which had not been fulfilled and also prohibited further immigration from the United States. When Robertson found out that his contract had been revoked, he appealed to Austin for help. Austin ended up getting the contract reissued to himself and Samuel W. Williams (Tyler 1936:3-7).

From 1831 to 1834, several large land grants, between three and 11 leagues, were issued along the Brazos and Little Rivers (Tyler 1936:3-4; Atkinson 1929:36). One such grant issued was the 11 leagues of Maximo Moreno. Most of the 22 land grants issued at this time were either sold or transferred before the titles were issued or before the land was surveyed (Atkinson 1929:18). The grants that were settled by the original grantees were those of M. F. Connell, O. T. Tyler, Moses Griffin, Charles Curtis, William Reed, Henry Purdon and John Fulcher. These grants were located along the Little and
Lampasas Rivers and Salado and Nolan Creeks in what is now southern Bell County (White 1984:34).

In 1834, by an act of the Legislature of Coahuila-Texas, the territory was restored to the Nashville Company. Sterling C. Robertson was recognized as empresario. He set off on a campaign to Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee and Kentucky to recruit families to settle his colony. His first headquarters, Tenoxtlan, was established at the crossing of the Camino Real at the Brazos River. In 1835, the village of Nashville, thirty miles north of Tenoxtlan was established near the mouth of Little River, on the western shore of the Brazos River. This would become the major stopping point and administrative center of Robertson’s Colony. Attempts were made in 1834 and 1835 to form settlements along Little River and at Three Forks, the confluence of Lampasas and Leon Rivers and Salado Creek, but these settlements were raided by Indians, and the settlers fled to Nashville and settlements further east for protection (Tyler 1936:4-7, Atkinson 1929:36).

The Republic Years: 1836-1845

When Texas achieved independence in 1836, most of the settlement was concentrated in the eastern part of the Republic and was composed of scattered farms and cotton and sugar plantations. There was hardly any industry. Milam County was formed in 1836 from the territory of the Robertson Colony and settlement began to move slowly westward along the Brazos and Little Rivers (Fehrenbach 1968:247).

In 1837, Congress established a comprehensive law, unlike any other in the contiguous states, that was intended primarily to attract settlers from the East to Texas, attempt to pay off its public debt and pay all of the men and their families who had
participated in the revolution. Texas' allocation of public land resembled those used by the Spanish and Mexican governments. The vara continued to be used as the length of measurement (a vara equals 33.33 inches). Under the law, land districts were created, consisting of a board of three land commissioners and a clerk for each county. This board was given the duty of hearing petitions for land and issuing certificates in accordance with the provisions of the law (Stabler 1996:25).

Under the law, immigrants who arrived before March 2, 1836 were entitled to headright grants of the First Class, which gave them a league (4,428 acres) and a labor (177.1 acres) for heads of families and one-third league for a single man of 17 years and older. Because of abuses and frauds that were easy under the rules of the First Class grants, all grants were made conditional. Settlers arriving after March 2, 1836 but before October 1, 1837, were given Conditional Certificates of the Second Class for 1,280 acres and single men received 640 acres. This grant included an additional requirement of three years residency in Texas prior to the granting of the lands. Arrivals after October 1, 1837 but before January 1, 1840 received Conditional Certificates of the Third Class that were good for 640 acres, whereas, single men received 320 acres. Third Class grants were extended by Congress to January 1, 1842 and called Fourth Class grants. Besides the residency requirement, this grant also required the grantee to cultivate ten acres (Miller 1972:23-13, 29-30).

Each applicant had to answer questions under oath concerning his date of arrival, marital status, military service and proof of age in front of the board. He had to bring two creditable witnesses to swear to the truth of his answers. All certificates of Second, Third
or Fourth Class were conditional and could not be transferred or sold until these conditions were met. After three years of responsible citizenship, a homesteader would petition the board of his county for an Unconditional Certificate. Again two witnesses were required (Miller 1972:29).

The Republic of Texas also issued grants to those who served in the military during the revolution. For each three months of service, a Bounty grant of 320 acres was awarded. For those who had participated in the battles of San Jacinto and the Alamo, 640 acres of land were awarded to the participants or their families. These grants were called Donation grants. For those who protected the frontier were awarded 240 acres (Miller 1972:50-52).

Dates of land grants deeded by the Republic and later by the State of Texas, chronologically follow the streams westward through Bell County. After land was deeded along Little and Lampasas Rivers, Salado and Nolan Creeks, settlement moved into the Cowhouse valley. The majority of the Second Class, Third Class and Bounty Grants deeded by the Republic along Cowhouse Creek were not settled by the original grantees, but were sold either by their heirs or land speculators. Tracts of land in the Bounty Grant of James Halfpenny, the Second Class grants of Thomas Gay and William B. Brent and the Third Class grants of Martha Smith and James Richardson were purchased from land speculators by the first settlers to the area, some of whom were G. W. and Nelson Walton, Moses Denman, Jesse Doss, Hyram Reynolds, Joe Hawkins, Ruff Petty, J. R. Sutton, and T. E. Tomlinson. The Bounty and Third Class grants situated along the waters of Cowhouse Creek and Taylor's Branch, settled by the original grantees were
Isaac Dowess, John Houchin, and M. F. Harmon.

After the revolution, those who had already been granted land by the Mexican government began to move back to their homesteads along Little River. Congress organized small battalions of rangers to protect them. The rangers equipped and furnished themselves and in return were given 1,280 acres of land for each year served (Tyler 1936:40). One company, consisting of 20 men, under the command of Lieutenant George B. Erath, was sent in November, 1836, to establish a fort on Little River for the protection of the settlers on that stream. It was first known as Little River Fort, but later called Fort Griffin. It was situated on the league of Moses Griffin, an early pioneer. Despite the existence of the fort, Indian raids continued. Indians remained at Comanche Gap near Sugar Loaf Mountain (eastern Coryell County) until they were removed to Indian Territory in 1859 (Tyler 1936:42-46, 56, 74-5, 185).

In 1838, Mirabeau B. Lamar was elected president of the Republic. His first effort was to stamp out the threat of the Indians on the frontier. He initiated a bloody campaign against the native populations in order to push them beyond the borders of Texas. When General Sam Houston became President in 1841, he sought a more peaceful approach. He assembled the chiefs of the Caddoes, Ionies, Anadarkoes, Keechi, Wacos, Tawakanes and other small tribes near the present location of Waco and signed a peace treaty. Other treaties were agreed upon in 1843, 1844 and 1845. It was not until after President Houston made peace with the Indians, did permanent settlement result along the frontier (Tyler 1936:74-75).
Early Years of Statehood: 1845-1861

Texas became the twenty-eighth state on December 29, 1845 under the condition that it was to retain its public debt of ten million dollars, but unlike any other state, was allowed to retain possession of its public lands. One of the first acts of the legislature, granted land to settlers through preemption. A settler was allowed to settle on 320 acres of unappropriated land after he first, filed an affidavit with the General Land Office and second, had the land surveyed. He had to live on the land and make improvements for three years. After the third year of residency, the homesteader could pay the state about $2 per acre for the land and obtain a patent from the General Land Office. The homesteader had to have two witnesses to confirm his occupancy and labor. In 1854, the preemption law was reduced to 160 acres and was discontinued in 1856. But after the Civil War it was reinstated and preemption grants were awarded until 1898 (Miller 1972:34-36, Stabler 1996:26). The majority of the surveys in the Cowhouse valley began as preemption grants of 160 acres.

In 1847, Goldsby Childers and his son Prior were the first to venture westward from their Little River homesteads and settle along the banks of the Lampasas River. They built a cabin near a spring on the south bank and within a year, another son, Robert and his son-in-law, Tom Waldon built a water mill at the settlement. The Childers Mill soon became the nucleus of a small settlement. A general store and school were established. However, the Childers settlement remained isolated until the federal government began establishing forts along the frontier. In 1849, three companies of cavalry from Austin were sent to establish Fort Gates, on the Leon River to the north.
Their route crossed Lampasas River at the Childers settlement and this line became the military road over which supplies were carried to the new fort (Tyler 1936:83-85). The Childers family received a contract to supply the fort with food and other necessary supplies and a small settlement was established. At this time, there were about 500 Tonkawas in the Coryell County area and most allied themselves with the settlers to protect themselves against Comanche attacks. But by 1852, most of them were moved to a reservation to the west (Tyler 1936:87).

From 1845 to 1850, friendly and hostile Indians made frequent visits to the small settlements along Little and Lampasas Rivers. One of the last raids made into the area occurred in 1849 when a band of Indians crossed the Cowhouse with a large herd of horses that they had stolen from a pioneer in Williamson County. An old man known as “Cowhouse Taylor” had settled at the mouth of the tributary (later known as Taylor’s Branch), and a young man named John Potter, saw the Indians heading north. Potter left to notify the settlers to the southeast. A group of men and boys gathered at Taylor’s Branch and followed it to the headwaters of the Leon River where the Indians had been intercepted by Lieutenant Pickett of Fort Gates. All but nine of the horses were recovered and returned to their owner (Atkinson 1929:32; Tyler 1936:89).

In 1849, the residents along the Lampasas and Little Rivers and Salado Creek petitioned the state for a county government closer to home (White 1984:10). Bell County was created from Milam County and was approved on January 22, 1850. Mrs. Matilda F. Connell Allen, offered to donate 120 acres of land along Nolan Creek, out of her colonial league, to serve as the new county seat (Atkinson 1929:40-1). The new town
was called Nolanville, but was changed in accordance with a recommendation from the legislature that the names of county seats conform to that of the county. The new name of Belton was approved in December, 1851 (Atkinson 1929:44).

During the 1840s and 1850s, settlers from Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri and Mississippi were moving to Texas with the lure of cheap land. The progression of settlement across Texas revealed an orderly westward progression from the 1840s to the 1890s (Lewis 1948:9-10; Jurney et al. 1988:16). Settlements during this time spread into the hilly, western portion of the county along the Lampasas and Leon Rivers, Nolan and Cowhouse Creeks, where a convenient supply of wood and water could be found (Lewis 1948:10).

Guide books of the 1840s offered immigrants practical advice. One such book, written by Edward Smith, *Account of a Journey through North East Texas*, states: “It is best to select a location upon the edge of the wood, where there is good timber and pine if possible, and not far distant from small water courses, where the cattle may feed during the short winter....It is not prudent to locate in the midst of a great prairie, since there, stock water is not very plentiful; wood is scarce and small, and shade is absent.” (Jurney et al. 1988:19)

Tyler (1936:160) reported that about 15 settlers had established homesteads along Cowhouse Creek in the 1850s. Two of the valley’s earliest settlers were the Walton brothers, G. W. and his brother, Nelson. Before they settled in Texas, they had spent two years in the gold fields of California and were quite successful. When they returned to Tennessee, they decided to move to Texas and in 1854, and purchased property along
Cowhouse Creek. Ruff Petty was also an early pioneer in the valley. He arrived with the Waltons in 1854 and established a home on the south side of the creek near the mouth of Taylor’s Branch. Another settler who homesteaded in the valley in 1856 was J. R. Sutton. During the Civil War, he served as a ranger commissioned to protect the western frontier. After the war, he established a blacksmith shop at his home. James Clements and his family settled on Taylor’s Branch a few miles north of the mouth, at site 41BL571. His sons, Adam and Bird, and his daughters, Delilah and Rebecca became leading figures in the history of the lower Cowhouse valley.

Near the end of the decade, a second series of Indian wars began. In the spring of 1859, a band of Indians raided the Riggs family farm on Nolan Creek, killing Mr. and Mrs. Riggs and a neighbor. Raids continued through the early 1860s to such an extent that Bell County organized four ranger organizations to protect the frontier (Atkinson 1929:67). John Henry Brown’s Ranging Company was organized in 1859, the Bell County Minute Men, who later became the Bell County Rovers, served without pay. Governor Houston gave a commission to the county for the organization of the Texas Mounted Rangers of Bell County (Atkinson 1929:68).

During the 1850s, the residents of Cowhouse valley were primarily engaged in stock raising. The Clements family owned a large herd of cattle and horses; and Sam Bishop, husband of Delilah Clements, worked as a cowboy on the cattle trails. On one trip to Chicago, he purchased a buggy with his wages and drove back to Bell County. Most pioneers cleared tracts of land along the creek bottoms and planted subsistence crops. Wheat, corn, millet, barley, and sorghum were the primary crops. There were few
mechanical threshers in the county at the time and most of the crops were cut with scythes. Very little cotton was grown, and of that, most was it was concentrated along the Little River bottom lands (Tyler 1936:291).

Statistics compiled from the 1860 Census reflect the frontier lifestyle of the county. Only 21,196 acres were improved while 441,688 were unimproved. The farms produced 26,609 bushels of wheat, 840 bushels of rye, 96,612 bushels of corn, 3,517 bushels of oats, 514 bales of cotton, 11,925 pounds of wool, 4,109 gallons of sorghum molasses and 19,140 pounds of honey (Stabler 1996:16).

The county seat of Belton had a population of only 300 people. It also had 10 manufacturing establishments, including one blacksmith shop, one boot and shoe maker, one flour and meal mill, one cabinet maker, one saddlery and harness maker, and one tin and sheet iron maker. Bell County had one Baptist church and two Union churches.

The Population Census of 1860 enumerated 1,005 slaves and 3,794 whites, of which 179 were slave holders (Atkinson 1929:58; Carlson et al. 1986:20-21). Few homesteaders in western Bell County owned slaves. Only two men living in Bell County owned more than 30 slaves; John Reed, on Little River, had 33 and E. Sterling Robertson, on Salado Creek, had 30. Nineteen others owned between 10 and 29 (Atkinson 1929:101).

The Civil War Years: 1861-1865

On February 1, 1861, Texas joined the Confederacy and 10 Confederate and State Companies were formed in Bell County. A total of 1,037 men, out of a population of nearly 4,000, fought for the Confederate States of America (Atkinson 1929:67).
Governor Houston and many others did not support the vote for secession.

Several men, who refused to fight formed a small camp, “Camp Safety,” in the rough mountainous terrain of dense cedar brakes along Bell Branch in northwestern Bell County. It was in a sparsely settled area which provided protection from both Confederate sympathizers and Indians. Sam Bishop, who preempted the land on which the camp was located, told to George Tyler that a Confederate captain tried to recruit these men to serve in his company along the Rio Grande in 1864. Five men enlisted but as they approached the Rio Grande, they escaped to Mexico (Tyler 1936:238-239).

Many of the settlers of western Bell County enlisted in the Confederate Army. Bishop related a story in his published genealogy about the hardships his mother suffered when her husband was away at war. At the outset of war, Delilah Bishop and her four-year-old daughter moved closer to her father’s farm near Sugar Loaf (in eastern Coryell County) and set up house in the old Riggs home, along with 300 head of cattle. However, Delilah’s father moved again, this time to Taylor’s Branch, for reasons unknown, probably to homestead the land he and his sons had already preempted. Delilah was pregnant and delivered her child three months after her husband left for war. She had been promised protection and aid by men who were excused from military service. But during the war, all of her family’s cattle had been stolen. A preacher, who did not go to war, but stayed behind to care for war widows, had often borrowed corn from Delilah and never repaid it. She had also given him money to buy groceries in Belton, 20 miles away only to receive half as much groceries as the money should have bought. From then on, she made the trip herself. She put her daughter astride the horse behind her and
carried the baby in her lap, a 40 mile round trip (Bishop 1958:19-21).

Reconstruction: 1865-1880

The 1870 Census reflected economic hardships, suffered during the Civil War. The value of farm machinery for the county dropped from $66,171 in 1860 to $22,501 in 1870. There was a decline in the number of cattle, from 42,037 head in 1860 to 30,976 in 1870, and a decline in the number of sheep, from 11,654 in 1860 to 9,718 in 1870. The number of working oxen also declined but the number of milch cows and horses stayed the same. There was an increase in swine, from 8,711 in 1860 to 12,467 in 1870. And there was a slight increase in the number of farms recorded improved, from 21,196 acres in 1860 to 27,927 acres in 1870 (Stabler 1996:16-17). The figures suggest the farmers maintained a subsistence economy while their commercial pursuits in cattle and farming suffered.

After the war, a steady stream of immigrants from the southern states, poor whites and ruined plantation owners, moved to Texas. The population of the county doubled between 1860 and 1870, increasing from 4,799 to 9,711. The increase was entirely among whites, the black population increased by only 99 individuals (Tyler 1936:281-282). Lewis (1948:11) referred to the immigrants who settled western Bell County as old-line Americans, third, fourth or more generations of English, Scottish or Welch descent. They were generally poor and many stayed poor. By the time they emigrated to Texas, the best farm land along the streams had already been taken and since the blackland prairie was still considered uninhabitable, the new immigrants either settled on marginal lands, purchased portions of older settler’s property or became tenants.
Those who could not afford to purchase prime farmland, preempted unappropriated land along Taylor’s Branch. The majority of these preemptions belonged to families who settled and stayed in the area. Some of these were the families of J. T. W. J. Hallmark, G. E. Hallmark, William Law, F. M. Defour, and C. C. Doss. One Scrip grant was settled by James Clements in 1862. These families were primarily yeoman farmers from the southern states, who lived by subsistence farming and hunting. They were first attracted to the small valley and hollows of Taylor’s Branch which had an abundant supply of timber, water, wildlife, and tillable soil.

The settlers on Taylor’s Branch were in need of a school, the nearest being in Belton, 15 miles away. In 1866, the small community built its first school out of split cedar logs on Taylor’s Branch and called it Brookhaven. The school served the community for three years and its first school master was Bird Clements (Bishop 1954:24-27).

In 1866, Major A. J. Rose, a resident of Salado, saw a need for a grist mill, flour mill and a cotton gin in the Cowhouse valley. He purchased a site on the north bank of the Cowhouse near a spring at the mouth of Taylor’s Branch and built a steam-powered flour and grist mill. In 1869, he sold the property to Judge O’Hair. O’Hair and his sons operated the mill for 10 years. Every Saturday, they would grind corn, taking one-eighth of the cornmeal for their services. The O’Hairs later installed a saw mill and a small cotton gin which had the capacity to turn out three to four bales daily. About this time, a blacksmith shop was established by Bill Wolf (Bishop 1954:27-30).
As the population increased along Cowhouse Creek and Taylor's Branch, it became obvious that a new school house was needed, one more centrally located. Citizens of the community held a meeting and decided to build a new structure one-half mile north of O'Hair's Mill. They called the new school Cedar Grove. O'Hair agreed to saw the lumber free of charge if the citizens would cut and haul the logs to his mill. The entire community erected the new 16-x-24 foot school building which included a fireplace at one end. It served the community for 10 years before any changes were made. School terms were short. Farmers had to have their children at home in the spring to plant crops and in the fall to help harvest them. That left only two or three months in the winter for classes. Under the direction of its first school master, Professor Davis, a literary and debating society was organized. Elderly citizens took part in these exercised as the students, which proved to be both instructive and entertaining. The meetings were held weekly at the schoolhouse, attracting interest of the entire community. Lawyers from Belton attended these debates and took part in them. This tradition last for 30 years, eventually moving to Sparta (Bishop 1954:30-32).

The increased number of farms and marketable crops made it imperative to build new roads and bridges. The county levied a special tax for the improvement of public roads. An overseer was appointed for each portion of a designated road. Every landowner along that section of road had to maintain his section under the direction of the overseer (Tyler 1936:368, 305). G. W. Walton was responsible for the maintenance of the roads in the Cowhouse valley during the 1870's (Bell County Commissioners Report).
During this time, a telegraph line was installed in Belton, connecting it to Round Rock, north of Austin. The line was extended to Lampasas and later to Gatesville (Tyler 1936:10-11). A post office was established at Sparta in the early 1870s (Figure 9). The first mail delivery in the valley was the star route from Belton to Sparta and to Brookhaven, then to Sugar Loaf in Coryell County. It returned through South Nolan Creek valley. In 1882, the rural free delivery mail law was enacted, and the star route was abolished (Bishop 1954:40).

Bell County pioneered the Grange movement in Texas. Salado Grange No. 1 opened in 1873 and the order spread rapidly over Texas, forming County Granges and a State Grange. A. J. Rose (founder of the mill at Taylor’s Branch) was its first State Lecturer. The order prospered for 12 years before it was superseded by the Farmers’ Alliance. The leading objectives of the Grange were co-operation among farmers in the marketing of produce and in the purchasing of farm supplies and building materials, doing away with the middle-man, and providing for agricultural education and greater participation by farmers in making laws. The Grange established stores throughout Texas that flourished for a time. These stores received by consignment cotton and other farm products from the farmers and then sold them directly to spinners’ agents and exporters. In turn, the stores would purchase at wholesale prices, the supplies required by farmers, in car-load lots. To pay the overhead expenses, the Grange stores charged a fixed commission upon all transactions. Because they were based upon cash transactions and had no reserved capital, they could not extend credit. When droughts and other calamities befell the farmers, they were forced back to credit accommodations offered
Figure 9. 1874 Post offices of Bell and Coryell Counties. (Jackson 1982)
by the regular merchants (Tyler 1936:299-300).

The Grange was established in the Cowhouse valley in 1877. It held its meetings at the Cedar Grove school house. The lodge decided to open a Grange store, but there was no building in which to sell goods, so G. W. Walton, who had previously built a two-story building near his home (the future site of Sparta) offered the Cedar Grove Grange the use of the lower story for the store. It was at this time that the community was given a name -- Sparta (Bishop 1954:36).

**The Railroad Era: 1880-1900**

The first railroad to reach Bell County was the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe Railroad Company. It opened up the county to wider markets and connected it with the rest of the country (Stabler 1996:18). In the spring of 1880, the railroad entered Bell County at the present site of Rodgers, but decided to establish a new town named Temple and to place its terminus at that location. From Temple, the railroad eventually extended west to Lampasas and north to Fort Worth. In 1882, the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad (known as the Katy) extended its line through Bell County and headed south. New railroad towns of Rodgers, Heidenheimer, Nolanville and Killeen were established along the Santa Fe’s tracks, while the towns of Troy, Little River, Holland and Bartlett were founded along the Katy’s tracks (Tyler 1936:313-319). Temple became an important railroad center and the population of the town quickly passed that of Belton. Many farmers saw opportunity in the town and sold their farms. Worth Walton, the son of G. W. Walton, opened a livery stable in Temple and G. E. Hallmark began purchasing town lots in Killeen.
The railroad towns became centers of agriculture and commerce. Flour was brought in from the northern mills and sold at a price lower than what it would cost the farmers to grow and mill locally. During the 1880s, wheat fields were converted to cotton, which brought a better price. The census figures reveal this turn; in 1879, 84,267 bushels of wheat were produced in the county, but in 1889, only 20,936 bushels were raised (Tyler 1936:296).

During the 1880s, the Blackland Prairie began to be settled by German and Czech groups from southeast Texas. Steam-powered drills allowed the farmer access to larger quantities of water and allowed him to irrigate the previously unproductive prairie lands. The price of farm land began to increase as the remaining tracts of land were bought up; many small farms were consolidated and rented to immigrant tenants. Cotton occupied larger acreage than any other crop in the country, tripling its yield from the previous decade. Corn was the second crop of importance, more than doubling during the decade. Much of the corn produced was used for feeding work stock and farm animals, mainly hogs and cows (Tyler 1936:295-296). The third crop of importance was oats. It, too, was fed to work stock and cattle and surplus was sold outside the county and state. Other minor crops included millet, milo, and rye (Atkinson 1929:93).

Throughout most of this period, farmers prospered. Cotton was a more dependable crop than corn because it was less affected by early summer droughts. Yields were good in the early 1880s, but in 1886, a drought hit central Texas and lasted three years. Many families were ruined and moved back to the eastern and southern counties of Texas (Tyler 1936:298).
Barbed wire allowed the farmer and the rancher to better manage and contain their livestock. Ranchers focused on improving the quality of his herd through breeding. Large herds of cattle were no longer economical. Cattle no longer were herded to market, but were shipped by rail. Dairy farming became a viable business during the 1880s (Atkinson 1929:211-212). Among the breeds in Bell County were Jerseys, Holsteins and Angus (Carlson et al. 1986:22).

The Panic of 1890 caused a decrease in the prices of farm commodities, and in 1893, the financial market collapsed (Calvert, personal communication). The county felt the depression as cotton prices fell. The prices farmers received for their crops were not sufficient to cover the cost of planting and harvesting, much less for those who had mortgages on their property. Many farmers during this period lost their farms due to mortgage foreclosures. As cotton prices were falling, land prices continued to rise. Most of the farmers that had paid off their mortgage notes before 1890 were able to hold onto their farms. The farms in the Cowhouse valley that were abandoned due to mortgage foreclosure were obtained by those who had weathered the depression such as G. E. Hallmark and George W. Cole, Jr. Many of these foreclosed farms became tenant farms. The tenancy rate in Bell County increased from 41.9% in 1880 to 60.3% by 1900 (Lewis 1948:20).

The hard times in the 1890s did not stand in the way of public improvements. County bond elections paid for the building of iron bridges and road improvements. By 1900, all of the important stream crossings in the county had a bridge. A bridge was built
over Cowhouse Creek in 1895 near the Tennessee Valley settlement. Other bond issues included building a new jail and improving the county school system (Tyler 1936:330).

The county school system that was set up the State Legislature in 1884 divided the county into districts of which school trustees were elected to manage the schools under the general supervision of a county school board. Towns could incorporate themselves as independent school districts by levying a local tax on property. The little rural school districts were inferior to those in the towns, relying on donated monies collected by local trustees, a small amount from the State School Fund and by tuition. After 1900, more money became available for all county schools and in 1908, the State Constitution was amended to allow each county to impose a property tax by voter approval (Tyler 1936:341-342). In 1890, the Cedar Grove School became Common School #7 and it employed two teachers. It was the only establishment left at O’Hair’s Mill at that time. A school had been established in Sparta in the 1880s and classes were held on the second floor of the Walton store (Figure 10). In 1895, Nelson Walton built a new school house for the families of the lower Cowhouse valley (Bell Co. Retired Teacher’s Association 1976:195; Bishop 1954:40).

The New Century: 1900-1940

The period from 1900 to 1930 was characterized by a series of uneven fluctuations between prosperity and depression (Lewis 1948:17). Each decade of the early twentieth century brought with it a new problem for the farmers of Bell County. These problems forced the farmers who remained on the land to change their farming
methods; while others left farming and took jobs in the newly established factories and businesses in Bell County and throughout the state.

The population of the county continued to grow, with an increase of 36.4% from 1890 to 1900. The population of Temple grew from 4,047 in 1890 to 7,065 in 1900 and Belton's population increased by 700 (Tyler 1936:340). However, two-thirds of the population remained rural and tenant farms outnumbered owner-operated farms (Lewis 1948:50). There were 4,915 farms, the majority consisted on 50-99 acres in size (Stabler 1996:20-21). By 1910, population growth began to slow, with an increase of only 8% from the previous decade. This growth was in the incorporated towns of Temple, Belton, Killeen and Rodgers. The Census of 1910 shows a loss of over 2,000 people in the countryside (Tyler 1936:340-341).
During the first few years of the twentieth century, high cotton yields and high prices brought prosperity to the farmers and the towns. However in 1904, the boll weevil had reached Bell County from the southern plains and cotton production was reduced by one-third to one-half of what it had been in earlier years and continued to inflict damage through the decade (Tyler 1936:336, 343-344). In 1910, the Texas Agricultural Experiment System of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas established a substation in Bell County. The main concern of the substation was the decreased cotton production on the blackland prairie. The agronomists began to experiment with crop rotation, by planting cowpeas, a legume. They found that it improved the yields of cotton and corn (Atkinson 1929:96-99).

Prior to the outbreak of World War I, a decline in farm prices hit central Texas. However, by 1917, European countries began importing farm products from the United States. Just as farmers were taking advantage of the high prices brought on by the war, a drought fell upon central Texas and lasted for two years. Some farmers produced no crops at all and fell into debt. In 1919, the state legislature passed a law authorizing the county to make limited loans to distressed farmers in order that they might purchase seed, feed and other necessities. The drought was broken in 1919 and the county produced bumper crops of cotton, corn, wheat and oats (Tyler 1936:377-378).

The population of Bell County in 1920 decreased from the previous decade by 5.6%. There was also a decrease in the number of farms in Bell County from 4,915 in 1910 to 4,555 in 1920. 60% were now tenant operated. The decrease was the result of the consolidation of several of the smaller farms into larger farms. Motorized farm
machinery made it possible to cultivate more land with less effort. One significant change that occurred was that wheat production increased from 35,661 bushels in 1910 to 582,229 bushels in 1920. This increase also occurred in Coryell County (Stabler 1996:22).

The 1920s saw a remarkable increase in farm and ranch diversification. The raising of blooded horses, cattle and hogs was increasing. An improvement in the grades of all classes of livestock enhanced the total value, while decreasing the number of head in the county. The larger cattle ranches in the western portion of the county converted to livestock farms. The sheep and goat industry in southwestern Bell County also expanded and the poultry industry developed in the 1920s. The dairy industry also increased largely due to the establishment of the Borden Factory in Belton (Atkinson 1929:99-100).

Ninety manufacturing establishments were located in Bell County in 1920, among them, a yarn mill, one of the first textile mills in Texas, a cotton compress, an ice plant, agricultural implement works, a foundry, a candy and gum factory, a bottling company and a broom and mop factory. In 1929, the population of Belton was 6,500 and Temple had a population of 18,000 (Atkinson 1929:102, 122).

The prosperity brought on by the war was short lived. During 1920 to 1924, the country was experiencing an economic depression in the banking industry. However, in 1924, prices began to rise steadily until the stock market crash in the early 1930s (Lewis 1948:17). Despite the fluctuations of yields and prices, cotton acreage increased and remained high throughout the 1920s and into the early 1930s until it was cut by the AAA program. Among the significant trends during this period were an increase in
mechanization, the value of farm implements rose from $884,798 in 1910 to $2,047,212 in 1930 and an increase in tenancy to 68% (Lewis 1948:18, 20).

During the early 1900s, the automobile became a common sight within the county, facilitating road improvements. In 1913, Precinct One (Belton) voted for a $150,000 bond for road improvements. By 1917, a two million dollar bond was approved by the people of the entire county. The new road construction included the laying of gravel roads, the construction of steel bridges over the major streams and rivers and the placement of concrete culverts and spillways over the minor stream and creek crossings. These improvements were carried out under the leadership of W. P. Denman, son of Moses Denman of Sparta. By 1923, over 6,000 automobiles were registered in the county (Tyler 1936:346-347).

Form 1900 to 1940, a number of rural schools, stores and churches closed. Larger towns were attracting the rural population at the expense of the smaller towns and hamlets. Even in the southeastern portion of the county where the best cotton producing areas were, the towns of Rodgers and Holland had a decline of services and population (Lewis 1948:39).

Lewis (1948:41) found that the German and Czech communities in eastern Bell County and the area just west of Belton (the Cowhouse valley) had retained a stable population and that these communities were more resistant to change. Reasons offered by Lewis were that these areas had a more uniform standard of living, were involved with agriculture on an intensive scale and were actively involved in the community through the school and church.
In 1900, there were 112 common schools in Bell County. One hundred thirty-one teachers taught 7,600 school-age children on the average five and a half months. During the following decade, schools consolidated across the county and the state. In 1925, three school districts that formed in the previous decade, Academy, Little River and Sparks consolidated and formed the Academy Independent School District. Others were Killeen, Rodgers, Holland, Troy and Pendleton. By 1945, there were only 41 rural elementary schools left with a population of 1,330, down 46% from 10 years before (Atkinson 1929:109; Tyler 1936:343; Lewis 1948:57, 61). Sparta’s School was consolidated with Cedar Grove in July, 1919, and had three teachers. It continued to operate until 1954 when the building of the Belton Reservoir forced its closing (Bell Co. Retired Teachers’ Association 1976:356).

Bell County was not spared from the economic hardships of the 1930s. The hardest hit were the farmers that depended on cotton. The western portion of the county, which included the Sparta community, though much poorer, managed better because of a greater reliance on subsistence agriculture. The agricultural agencies were least effective in much of western Bell County, however, AAA money had gone to clearing cedar and planting grasses for sheep and goat raising (Lewis 1948:18, 102).

Many of the New Deal programs instituted by Franklin D. Roosevelt during the Depression helped issue central Texas into the twentieth century. The rural roads continued to be improved, the Civilian Conservation Corps constructed water management features on rural farms and helped with the terracing of fields to aid in the prevention of soil erosion (Stabler 1996:23).
Mid-Century: 1940-1954

The population of Bell County decreased during the Depression, from 50,030 in 1930 to 44,863 in 1940. The Depression lowered the tenancy rate in 1940 to 56.1% down from the high 68% in 1930 (Lewis 1948:19; Stabler 1996:22-23). The economic programs of the Depression forced many of the tenants off the land. By 1945, 60% of the total population if the county was concentrated in three towns, Temple, Belton and Killeen. A large percentage of young people left the farm in the search for a better standard of living (Lewis 1948:105-106).

In 1940, the principal crops were cotton, oats, grain sorghums, pecans, dairy products and beef cattle. Striking changes occurred in agricultural production during the war years. The most significant was the decrease in cotton and corn and the increase in livestock. Beef prices rose during the war and many farmers opened their farmland to cattle. In 1940, cotton was planted on 60 to 80% of the total crop land, but in 1945, cotton acreage was down by one-half to a third of the total acreage. This trend has been attributed to the educational efforts of the agricultural agencies about crop diversification. Lewis estimated that 50% of the farmers, primarily owners and better-off farmers, had been influenced by the educational programs that stressed crop rotation, contour plowing, terracing and the use of cover crops to aid in soil development (Lewis 1948:21-23, 26, 106).

The labor shortage produced by the war brought an increase in farm mechanization and an end to tenant farming. Five hundred tractors were purchased in Bell County during the war years and the number of mules and colts dropped from 7,676
to 3,081. In 1940, there were only a few mechanical corn pickers, but by the end of the war, 30 pickers were reported. Lewis' survey of the farms of Bell County showed a great variety of farm equipment ranging from primitive to modern. Except for the poorer farmers in the western part of the county and among the African-American farmers in the Whitehall community, both of whom still used mules and single-plow equipment, most farms, both tenant and owner operated, were worked with tractors with double-row equipment (Lewis 1948:25). This trend was confirmed by T. A. Wilhite (personal communication 1998).

Lewis' survey also described the types of farm houses that existed in Bell County in the mid-1940s. They ranged from poor shacks with dirt floors of the charcoal burners and cedar choppers in the uplands of western portion of the county to modern, well-furnished homes of the wealthier families. Most of the homes were one-story wood frame structures. About a third were unpainted and these usually were tenant dwellings. Lewis noted that the Czech and German farm houses were in better condition than those of the old-line Americans. This tendency was also noted in the condition of the outbuildings, such as sheds, barns, poultry coups and hog pens. The old-line Americans had an attitude of indifference toward upkeep of their farms. Often tool and tractor sheds were not found on their farms and machinery and tools were left out unprotected. It was a common saying among farmers that machinery rusted before it was worn out (Lewis 1948:27-28).

The standard of living also varied by ethnic groups. As previously mentioned, the old-line Americans predominated in the upper and lower levels and the Czech and German farmers fell into the middle income group. Housing and sanitary facilities varied
significantly between the eastern and western portions of the county. It was calculated that 36.6% of all rural farmhouses were in need of major repair. 74.4% had no running water, but most had indoor toilets. In the Czech area, only 2.6% had no indoor toilets whereas in the western portion, 29.1% had none. 99.7% had no electrical lights in the western portion of the county and 63% did not have any in the eastern portion (Lewis 1948:30). One reason Sparta did not have electrical power to its homes, was because the valley was under consideration by the Corps of Engineers as a possible site for a reservoir (Bell County Museum Records 1995).

During World War II, the state of Texas changed dramatically. Army and Air Corp training bases were established throughout the state, primarily because the mild winters afforded year-round training. The United States War Department wanted to establish an anti-tank force to fight the German Panzer Tanks that were terrifying Europe. In 1941, the government surveyed several areas in Coryell County as the location of a training facility. General A. D. Bruce chose an area north of Killeen because the hilly terrain was similar to that the Army would face in Europe. Also, the assessed value of the land was much lower than that of the other areas in consideration. The manager of the Real Estate Office of the Army Corps of Engineers set up office in Gatesville in 1942 and began the process of surveying the selected site. The area encompassed 104,000 acres, 85% of which was in Coryell County. Twenty communities were taken in this first acquisition. Condemnation proceedings were initiated and most land owners conveyed their farms to the United States. Four hundred and seventy families (200 of these lived in Bell County) were displaced by the initial land purchase (Stabler 1996:23-24; Lewis
The landowners were given, in many cases, 10 days to vacate their property. Some were so heartbroken over having to leave their homes that some died of heart attacks or committed suicide. In some cases, the bulldozers and tanks rolled in and destroyed the houses as the landowners were removing the last of their possessions. Many had wished to salvage the wood from their homes because building materials were hard to come by during the war. The prices paid for the land were not adequate for landowners to purchase new farms. Those who felt they did not receive a fair price for their land presented their cases to the federal court in Waco. Often, those who appealed, ended up getting little more than the initial offer (Stabler 1996:23-24).

The Tank Destroyer Command was named Camp Hood in honor of General John Bell Hood, a Confederate general in the Army of North Virginia and was the commanding officer of the Texas Brigade. By September, 1942, most of facilities were in place and the Camp began to operate. Thirty-four thousand additional acres were purchased south of Gatesville in 1943 for North Camp Hood along with 12,000 acres in southwest Bell County. A German Prisoner of War camp was built at North Fort Hood. In 1946, Camp Hood became an infantry training center, the Twentieth Armored Division and the Second Armored Division arrived in 1946. In 1950, Camp Hood became a permanent base and was renamed Fort Hood (Stabler 1996:24).

The war had an impact on all of the farmers of Bell County. Lewis estimated that 50% of the farmers relied upon off-farm work as a major source of income. One of his informants voiced the common fact that “We work in town to support our farms.” (Lewis
1948:28) Many took jobs within Camp Hood, the McClosky Veterans Hospital in Temple, the Bluebonnet Ordnance Plant in McGregor and with manufacturing plants in Temple (Lewis 1948:28). All groups in the county, from the poor cedar choppers to the wealthier ranchers, cotton growers, dairy farmers and city merchants increased their incomes during the war, by an estimated 50% (Lewis 1948:30).

In 1953, Fort Hood expanded again into western Bell County. This acquisition included land for the construction of Belton Dam and Reservoir. Part of the Reservoir lies in the Fort Hood boundaries and the land around Lake Belton is used for training purposes. At present, Fort Hood is the largest military installation in the United States and it covers 339 square miles (Stabler 1996:24).

The 13.6 million dollar Belton Reservoir project was authorized under the provisions of the Flood Control Act approved on July 24, 1946. It was built by the Army Corps of Engineers to reduce flooding of the 69,000 acres of bottom land in the Little River valley. The dam was located on the Leon River about three miles north of Belton and eight miles west of Temple. The reservoir area encompassed the Leon River and Cowhouse Creek valleys. Today, the maximum width of the reservoir is about 3.5 miles at a point near the Leon River and it encompasses 23,620 acres (Hallock 1953:1-6; Bell County Museum Records).

In June, 1953, the last residents of the Cowhouse valley to pack up their belongings were Byron and Nora Walton Denman. Almost one hundred years before, their grandfathers, Moses Denman and G. W. Walton, had been among the first to settle the Cowhouse valley. In 1954, the waters of the Leon and the Cowhouse began to fill the
valley floor. Eighty-four residents watched as their homes disappeared beneath the waters (Bower 1976:296). By 1957, the reservoir had filled to its expected level.
CHAPTER IV

SITE DESCRIPTION AND ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTATION

Carlson et al. (1986) recommended further archaeological research on 12 historic farmsteads found within the boundaries of the Sparta community. Each of the site’s location, nearest water source, vegetation, soil characteristics, dimensions, and environmental impact, along with features and artifacts collected from the surface will be presented. A site sketch map, depicting the general topography, vegetation, military trails, features and artifact concentrations found at each site was prepared during the initial survey of 1983-1984. Copies of these sketch maps are included in Appendix I.

The archival documentation compiled on each site will then be presented. The Bell County deed, probate, and ad valorem tax schedules were examined, as were the documents on file and microfilm at the General Land Office and the State Archives in Austin. Figure 11 is a map of the land surveys in the Cowhouse valley.

Nine of the sites are dated to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sites 41BL574, 41BL578 and 41BL614 were occupied during the early twentieth century. Two sites, 41BL577 and 41BL580, belonged to the Sellers family, sites 41BL571, 41BL574 and 41BL578, to the Hallmark family. The Doss family owned the farmsteads at sites 41BL617 and 41BL618 and the Wiseman family lived at sites 41BL614 and 41BL617. The majority of the sites were owner-occupied, except for sites 41BL442, 41BL469, and 41BL551, which became rental properties in the twentieth century.
The G. W. Walton, Jr.—T. C. Robertson Farmstead, 

and a Twentieth-Century Tenant Farm, Sites 41BL442 & 41BL443

Site Descriptions

Site 41BL442

Site 41BL442 is a late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century farmstead located in the southeastern portion of the Thomas Gay Survey, within the UTM Bland quadrat 34/49. The site is south of the old Sparta Road on a grassy, fluvial lowland slope at an
elevation of 620 feet, about 900 meters southeast of Cowhouse Creek. Mesquite, juniper
and deciduous hardwoods cover the 7,800 square meter site. A cleared field and a tree-
fence line are visible on the eastern portion of the site. The soil is shallow, described as a
brown loam intermixed with limestone nodules and classified as BRE. The site has
recently been affected by bulldozers and military bunkers.

A well, cistern, root cellar, chimney fall and a limestone foundation were
documented. The artifacts collected include an overglazed red-stenciled whiteware sherd,
ca. 1930s, overglazed green-banded porcelain, ca. 1930s, a Depression glassware
fragment, a snuff bottle base, a patent medicine bottle base post-dating 1904, a clear milk
bottle base post-dating 1903, and a pewter button. Other artifacts include window glass,
barbed wire, a file, a hinge and cast iron fragments. It has been recommended that site
41BL442 be considered for further archaeological investigation (Carlson et al. 1986:299).

Site 41BL443

Site 41BL443 is a twentieth-century dump located to the west of site 41BL442,
within the same 100 acre tract in the Thomas Gay Survey. It covers 25 square meters of
open grassland at an elevation of 620 feet. Artifacts collected include a small clear glass
bowl with pressed circle and ray designs, a porcelain jar fragment molded with lettering
"GERMANY," an imported stoneware vessel, possibly a tea or coffee pot with a tan
interior Bristol glaze and a dark brown exterior glaze, a green glass refrigerator dish, a
solarized tableware serving vessel, assorted clear bottles including a Jergen's lotion bottle
(1904+), a Packer's shampoo bottle (1946+), a machine-made threaded Owen Illinois
medicine bottle (1929-1954), a clear flask-type oval bottle embossed with a leaf design
and a frozen metal cap (1924+) and a aqua-green flat bottle base of a soda bottle marked with "THE LIQUID CARBONIC COMPANY" trademark (1904+). Missing from the collection, but reported in the Fort Hood data base are whiteware sherds with red hand-painted designs, whiteware plate rim with a gold stripe, whiteware plate rim with a pink floral design, and a whiteware saucer with a gold floral design.

**Historical Documentation**

Sites 41BL442 and 41BL443 are located in the southeastern portion of the Thomas Gay Survey, a 500 acre tract of land on Cowhouse Creek. The Second Class grant was patented to the heirs of Thomas Gay in November, 1852 (Milam Land District Files 436). G. W. Walton purchased the 500 acre tract in the early 1860s and the Bell County tax rolls show that he paid the assessed taxes until he subdivided and sold it in the 1880s. The archival documentation of the Thomas Gay Survey prior to 1880 is presented in the discussion of site 41BL469.

The parcel of land on which sites 41BL442 and 41BL443 are located, is a 65 acre tract, located in the southeastern portion of the survey. In December, 1880, G. W. Walton conveyed the 65 acre tract to his son, G. W. Walton, Jr. (Bell County Deed Records 38:345). G. W. Walton, Sr. continued to pay the taxes on the entire Thomas Gay Survey until 1891. That year, G. W. Walton, Jr. sold the 65 acre tract to Thomas C. Robertson for $700 (BCDR 47:553). Robertson had previously purchased a 35 acre tract of land in the Thomas Gay Survey from Walton, directly to the east of the 65 acre tract (BCDR 75:236).
In 1891, Robertson paid taxes on both tracts, valued at $700, 1 wagon, 6 horses, 8 head of cattle, and 20 hogs, totaling $1,130. The 100 acre tract increased in value over the next two years, suggesting that Robertson made improvements to the farmstead. In 1894, he paid taxes on an additional 231 acres of land in neighboring surveys. His total assessed value was $1,960.

In 1895, Robertson sold the 100 acre tract to J. G. Brown for $2,000 (BCDR 101:456). In 1896, Brown paid taxes on the 100 acre tract, valued at $650. He also owned 2 horses, 4 hogs, 1 head of cattle, and a wagon. Brown apparently made no improvements to the property; its value declined to $550 in 1899. The 1900 Census listed Brown, 36 years old, married to Bulah, 35, and having a three year-old son. He was listed as a farmer, owner of a home free of mortgage (site 41BL442). Brown sold the tract to N. H. Humphries in November, 1900 for $2,000. Humphries paid $200 in cash and Brown financed the remaining balance (BCDR 134:635).

Humphries made improvements to the property; its value increased to $650 in 1902. In that year, Humphries rendered for taxation, 3 horses, 7 hogs, 2 head of cattle, and a wagon, valued at $220. In November, 1903, Humphries sold the 100 acre tract to George W. Cole, Jr., a large landowner in the Cowhouse valley. Cole paid Humphries $200 in cash and assumed the note payments to Brown (BCDR 149:391). At this time, Cole was the owner of a 200 acre tract of land in the central portion of the Thomas Gay Survey. He had previously purchased it from T. E. Tomlinson in July, 1893 (BCDR 91:376). Cole owned property in 18 surveys and had 200 head of cattle; his total assets were valued at $14,945 in 1903. Cole may have leased the property to tenants from
1903 to 1906.

In 1906, Cole sold the 100 acre tract to T. N. and Mary Spruell for $2,000, to be paid in ten promissory notes dated January 1, 1907-1916 (BCDR 167:54). Spruell lived at site 41BL442 for two years and made improvements. In 1907, it was valued at $640, and by 1908, it increased in value to $1,200. The tax rolls list Spruell owning 9 horses, 4 head of cattle, 8 hogs, 2 wagons/carriages and farm implements valued at $1,020. The tax rolls suggest that Spruell had a successful farm, however, he sold it back to G. W. Cole, Jr. in September, 1908 for $1,100 (BCDR 191:127).

Cole owned the adjoining 200 acre tract in the Thomas Gay Survey. In 1910, the 300 acre tract was valued at $5,500 and Cole's total assets were valued at $50,370. The 1920 tax rolls list Cole living in Belton, and the 300 acre tract in the Thomas Gay Survey had declined in value to $5,100. In 1930, it was valued at $3,900. That year, Cole's widow, Mary, sold it to G. B. Smith for $17,200 (BCDR 403:376).

During the 23 years that G. B. Smith owned the 300 acre tract, its value fluctuated around $3,320. In July, 1953, G. B. Smith sold 280 acres of this property to the United States of America for the sum of $34,000 (BCDR 690:205).

Summary

G. W. Walton, Jr. may have built the farmstead designated as site 41BL422, after his father conveyed the 65 acre tract to him in 1880. Eleven years later, he sold the 65 acre tract to Thomas C. Robertson, who had purchased the adjoining 35 acres to the east. Robertson resided at site 41BL422 for four years. In 1895, he sold the 100 acre tract to J. G. Brown and in 1900, Brown sold it to N. H. Humphries. In 1903, Humphries sold the
property to George W. Cole, Jr., a large landowner and rancher in the area. Cole sold the land to T. N. Spruell, who farmed the property for two years. In 1908, he sold it back to Cole and the property remained in his name until his widow sold it to G. B. Brown in 1930. Both Cole and Brown lived in Belton and owned a number of properties in Bell County. The site was occupied by a number of owners for short periods of time -- Walton, Robertson, J. G. Brown, Humphries and Spruell. After Spruell sold it to Cole in 1908, he probably leased it to tenants.

The Z. T. Cartwright--Martin Whalen Farmstead,

and a Twentieth-Century Tenant Farm, Site 41BL469

Site Description

Site 41BL469 has been defined as a late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century farmstead, located in the north-central portion of the Thomas Gay Survey, in UTM Bland quatrat 34/50. It is located on a fluvial lowland at elevation of 580 feet, and is presently eroding from the northern shoreline of Lake Belton, approximately 1,000 meters west of Taylor’s Branch. The soil is classified as BRE, a brown silty loam intermixed with limestone nodules. Willow, chinaberry and grasses cover the 170 square meter site. It has been estimated that 95% of the site has eroded into the lake.

No features were present, but the artifacts collected were considered historically significant to warrant further archaeological investigation. Refined earthenware include two whiteware sherds from a cup or bowl, decorated with a sponge-cut red and blue floral design on the exterior, and a blue band on the interior (dated to the late nineteenth century), a blue shell-edge decorated ironstone rim of a large platter, also dated to the late
nineteenth century. Glassware collected include a green bottle neck with a champagne neck finish, an aqua-green Mason jar body and neck, a solarized glass bottle with a brandy neck finish (1880-1918), and a clear tumbler rim with molded ridges. Bricks, cut limestone, horseshoes and tin cans were also collected.

**Historical Documentation**

Thomas Gay received a conditional certificate for a headright for 640 acres from the Republic of Texas for his military service. On July 19, 1838, I. H. Isbell, appeared before the county clerk of Harris County and swore that he was the administrator of the estate of Thomas Gay, deceased. In June, 1851, Isbell received a certificate in the name of Thomas Gay from the commissioner of Harris County for 640 acres of land. The following year, he had 500 acres of land on Cowhouse Creek surveyed by William Armstrong, the Milam Land District surveyor and on November 3, 1852, he received a patent from the State of Texas for the 500 acre tract (Milam Land District Files 436).

The deed records state that Isbell received the patent on 640 acres in October, 1851, and that he sold the patent to W. R. Baker the same day. Baker then sold 500 acres to James Armstrong, who sold it to William Armstrong in November, 1852 (BCDR D:62; D:64; D:65). Armstrong then sold the 500 acre survey to Martin L. Walton, a relative of G. W. Walton, for $1,000 (BCDR, B:623). George W. Walton paid taxes on the 500 acre tract in 1861, along with 1,015 acre F. Niebling Survey he had purchased from James C. Armstrong.

The 1860 Agricultural Census listed Walton as the owner of 2,600 acres of land (2,395 acres in the Thomas Gay, F. Niebling and J. Halfpenny Surveys) of which only 100
acres were improved. On that acreage, he produced 125 bushels of wheat and 100 bushels of corn. The cash value of the property was listed as $6,500. Walton had 12 horses, 6 milch cows, 8 oxen, 25 hogs and 24 head of cattle, valued at $910.

The value of the Thomas Gay Survey in the Bell County tax rolls remained at $1,000 through 1868. That year, Walton sold the Niebling acreage and purchased 880 acres in the neighboring James Halfpenny Survey and 768 acres in the W. H. Perry Survey. He also rendered for taxation, 60 horses and 39 head of cattle. In 1869, he paid taxes on his land holdings in the Thomas Gay and the James Halfpenny Surveys. The assessed value of the acreage in both surveys was $3,750, an increase of $390, suggesting that the improvements were made during the year. The 1870 Census lists G. W. Walton, his wife and seven children, ranging in ages from three to 18, living at home at that time. Walton's occupation is listed as blacksmith, with $5,000 in real estate and a homestead valued at $800.

The 1870 Agricultural Census listed G. W. Walton cultivating 90 acres. He produced 100 bushels of corn, 15 bushels of potatoes and 12 bales of cotton. He had 15 horses, 2 mules, 2 oxen, 12 cows, and 46 head of cattle. His farm was valued at $2,500, the highest in the valley.

The assessed value of his property increased during the early 1870s; in 1875, the Thomas Gay lands were valued at $2,000 and the James Halfpenny lands were valued at $5,000. In 1875, Walton purchased additional land along the Cowhouse Creek in the Moses Allen Survey. That year he rendered for taxation 10 horses, 41 head of cattle, 2 goats, tools and implements valued at $60. His total valuation was $6,140. In 1879, his
assets remained basically the same except that he rendered 12 hogs. In 1880, Walton paid additional taxes on $250 worth of machinery. Bishop (1954:38) noted that Walton built a cotton gin and grist mill in the Sparta community around 1878. The machinery assessed in the tax records may reference these operations.

The 1880 Agricultural Census listed 1,200 acres as farmland on which he planted 25 acres in corn, netting 300 bushels, 20 acres in oats, netting 600 bushels, 25 acres in cotton, netting eight bales. Walton also had 6 cows and 8 horses. His poultry produced 300 dozen eggs.

In 1881, Walton subdivided his land holdings among his children, leaving him with 320 acres in the northern portion of the Thomas Gay Survey, valued at $1,000 and 300 acres in the James Halfpenny Survey. He had acquired an additional 31 acres in the J. A. Womack Survey and 30 acres in the Moses Allen Survey. In 1882, the 320 acres in the Thomas Gay Survey increased in value to $1,600. In 1884, Walton paid taxes on only 250 acres in the Thomas Gay Survey, valued at $2,500. He had sold 70 acres, on which site 41BL469 is located, to Z. T. Cartwright in November, 1885 for $1,000. Z. T. Cartwright paid $582 in cash and the remaining balance due the following November (BCDR 50:300).

In 1886, Z. T. Cartwright rendered for taxation, the 70 acre tract, valued at $1,000, 2 horses, 1 wagon, and 4 head of cattle. In July, 1886, he sold the 70 acre tract to T. E. Tomlinson (BCDR 56:393). Tomlinson had purchased 220 acres in the Thomas Gay Survey from Walton the previous year, and in 1887, he paid taxes on 290 acres in the
Thomas Gay Survey, valued at $2,490. In 1888, it had increased to $3,540, suggesting that improvements were made to the property.

In November, 1889, Tomlinson sold the 70 acre tract to Sam Dunn for $1,200. Dunn paid $421.50 in cash and Tomlinson financed the remaining balance at 10% interest over a three year period (BCDR 71:405). In 1890, Dunn paid taxes on the 70 acre tract, valued at $570, 150 acres in the J. F. Cartwright Survey, valued at $350, a wagon, 2 horses, 12 head of cattle, and 25 hogs.

In December, 1890, W. J. Sliger paid Dunn $1,200 for the 70 acre tract and assumed Dunn's payments to Tomlinson (BCDR 78:8). The property value declined in the tax records to $510 that year. Sliger also rendered for taxation 7 horses, 16 head of cattle, 12 hogs and a wagon. No taxes were paid on the 70 acre tract in 1892 and 1893. Sliger defaulted on his note payments to Tomlinson, and in January, 1893, Tomlinson sold the property to Martin Whalen for $1,100. Whalen paid $300 in cash and Tomlinson financed the remaining balance (BCDR 88:385).

Martin Whalen also owned 146 acres in the G. C. & S. F. R. Co. Survey, Certificate 1079 to the north, but in 1895, he paid taxes only on the 70 acre tract in the Thomas Gay Survey, valued at $470. The property value had declined from $570 in 1890 to $470 in 1895. In 1896, its value had increased to $510, suggesting that he made improvement to the farm. During these years, he also rendered for taxation 2 horses, 8 to 11 head of cattle, 6 hogs, and farm implements. Whalen paid taxes continuously on the property until he sold it to M. Boyd in November, 1898 for $1,200 (BCDR 126:122).
The 1900 Census listed M. Boyd, a bachelor, 31, living with his mother, Martha, 61, and a hired-hand, Hardy Bloodworth, 22, in the Sparta community. M. Boyd owned property in the I. Dowess and J. B. Womack Surveys prior to his purchase of the 70 acre tract in the Thomas Gay Survey. He paid taxes on these tracts of land until he sold them to W. H. Hurd in June, 1900 for $5,000. Hurd paid $2,000 in cash and J. Z. Miller, Jr. financed the remaining balance at 10% interest (BCDR 129:173).

The 70 acre tract in the Thomas Gay Survey was not rendered for taxation in 1901 and 1902. In December, 1902, Hurd sold the 70 acre tract to George W. Cole, Jr. for $2,000 down, and the assumption of the note payable to J. Z. Miller, Jr. (BCDR 150:3). Cole, paid taxes on the 70 acre tract until he sold it to T. N. Parks in December, 1906 for $6,000 (BCDR 158:168).

T. N. Parks was 38 years old and married to Stateira Doss; they owned 185 acres in the neighboring I. Dowess Survey and 31 acres in the J. H. Conley Survey. Parks paid taxes on these properties, which were valued collectively at $3,400, until he sold them to E. J. Carter (the father of Park’s brother’s wife, Nora Carter Parks) in December, 1912 for $7,000 (BCDR 238:265). Deed 238:265 mentions J. L. Smith, a tenant farmer, living on the 70 acre tract and that he would continue to live there after Carter was granted title to the property. The 1910 Census listed James L. Smith, 42, an immigrant from Alabama living with his wife, Pollie, 23, their three children, two to six years of age and Smith’s mother living on a farm as a renter in the Sparta community.

The 1913 tax rolls state that E. J. Carter was residing in Killeen, and that he owned a total of 883 acres of land in Bell County. The assessed value of the 70 acre tract in the
Thomas Gay Survey was listed as $1,000 for that year.

In April, 1928, Carter conveyed the 70 acre tract in the Thomas Gay Survey and 70 acres in the I. Dowess Survey to his daughter, Nora Carter Parks, but continued to pay taxes on the property until 1945 (BCDR 465:389). The property was valued at $730 and it remained at that valuation until it was purchased by the United States of America in July, 1953. Jesse and Nora Parks received $7,875 from the United States of America for the 70 acres in the Thomas Gay Survey and 18.5 acres in the Isaac Dowess Survey (BCDR 690:441).

Summary

It is unknown when the farmstead, site 41BL469, was first established. It’s location on a lowland ridge north of Cowhouse Creek and west of Taylor’s Branch suggest that it was occupied fairly early in the history of the Cowhouse valley. It may have been built by G. W. Walton for one of his children. The tax rolls suggest improvements were made to the property during the 1870s. After Walton sold the property to Z. T. Cartwright in 1885, it was transferred from one landowner to another until it was sold to Martin Whalen, who resided on the 70 acre tract from 1893 to 1898. All of the previous owners except Cartwright, had multiple properties and therefore, it was unlikely that they lived at the site for the short time it was listed in their names. Whalen farmed the 70 acre tract along the Cowhouse until he sold it to W. H. Hurd, who later sold it to George W. Cole, Jr. in 1902. The tax records suggest that the 70 acre tract was a tenant farmstead from 1902 to 1953. It is mentioned in Deed 238:265, that the 70 acre tract was the home of a tenant farmer, L. J. Smith in the early 1910s.
The J. P. Roberson—G. W. Murray Farmstead, and a

Twentieth-Century Tenant Farm, Site 41BL551

Site Description

Site 41BL551 is a farmstead dated to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is located in UTM Bland quadrat 34/53 at an elevation of 730 feet. The site is situated on the southern side of a hill. An intermittent tributary of Taylor's Branch is located 250 meters to the west. The soil at the site has been classified as KVB, a dark brown clay loam less than one meter in depth. Juniper, oaks and grasses cover the 8,400 square meter site. The site has been impacted by military vehicular traffic, cattle and erosion.

Features include a limestone foundation, rock wall and stock tank. Remnants of a historic road are located southeast of the site. Artifacts include fragments of stoneware, whiteware, bottle lip and neck fragments, canning jars, a green medicine bottle, wire nails, Baker flat barbed wire, tin cans, barrel hoops, a wash tub, Ferris bricks, cut limestone, stove parts, bolts, hinges, and furniture pulls. The artifacts are listed in the survey report, but could not be located in the collection. Site 41BL551 has been recommended for further archaeological testing by Carlson et al. (1986).

Historical Documentation

On October 5, 1852, Patrick Lusk received a certificate from the General Land Office stating that he was entitled to have 287 acres of land surveyed, it being the unlocated balance of headright certificate #428 issued by the Board of Land Commissioners of Washington County for 340 acres of land dated January 12, 1847. In
June, 1858, the district surveyor of Bell County, H. E. Bradford, surveyed 287 acres of land in the name of Patrick Lusk on the headwaters of Taylor's Branch (Milam Land District File 1821).

In 1861, the 287 acre Third Class grant was patented to William Wilkes, assignee of Patrick Lusk, by the State of Texas. Wilkes, a resident of Hayes County, sold the 287 acre tract to John D. and Mary O'Keefe in March, 1871 for $140 (BCDR R:421). The O'Keefe family owned acreage in the Nancy Chance Survey, another western Bell County survey at this time. In 1872, J. D. O'Keefe paid taxes on 100 acres in the Patrick Lusk Survey, valued at $200. He rendered no other property that year.

The 1870 Census listed John D. O'Keefe, 37, born in Kentucky and married to Mary, 33, of Alabama. They had six children, ages one through 12. He was listed as a farmer; his real estate was valued at $300 and his homestead at $500. The O'Keefe's nearest neighbor was B. L. Clements, who resided on his preempton to the west of the Patrick Lusk Survey. This suggests that O'Keefe and his family moved from the Nancy Chance Survey to site 41BL551 in the Patrick Lusk Survey before 1870.

The 1870 Agricultural Census listed O'Keefe cultivating only 10 acres, which produced 200 bushels of corn, 30 bushels of potatoes, and 20 gallons of molasses. He had 8 horses, 5 cows, 20 hogs and 12 head of cattle. The value of his farm and livestock was $410.

In November, 1872, O'Keefe sold 108 acres in the eastern portion of the survey, on which site 41BL551 is located, to J. P. Roberson for $600 (BCDR R:423). In 1875,
Roberson paid taxes on 108 acres in the Patrick Lusk Survey, which was valued at $400, 3 horses, 10 head of cattle, 10 goats, and farming implements, valued at $265.

The 1880 Census listed J. P. Roberson, 41, as a farmer, born in Tennessee and his wife, Sarah, 42, born in Alabama. They had seven children, ages two through 14, and a niece living with them. His nearest neighbor was William DeFore, who lived on his preemption to the south.

Roberson continued to pay taxes on the 108 acres through the mid-1880s. In 1880, the 108 acre tract was valued at $600. He had 2 horses, 6 head of cattle, 5 hogs and a wagon. In September, 1882, he purchased from his neighbor, I. H. Scoggin, two tracts of land, 60 acres in the Bird Clements Survey, west of the Patrick Lusk Survey, and five acres of land in the William DeFore Survey, to the south (BCDR 40:216). During this time, Roberson also purchased 34 acres in the south-central portion of the Patrick Lusk Survey, increasing his holdings to 142 acres in that survey. He paid taxes on 142 acres in 1882, valued at $965. This was a substantial increase over the previous year, which suggests that Roberson improved his homestead considerably. That year, he also rendered for taxation his other holdings in the William DeFore and Bird Clements Surveys, 1 wagon, 3 horses, 8 head of cattle, and 12 hogs.

In 1885, Roberson paid taxes on 108 acres in the Patrick Lusk Survey and 20 acres in the Bird Clements Survey, valued at $1,500. He had 2 wagons, 3 horses, 12 head of cattle, 12 hogs and farming implements valued at $490. Roberson sold the property to G. W. Rae during this time (no deed located), and in November, 1887, Rae sold the 142 acre tract to D. D. Dykes for $4,000. Dykes paid $3,500 cash and agreed to pay the
removing balance over a two year period (BCDR 62:261). The tax rolls listed D. D.
Dykes paying taxes on the 142 acre tract in the Patrick Lusk Survey and the five acre tract in the William Defore Survey in 1891, valued at $645. Dykes also paid taxes on 1 wagon, 3 horses, 5 hogs, and 2 head of cattle.

From 1892 through 1894, the 142 acre tract was listed in Unrendered Property in the Bell County tax schedules. It is unclear what happened to the property during this time, however, Harrison Roberts held title to the land before he sold it to G. W. Murray in November, 1894 for $1,300. J. Z. Miller, Jr. of Belton financed the sale at 10% interest over an 11 year period (BCDR 99:403).

G. W. Murray owned 60 acres in the J. P. Murray Survey, directly north of the Patrick Lusk Survey. In 1895, he paid taxes on the 142 acres in the Patrick Lusk Survey valued at $610 and the 60 acres in the J. P. Murray Survey valued at $140. He also paid taxes on 6 horses, 5 head of cattle, 6 hogs and 1 wagon. Murray continued to pay taxes on this property through 1901.

In December, 1900, G. W. Murray sold it to J. L. Murray (BCDR 141:307). J. L. Murray, 46, born in Alabama, was listed in the 1900 Census as a farmer with a mortgaged farm. He was married to Abbey, 34, a native of Texas, and they had six children, ranging in age from four to 15. J. L. Murray's brother, T. W. Murray, also resided with them and was listed as a farm laborer.

In January, 1902, J. L. Murray sold his holdings to E. A. Johnson, a resident of McLennan County for $1,800. Johnson paid $1,110 in cash and assumed the balance of the note to J. Z. Miller, Jr. (BCDR 147:420). E. A. Johnson paid nonresident taxes on the
142 acre tract in the Patrick Lusk Survey until 1909; it was valued at $630. Johnson also acquired five acres in the adjoining DeFore Survey and 80 acres in the G. C. & S. F. R. Co. Survey, Certificate 4791.

From 1902 until the tract was sold to the United States of America in 1953, the 142 acre tract was owned by a succession of landowners, the majority of them not residents of the county. These land owners may have leased the property to tenant farmers. In April, 1909, Johnson sold his land holdings to Harry Moore of McLennan County for $3,000 (BCDR 199:14); that same month, Moore sold it to W. R. Thomas of McLennan County for $3,500 (BCDR 199:94).

In June, 1910, Thomas sold the 142 acre tract to J. B. Farley of McLennan Co. for $3,850. Farley paid $1,400 in cash and Thomas financed the balance at 8% interest (BCDR 204:311). In August, Farley conveyed the 142 acre tract to J. M. and Nettie Chapman. Chapman paid Farley $1,400 and assumed the note payable to W. R. Thomas (BCDR 217:473).


In March, 1921, R. H. and Pearl McDonald of Johnson County sold the three tracts to H. H. Meador, also of Johnson County, who then sold it to M. E. Somerford of
Johnson County in December of that year for $6,200. Somerford paid $500 in cash and Meador financed the remaining balance over a period of three years (BCDR 327:327, 333:486).

In June, 1925, the 27th Judicial District Court seizing the property for nonpayment of county and state taxes and the three tracts of land were auctioned at a sheriff’s sale in Belton. J. E. Warren of Johnson County purchased the property for $250 (BCDR 373:318). The following January, Warren conveyed the property to C. E. Bowers, also from Johnson County for $1 (BCDR 373:320). In October, 1929, a tax lien was placed against the property by the State of Texas and the 142 acre tract was auctioned once again by the 27th Judicial District Court. A. G. Vick, a resident of Belton, acquired the property for $10 and paid the taxes. In 1930 it was valued at $140.

In October, 1931, A. G. Vick sold the 142 acre tract and the other two tracts in the DeFore and G. C. & S. F. R. Co. Surveys to Wilbur Flewellen (BCDR 409:7). Flewellen sold the property to Carl Clawson for $850 in July, 1935, who in turn sold it for $1,000 to W. E. Magee in November, 1936 (BCDR 440:132; 452:14).

W. E. Magee sold the property to Preston Gobble in July, 1937 (BCDR 457:189). Gobble paid taxes on the property until he sold it to the United States of America in 1953. By 1940, Gobble had acquired the entire 287 acre Patrick Lusk Survey, five acres in the William Defore Survey and 42 acres in the Bird Clements Survey, all of which were valued at $880. The value of the property rose to $990 in 1950. In October, 1953, Gobble received $20,055 from the United States of America for the 334 acre tract for the expansion of Fort Hood (BCDR 694:376).
Summary

The farmstead at site 41BL551 was built by John D. O'Keefe around 1870 and improvements were made by J. P. Roberson in 1882 and 1883. Roberson not only improved his homestead, but he also purchased additional acreage in the area. He sold the property in 1886 to another landowner in the area, who sold it to G. W. Murray in 1894. The tax rolls suggest that Murray lived on the 142 acre tract, on which site 41NL551 was located from 1895 through 1901 until he sold it to E. A. Johnson of McLennan Co. From that date, the 142 acre tract in the Patrick Lusk Survey was owned by a succession of landowners, many residing outside the county. The property may have been leased to ranchers. According to T. A. Wilhite, this farmhouse was occupied by a family, headed by a father who “hired” himself out as a laborer to the farmers in the Cowhouse valley during the 1940s (Wilhite, personal communication).

The Nancy Clements-Bone--Hallmark Family Farmstead,

Sites 41BL571 & 41BL573,

and the W. C. Hallmark Farmstead, Site 41BL574

Site Descriptions

Site 41BL571

Site 41BL571 is a late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century farmstead, located in the UTM Bland quadrat 35/51, on an intermediate upland slope, west of Taylor’s Branch. A modern road runs about 100 meters to the southwest. The site covers 4,000 square meters of grassland, and deciduous hardwoods provide a 75% canopy. The soil has
been classified as KVB, an alluvial, stony clay, one meter in depth. The site has been impacted by erosion.

The artifact density is low; artifacts collected include the following: blue Bristol glazed stoneware, a hand-painted floral green whiteware sherd dated to the mid-nineteenth century, an aqua-green glass canning jar fragment, two fully automated bottle fragments, barbed wire, wire nails, galvanized sheet metal, cut limestone and a cast iron stove fragment with "EXCELLENT QUALITY" inscribed. Features include a limestone foundation, a hearth of cut limestone, a concrete slab, a well, and a root cellar. It has been recommended that one or more subsurface tests be conducted at the site in order to determine the extent of the deposits (Carlson et al. 1986:353).

Site 41BL573

Site 41BL573 is an outbuilding and well site dated to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and is also located in UTM Bland quadrat 35/51. Its close proximity to site 41BL571 may indicate a relationship. A limestone well with an unlined shaft and a scatter of sheet metal that possibly could have been a shed, covers 1,400 square meters. Other associated artifacts include a brown glass medicine bottle with a frozen metal cap, a clear glass refrigerator dish lid, stove parts and metal farm implements.

Site 41BL574

Site 41BL574 is an early twentieth-century farmstead, located in the Bland UTM quadrat 34/51. It is on an intermediate upland on the west side of Taylor's Branch, which is about 300 meters away. The site encompasses 7,800 square meters, and is covered with dense juniper and oak. The soil type has been classified as KVB, with BRE soils to the
west. The site has been impacted by erosion, earth-moving equipment, cattle grazing, and modern dumping activities.

Features include a house foundation, a hearth of cut limestone, and irises. This location corresponds to that of a structure identified on the 1923 USGS map for this area. The artifacts collected at this site include the following: Bristol glazed stoneware with a blue floral design, a canning jar fragment, inscribed with “BALL,” a machine-made liquor bottle fragment, a brown bottle base by Owens-Illinois Glass Co. (1940-54), a clear panel bottle fragment, red and yellow Depression glass fragments, assorted milk glass and clear glass tableware fragments, unidentified brass objects and a brass pocket knife. Other artifacts include barbed wire, barrel hoops, buckets, car parts, horse gear, wire nails, tin cans, wash tubs, enamel pots, a baby buggy wheel and a metal suitcase frame.

**Historical Documentation**

Sites 41BL571 and 41BL573 are located in the northeastern portion of the 160 acre James Clements Survey. Site 41BL574 is located in the southeastern portion of the same survey. All three sites are on property belonging to two families from 1866 to the 1940s, so they are discussed together. The field notes at the General Land Office suggest that site 41BL571 may have been the residence of the original grantee, James Clements in the 1860s (Milam Land District Files 841). His widow, Nancy Clements-Bone sold the property in 1894 to G. E. Hallmark. Site 41BL571 belonged to the Hallmarks until they sold it to R. K. Allen in 1941. Site 41BL574 was built by a member of the Hallmark family during the first decade of the twentieth century.
In November, 1862, James Clements filed a designation claiming that he had settled on a tract of vacant land located between the John Houchin Survey to the east and the William Potter Survey to the west. The following year, he appeared once more with two witnesses, J. F. Arthur and S. H. Simmons to file an affidavit of designation. With the affidavit in hand, he assisted John Allen in surveying his 160 acre preemption (Milam Land District Files 841).

James Clements was born February 8, 1799 in South Carolina. He married Rebecca Lindeville in 1824 and had eight children. After Rebecca died in 1841, Clements and his children emigrated to Texas. When they reached Cass County, Texas, the Clements received a headright of 640 acres and built a pine log house. During this time, Clements married Nancy Ann Wornel. In 1851, the family moved to McLennan County, and settled on the Bosque River. In 1854, the family moved again, 20 miles south of Waco, to a settlement called Perry Hills (future town of Moody). Two of the oldest sons, Bird and Adam, decided to stay at Perry Hills and raise sheep. In 1861, the Clements family moved to Coryell County, but eventually homesteaded on Taylor’s Branch. Clements preempted 160 acres of land and built a cedar log house with two rooms (Bishop 1958:4-7). In 1866 and 1867, James Clements rendered for taxation 10 horses and 18 head of cattle.

James Clements died in 1868 (Limmer 1988: 400-401). The 160 acre tract did not appear in the Bell County tax rolls for the next three years. However, the farm appeared in the 1870 Agricultural Census. Nancy Clements had 18 acres in cultivation, of which produced 300 bushels of corn, 15 bushels of potatoes, 15 gallons of molasses and one-half
bale of cotton. She had 12 horses, 10 cows, 15 head of cattle and 20 hogs. The farm was valued at $470.

In 1971, Nancy Clements paid taxes on the 160 acre preemption, valued at $315, 12 horses and 24 head of cattle. She occasionally appeared in the tax rolls through the 1870s and 1880s. During the 1870s, she rendered for taxation a herd of goats, along with horses and cattle.

The 1870 Census listed Nancy as the head of the household, and living with her were eight step-children and children, 39 to three years of age. Her stepson, Albert, 39, was listed as a cattle dealer. The real estate was valued at $320 and other assets, which included the house was valued at $400. Two of the children attended school at Cedar Grove two months of the year. Her neighbor to the east was John Hallmark, a 41 year old farmer, his wife and seven children from South Carolina. One of Hallmark’s sons, George E. Hallmark, 13 years of age in 1870, would later purchase the Clements’ property.

Sometime in the early 1870s, Nancy Clements married J. H. Bone, a widower with three small children who lived on his preemption to the west of the Clements grant. The notes in the General Land Office file, the 1880 Census and the Bell County tax rolls suggest that Bone and his children moved to the Clements farm, site 41BL571 and lived there until they sold the property in the mid-1890s to G. E. Hallmark. The 1880 Census listed the occupants of the Clements homestead as J. H. Bone, 45, Nancy 50, her stepdaughter, Avis, 24, from her first marriage, three of her children, ages 13 through 17, three of J. H. Bone’s children, ages 11 through 15, and a daughter, Sarah, seven, from their marriage.
The J. H. Bone farm was listed in the 1880 Agricultural Census. Eighteen acres were in cultivation, of which 10 were planted in corn and eight were planted in cotton. The farm produced 160 bushels of corn and two bales of cotton. The family had 15 hogs, 6 cows, and 10 horses. The farm was valued at $612.

The 1880 Census listed G. E. Hallmark and John D. Hallmark (G. E. Hallmark's older brother) as Bone's closest neighbors. G. E. Hallmark was 23 years old, married to Martha, 19, and they had two small children. Apparently, G. E. Hallmark was living on his father's property at the time, his homestead was located between the Bone and the John D. Hallmark farmsteads either in the J. T. W. J. Hallmark Survey or the M. Hunt Survey.

In January, 1880, Nancy's step-son, Adam Quency Clements appeared before Bell County Notary Public and filed a Certificate of Occupancy of Surviving Heirs, claiming that James Clements was a bona fide settler upon 160 acres of vacant public land. The following month, he wrote a letter to the General Land Office asking for the patent to be sent to H. E. Bradford, Notary Public of Bell County. In it, John D. Hallmark and H. B. Denman testified that James Clements was a bona fide settler and that he had established a homestead. The property was surveyed three times in 1880, but the calculations of field notes continued to exclude about six acres in the northeastern portion of the survey. Apparently, one of the 1880 surveys was considered valid and the General Land Office issued a patent to Nancy Clements-Bone and her children for 160 acres of land in June, 1880 (Milam Land District Files 841).
However, Nancy Clement-Bone discovered that the survey was incorrect -- it did not include improvements that were made to the property. She had the property resurveyed in 1882 and again in 1884. She then wrote a letter, and had it notarized in the District Clerk’s Office in Belton before H. E. Bradford. It stated that she and her children were the owners of the land, it had never been sold or transferred, and the patent with the field notes did not include the house and other improvements that were made to the property. She asked that the patent be canceled and a new patent be issued following the corrected field notes. Bradford was to forward the letter to the General Land Office, however, he lost it (Milam Land District Files 841).

Nancy Clements-Bone then wrote a second letter, stating that Mr. Bradford had made a diligent search but could not locate the letter. She again asked the Land Office to cancel the old patent and reissue a new one based on the corrected field notes. She signed this letter in front of R. F. Turner, District Clerk of Bell County on June 19, 1885. The letter was received and promptly addressed by W. C. Walsh, Commissioner of the General Land Office. On June 23, 1885, Nancy Clements-Bone received a letter from Walsh, stating that the field notes of the survey of 153 1/2 acres of land that were patented to the heirs of James Clements did not include the house and other improvements and that patent #425 had been canceled. He then issued a new patent to Nancy Clements-Bone (BCDR 51:621; Milam Land District Files 841).

Nancy Clements-Bone paid taxes on the property from 1891 through 1893, the land was valued at $430 during these years. In 1893, she rendered for taxation a wagon, 3 horses, 10 head of cattle, 14 hogs and 30 goats. The previous year, she reported 70 goats.
On January 1, 1894, Nancy Clements-Bone sold the 160 acres that had been patented to the heirs of James Clements to G. E. Hallmark for the sum of $550. He made a $200 down payment and she financed the remaining sum over a period of two years (BCDR 175:226). Nancy Bone moved with her husband to Coryell County (Stabler, personal communication).

G. E. Hallmark purchased a number of properties in Bell County around the turn of the century. In 1894, he paid taxes on 80 acres in the M. Hunt Survey, 160 acres in the J. T. W. J. Hallmark Survey, and on the 160 acres in the James Clements Survey. Hallmark also rendered for taxation, 2 wagons, 5 horses, 26 hogs and 13 head of cattle. It is uncertain who occupied the Clements-Bone farmstead after Hallmark purchased it. Possibly Hallmark leased it to one of his siblings.

Portions of the listings of Precinct 7 (the Sparta community) of the 1900 Census are illegible, therefore, it is difficult to place families on specific properties. However, the 1910 Census placed James M. Hallmark, G. E. Hallmark's second son living in the same locality as the Clements-Bone farmstead. James was 24 years old, listed as a farmer, and renting his home.

From 1896 until his death in 1938, G. E. Hallmark purchased additional tracts of land in the Cowhouse valley and in the vicinity of Killeen. The Bell County tax rolls did not list the value of each individual tract of land during this time, but assigned one value to all properties, therefore it is difficult to know if improvements were made to individual tracts of land. In 1907, after Hallmark sold 50 acres in the western portion of the James Clements Survey to W. F. Sellers, the 110 acres was individually valued at $385. In 1910,
it was valued at $470. This could possibly reflect improvements made by James M. Hallmark or his father, at site 41BL571. It is also possible that during this time, the farmstead at site 41BL574 was built by another son of G. E. Hallmark, possibly W. C. "Clem" Hallmark and his wife, Elizabeth "Maggie" Doss. She was the daughter of C. C. Doss and Hattie Doss-Vineyard-Worley. The artifact collection suggests a twentieth-century occupation.

From 1900 through 1920, Hallmark's assets averaged around 30 head of cattle, 5 horses, 15 hogs, and 2 wagons. The 1925 tax rolls listed G. E. Hallmark living in Killeen and owning over 800 acres of land in the Cowhouse valley, valued at $5,580 in 1925.

In September, 1935, W. F. Sellers conveyed the 50 acre tract in the James Clements Survey (that he had purchased from G. E. Hallmark in 1907), to Leona Hallmark, his daughter, who had married James M. Hallmark, thus reverting the 160 acre James Clements Survey back to the Hallmark family (BCDR 439:362). The deed records suggest that Leona was James' second wife.

That same month, G. E. Hallmark filed an Appointment of Trustees, recorded in Vol. 440, page 396 of the Deed Records of Bell County, stating that his sons, A. M. Hallmark, P. C. Hallmark and George B. Hallmark would represent him in all business transactions, to lease his lands, to collect the rents and to transact and attend to all of his personal affairs.

G. E. Hallmark died on February 6, 1938 at his residence in Killeen. Prior to his death, G. E. Hallmark wrote a will (dated March 26, 1929) which stated that all of his
assets be passed on to his wife, M.A. Hallmark and that his son George B. Hallmark be the executor of the estate (Bell County Probate Records 55:1).

In an affidavit filed in the Deed Records of Bell County (480:246), P. P. Wilhite and W. B. Denman, affiants, stated that Mrs. M. A. Hallmark died in Bell County on August 18, 1939. She and her husband had 13 children, all living. On December 23, 1941, W. B. Hallmark, one of Hallmark’s 10 sons, stated in an affidavit recorded in Vol. 495 page 122 of the Deed Records of Bell County, that all of the debts of his parents’ estate have been paid. He also stated that the lands north of Sparta, locally called the “Hallmark lands” were small, “consisted of pasture lands, of small value and the entire value of the property of the said Estate amounted to less than $12,000.” He also stated that this land had not been sold to R. K. Allen of Williamson County. Apparently, R. K. Allen had been negotiating with G. E. Hallmark to buy the property.

In 1942, R. K. Allen purchased from G. B. Hallmark, executor of his father’s estate, most of the family’s northern tracts in the J. L. Doss, W. Potter, McKinney and Williams, Z. T. Cartwright, J. T. W. J. Hallmark, G. C. & S. F. R. Co, G. E. Hallmark Surveys and 27 acres in the northeastern portion of the James Clements Survey, on which site 41BL571 is located, for $4,500 (BCDR 494:121). Allen paid taxes on this land, valued at $2,040 until he sold it to Walter Cloudt in 1944 for $10,000 (BCDR 523:227). From 1945 through 1953, the property value increased to $3,200.

To summarize, the 160 acre James Clements Survey consisted of two tracts of land, the 50 acre tract in the central-western portion of the survey (which W. F. Sellers purchased in 1907) and the 110 acre tract that encircled the 50 acre tract on the east. The
110 acre tract was subdivided, 27 acres in the northeastern portion, 50 acres in the center and 28 acres in the southern portion of the survey. The chain of title to these tracts of land is summarized below.

In January, 1941, W. C. Hallmark conveyed his portion of the estate, the 110 acres in the James Clements Survey, to his brother, G. B. Hallmark (BCDR 485:64). In December, 1941, G. B. Hallmark, sold 27 acres of this tract, located in the northeastern portion of the James Clements Survey, on which sites 41BL571 and 41BL573 are located, to R. K. Allen of Williamson County (BCDR 494:121). R. K. Allen sold this tract of land to Walter Cloudt in July, 1944. This deed also assigned a grazing lease to R. K. Allen dated September 23, 1942 (BCDR 523:227). The 1945 tax rolls list Walter Cloudt living in Ingram, Texas. The 27 acre tract was valued at $70.

In January, 1954, Willie M. Cloudt, widow of Walter Cloudt, sold the 27 acres along with other parcels of land to the north, a total of 1,179 acres (Tract # 1212) to the United States of America for $52,697 (BCDR 700:112).

The remaining 83 acres (which is listed in the deed records as 78 acres), consisted of 50 acres in the central-eastern portion of the survey and 28 acres along the southern boundary of the survey on which site 41BL574 is located. The 50 acres in the central-eastern of the survey were conveyed by G. B. Hallmark to James M. Hallmark for the sum of $10 in December, 1941 (BCDR 496:332). Leona, James M. Hallmark's wife had previously gained title to the 50 acres to the west of this tract from her father, W. F. Sellers in 1935. In 1945, James M. Hallmark paid taxes on two 50 acre tracts in the James Clements Survey. Both tracts were listed as having houses free of mortgage on them.
These house sites were not recorded in the 1984 Fort Hood archaeological survey.

James M. and Leona Hallmark sold the 100 acre tract (Tract # 1222) to the United States of America in February, 1954 for $4,150 (BCDR 702:38). They did retain the right to harvest all crops that were growing on the land before December 1, 1954.

The remaining southern 28 acres of the James Clements Survey on which site 41BL574 is located, was conveyed by G. B. Hallmark to W. C. Hallmark, along with 50 acres in the adjoining J. F. Cartwright Survey in June, 1941 (BCDR 494:412). In 1943, W. C. Hallmark paid taxes on the 28 acre tract in the James Clements Survey, which had been valued at $90. The tax rolls list a mortgage-free house on the property; this house site corresponds to site 41BL574. The 50 acre tract was valued at $400 through the 1940s and 1950s. W. C. and his wife, Maggie Hallmark sold the two tracts, 28 acres and 50 acres (Tract # 1220) to the United States of America in February, 1954 for $4,625 (BCDR 703:333).

Summary

Farmstead 41BL571 and the outbuilding/dump site 41BL573 were first occupied and used by the James Clements family until Nancy Clements-Bone sold the 160 survey to George E. Hallmark in 1894. Of the 13 Hallmark children, six continued to reside in Bell County after they reached adulthood. The 1910 Census suggests that James M. Hallmark, G. E. Hallmark’s second son may have lived at site 41BL571.

Site 41BL574 may have been occupied by a member of the Hallmark family. The deeds indicate that site 41BL574 was conveyed to W. C. Hallmark in 1941, but he was possibly renting it from his father as early as 1901 when he married Maggie Doss.
The W. R. Paulk--Sellers Family Farmstead, Site 41BL577

**Site Description**

Site 41BL577, defined as a domestic dwelling with possible outbuildings dates to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It covers 11,000 square meters along a wooded ridge at an elevation of 840 feet and located about 75-90 meters from an intermittent tributary of Cowhouse Creek in the Bland UTM quadat 34/51. It is presently located about 120 meters west of a major NW-SE running tank trail in an area of live oak, juniper, cacti and Texas persimmon. Three areas within the site boundaries seem to have been heavily cultivated during its occupation. The soil has been classified as DPB soil type, fair for grain, seed and grass cultivation. Today, the site has been heavily impacted by bulldozing, military vehicular traffic and erosion.

The artifact density was moderate as described by Carlson et al. (1986:354). Artifacts collected include the following: black transfer-print whiteware (late nineteenth century), a pink floral decal-decorated whiteware, a clay slipped-Bristol glazed stoneware rim of a large crock, and numerous solarized glass fragments dating from 1880-1918, milk glass and clear glass fragments, a panel medicine bottle fragment with “PREPARED MEDICINE...ST. LOUIS,” another panel bottle made of solarized glass, aqua-green glass canning jar fragments, an aqua bottle with a castor oil neck finish, a clear bottle with a frozen metal cap containing food coloring, barrel hoops, horse shoes, stove parts, hinges, wire nails, tin cans, a lightening rod, and cut limestone blocks. A possible chimney fall and a rectangular stone foundation were noted. Carlson et al. dates the site to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (1986:354).
Historical Documentation

Site 41BL577 is centrally located within the 160 acre preemption grant of J. F. Cartwright. In January, 1879, the 160 acre upland tract was surveyed by John Harvey, surveyor of Bell County for J. F. Cartwright. In February, Cartwright appeared before the Bell County Clerk with two witnesses, J. R. Jones and F. M. Defore to declare that he was a bona fide settler of vacant public domain. By virtue of this affidavit, Cartwright received a designation for the 160 acre grant (Milam Land District Files 4069). He appeared in the ad valorem tax schedules for that year; his land was valued at $160 and he had 2 horses, 1 wagon, 1 head of cattle, 15 hogs and miscellaneous property valued at $100. In the 1880 tax rolls, his livestock herd decreased and his total assessed value declined. He and his wife, Mary, are listed in the 1880 Census, he, 29, born in Georgia and she, 21, born in Texas. They had two small children, Robert, four, and Montina, one. His neighbors were his brother, Z. T. Cartwright, William Laws, and F. M. DeFore.

The Cartwright brothers must have decided about the same time that the Cowhouse valley was not to be their homes, because they both sold their preemption grants in 1880-1881. In January, 1881, J. F. Cartwright sold his property to Nathan Ensor for $100 cash and $200 to be paid in lint cotton, 1,000 pounds to be paid December 1, 1881 and 1,000 pounds to be paid in December, 1882 (Milam Land District Files 4069).

Ensor had the property resurveyed in May 1882, finding it to contain 151.8 acres. He then sold it to Eva Brown in December for $200. The State of Texas issued a patent for 151.8 acres to Eva Brown on August 14, 1885 (Milam Land District Files 4069; BCDR 375:5). Neither Ensor nor Brown appeared in the Bell County tax schedules
during these years. The J. F. Cartwright Survey was listed in Form D, Roll of Unrendered Property in Bell County for the years 1885 through 1887. However, Eva Brown and her husband, M. Brown appeared in the tax rolls owning land in seven other Bell County surveys in 1889.

Sam Parks, 38, and his wife Amanda, 25, purchased the 151.8 acre J. F. Cartwright Survey in October, 1888, from the Browns (BCDR 68:74), but defaulted on their note payments. Levi Paulk assumed the note, making payments in 1889 and 1890 to the Browns for the 151.8 acre tract (BCDR 94:224). Levi Paulk owned the neighboring Z. T. Cartwright Survey at this time. Sam Parks paid taxes on this property in 1889, valued at $300. He also had 1 wagon, 2 horses, 6 head of cattle and 4 hogs, valued at $100.

Between 1890 and 1892, Levi Paulk conveyed tracts of 50 acres each out of the J. F. Cartwright Survey to three of his sons, W. R. Paulk, J. S. Paulk and H. B. Paulk (BCDR 94:197; 94:288). Site 41BL577 is located in the middle 50 acre tract, which was conveyed to W. R. Paulk. In 1892, W. R. Paulk’s property was valued at $100, he had 1 wagon, 2 horses, and 5 head of cattle. It appears that his brother, J. S. Paulk gave his property (50 acres east of W. R. Paulk’s 50 acres) to W. R. Paulk, because in September, 1893, W. R. Paulk sold his property and the 50 additional acres in the eastern portion of the survey to W. F. Sellers (BCDR 94:290).

Within the month, W. F. Sellers sold the 100 acre tract (central and eastern tracts) in the J. F. Cartwright Survey to I. J. Tallon (BCDR 94:293; 94:294). He paid taxes on the 100 acre tract valued at $250 in 1894 and $280 in 1895. In October, 1895, I. J. Tallon
sold the centrally located 50 acre tract on which site 41BL577 is located to George W. Cole, Jr. (BCDR 104:85). It is uncertain if the site was occupied at this time. From 1896 to 1910; it was listed under Form D, Roll of Unrendered Property.

Cole retained this 50 acre tract on which site 41BL577 is located, until February, 1911, until he sold it to W. F. Sellers and his wife, Martha, for $600 (BCDR 217:334). They had been acquiring property for a number of years and may have purchased this property (which they had previously owned), for one of Sellers’ many siblings to farm. W. F. Sellers probably lived on the original tract of land he purchased in 1906 in the Z. T. Cartwright Survey, site 41BL580. During the 1910s-1920s, W. F. Sellers acquired additional acreage, two lots in Belton, and the western 50 acre tract in the J. F. Cartwright Survey. He now owned the entire J. F. Cartwright Survey. In the 1910 Census, W. F. Sellers’ two step-brothers, James, 28 and Arthur 21, both married, were living in the Sparta community, one of them possibly at site 41BL577. The 1910 Census listed James Sellers as an owner of a mortgaged farm and Arthur Sellers as a renter.

In July 1934, after the death of his wife, W. F. Sellers partitioned his property among his children -- Leone Sellers Hallmark and her husband James M. Hallmark, D. L. Sellers and his wife, Aline Sellers, Lottyte May Morgan and her husband J. D. Morgan, R. L. Sellers and his wife, Pearlie Mae Sellers, A. L. Sellers and his wife, Minnie Lee Sellers (BCDR 431:419).

The deed records suggest that A. L. Sellers received the 50 acre tract on which site 41BL577 was located because in January, 1936, he and his wife sold it to A. G. Vick and Owen P. Carpenter for $500 (BCDR 441:354). In March, 1942, W. F. Sellers, having
regained title to the 100 acre tract that Vick and Carpenter had previously purchased (central and western portions), sold it to Bertie Hutchinson for $650 (BCDR 496:9). She paid taxes on the land valued at $600 in 1943; the tax rolls refer to two house schedules on the 100 acre tract. Site 41BL577 is located in the central 50 acre tract and an unknown site must have been located in the western portion of the survey. In November 1947, Mrs. Bertie Hutchinson and her husband, Tommie Hutchinson of Val Verde County sold the property to Preston and Lucy Gobble for $1,000, financed by First National Bank of Belton (BCDR 574:377).

In 1950, the Gobbles paid the taxes on the 100 acre tract, valued at $600. They eventually sold it to E. E. and Angie Gordon for $1,800 (BCDR 627:589). The Gordon’s property was acquired by the United States of America on March 4, 1954 and recorded in Civil Action No. 1505. The Gordons received $10,500 in compensation (BCDR 702:122).

Summary

Site 41BL577, the upland farmstead situated in the middle 50 acre tract of the J. F. Cartwright Survey may have been the homestead of J. F. Cartwright from 1879 to 1881. It is certain that the site was occupied by W. R. Paulk in the early 1890s, and then possibly by tenants of George W. Cole, Jr. After it was purchased by W. F. Sellers in 1911, it was probably occupied by members of the extended family of John L. Sellers, W. F. Sellers’ father. W. F. Sellers’ son, A. L. Sellers received the property in a partition of his father’s estate in 1934. It remained in the Sellers family until it was sold in 1942.
The Hallmark Family Farmstead, Site 41BL578

Site Description

Site 41BL578, a twentieth-century farmstead, is located east of site 41BL577, on a ridge at an elevation of 840 feet, near an intermittent tributary of Taylor’s Branch, 840 meters to the east. It is located north of a historic road. The site covers an area of 52,000 square meters and 25% of the area is covered with juniper and live oak. The soil is classified as TAD, a dark brown, stony clay with limestone and chert inclusions. No structural remains are present, except for cut limestone. The site has been heavily disturbed by bulldozing, military vehicular traffic and erosion.

Artifacts collected from the surface include a pink and green floral decal design on a whiteware teapot lid, numerous Bristol glazed stoneware sherds, a soft drink bottle with an improved tooled neck finish (1875-1915), a solarized pressed glass bowl sherd (1880-1918), translucent white pressed glass tableware (1930-1940), yellow Depression glass (1930-1940), Kerr canning jar fragments that post-date 1915, a brown flask made by Anchor Hocking post-dating 1938 and clear glass tumbler fragments decorated with sunburst designs. Other artifacts include a hoe blade, an iron file, barbed wire, stove parts, bolts, and tin cans. This site appeared on the 1923 USGS map of the area.

Historical Documentation

Site 41BL578 is located within the 160 acre preemption grant of J. F. Cartwright. The documentary history of the J. F. Cartwright Survey prior to 1892 is presented in the land tract history of site 41BL577.
Between 1890 and 1892, Levi Paulk subdivided the J. F. Cartwright Survey and conveyed tracts of 50 acres each to three of his sons, W. R. Paulk, J. S. Paulk and H. B. Paulk (BCDR 94:197; 94:288). Site 41BL578 is located in the eastern 50 acre tract that was conveyed to J. S. Paulk. It appeared that J. S. Paulk conveyed the 50 acre tract to W. R. Paulk, because in September, 1893, W. R. Paulk sold his acreage and the 50 acre tract, on which site 41BL578 is located to W. F. Sellers (BCDR 94:290).

Within the month, W. F. Sellers sold the two 50 acre tracts in the J. F. Cartwright Survey to I. J. Tallon (BCDR 94:293; 94:294). He paid taxes on the 100 acre tract valued at $250 in 1894 and $280 in 1895. In January, 1896, I. J. Tallon sold the eastern 50 acre tract in the J. F. Cartwright Survey on which site 41BL578 is located, to G. E. Hallmark (BCDR 125:332). Site 41BL578 appeared to be unoccupied from 1896 to 1907; it was listed under Form D, Roll of Unrendered Property for Bell County during these years.

The 50 acre property purchased by G. E. Hallmark from I. J. Tallon in 1896 stayed in the Hallmark family until it was purchased by the U. S. Government in February, 1954 (BCDR 703:333). The Hallmark family first settled northeast of Taylor's Branch in the 1860s. John Hallmark, George's father appeared in the 1870 Census. George was 13 years-old at that time and the second oldest of seven children. In the 1880 Census, George was married and had two small children. From the location of his homestead in the census, he was living either on his father's property, a 160 acre preemption grant, or on his own 80 acre preemption grant, southeast of his father's property. Both of these preemption grants are located northeast of the J. F. Cartwright Survey. He paid taxes on the eastern 50 acre tract in the J. F. Cartwright Survey in 1908, and also on 617 acres in
seven surveys to the north, and 100 acres on Cowhouse Creek; his total assets appraised at $5,390.

G. E. Hallmark continued to pay taxes on these properties until his death in 1938. His estate was partitioned among his children in 1940, and in June, 1941, W. C. Hallmark gained title to the 50 acre tract in the J. F. Cartwright Survey on which site 41BL578 is located (BCDR 494:412). The property's assessed value was $400 and remained constant through 1953. In February, 1954, W. C. Hallmark sold the 50 acre tract along with 28 acres in the James Clements Survey to the United States of America for $4,624 (BCDR 703:333).

Summary

The 50 acre tract in the J. F. Cartwright Survey on which site 41BL578 is located, was owned by G. E. Hallmark from 1896 to 1938, and then by his son W. C. Hallmark. It is likely that site 41BL578 was occupied by one of G. E. Hallmark's children during the first half of the twentieth century. W. C. Hallmark gained title to the 50 acre tract in the J. F. Cartwright Survey in 1941, but it is uncertain if he lived on the property prior to that date. Site 41BL578 may have been rented to another Hallmark sibling or a tenant family.

The J. C. Paulk--W. F. Sellers Farmstead, Site 41BL580

Site Description

Site 41BL580 is a late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century farm/ranch complex located on an Edwards limestone upland spur, west of Taylor's Branch. It is found in the Bland UTM quadat 34/51. The 18,000 square meter site is covered with native grasses and interspersed with live oak, juniper, hackberry, and cedar elm. Two types of soil have
been classified at this site, TAD and DPB. The site has been impacted by bulldozing, military vehicular traffic and camping. A chimney fall, root cellar and stone corral are the most notable features. This site corresponds with the location of a structure noted on a 1923 USGS map of the area.

Surface collections include undecorated molded whiteware, cobalt blue transfer-printed whiteware, flow-blue decorated whiteware, a sample of a large ironstone soup bowl, Bristol glazed stoneware, a large collection of white milk glass tableware, a canning jar base and a bottle base with maker's marks and inscriptions, solarized, brown and clear glass fragments from semi- and fully- automatically produced bottles, cast iron stove parts, barrel hoops, farm machinery, horseshoes, wagon hardware, wire and cut nails, metal buckles and snaps, a toy tea pot and a harmonica.

Historical Documentation

Site 41BL580 is centrally located within the 160 acre preemption grant of Z. T. Cartwright. In January, 1879, Cartwright had John Harvey, county surveyor of Bell County survey a tract of land on which he and his family had lived for three years (Milam Land District Files 3297). They appeared in the 1880 Census, Z. T. Cartwright, 30, born in Georgia, Margaret, his wife, 25, born in Mississippi and their three children, Ida, five, Edward, three, and William, eight-months old. Cartwright employed a field hand, a 27 year old man named James Owens, at this time. F. M. DeFore and Z. T. Cartwright's younger brother, J. F. Cartwright were his immediate neighbors. In the 1880 ad valorem tax schedules, Cartwright's property was valued at $160; he had one head of cattle. In December, 1880, he and his wife transferred their property to George M. White for $350
cash, two 500 pound bales of cotton, and $100 due in December, 1881 (Milam Land District Files 3297). White, 30, also appeared in the 1880 Census, living in the vicinity with his second wife, Mary, 17, and his nine year-old daughter.

On December 17, 1881, White filed a certificate of occupancy stating that he had occupied the Z. T. Cartwright Survey for three years, and this was witnessed by two of his neighbors, F. M. DeFore and William Laws. (It is assumed that Cartwright allowed White to settle on a portion of his land.) A survey of the property was made in May, 1882 by J. W. Turner, county surveyor and White and DeFore served as chain carriers (Milam Land District Files 3297). The 1881 *ad valorem* tax schedules suggest improvements were made to the property since the value of the land increased in value to $200. That year, White reported 1 horse, 4 head of cattle and 2 hogs. White continued to live on the property through 1885 and that year, his property was valued at $250. He had 8 head of cattle, 2 horses, a wagon and farming implements valued at $220. In August, 1885, George M. White filed another certificate of occupancy, stating that he had occupied for three consecutive years, the 160 acres originally surveyed for Z. T. Cartwright (Milam Land District Files 3297).


Levi Paulk did not appear in the tax rolls for the years 1886 and 1887. In 1888, the Z. T. Cartwright Survey was listed under Form D, Roll of Unrendered Property for Bell County, valued at $600. Paulk, however, paid taxes on holdings valued at $700 in
another survey. In 1889, he rendered 130 of the 160 acres in the Z. T. Cartwright Survey, 2 horses, 1 wagon, 2 hogs and 7 head of cattle, valued at $800. The following year, he acquired additional livestock and his total value increased to $870.

In August, 1890, Levi Paulk sold 45 acres, centrally located within the Z. T. Cartwright Survey, to Sam Parks (BCDR 74:501; 75:7). Site 41BL580 is located on this property. In 1891, Parks paid taxes on the 45 acre tract, valued at $90. He also owned 1 wagon, 1 horse, 4 head of cattle, 2 hogs and farm implements valued at $210. The ad valorem schedules (1891-1894) suggest that Parks continued to live on the property through 1894. In November, Parks sold 45 acres in the Z. T. Cartwright Survey, on which site 41BL580 is located, to George W. Cole, Jr. (BCDR 96:32; 96:362).

Cole had been acquiring land in the Sparta community for a number of years. In 1887, he purchased the former Grange store in Sparta from his brother-in-law, T. E. Tomlinson and managed it for 13 years. In 1896, Cole paid taxes on 839 acres of land, valued at $7,155 and one acre located in the James Halfpenny Survey (Sparta). He had 18 horses, 4 head of cattle, 7 hogs, 4 wagons or carriages and miscellaneous goods valued at $2,500. The following year, he acquired an additional 234 acres and increased his herd to 70 head. In 1898, Cole purchased an additional 100 acres in the Sparta area, and five acres in the Salado community, south of Belton. In 1898, he sold the 45 acre tract in the Z. T. Cartwright Survey on which site 41BL580 is located, to J. C. Paulk, a son of Levi Paulk (BCDR 129:43). This purchase is reflected in the tax rolls for the following year.

The 45 acre tract that Cole purchased from Parks and then sold to Paulk’s son in 1898 was probably occupied by a member of the Paulk family during the years 1894-1898.
Cole probably rented the property to J. C. Paulk until he was able to purchase it. The 1900 Census listed J. C. Paulk as a farmer, living on a mortgaged farm between Parks’ farmstead and G. E. Hallmark’s property. J. C. Paulk paid taxes on the land in 1900, he owned 2 horses and 1 wagon. In January, 1901, he sold the 45 acres in the Z. T. Cartwright Survey, on which site 41BL580 is located, to G. E. Hallmark (BCDR 140:34).

G. E. Hallmark, like Cole, was acquiring land in the Sparta area. He owned 591 acres which included the 45 acres in the Cartwright Survey, valued at $1,820. He also had 3 horses, 50 head of cattle, 10 hogs, 1 wagon and miscellaneous property valued at $410. Hallmark’s taxable assets remained the same for the years 1902 to 1906. It is unknown which property was his homestead, although the property he owned in the Hunt Survey is listed first in the tax rolls. In November, 1906, he sold the 45 acre tract to W. F. Sellers (BCDR 140:34) and in 1907, a 50 acre tract in the James Clements Survey. W. F. Sellers’ daughter, Leona, had married G. E. Hallmark’s son, James, in 1901. The purchase of the 50 acre tract in the James Clements Survey may have been a gift to the couple. The following year, Sellers’ combined value on both tracts of land, 3 horses, 7 head of cattle, 1 wagon, farm implements and tools, was $700.

The Sellers family, headed by John LaFayette Sellers settled in Bell County after the Civil War. W. F. (Willis Franklin) was a twin, the sixth child from his father’s second marriage to Manerva Ann Curry of Tennessee. After Manerva died in 1878, John Sellers married Nancy Emma Adams of Georgia in 1880, and together they had eight more children. John Sellers died at the age of 79 at W. F. Sellers’ home in 1911 (Limmer 1988:886-887). W. F. Sellers appeared for the first time in the tax rolls in 1901. He paid
taxes on 3 horses, 1 head of cattle and miscellaneous equipment that was probably located on his father’s property. It was not until 1906 when W. F. Sellers purchased the 45 acres of land from Hallmark, that he appeared in the tax rolls as a property owner.

In 1908, W. F. Sellers had increased his assets over the previous year -- he made improvements to his homestead and acquired eight hogs. In the 1910 Census, Sellers’ farm was listed as mortgaged, he was 41, and his wife Martha, was 38. They had three children under the age of 12. During the next two years, he purchased a 40 acre tract of land in the J. L. Doss Survey to the north and added to his livestock herd, increasing his assessed value to $840. He continued to pay taxes on the 45 acre tract in the Z. T. Cartwright Survey on which site 41BL580 is located, until he conveyed it to his son, R. L. Sellers in July, 1934 (BCDR 461:66). R. L. Sellers paid the taxes on this property and an additional fifteen acres in the Z. T. Cartwright Survey until he sold it to his brother, D. L. Sellers for $500 in October, 1937 (BCDR 461:65). The ad valorem tax schedules indicated that R. L. Sellers lived at site 41BL580 from the years 1934 to 1937. W. F. Sellers had moved to Belton in 1934 and died at the age of 67 in 1950.

By 1940, D. L. Sellers had moved to Belton, but continued to pay taxes on the 45 acre tract in the Z. T. Cartwright Survey, an additional 85 acres in the same survey, 37 acres in the H. B. Paulk Survey, 160 acres in the DeFore Survey and 105 acres in the William Laws Survey, collectively valued at $1,400. In November, 1940, he sold all of the Sparta property to W. C. Talley for its appraised value of $1,500 (BCDR 483:178). In October, 1951, Talley sold the same property to J. F. Jenkins (BCDR 645:566) for
$9,100. In March, 1954, this property was condemned in Civil Action No. 1515 and Jenkins was paid $19,548 by the United States of America (BCDR 700:466).

**Summary**

The artifact assemblage dates this farmstead to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. J. F. Cartwright first resided on the 160 acre preemption with his family for a few years before he sold it to George M. White. It is uncertain if this site was the original homestead of either of these two families, since they owned the entire 160 acre survey. Levi Paulk purchased the property and then sold it to Sam Parks in 1890. Since Parks already owned land in a neighboring survey, it cannot be determined if he lived on this tract. J. C. Paulk purchased it in 1898 and he and his wife lived there for two years before they sold it to G. E. Hallmark. Since Hallmark already owned a number of properties, he may have leased it to a tenant family or to W. F. Sellers, a young man from a large family that lived south of Cowhouse Creek. W. F. Sellers purchased the property in 1906, lived on it, made improvements and expanded his land holdings in the area until he conveyed it to his son in 1934. The property stayed in the family until it was sold to W. C. Talley in 1940.

**The James T. Wiseman Farmstead, Site 41BL614**

**Site Description**

Site 41BL614 is an early twentieth-century farm/ranch complex located on an upland ridge at an elevation of 810, centrally located in the Asa Reed Survey in Bland UTM quadrat 36/50. The site covers 14,300 square meters. The soil at the site has been classified as TAD and is described as a stony clay. Live oak, juniper, and Texas
persimmon cover 50-75% of the site. A tributary of Taylor’s Branch is located 320 meters to the west. The site has been impacted by a tank trail that runs through the center of the site.

Site 41BL614 corresponds to a structure found on the 1923 USGS map for this area. Features include a stone wall, stone piles, a concentration of burned historic trash, and a hogwire corral. The artifacts collected include the following: hand-painted blue floral whiteware, solarized glass tableware (1880-1918), two condiment bottles, clear, milk glass and solarized pressed glass tableware, a Kerr canning jar, a solarized bottle made by the Illinois Glass Co. (1903-1913) and an Anchor Hocking (1920-1964) clear bottle base fragment. Other artifacts include barbed wire, chains, buckets, horse shoes, wagon hardware, furniture hinges, stove parts, latches and tin cans. The site was recommended for further archaeological testing by Carlson et al. (1986:367).

**Historical Documentation**

The history of the Asa Reed Survey, prior to 1906, is presented in the land tract history of site 41BL616. Site 41BL614, a twentieth-century farmstead, is centrally located in the Asa Reed Third Class land grant, patented to Asa Reed in March, 1871 (Milam Land District Files 2194). The census and *ad valorem* tax schedules of the time period, suggest that site 41BL414 was the second residence of James T. Wiseman after he purchased the 100 acre tract on which the site is located, from R. L. Garner in 1906 for $450 (BCDR 167:161). He had previously purchased the southern 58 acres of the same survey from George W. Cole, Jr., in 1899 and according to the tax rolls, resided there (site 41BL617) until 1908 (BCDR 134:35).
The 1900 Census placed J. T. Wiseman, 31, born in South Carolina, married to N. M. Wiseman, 24, of Texas, and their three children, ages one through eight, living at site 41BL617, situated between H. A. Worley (site 41BL618 to the south) and G. E. Hallmark (to the north). In 1906, J. T. Wiseman paid taxes on the 158 tract in the Asa Reed Survey valued at $610. At that time, he had 3 horses, 4 head of cattle, 4 hogs and a wagon, valued at $200. The following year, the assessed value of the land remained the same; however, he acquired more cattle. The tax assessments on his property remained fairly unchanged throughout the decade. In 1908, his land was valued at $900, an increase of almost $300. The tax rolls suggest that Wiseman built a new home on a bluff directly to the east of site 41BL617, centrally located and overlooking most of his property; that new homesite being site 41BL614. Site 41BL614 has been defined as a twentieth-century farmstead; few artifacts dating to the nineteenth century have been recovered there.

The 1910 and 1920 Censuses placed the J. T. Wiseman family south of G. E. Hallmark, residing at site 41BL414. From the 1910s through 1930, J. T. Wiseman's property value was assessed at $800. He acquired more wagons and/or buggies and horses during these years. The numbers of his livestock herd fluctuated, averaging 6 hogs and 4 head of cattle. The 1935 tax rolls listed a house free of mortgage situated on the 158 acre tract in the Asa Reed Survey.

In 1943, J. T. Wiseman paid taxes on one acre of land in the Josiah Taylor Survey (Sparta). He died in 1943 at the age of 77 (Fort Hood Cemetery Records). His wife paid taxes on the 158 acres in the Asa Reed Survey in 1944. In March of the following year, Mrs. J. T. Wiseman and her children sold the 158 tract of land in the Asa Reed Survey to
John W. Beall for $1,750 (BCDR 529:244). Mrs. J. T. Wiseman moved to Scurry County and the house may have been abandoned. John W. Beall probably leased the land to ranchers for grazing cattle.

John W. Beall resided in Belton, and he paid the taxes on the property until his death in January, 1947. From 1948 through 1953, Mary Beall, paid taxes on the property which was valued at $600. Besides the Asa Reed survey, Beall also owned 324 acres in other Cowhouse valley surveys. In March, 1954, Mary Beall sold 70 acres out of the Asa Reed Survey (Tract B-123) to the United States of America for $5,600 (BCDR 702:357).

**Summary**

*Ad valorem* tax schedules and the 1900 Census suggest that Wiseman’s first residence was site 41BL617, located in the lower 58 acres of the Asa Reed Survey which he purchased in 1899. In 1906, he acquired the northern 100 acres of the Asa Reed Survey and in 1908, built a new home, site 41BL614. Site 41BL614, was the homestead of the J. T. Wiseman family from 1908 through 1944, until his widow sold the 158 acre survey to John W. Beall. Beall lived in Belton, and owned acreage in the surrounding surveys. He probably used the land for grazing cattle or leased it to other ranchers.

**The Asa Reed--R. L. Garner Farmstead, Site 41BL616**

**Site Description**

Site 41BL616, located in Bland UTM quadrat 36/50, is a mid-nineteenth and early twentieth-century farm/ranch complex. It is located on an upland terrace at an elevation of 690 feet, covering an area of 2,650 square meters. A spring-fed tributary of Taylor’s Branch is located 260 meters from the site. The soil has been classified as TAD and is
described as a stony clay. Juniper, pecan, hackberry, chinquapin oak and lilac-chaste trees cover 75% of the site. The site has been impacted by wheeled military vehicles, littering and erosion.

A chimney fall, root cellar, limestone rock piles and a stone wall are the noted features described in the 1986 survey report. The artifacts collected include the following: brown transfer-printed whiteware, Albany-slipped stoneware, a bottle neck with an applied string finish (?-1845), a bottle neck with an improved-tooled finish (1870-1915), a solarized bottle base (1880-1918), and clear bottle fragments. Cut limestone, barrel hoops, farm machinery, horse shoes, stove parts, cut nails, hinges, tin cans were also found. This site was recommended for further archaeological testing by Carlson et al. (1986:368).

Historical Documentation

On October 7, 1868, Asa Reed, appeared before the Bell County surveyor, signed an affidavit stating that he had selected and improved vacant land on Taylor’s Branch. He filed the affidavit for the purpose of having the 160 acre tract surveyed to obtain a patent. That day, Reed, two of his neighbors, C. C. Doss and James Clements, and the county surveyor, George Richard, surveyed the property (Milam Land District Files 2194).

The Census of 1870 listed Asa Reed, 48 years of age, born in Tennessee and married to Margaret. They had six children, eight to 18 years of age; the younger children attended the Cedar Grove School three months of the year. Reed’s occupation was listed as a farmer and his estate was valued at $1,000.
The 1870 Agricultural Census listed 16 out of 100 acres in cultivation. Reed produced 200 bushels of corn, 10 bushels of potatoes, and one-half bale of cotton. He owned 8 cows, 15 hogs, 1 sheep and 14 head of cattle. His farm was valued at $1,450.

On May 19, 1871, Robert Gage and Sam Bishop signed an affidavit stating that the 160 acre tract surveyed in October, 1868, was the homestead of Asa Reed and that he had resided there for three years and made improvements. On June 5, 1871, Reed was granted a Third Class land grant for 160 acres of land by the State of Texas (Milam Land District Files 2194; BCDR 526:220).

In November, 1873, Reed sold 60 acres for $63, the southern portion of the survey, to C. C. Doss (BCDR T:194; Milam Land District Files 1385 & 2194). Doss had preempted a 160 acre tract south of the Asa Reed Survey of which he received a patent from the State of Texas in March, 1874.

Asa Reed first appeared in the Bell County tax rolls in 1872. The 100 acre tract of land on which his homestead, site 41BL616 was situated, was valued at $150. He had at that time 34 head of cattle and 3 horses. Over the next two years, he had acquired a large number of livestock, probably from the proceeds of the sale of the 60 acre tract: 16 horses, 35 head of cattle, and 40 goats. He had farm implements, tools and personal property valued at $120. That year, his total taxable assets were valued at $730. In 1876, he eliminated half of the goat herd and began acquiring hogs. In 1878, Reed had 60 hogs and 10 head of cattle.

The 1880 Agricultural Census of Bell County provided data on the Reed farm for the year 1879. It listed 40 of the 100 acres improved, 16 acres were planted in corn,
which produced 100 bushels, and four acres were planted in cotton, which produced one bale. Farm production for that year was valued at $275. The farm, which included the house, outbuildings and fences, was valued at $250. Reed had $25 worth of farm implements and tools. He had 30 hogs, more than any farmer in the Cowhouse valley, 5 horses, 3 milch cows, and 20 chickens. No sheep were listed. He reported producing 300 dozen eggs and 30 pounds of butter during 1879. His livestock herd was valued at $300.

In the 1880 Census, only two children were living with the Reed family, Jack, 20 and Georgia Ann, 18. Asa Reed's brother, Austin, 71, was living with the family at that time, his occupation was listed as shepherd. The 1880 Census enumerated Reed's homestead between C. C. Doss (who resided at either site 41BL617 or site 41BL618 to the south) and G. E. Hallmark (who resided on his property to the north). Through the early 1880s, Reed was engaged primarily in hog raising. By the mid-1880s, his cattle herd had dwindled to 25 and the value of his assets had fallen to $385.

The Bell County ad valorem tax schedules of 1887 through 1889 list the Asa Reed Survey under Form D, Unrendered Property for Bell County. In 1889 or 1890, Asa Reed sold the 100 acre tract to R. (Rufus) L. Garner (mentioned in Bell County Deed 120:307 concerning the southern 60 acre tract, dated October, 1895). In the Bell County 1890 ad valorem tax schedules, Garner was living on the property, valued at $400, but no taxes were assessed. The following year, Garner rendered the 100 acre tract in the Asa Reed Survey, a 40 acre tract in the William Potter Survey, 9 horses, 20 head of cattle, 15 hogs, 2 wagons, and miscellaneous property, valued at $1,300 for taxation. However, during the years 1892 through 1895, the 100 acre tract in the Asa Reed Survey was not rendered.
In 1896, W. S. Garner, an unknown relative of R. L. Garner, paid the property taxes on the 100 acre tract on which site 41BL616 was located. Improvements must have been made to the 100 acre tract in 1895, because the property increased in value to $510; its last assessed value was $400 in 1891. W. S. Garner continued to pay taxes on the property through 1900. During these years, he had a minimum number of livestock, a couple of horses, and a few head of cattle.

From 1901 through 1905, R. L. Garner paid the taxes on the 100 acre tract in the Asa Reed Survey. From 1901 through 1905, he had on the average, 2 horses, 2 head of cattle, and a few hogs, valued under $200. The property, valued at $520 in 1899, when W. S. Garner was in residence, was now valued at $370 in 1901 and remained at this valuation until Garner sold it to James T. Wiseman in September, 1906 for $450 (BCDR 167:161). R. L. Garner financed the sale; Wiseman paid $150 cash and agreed to pay seven promissory notes in the sum of $50 on the first day of January 1907 through 1912 at 8% interest.

R. L. Garner appeared in the 1910 Census, living in another portion of the county. He was 59 years of age, born in Tennessee and married to Amanda, 32, and had two children living with them. According to an affidavit filed in the Bell County Deed Records (568:50) in 1947 by T. F. Garner, a son of Rufus L. Garner, Rufus had been married three times. From his first marriage to Lizzie Garner, they had nine children (T. F. Garner, being the fifth born). After the death of Lizzie, Rufus married Amanda (Mattie) Garner and they had one daughter. After the death of Mattie, Rufus married Sallie Garner, and they had no children. It is unclear what the relationship of W. S. Garner was to R. L.
Garner, the initials do not correspond with any of the children's names listed in the family history published in Limmer (1988). W. S. Garner may have been his brother.

By following J. T. Wiseman in the tax rolls, it appeared that he moved onto the 58 acre tract he purchased from Cole in 1899, site 41BL617. The 1900 Census placed Wiseman living on property between H. A. Worley (site 41BL618 to the south) and G. E. Hallmark (to the north), which corresponds to the location of site 41BL617. In 1906, Wiseman owned 158 acres in the Asa Reed Survey; he did not take up residence at the Reed-Garner homestead, site 41BL616, but may have rented it to tenants. The 1910 Census placed the Winkley family, listed as renters, at a farmstead located on the road between J. T. Wiseman and G. E. Hallmark.

Summary

Site 41BL616 was the homestead of Asa Reed, the original grantee of the 160 acre Third Class grant, patented to him in 1871. During the early 1870s, Reed had a substantial herd of cattle, goats and horses, but by the end of the decade, he had shifted his primary interests to hog raising. He was also engaged in subsistence agriculture, and grew cotton as a cash crop. In 1890, Reed, 68 years old, having lived at site 41BL616 for 20 years, sold it to R. L. Garner. Garner resided on the property until he sold it to J. T. Wiseman in 1906. The tax rolls suggested that Wiseman did not reside on the property, but rented it to tenants. The 1910 Census placed the Winkley family renting a farm in the vicinity of site 41BL616.
The Doss--Wiseman Family Farmstead, Site 41BL617

Site Description

Site 41BL617, a property owned by the Doss and Wiseman families, is north of the Doss Cemetery (site 41BL608) and the H. A. Worley homestead (site 41BL618), in the southern portion of the Asa Reed Survey. It has been dated to the 1880s through the 1930s and is located in Bland UTM quadrat 36/50, on an lowland spur at an elevation of 635 feet. The closest water source is a tributary of Taylor’s Branch, 170 meters to the north. The soil is a tan clay subsoil, classified as KVB. The site is interspersed with live oak, juniper, hackberry and American elm and covers an area of 9,900 square meters. It corresponds with a structure found on the 1923 USGS map of the area.

The surface area of the site was heavily impacted by bulldozing, military vehicular traffic, cattle, erosion and burning. Features include a large depression and piles of burned limestone. The artifacts collected include the following: undecorated porcelain by Charles Meakin of Hanley, England (1883-1889), flow-blue decorated whiteware, red stenciled whiteware, green hand-painted whiteware, Bristol-glazed stoneware, solarized glass tableware (1880-1918), pressed clear and milk glass tableware, two soda bottle fragments, Depression glass tableware, and condiment bottles made by Hazel Atlas Glass Company and Knox Glass Company (1923-1953). A brass clip, a “Clabber Girl Baking Powder Double Acting” lid, three buckle harnesses and cut nails were also found. Other artifacts include barbed wire, car parts, wagon hardware, hinges, stove parts, wire nails, and tin cans. This site was recommended for further archaeological testing by Carlson et al. (1986:369).
Historical Documentation

Asa Reed received the patent to the 160 acre Third Class grant in June, 1871, and lived at site 41BL416 in the northeastern portion of the survey. In November, 1873, Asa Reed sold 60 acres from the southern portion of his survey to Christian Columbus Doss for $63 (BCDR T.194).

The 1870 Census listed C. C. Doss, 35, married to H. A. Doss, 21, and having at that time, two small children, William and Jesse. His estate was valued at $250. His brother, Harmon, 26, was his closest neighbor, also married and had a small daughter. They were living at an unknown site on the 160 acre preemption grant that C. C. Doss had surveyed in 1868, just south of the Asa Reed Survey. In March, 1874, C. C. Doss received the patent to the 160 preemption grant from the State of Texas (Milam Land District Files 1385).

C. C. Doss was the fourth child of Jesse and Violet Doss, natives of North Carolina, who immigrated to Texas via Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois in the early 1850s. Jesse and Violet Doss and four of their children appear in the 1860 Census living south of Cowhouse Creek. In December, 1861, C. C. Doss and his brother, Harmon, enlisted in the Confederate Army in Belton. After the war, C. C. Doss married Harriet Adeline Townsend, a native of Mississippi. They had 9 children, two died in infancy (Limmer 1988:467-468).

In 1875, Doss paid taxes on the C. C. Doss Survey, valued at $100 and the 60 acre tract in the Asa Reed Survey, valued at $50, 7 horses, 7 head of cattle and 17 goats. The following year, the appraised value of the 60 acre tract had risen to $60, suggesting
improvements to the property, possibly a new farm house. C. C. Doss may have moved his family from his original homestead in the C. C. Doss Survey to either site 41BL617 or site 41BL618, in the southwestern portion of the Asa Reed Survey during the late 1870s.

The ad valorem tax schedules for the year 1877 show Doss had eliminated his goat herd and replaced it with hogs. His neighbor, Asa Reed, had done the same. In 1879, Doss’ assets had increased; he had 30 hogs, 4 head of cattle, 4 horses or mules, a wagon and miscellaneous farm implements, valued at $420.

According to the 1880 Agricultural Census, which recorded the agricultural activities for the year 1879, C. C. Doss had only 60 acres of his total 220 acres improved. His farm, which included the house, outbuildings and fences was valued at $1,100. This figure is the highest value assessed for any of the farmsteads in the vicinity. Eighteen acres were planted in corn, which produced 300 bushels, and six acres planted in cotton, which produced one bale. The total value of his farm production was $315, the highest value assessed among the neighboring farms. The number of livestock reported was in keeping with the tax rolls. His chickens produced 40 dozen eggs and his cows produced 75 pounds of butter.

From the Fort Hood Cemetery Records, C. C. Doss died in 1881 at the age of 46 and was buried in the Doss Cemetery (site 41BL608), an acre of land located between sites 41BL617 and 41BL618 in the Asa Reed Survey.

In 1882, the appraised value of the Asa Reed 60 acre tract on which sites 41BL617 and 41BL618 are located, increased from $60 valuation to $100, new structures were built. But from 1884 through 1893, this 60 acre tract of land in the Asa Reed
Survey appeared in the tax rolls as unrendered property. This can possibly be explained by
the fact that in 1883, H. A. Doss married Berry R. Vineyard, and moved the family to
Oklahoma. She later divorced him and returned to Bell County where she later married J.
J. Worley (Limmer 1988:467; BCDR 525:404). It has speculated that when H. A. Worley
remarried, she and her husband took up residence at site 41BL618, directly to the south of
site 41BL617. The deed records, tax rolls and a 1919 Bell County School Consolidation
map listed Mrs. Worley’s residence on one acre in the southwestern corner of the Asa
Reed Survey; this corresponds to site 41BL618. Site 41BL617 was probably the
residence of her son, Joel Franklin Doss and his family.

In 1894, J. J. Worley paid the taxes on the 60 acre tract in the Asa Reed Survey
and on the 160 acres in the C. C. Doss Survey. In October, 1895, Mrs. H. A. Worley and
her children deeded the 60 acre tract to her son, Joel Franklin Doss and his wife, A. M.
Doss for $100 (BCDR 120:307). Mrs. H. A. Worley paid the taxes on the 60 acre tract
through 1898. During this time, other property on which she was assessed, included 2
horses, a few head of cattle, 1 to 2 hogs, a wagon and miscellaneous property valued
between $620 and $720.

In October, 1899, Mrs. H. A. Worley and her children sold the 60 acre tract for
the sum of $300 to George W. Cole, Jr., a large landowner in the Cowhouse valley
(BCDR 122:61). The following year, Cole also sold 58 acres (less the one acre Doss
Cemetery and the one acre Worley homestead, site 41BL618) to J. T. Wiseman (BCDR
134:35) for $450. Wiseman paid off the note in September, 1908 (BCDR 186:532).
The 1900 Census placed J. T. Wiseman living on property situated south of G. E. Hallmark and north of H. A. Worley, this corresponds to the location of site 41BL617. Wiseman paid taxes on the 58 acre tract, valued at $240, in 1900. He also owned 2 horses, 5 hogs, 1 wagon and miscellaneous farm equipment valued at $70.

From 1901 through 1905, the assessed value of the 58 acre tract remained the same, suggesting that Wiseman made no improvements to the property. The numbers of livestock that he rendered for taxation also remained fairly constant. In September, 1905, he purchased the northern 100 acres in the Asa Reed Survey that bordered his property from R. L. Garner for $450 (BCDR 167:161).

After J. T. Wiseman purchased the 58 acres in 1900, he moved onto the farmstead at site 41BL617. It has been speculated that in 1907 or 1908, he built a new home east of 41BL617. If Wiseman moved to a new homestead (site 41BL614) in 1908, as the tax rolls may indicate, it is uncertain who lived at site 41BL617 after that date. The 1910 Census recorded a William Wiseman, 42, J. T. Wiseman’s brother, renting a homestead near him; this may be site 41BL617. The 1920 Census also listed V. L. Wiseman, 28, and a J. E. Wiseman, 46, as renters living near J. T. Wiseman. Since J. T. Wiseman owned the property and continued to pay taxes on it until his death in 1944, it is assumed that the homestead was leased to members of his family.

In 1943, J. T. Wiseman paid taxes on one acre of land in the Josiah Taylor Survey, probably an acre lot in Sparta. He died in 1943 at the age of 77 (Fort Hood Cemetery Records). His wife paid taxes on the 158 acres in the Asa Reed Survey in 1944. In March of the following year, Mrs. J. T. Wiseman, now a resident of Scurry County, along with
her children, sold the 158 tract of land in the Asa Reed Survey to John W. Beall for $1,750 (BCDR 529:244). It is likely that after the death of her husband, Mrs. J. T. Wiseman moved away and the house was abandoned. John W. Beall probably leased the land to ranchers for grazing cattle.

John W. Beall resided in Belton, and he paid the taxes on this property until his death in January, 1947. From 1948 through 1953, Mary Beall, paid the taxes on the property which was valued at $600. Besides the 158 acre Asa Reed Survey, Beall also owned 324 acres in other Cowhouse valley surveys. In March, 1954, Mary Beall sold 70 acres out of the Asa Reed Survey (Tract B-123) to the United States of America for $5,600 (BCDR 702:357).

**Summary**

The 60 acre tract on which site 41BL617 is located, was owned by the Doss family from 1873 through 1899. It has been speculated that site 41BL617 was the homestead of C. C. Doss and his family. In 1894, Mrs. H. A. Worley, C. C. Doss’ widow conveyed the property to her son, Joel Franklin Doss, but Mrs. Worley continued to pay the taxes on the 60 acre tract until the family sold it in 1899 to George W. Cole, Jr. The following year, Cole sold 58 acres to J. T. Wiseman. Wiseman lived on the site until he moved to a new homestead around 1908. The 1910 and 1920 Censuses listed a renter, a relative of J. T. Wiseman, living at site 41BL617. Wiseman continued to pay taxes on the property until his death in 1944. In 1945, J. T. Wiseman’s widow sold the property to John W. Beall. The artifacts collected at the site suggest continuous occupation from the 1880s through the 1930s, placing both the Doss and Wiseman families at site 41BL617.
The H. A. Worley Farmstead, Site 41BL618

Site Description

Site 41BL618, a late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century farmstead of C. C. Doss’ widow, Harriet, is located in the southwestern corner of the Asa Reed Survey. It is situated on an lowland spur, 150 meters east of Taylor’s Branch and at an elevation of 635 feet. It covers an area of 6,000 square meters. Two soils have been classified at the site, BRE and KVB. The site has been impacted by military vehicular traffic, cattle, and erosion. The location of this site corresponds with a structure found on the 1936 highway map for Bell County at the intersection of two roads. Site 41BL618 is located in the Bland UTM quadat 36/50.

Features encountered include a chimney fall, root cellar and a flower bed of irises and roses. The artifacts collected during the initial survey in 1984 include Albany clay-slipped stoneware, two solarized panel bottles (1880-1918), two snuff bottles, cut nails, wire nails, hinges, barrel hoops, kettle parts, stove parts, barbed wire, window glass and cut limestone. This site has been recommended for further archaeological testing by Carlson et al. (1986:370).

Historical Documentation

C. C. Doss, was the fourth child of Jesse and Violet Doss, natives of North Carolina, who immigrated to Texas via Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois in the early 1850s. Jesse and Violet Doss and four of their children appear in the 1860 Census living south of Cowhouse Creek. In December, 1861, C. C. Doss and his brother, Harmon, enlisted in the Confederate Army in Belton. After the war, C. C. Doss married Harriet Adeline
Townsend, a native of Mississippi. They had nine children, two died in infancy (Limmer 1988:467-468).

The 1870 Census listed C. C. Doss, 35, married to H. A. Doss, 21, and having at that time, two small children, William and Jesse. His estate was valued at $250. His brother, Harmon, 26, was his closest neighbor, married and had a small daughter. Both families were living on a 160 acre preemption grant that C. C. Doss had surveyed in 1868 by G. W. Walton, just south of the Asa Reed Survey. In March, 1874, C. C. Doss received a patent to the 160 preemption from the State of Texas (Milam Land District Files 1385). The previous year, C. C. Doss had purchased a 60 acre tract in the Asa Reed Survey directly to the north for $63 (BCDR T:194).

In 1875, Doss paid taxes on the 60 acre tract in the Asa Reed Survey valued at $50, and 7 horses, 7 head of cattle and 17 goats. The following year, the value of the 60 acre tract rose to $60, suggesting slight improvements to the property, possibly outbuildings or corrals for livestock. In 1877, he eliminated the goat herd and replaced it with hogs. His neighbor, Asa Reed, had done the same. In 1879, Doss' assets had increased; he had 30 hogs, 4 head of cattle, 4 horses or mules, a wagon and miscellaneous farm implements and tools valued at $420. The appraised value of the 60 acre tract increased to $100 in 1882, suggesting a house structure was probably built then (either site 41BL617 or site 41BL618).

According to the 1880 Agricultural Census, which recorded the agricultural activities for the year 1879, C. C. Doss had only 60 acres of the total 220 acres improved (160 in the C. C. Doss Survey and 60 acres in the Asa Reed Survey). His farm, which
included the house, outbuildings and fences, was valued at $1,100, quite a difference from
what he rendered for taxation to the county. This figure is the highest value assessed for
any of the farmsteads in the vicinity. Eighteen acres were planted in corn, which produced
300 bushels, and six acres planted in cotton, which produced one bale. The total value of
his farm production was $315, the highest value assessed among the neighboring farms.

C. C. Doss died in 1881 at the age of 46 and was buried in the Doss Cemetery, an
acre of land, just north of site 41BL618, in the Asa Reed Survey. In 1883, his widow, H.
A. Doss paid the taxes on the 60 acre tract, valued at $120. From 1884 through 1893,
this 60 acre tract of land in the Asa Reed Survey appeared in the tax rolls as unrendered
property. According to family records, after the death of her husband, H. A. Doss married
Berry R. Vineyard and moved her family to Oklahoma. Some sources say that he was an
abusive man, caused the death of two of her children. She divorced him and moved back
to Bell County, where she married J. J. Worley (Limmer 1988:467; BCDR 525:404).

In 1894, J. J. Worley, paid taxes on the 60 acre tract in the Asa Reed Survey and
on the 160 acre C. C. Doss Survey. In October, 1895, the heirs of C. C. Doss deeded the
60 acre tract to Joel Franklin Doss and his wife, A. M. Doss for $100 (BCDR 120:307).
However, the taxes were paid by H. A. Worley, and she continued to pay them until 1898.
She also paid taxes on 60 acres in the western portion of the C. C. Doss Survey. Other
property on which she was assessed included 2 horses, 3 head of cattle, 2 hogs, a wagon
and miscellaneous property valued at $680.

In October, 1899, the Doss children and Mrs. H. A. Worley sold the 60 acre tract
for the sum of $300 to George W. Cole, Jr., a large landowner in the Cowhouse valley
(BCDR 122:61). Mrs. H. A. Worley continued to live on the one acre tract, site 41BL618, because, the following year, Cole sold it back to her for $1 (BCDR 140:229). Cole also sold the remaining 58 acres (less the one acre Doss Cemetery) to J. T. Wiseman for $450 (BCDR 134:35). Wiseman paid off the note in September, 1908 (BCDR 186:532).

In 1899, H. A. Worley paid taxes on one acre of land, on which site 41BL618 is located and 60 acres in the C.C. Doss Survey, and two head of cattle. The following year, she paid taxes on the one acre in the Asa Reed Survey, but her holding in the C.C. Doss Survey was listed as 40 acres. In the 1900 Census she is listed as a widow, living with her two daughters, Maggie Doss and Hattie Vineyard. The 1910 Census also listed her as a widow, living with her daughter Hattie Boyd.

Mrs. Worley continued to reside at site 41BL618 through the 1910s. The one acre tract of land on which site 41BL618 is situated is listed under her name on the 1919 consolidation map of the Cedar Grove-Sparta Common School District. A pension application was filed by H. A. Worley in 1930 for Civil War service of her first husband, Christian Columbus Doss. In that application she stated that she was married to Berry R. Vineyard until his death in 1895, and that she had never remarried. There were no marriage certificates in Bell County for any of her marriages. She died in April, 1931 at the age of 82 and was buried in Morgan, Texas (Limmer 1988:467).

Mrs. H. A. Worley's name appeared again in a warranty deed dated August 1945, selling 40 acres of land in the western portion of the C.C. Doss Survey to the Hallmark family (BCDR 532:622). As to what happened to the homestead after her death, is unknown. Apparently it was purchased by John W. Beall, who purchased the 158 acre
Asa Reed Survey from J. T. Wiseman in March, 1945 (BCDR 529:244). John W. Beall died in January, 1947, leaving no will. The one acre tract was included in the conveyance of the 160 acres of the Asa Reed Survey from Mrs. Rebecca J. Beall of Tyler County, the mother of John W. Beall to Robert Nelson Beall. The taxes on the property were paid by Mary Beall through 1953; the property being valued at $600. Mary Beall sold 70 acres out of the Asa Reed Survey to the United States of America in March, 1954 for $5,600 (BCDR 702:146).

Summary

Site 41BL618 was the farmstead of C. C. Doss’ widow, H. A. Worley. The tax rolls suggest that she and her third husband, J. J. Worley were living at the site in 1895. The Bell County Deed Records, the 1900 Census and a 1919 county school district map listed her living on a one acre farmstead in the southwestern corner of the Asa Reed Survey. She continued to reside at site 41BL618 through the 1920s. Eventually the property became part of the tract that was sold to the United States of America by Mary Beall, heir of John W. Beall.
CHAPTER V

THE ARTIFACT COLLECTION

Things, Walter Prescott Webb described in *The Great Frontier* (1964), are objects in motion. He quotes a 1924 article published in *The Atlantic Monthly* entitled “Things are in the Saddle,” in which the author, Samuel Strauss observed that modern America, its ideology and its institutions are dependent on “things.” The artifacts collected at the nineteenth- and twentieth-century farmsteads of the Sparta community represent participation in a market economy that was transforming the nation at the time. Leone and Potter (1988:19) describe the social context of this time period as the “culture of capitalism.” Orser and Fagan (1995:90) define the artifacts of capitalism as commodities, mass-produced for sale, objects created specifically for exchange.

Artifacts are not seen “as just a passive product of economic behavior, but as an instrumental component of symbolic actions” (Beaudry, Cook and Mrozowski 1996:294). They are tangible incarnations of human relationships that embody the behaviors and the attitudes of the larger society to which they belonged. Henry Glassie, a folklorist, sees artifacts as “meaningful things.” His work influenced the thinking of James Deetz, who viewed artifacts as material manifestations of a hidden, cultural structure. According to Deetz (1977), each culture has structural rules, a mind-set, of which the members may not even be aware (Beaudry, Cook and Mrozowski 1996:272).

In this chapter, sherds of broken whiteware, ironstone, stoneware, glass tableware and bottles from 11 farmsteads in the Sparta community will be described and examined.

The collection was acquired during a pedestrian survey in 1983 and 1984,
conducted by the Archeological Research Laboratory of Texas A&M University. A small number of diagnostic artifacts were collected from the surface of each site, and therefore, the collection has limited analysis potential. However, the artifacts have served as chronological markers for each site. The most striking characteristic of the artifacts is their uniformity, a reflection of the emergence of the modern, market economy. The ceramic and glass tableware provide insights on the popularity of tableware of the time and reveal the wide variety of forms and styles from which the consumer could choose. Decorated whiteware reveals individual preferences and personal tastes and are rarely repeated across the community. The collection of bottles reflect the vast array of consumer products, most of them from the Northeast and Midwest, that were available to the rural central Texas farmer. As a whole, the Sparta collection, though meager as it is, provides insights into late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century farm life. Appendix II presents two tables listing the distributions of ceramic and glass artifacts found at the historic farmsteads.

Ceramics

Only one of the ceramic sherds collected from the Sparta sites had a maker’s mark. Therefore, no data is available on the manufacturers, the places of manufacture and corresponding dates of the ceramic collection. By examining a number of archaeological reports produced in Texas over the last 20 years (Earls et al.1993; Jurney and Moir 1987; Skinner and Conners 1979; Raab 1982), a number of manufacturers have been identified. Ceramics found at these sites were manufactured by J. & G. Meakin Ltd. (part of the Wedgwood group), Arthur J. Wilkinson Ltd. and the Doric China Co. of Staffordshire, England; Harker Pottery Co. and Homer Laughlin China Co. of East Liverpool, Ohio, a
supplier to Sears and Roebuck & Co.; Edwin M. Knowles China Co. of Newell, West Virginia, Taylor Smith Taylor China Co. of Chester, West Virginia and Wallace China Co. in Los Angeles, California.

**Stoneware**

Utilitarian stoneware vessels were an important part of rural life in central Texas. The assemblage is represented by 15 sherds from 13 sites within the Sparta community. Stoneware vessels are utilitarian in nature, such as crocks, jugs and butter churns. Stoneware is a hard paste, non-porous ware that has been fired at a higher temperature than whiteware. It is manufactured from naturally occurring clays that vitrify at 1,200 to 1,300 degrees centigrade. The paste colors usually fall within the ranges of gray and tan (Skinner 1985: 7-2).

Stoneware is classified by its finish. Four types of stoneware glazes were produced during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These are salt glaze, alkaline glaze, natural clay slip and Bristol glaze. Stonewares pre-dating 1900 generally have a salt-glaze which is clear and has an “orange peel” finish. Interiors are often slipped with clay, using imported clay from Albany, New York, or local clays. The Albany type has been ubiquitously used in literature to include both Albany slips and local natural clay slips. A slip has a cream or thick lotion-like consistency and is the color of the clay body used to make it. By 1875, salt glazed vessels were being replaced by slip glazed vessels in northern Texas. Interior and exterior slipped stoneware became common between 1870 and 1900. Five examples of this type are represented in the collection (site 41BL577, Sellers property; site 41BL616, Reed-Garner farmstead; site 41BL618, the Worley farmstead).
Another nineteenth-century stoneware, alkaline glazed stoneware, was the least expensive to produce and was popular among families that had immigrated from the lower Southern states. To some, it was not popular, because of its runny, molasses-like appearance (Lebo 1988:275-278). Salt, salt and clay combinations, and alkaline glazed stoneware are found at other historic sites in Texas, but none are part of the collection.

After 1900, Bristol glazed stoneware became more common; it is identifiable as a thick creamy white glaze that was used both on the exterior and the interior of vessels (Carlson et al. 1986:481). This type was introduced in the United States in the 1880s and became popular in the South around 1900. Early Bristol glazes were used in conjunction with a natural clay slip on the shoulder, mouth and interior of vessels. This type of glazing usually occurred on syrup jugs or mixing bowls. Two examples of this type are represented in the collection (site 41BL443, dump on Walton-Robertson farmstead and site 41BL571, Clements farmstead). One stoneware vessel from site 41BL443 is a tea or coffee pot. It has a cross-hatched brown exterior and a Bristol interior glaze dating to the late nineteenth-century. Around 1920, Bristol glazes were used on the interior and the exterior surfaces. Decorations were sometimes added in forms of blue bands, sponged and spattered designs (Lebo 1988:278). Examples of blue Bristol glazed stoneware are represented (site 41BL578, Hallmark property; site 41BL580, Sellers property, and site 41BL617, Doss-Wiseman property) and an example of a blue sponged floral design was found at site 41BL574, a Hallmark farmstead. The most predominant stoneware type in the Sparta collection consists of exterior and interior Bristol glazed stoneware, which came into use after 1920.
Lebo's examination of stoneware from historic sites in north-central and east Texas reveal several trends. Salt glazed stoneware was recovered primarily from pre-1865 sites; and alkaline glazed stoneware was most frequently found at sites that were occupied by families that immigrated from the lower South, owned slaves or were themselves freed slaves and which predated 1870. Natural clay slip vessels and clay slip-Bristol combinations were popular after 1890. Interior and exterior Bristol vessels began to appear around 1920. These glaze styles were all produced in Texas during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but after rail service became available, stoneware and glass containers were imported from the Midwest. Between 1920 and the Depression, most of the Texas potteries closed (1988:286-291). The Sparta stoneware assemblage fits fairly well within these trends. Although the Sparta area was settled in the 1850s, no salt glazed stoneware is represented in the small collection. None of the families from the lower South that settled the area were slave holders or freed slaves, so the tradition of using alkaline stoneware was not established. Clay slip stoneware and clay slip combined with a Bristol glaze dating to the late nineteenth century is found. And as previously mentioned, the interior and exterior Bristol glazed stoneware, is well represented.

**Whiteware**

Whiteware is a refined earthenware made from a mixture of white-burning clays and is fired at 1,135 to 1,180 degrees centigrade (Skinner 1985:7-2). It is identified by its white paste and a clear, colorless glaze, which lacks the greenish and yellowish tints of creamware and the bluish tints of pearlware which were produced in the late eighteenth through the middle nineteenth centuries. Whiteware began replacing pearlware around
1820 and continued to be produced throughout the century (Price 1979:11). Whiteware is the most common ceramic ware recovered from the Sparta farmsteads. Two examples of ironstone are included in the collection, a thick rim of a large platter with a molded decoration and a base of a soup colander. Ironstone has been defined as a refined earthenware having a harder white paste than whiteware. It became available in the decades following the Civil War (South 1974:247-248; Fairbanks 1974: 77). South has proposed a single category “Whiteware/Ironstone,” and Price suggests that ironstone should be considered a variety of whiteware (Price 1979:12).

Whiteware was decorated utilizing a wide range of methods and motifs and are represented in the Sparta collection. Edge-decorated, annular, sponge-decorated, hand-painted, transfer-printed, decal-decorated will be briefly discussed and placed within Miller’s (1980) classification system. Miller classified ceramic decorations into four classes of value, based on the skill to produce the type of design (Earls et al.1993:535). Undecorated wares are placed in level one.

Edge-decorated wares consist of a painted band around the rim of a vessel. The rim generally has a molded decoration over which color has been applied, the most common being “shell-edge.” Molded decorations were produced during construction of the vessel and do not constitute an additional step during production. Edge decorations, shell-edging and banding did not require great artistic skill and were, therefore, not expensive. Miller placed this type of decoration in the second level (Earls et al.1993:535). A “shell-edge” whiteware sherd is represented in the collection (site 41BL469). It has a feather-like molding along the rim and is painted blue. This sherd may well have belonged
to the family of G. W. Walton, Jr., or Thomas C. Robertson who occupied the site from
1880 through 1895.

Annular ware is characterized by multiple bands that occur below the rim of the
vessel, usually on a bowl or mug. Some annular wares exhibit an impressed ring, made
from an engine-turned mold (Carlson et al. 1986:477) An example of an annular ware was
found at site 41BL616, the Reed-Garner-Wiseman farmstead.

Spongeware, sometimes called spatterware, has paint applied with a sponge,
usually in bright red, green, blue or lavender that may cover the entire vessel. Spongeware
was first introduced in the late 1820s and continued to be used until 1860. Cut-sponge
wares are the same except that a design has been cut from the sponge and stamped on the
vessel, usually with a single floral or geometric motif repeated across the vessel. Cut-
sponge decorated wares were introduced in the late 1840s and early 1850s (Price
1979:20). Miller places sponge and cut-sponge decorated wares in level two. Examples
of cut-sponge decorated whiteware are represented in the Sparta collection. One is a cup
or bowl with a red and blue floral design, the other is a plate with blue scrolls stamped
along the rim, both from site 41BL469, the homestead of Z. T. Cartwright, Tomlinson,
Dunn, Sliger and Whalen during the late nineteenth century.

Transfer-printed decorations are applied with an inked waxed paper on which the
design was transferred from a copper plate engraving. Prior to 1830, blue was the
predominant color, but a wide range of colors, including red, purple, lavender, green,
brown and black came into use in the 1840s (Price 1979:19). Nearly all of the nineteenth-
century transfers were open patterns of vines, leaves, and springs of flowers with
undecorated space between the design elements. Green was the most frequent color used. These wares date between 1860 and 1910 (Moir 1988:258). Miller placed transfer ware in the fourth, or highest category (Earls et al.1993:535). In the Sparta collection, cobalt blue (site 41BL580, Paulk-Sellers farmstead, 1891-1900), black (site 41BL577, Sellers farmstead), red (site 41BL577), and brown (site 41BL616, Reed-Garner farmstead) transfer wares are represented.

Flow-blue decorated whiteware consists of painted or transfer-printed designs on vessels in which the color has flowed out or bled into the surrounding portions of the vessel. Price’s research suggests that “flown blue” decorated wares were available in the 1840s and Carlson notes its reappearance in the 1890s (Price 1979:22; Carlson et al. 1986:479). One flow-blue decorated sherd was found at site 41BL580, the farmstead of J. C. Paulk from 1891 to 1900.

Hand-painted whiteware predominates in the Sparta collection. The majority of the decorations consist of floral designs in bright green, gold, black, pink, and red (site 41BL571, Clements farmstead; site 41BL577, Sellers farmstead; site 41BL616, Reed-Garner farmstead; and site 41BL617, Doss-Wiseman farmstead). Two sherds in the collection are hand-painted over the glaze and portions of the design have worn off (site 41BL442). Designs consist of polychrome floral groupings, green leaves painted below a black rim, green sprigs, red flowers and gold stripes. One whiteware sherd had a red stenciled floral and leaf design (site 41BL617). These designs were painted onto tea cups, tea pots or sugar bowls, plates and bowls. Hand-painted designs in bright colors were introduced in the 1830s and continued through the 1860s (Price 1979:21; Hume 1970).
Miller places hand-painted wares in the fourth category since a higher level of skill is needed to reproduce designs from piece to piece in a matching set (Earls et al. 1993:535). Three examples (site 41BL443, dump and site 41BL617, Doss-Wiseman farmstead) of gold rim bands are found in the collection. Moir notes that gold rim banded decorations generally dates from 1900 onward (1988:257).

Only one undecorated whiteware rim sherd is represented in the collection (site 41BL580, Sellers farmstead). The molded designs, or repousse', are found along the rims in the forms of dots, scrolls and lines. This decoration is found on the earliest whiteware (Moir 1988:260). As previously mentioned, Miller places undecorated whiteware in the lowest category. Carlson et al. notes that a trend towards undecorated whiteware began in the mid-1850s and continued until 1930 (1986:479).

Decal decorated wares, often called decalomania, are also represented in the collection. The decal decorated ware is a form of decoration that occurs in monochrome and polychrome designs that are placed over whiteware glazes and have a tendency to wear off with use. Moir notes that pink and red roses with green leaves were the most typical patterns found in north-central Texas sites. He also notes that decal-decorated wares were available in the United States around 1890, and became popular through the 1920s (1988:257-260). Carlson et al. suggests a different decade of popularity in Texas, the 1930s (1986:479). Miller places decal-decorated wares in the third category. Two examples of decalomania have pink and green floral motifs, were found at site 41BL577, the Sellers farmstead and site 41BL578, a Hallmark property: Moir found similar patterns for sale in the 1902 and 1906 Sears, Roebuck and Co. catalogues (1988:261).
**Yellowware**

Two sherds of yellowware were found at site 41BL578 (J. S. Paulk-Hallmark farmstead). Yellowware is a light sandy yellow semi-refined earthenware that is represented by mixing bowls and chamber pots (Moir 1988:255).

**Porcelain**

Porcelain is the most refined type of ware produced. It is fired at very high temperatures (over 1,300 degrees centigrade) and vitrified to a very hard translucent, impermeable state (Skinner 1985:7-2; Carlson et al. 1986:481). Decal decorations are popular on this ware; one example of a green stripe decaled over the glaze was found at site 41BL442 (tenant farmstead) and a polychrome floral design was recovered from site 41BL617 (Doss-Wiseman farmstead). An example of a porcelain jar or container with a lid is represented in the collection from site 41BL443, a dump site on G. W. Walton, Jr. and T. C. Roberston’s property. It has the letters “AND MARS 390n ERMANY ½ M” molded on the side of the vessel. Another has a green band decaled over the glaze. Other examples include a blue floral-transfer design from site 41BL617, the Doss-Wiseman farmstead. This sherd is the only sample with a maker’s mark: “CHAR...HAN ENGLAND.” The word “England” was used on products after 1890 (Cushion 1990:138).

**Glassware**

The glassware collected from the surface, like the ceramic artifacts that represent the Sparta community in this study, have limited value other than providing dates to the historic sites. Like the ceramics described above, their very presence mirrors the growth
of the Industrial Revolution in this country and the penetration of commercial systems of
distribution and transportation of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In 1840, there were 78 glass factories in the United States, a number that doubled
over the next 20 years. This growth is attributed to a number of factors, first being the
improvement in manufacturing techniques, second, the development of mass
transportation systems, and third, the discovery of food preservation techniques. These
factors greatly increased the demand for glass bottles, jars and tableware (Lorrain
1968:35-38). During the nineteenth century, three glass-making regions produced the
bulk of glass used in the United States. These regions were the Mid-Atlantic States, New
England, and the Midwest. The glass industry became one of the largest and most
important industries in the United States (McKearin and Wilson 1978:68).

Tableware

A major invention in the glass industry was the pressing machine, patented in
1827. It enabled glass manufacturers to produce large quantities of attractive, inexpensive
tableware. Pressed glass is identified by the impressed patterns on the exterior of the
vessel and a smooth interior surface. By 1845, pressed glass was common in American

Clear, solarized and milk-white pressed glass tableware is well represented in the
collection. Eight of the 11 sites yielded samples of pressed glass tableware. The majority
of these fragments are of tumblers (drinking glasses) and are clear in color and have a
pressed sunburst and ray design. Solarized glass fragments of tumblers were found at sites
41BL577 (Sellers farmstead) and 41BL614 (Wiseman farmstead), thus dating these sites
to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Seven sites yielded pressed fragments of milk-white serving bowl fragments, a popular glassware produced form the 1890s to 1960 (Fike 1987:13).

During the Depression, pressed glass tableware was mass-produced and distributed. Most Depression glass is pale pink or pale green, but other colors, such as yellow, blue and clear were also produced during this time (Carlson et al.1986:483). The designs on Depression glass were accomplished through the use of hydrofluoric acid which attacks the glass. Before the acid is applied to the glass, the parts that are not to be etched must be covered with acid-resisting substances such as beeswax, paraffin or rosin through which the design was cut, or by a copper plate into which the design has been cut (Munsey 1970:51). Depression glass was found at five sites. The majority of these fragments have floral designs and are yellow, opaque green, and white. One is a fragment of a large serving platter, the others are fragments of bowls, cups, and plates. Two examples of pressed refrigerator glass fragments from two dump sites 41BL443 and 41BL573, and two pressed glass ash tray fragments from site 41BL574, the W. C. Hallmark farmstead, are found in the collection.

Bottles

The production of free blown glass bottles ceased around the middle of the nineteenth century with the growing popularity of regular shaped, mold-formed vessels. Between 1840 and 1850, the two piece bottle mold began to replace the three piece mold. The mold lines on a bottle made in a two piece mold run from the base up to the neck before fading out. The disappearance of the mold lines on the upper neck is due to the
reheating of the neck to apply a lip. Around 1850, a lipping tool replaced the simple laid on ring of molten glass. The mold lines on the neck of a bottle made with a lipping tool were removed and the glass had a swirled appearance due to the rotation of the bottle within the device. In 1857, the snap case was invented. It replaced the pontil rod for holding bottles while the neck and lip were finished. A bottle made with a snap case would not have a pontil mark on the base and its sides may have slight indentations where the bottle had been clamped in the device (Lorrain 1968:39-40).

In 1867, the first lettered panel bottles appeared on the market. These bottles were most often used for patent medicines, bitters and tonics (Fike 1987:8) Panel bottles were usually square or rectangular bottles with recessed panels on one or more of the sides with raised or embossed letters, describing the contents and the manufacturer. Initials of the bottle manufacturer were often impressed on the base of the bottle. Canning jars with zinc caps were patented in 1858, also became common. Kerosene lamps began to appear in the 1860s and milk bottles in the mid-1880s. (Lorrain 1968:40-44).

Rectangular panel bottles and patent medicine bottles were found at six sites. Colors include aqua-green, brown, solarized and clear. An aqua colored panel bottle fragment with impressed letters spelling the words “PREPARED MEDICINE” and “ST. LOUIS” was found at site 41BL577, W. F. Sellers’ farmstead. Site 41BL580, also a property of W. F. Sellers, yielded a solarized patent medicine bottle with an applied lip, dating that site to the nineteenth century. Another panel bottle found at that site has the word “CHATTANOOGA” on the side. Two similar bottles with the same maker’s mark were found in the mitigation of the O. H. Ivie Reservoir in the early 1990s. The
Chattanooga Bottle and Glass Co. was organized in 1901 and made bottles for beverages, liquor and proprietary medicines (Toulouse 1972:108-109). Site 41BL618 (Worley farmstead) yielded two fragments of a solarized panel bottle with partial inscriptions on the side. The only example of a three piece post bottom mold found in the collection is from site 41BL616, the Reed-Garner-Wiseman farmstead. It is a panel bottle made of solarized glass, and has a beveled base with two seams extending out from the base and running up two of the sides (Carlson et al. 1986:483). One example of a medicine bottle other than the panel bottle shape is that of a castor oil bottle found at site 41BL577 (Sellers farmstead). It was made of aqua-green glass, had a short neck and a ring or oil finish.

Some nineteenth-century bottle types can be identified by their contents. Snuff is one example. It is a preparation of tobacco, coarsely ground into a granulated or powdered form. The tobacco was fermented for several months with salt and aromatic substances such as oils of cinnamon, nutmeg, lavender and rose water. Many types of medicated and unmedicated snuff were available. Snuff bottles were made in two piece molds, usually of green, olive-green and brown glass. Snuff bottles are rectangular in form with chamfered corners (McKearin and Wilson 1978:259-261). Three snuff bottles made of brown glass were found at sites 41BL442 (tenant farmstead) and 41BL618 (Worley farmstead).

Other nineteenth-century bottles that were produced on a large scale were bitters bottles. Bitters are prepared from steeping roots, barks and herbs in brandy or spirits. They were extremely popular in the last half of the nineteenth century. They were
packaged in medicine bottles and vials, cylindrical, or rectangular in shape and in many shades of brown, amber, green and aqua-green glass. The neck of most bitters bottles have a tool-formed deep flat collar and they usually hold between five and 10 ounces (McKearin and Wilson 1978:300). No identifiable bottle fragments of bitters bottles were found, but it is likely that bitters were purchased and consumed in the community.

A modern form of a medicine bottle was found at site 41BL443 (dump). It is a threaded Owens-Illinois medicine two ounce bottle with “DURAGLAS” in script impressed on the base. This bottle dates from 1929-1954. Another Owens-Illinois bottle with a frozen metal cap, small, oblong and brown in color, dates to the 1930s (Toulouse 1972:406) was found at site 41BL573 (dump). A similar brown bottle fragment was found at site 41BL574, a Hallmark property. A bottle from site 41BL443 has been identified as a flask-type oval bottle manufactured by the Knox Glass Bottle Co. of Knox, Pa. dating from 1924 to 1968. The “K” in a keystone design indicates that the bottle was made in the Knox, Pa. plant. This company produced bottles for proprietary medicines and liquors (Toulouse 1972).

Canning or storage jars are well represented in the collection. Seven sites have recognizable canning jar fragments, and five have identifiable maker’s marks. A number of unidentified thick, aqua-green and clear glass fragments from the collection could be the remains of canning or storage jars. The glass companies represented are Kerr, Ball, Hazel Atlas and Three Rivers. Kerr canning jar fragments are found at sites 41BL578 (Hallmark property) and 41BL614 (Wiseman farmstead). Kerr canning jars were manufactured in Sand Springs, Oklahoma. The name “Kerr” was used by the Kerr Glass Manufacturing
Co. from 1912 to the mid 1950s. A Ball canning jar glass lid insert was found at site 41BL574. The Ball canning jar is difficult to date, since the company changed the script style over the years. Toulouse states that the script "Ball" came into use after 1892 (1972:68). The maker's mark on the Hazel-Atlas jar from site 41BL617 (Sellers farmstead) assigns its manufacturing dates from 1920 to 1964. The Hazel-Atlas Glass Co., was located in Wheeling, West Virginia. It used its own version of the lightning seal and later a metal lid (Toulouse 1972:242). Site 41BL578 (Hallmark property) yielded a rare Three Rivers jar. According to Toulouse, the Three Rivers Glass Co., located in Three Rivers, Texas operated from 1927 to 1935. The company produced canning jars, but the bulk of their business was in beverage bottles and milk containers (1972:494-495). The base of this bottle fragment may be either a canning jar or a milk bottle. A milk bottle base with an Owens scar, was found at site 41BL442 (dump). Its maker's mark, an encircled "D...ER" could not be identified.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a large number of stoppers were invented. In 1882, the lightning type of closure, consisting of an iron bail and lever was patented. This type of closure was used on canning jars. Crown caps for bottles were patented in 1892 and were first used on soda bottles and later became common on beer bottles (Fike 1987:8). In 1881, a semi-automatic bottle machine was developed. Bottles produced by this machine have mold lines running up to the lip; no seam appears on the lip (Lorrain 1968:42-43).

Soda, beer, wine and liquor bottle fragments were found at five of the Sparta sites. These bottles are identified by their lip treatment and the color of the glass. Beer bottlers
preferred to use amber or brown glass containers. Darker glass resembled the export beers of the time, and provided protection from light. It was not until 1873 that light beer (as opposed to ales and stouts) become widely distributed. That year, Adolphus Busch became the first brewer in the country to use pasteurization. Many of the early beer bottles were capped with corks, stoppers or lightning fasteners (Wilson 1981:2).

Bottles with a champagne neck finish contained wine, champagne, brandy and bitters. These bottles require a body with heavy walls and gentle lines designed to withstand the pressures of refermentation. The nineteenth-century, blown mold champagne bottle is nearly identical to a modern one, except for the hand-finished lip (Wilson 1981:19). Two “champagne” finish bottles were found at site 41BL469 (tenant farmstead), one is aqua-green, the other is solarized. A clear “champagne” finish bottle was found at site 41BL616 (Wiseman farmstead). Two liquor bottles were identified. One was a flask, recovered at site 41BL578 (Hallmark property), was made by the Anchor-Hocking Glass Corp., after 1938 (Toulouse 1972:48). The other, made by an automated bottling machine, was found at site 41BL574 (Hallmark property). It has a doubled beaded collar with the mold seam extending to the top of the lip.

Only four of the sites yielded bottle fragments that have been identified as soda bottles with the crown cap neck finish. Four of the five samples were aqua-green (site 41BL443, dump; 41BL578, Hallmark property and 41BL617, Doss-Wiseman farmstead) and the other soda bottle was clear (41BL443). The clear soda bottle had embossed on its base in script “THE LIQUID CARBONIC COMPANY,” no reference could be found for this maker’s mark.
A very common glass found in late nineteenth-century sites is solarized glass. Solarized glass (often referred to as lavender glass) is the result of attempts to decolorize glass. “Clear” glass had a aqua-green hue which glass manufacturers tried to eliminate by adding manganese dioxide as an ingredient. This manufacturing technique was used from 1880, when the demand for clear glass forced the manufacturers to perfect the technique of decolorizing with manganese, until approximately 1915. The First World War cut off the main source of manganese from Germany. Glass decolorized with manganese, when exposed to the ultraviolet rays of the sun, takes on an lavender color and is therefore easily identified (Munsey 1970:55). Seven of the sites yielded samples of solarized glass fragments. About half of the samples are pressed tablewares and the other half, are bottle fragments. One glass chimney made of solarized glass was found at site 41BL577, a property owned by W. F. Sellers.

By the twentieth century, most glass bottles were mass-produced for use in commercially processed and packaged food and drink. Data from manufacturing census records of glass containers show that the availability of glass containers increased as the cost of production decreased due to automation. As a result, most glass was discarded after its contents were emptied (Raab 1982:148). In 1903, the fully automatic bottle machine was patented by Michael Owens. Bottles produced with this machine have continuous mold lines along the entire side of the bottle. Fully automated bottles also exhibit an irregular circular snap-off scar on the base, often referred to as an “Owens scar” and sometimes a valve mark. Small valve marks, less than one centimeter in diameter, are found on machine-made bottles manufactured from 1935-1955. By 1920, the vast majority
of bottles produced in the United States were made by fully automatic machines (Lorrain 1968:42-43). Bottles with a continuous thread which contained prescriptions, pastes, condiments and hair tonics were standardized in 1924 (Fike 1987:8). This finish is important since it basically replaced all of the previously existing types of finishes. A threaded aqua-green jar fragment was found at site 41BL571, a Hallmark property.

Fully automated bottles are well represented in the collection. Bottle bases with “DURAGLAS” are represented in the Sparta collection. “DURAGLAS,” in script, an Owens- Illinois Glass Co. trade name was manufactured from 1940-1963. “DURAGLAS” in print dates from 1964 to the present. These bottles were used for a wide variety of consumer products: shampoo, body lotion, condiments, food coloring, syrup, soda, beer, wine and liquor. Examples from the collection include Packer’s Shampoo and Jergen’s Lotion, found at dump site 41BL443.

Colored glass fragments may help date a site. It was not until well into the twentieth century that colored glass (other than black/olive green, brown or aqua-green) became economically feasible, therefore a site with a large proportion of colored glass can be given an occupation date of post-1930. Two colored glass sherds are represented in the Sparta collection; one is a serving vessel with a red molded bubble design and a yellow rim found at site 41BL574 and the other were the fragments of a yellow glass, ribbed pattern found at site 41BL578; both sites are Hallmark properties.

Summary

The ceramic and glass artifacts described in this chapter are the products of “the culture of capitalism,” commodities purchased by people in the rapidly changing world of
the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Through mass marketing, consumer products manufactured elsewhere could be purchased in Belton, Killeen and Temple, ordered from the Sears Roebuck catalogue, found in the bottom of oatmeal or powdered soap boxes, or purchased or bartered from a traveling drummer, such as “the Riley Man” (Humphrey, personal communication). Glasswares, especially tumblers or small serving bowls were placed in boxes of powdered soap, as an incentive to purchase the product. Gasoline stations would sponsor promotions in which they would give away a different piece of glassware (usually Depression glassware) every two weeks to their patrons. Glass tableware was as common as it is today. As for the ceramic collection, porcelain is poorly represented; two of the four samples were found at the Doss-Wiseman farmstead. Neither family’s property holdings or tax assessments suggest a different level of economic standing within the community. The overwhelming presences of whiteware in the collection is expected. It was the ubiquitous tableware of the time; and served as an indicator of participation in the market economy (Hamilton, personal communication). A study (Moir 1988) conducted in north-central Texas, came to the same conclusion and also found that decorated whiteware as opposed to plain whiteware, was not a gauge of economic status, since it was found with the same frequency at both landowner and tenant sites. A wide range of decorative styles is present in the Sparta collection -- another indicator of mass-marketing, but also an indicator of family individuality, preferences, and tastes.

The artifact collection embodies two trends occurring during this time period. One is self-sufficiency in the farm economy, through the continued use of stoneware crocks
and canning jars. Four glass manufacturers of canning jars are represented in the collection. The other is participation in the market economy that was rapidly expanding during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as indicated by the acquisition of ceramic and glass tablewares and through the use of commercially produced medicinal and household products. It is interesting to note the relationship of one trend to the other. Farm families were using mass-produced canning jars and crocks to maintain a life style of self-sufficiency.
CHAPTER VI

ORAL HISTORIES

Memories, they’re the making of you. (T. A. Wilhite)

Six oral history interviews with former residents of Sparta were collected during the months of February and March, 1998. The interviews followed a specific format of questions (Appendix III); however, considerable latitude was given. Oral histories were given by Mrs. Ernestine Humphrey, Mrs. Billie Thompson Wilson, Mrs. Bert Bounds, Mrs. Lorene Boren, Mr. Bill Northan and Mr. T. A. Wilhite.

This chapter presents a brief family background on these individuals, followed by a compilation of the data collected, organized under two headings, farm life and community life.

Family Background

T.A. Wilhite

In 1871, T. A. Wilhite’s grandparents, Elias and Mary Ann Doss Wilhite and seven children moved from Tarrant County to Bell County to take care of Mrs. Violet Doss, Mary Ann’s mother, who was a widow. They settled at the “old Doss place” on North Nolan Creek. Their eighth child, George Albert was born that year. When George was 24 years-old, he married Fannie Jane Martin and they moved to Hamilton County. Within a few years, the family moved to Coryell County and settled in the King community.

Thomas Albert (T. A.), their tenth child, was born in King in 1911. When he was a few weeks old, the family moved to Brookhaven and lived there for four years. In 1915, his
family returned to the North Nolan Creek valley and rented 125 acres of land. Three more children were born from 1913 to 1918.

When T. A. Wilhite was 23 years old, he married a young woman, named Lucille, from Salado and they found a 125 acre farm to rent on the north side of Cowhouse Creek, about two miles east of Sparta. Their landlord was Johnny Boren and the property was located in the W. B. Brent Survey. T. A. and his family lived there for almost 20 years.

The Wilhite home had two bedrooms, a kitchen, dining room and a front porch that extended the width of the house; T. A. believed that it had once been two houses put together, because the floors in the back of the house sloped considerably. The property had a well, 125 foot deep, and every morning and afternoon, T. A. would draw water into cedar buckets for the livestock and for home use. He had a large barn that enclosed a double corn crib, each 12-x-4 feet in size, which held enough corn to last a season, a smoke house and a hay shed. He also had cattle, hog and horse pens and a cement water trough. He later installed a pipe to carry water from the well to the trough.

T. A. and Lucille had only one son, George Allen, and they took in a young orphan boy, John Lee Cowan, and raised him as their own. Both boys were T.A.’s main support in the fields. Their son, George, received a tract scholarship to South West Texas State University, married a local girl, and still resides in San Marcos.

It was T. A. Wilhite’s goal to have a efficient farm and $500 in the bank for emergencies. He had an opportunity to buy a 100 acre farm on the Cowhouse bottoms for $400, but he turned it down because he did not want to be in debt.
Ernestine Wilhite Humphrey, Billie Wilhite Thompson Wilson and Bert Wilhite Bounds

The Wilhite sisters were the daughters of Joel Earnest and Edgie Lee Wilhite (Earnest was T. A. Wilhite's oldest brother). Their oldest sister, Kathleen, has passed away. Earnest and Edgie Lee's first house, a four room dog trot, with a closed-in central hallway, was located on North Nolan Creek. Ernestine remembered how her mother would put ducking over the cracks in the floor to keep out the cold. Her parents raised two boys, Sam and Pink Martin, ages 12 and 9, the sons of Mr. Wilhite's cousin, Nannie Martin, who had died. The boys lived with them until they were adults. The girls slept in their parents room and the boys slept in the front room. In 1931, when Bert was a baby, the family moved to Sparta.

Their new home was a two year-old farmhouse located on 100 acres on the southern bank of the Cowhouse, just down from Sparta, in the James Halfpenny Survey. The farmland that Earnest Wilhite rented belong to Bascom Davis. Davis was known as 'Uncle Bascom' to everyone in the community. After he and his daughter were killed in a car accident, the land became the property of D. L. Cummins, his grandson. Their new home had two bedrooms and a dining room on the south side and a kitchen and living room on the north. The living room was called the heater room because a wood stove was located there. The house had a front and back porch, and extending from the back porch, a wooden walkway ran through the back yard to a yard gate. The house had a windmill and a raised water tower that provided water to the kitchen. A barn, smoke house, chicken coup, outhouse, granary and blacksmith shop were located up the hill from the house. The Wilhite family lived in this house until 1954.
Bill Northam

Bill Northam's father and mother were Charles and Sadie Northam. Charles was raised in Nolanville and Sadie was from Key's Valley, a community in southwestern Bell County. The young couple moved to a farm on Johnny Boren's land, south of Cowhouse Creek, about a mile east of Sparta, in the W. B. Brent Survey. From their house, they could see Earnest Wilhite's farm. Charles' brother, George, and his mother lived nearby and farmed land that belonged to the Denman family. His brother Henry lived about 1/4 mile down the creek. Charles first began farming a 35 acre tract on the "halfs" in the early 1930s, but by 1951, he was cultivating 500 acres of bottomland on Cowhouse Creek, belonging to D.L. Cummins and the Walton family.

Bill was born on April 15, 1932, the oldest of three boys. His brothers were Jack and Joe. On the day of his birth, Dr. Pitman from Belton was asked to stay with the young mother for a little while — Charles went down to the creek and caught a catfish for the doctor; he also paid him $36.

The Northam house had a porch, living room, which served as a bedroom, a kitchen and dining room and three small rooms attached along the back. Since the family lived so close to the creek, that was where they bathed. Their water came from a 30 foot well. The farm had a barn which was used as storage for hay and corn, a cow shed, and a horse and hog pen. They family never had an outhouse.

Lorene Boren

Mr. Boren's grandfather, Johnny Boren, owned a farm east of Sparta that he would visit with his parents when he was a child. It was his dream to someday move to
Sparta and operate the grocery store. After he married Lorene, he approached Mr. Jordan, the owner of the Sparta store and asked him if he would sell it to him. Mr. Jordan declined his offer so Mr. Boren went to work in the oil fields in west Texas. At the outbreak of World War II, railroad companies began hiring and he went to work for the Santa Fe Railroad. At this time, he moved his family to Lomeda in Coryell County. On a family visit to Sparta in 1944, Mr. Boren asked S. A. York, the owner of the Jordan store, if he could buy it. York accepted his offer and the Borens moved to Sparta.

Since her husband was an engineer with the Santa Fe, often putting in 70 hour weeks, he was not at home most of the time to run the store, so the duties of proprietorship fell to Mrs. Boren and her four children, Sandra, Charles (Butch), Royce and Wesley. Her father-in-law, Raymond, helped part-time. The Boren family moved into a house next to the store that had no electricity or running water. Since Mrs. Boren grew up on a farm in Crosbyton, in the Texas panhandle, such conditions were not considered inconveniences. Ice was delivered twice a week to the store and water was collected in a cistern, next to the house. When electricity came to Sparta in the late 1940s, the Borens hooked up a pump for a well. After three years, they remodeled their home and put in a bathroom and a septic tank. Eventually, they had a telephone, but her husband ran the lines. The Boren family’s property consisted of the store, house, barn and a cedar yard.

Farm Life

The Wilhite sisters and Bill Northam’s foremost memories of growing up on the farm was the high level of self-sufficiency that existed. Ernestine and her sisters
remarked that their parents were good managers. Their home garden, and that of others in
the valley, usually consisted of an acre or more, was planted in tomatoes, squash, okra,
onions, beans, peas, turnips, cucumbers, potatoes, pop-corn, and watermelons. Earnest
Wilhite had an orchard with peach, pear and pecan trees. During the summer, Edgie
Wilhite and her daughters would can the garden produce and make jellies and preserves.
They were not allowed in the kitchen when their mother was using the pressure cooker.
The canning jars were stored on shelves in two rooms of the house and would last until
the following harvest. The Northam boys also helped their mother “put up” jars, as did
Lorene Boren’s children. “Everyone canned, it was what you did,” recalled T.A. Wilhite.

All of the families spoke of self-sufficiency in terms of food, but would purchase
staples such as sugar, coffee and flour. Much of the glassware and tableware that the
family used came in the bottom of oatmeal boxes. Some gasoline stations gave away
glassware with a fill-up of gas. Cotton wash clothes and cup towels were packaged in
Proctor and Gamble washing powder.

Earnest and T. A. Wilhite planted ribbon cane and the Wilhite girls would help
harvest it. The cane was taken to the Kelly Syrup Mill on North Nolan Creek for
processing. Ernestine remembered an old mule was hitched to a wheel that turned the
grinder. The juice was then boiled and made into syrup.

From the cracklings of the lard, the Wilhite sister’s mother would make lye soap.
Lye soap was used by the family until “P and G” (Proctor and Gamble) soap was available
in the stores, but their mother continued to use lye soap on their father’s field clothes.
They remembered how hard they worked on wash day; they had to pack the wood, build
a fire, draw the water, rub the clothes on the wash board, boil them, and stir them around in the pot with a stick. They would hang them out to dry and then iron them with a heavy iron. Later, their mother had an iron that used fuel, but it was more trouble than the old one.

Edgie Wilhite made most of her family’s clothing. Ernestine remembered a little smocked dress and matching hat that she wore to church when she was five. Her mother also made the sacks used in cotton picking. The children first used flour sacks and as they got older, their mother made them larger sacks. She remembered the sack her father used was six feet long. Bill Northam’s mother made underwear for him and his brothers out of flour sacks. The Wilhite girls had a nice dress and black patent-leather shoes that they wore to church on Sunday and a couple of school dresses that they wore for two or three days in a row. They would polish their patent leather shoes with a biscuit. When they worked in the fields, they wore overalls. As a teenager, Ernestine remembered her father saying, “All of my boys wear skirts.” Boys wore overalls year-round and often went barefooted in the summer. From old school pictures, many of the boys did not wear shoes to school.

It was the custom for the school girls to pull up their bloomers over their knees when they were playing ball during recess. Earnest Wilhite told his girls that if he ever drove by and saw their bloomers pulled above their knees, they would be in trouble. Since their father was a cattle buyer, and often made trips to town, he would frequently pass the school yard. The sound of a truck driving by would send fear into their hearts, so they kept their bloomers pulled down over their knees during recess.
Every farm family had an ice box and ice was delivered twice a week in the summer. The ice man supplied each family with a sign that was placed in the window, letting him know how many pounds of ice were needed. The sign was square, with the numbers 25, 50, 75 and 100, representing pounds, printed along each side. Whatever the family needed that day was indicated by the top number. No one locked their doors then, they would just leave money on top of the ice box for the ice man. Some families had a milk cooler. It was a metal cabinet with shelves and a pan on top that held water. Extending down the sides were cloth panels that would wick the water from the pan. The milk cooler was left on the porch and the breeze would blow through the cloth and keep the contents inside cool.

During the hot summer months, the Wilhites would hang wet sheets in the doorways and wet down the floor to keep the house cool. Most of the people in Sparta slept outside during the summer months, but the Wilhite girls were not allowed. Bill Northam remembered running down to the creek in the evening, jumping in to get cool, then running back home and climbing into bed, hoping he would fall asleep before he got hot. No one remembered mosquitoes being a problem.

Electricity came to the valley in the late 1940s, a line ran along the south side of the valley floor. The Boren store and a few residences in Sparta had electricity, but none of the farms had electricity. Kerosene lamps and lanterns were used for light. The Earnest Wilhite house was heated with a wood stove in the living room and a cook stove in the kitchen. The family had a telephone, but it was used only for emergencies. The Northam home had two fireplaces and a cook stove.
On Saturday afternoons, most families would go to Belton and shop at Austin’s Grocery. If they ran out of something during the week, they would pick it up at the store in Sparta. The Wilhite girls would sit in the car and watch passers-by or visit with friends. Once they were in highschool, they sometimes would sell pecans or eggs for spending money. Ernestine bought a tube of lipstick and Maybeline eye make-up, both of which were frowned upon by her father. When the Wilhite girls left for highschool in Belton, their father would give them 25 cents to buy lunch. Ernestine remembered going to Wesley Coppen’s hamburger stand three blocks from the highschool to buy a hamburger for 15 cents and a R-C Cola for a dime.

On the first Mondays of each month, farmers from every community in Bell County that needed to buy or sell something would converge on downtown Belton at a place called the Trade Square (presently, Compass Bank). T. A. Wilhite loved to attend these gatherings, “you could trade, buy or sell anything, horses, mules, cows, hogs, chickens, plows, anything you had to trade or sell, you’d just bring it along.”

Everyone had a yard full of chickens, T.A. Wilhite recalled that his family had well over 50. Ernestine’s mother owned a kerosene incubator and she would hold back about 100 eggs to place in it. Lorene Boren had a proven method of egg production — mix red pepper with the chicken feed, those that didn’t produce, would be Sunday dinner.

The average numbers of livestock per farm consisted of 2 to 6 mules, a riding horse, between 10 and 35 head of cattle, 2 to 6 milk cows, 6 hogs and dozens of chickens. Cattle and hogs were tagged on their ears in case they got loose. The Wilhite sisters and Bill Northam recalled that it was their job to milk the cows at night and collect the eggs.
In the morning, Edgie Wilhite would milk the cows and her daughters would feed the livestock. Everyone made their own butter in butter churns and placed it in molds. Surplus eggs, butter and milk (stored in milk cans) were set by the side of the road for the milk man from Borden’s Dairy to pick up. This brought in extra income for the family.

Each winter, every family slaughtered one or two hogs for family use. This was done in winter because cutting meat was easier to do in cold weather. Neighbors would come early in the morning to help with the process. Usually the men and boys would slaughter the hogs and the women would make dinner for everyone. T. A. Wilhite fed the left-overs to his other hogs. The meat was preserved through smoking and lard was made. Almost everyone had a small smoke house in which a pan of coals were left to smoke for three days or more. Sausage was stored in large crocks, placed between layers of lard and sealed with a top layer of lard.

Calves were slaughtered on occasion and chickens more frequently. T. A. Wilhite earned extra income by buying and butchering calves. He would buy a calf for $10, kill and butcher it. He would put the meat in a wash tub and drive around the community selling the cuts of meat. One customer would only buy rump roasts from him. He did this on Friday afternoons and would make about $20. Sometimes neighbors would take turns slaughtering calves and dividing the meat among themselves. All of these families grew corn, maize (milo), red top cane and High Gear for animal feed. The Wilhite girls would shuck and shell corn on a rub board (and would get blisters on their nuckles) on Saturday morning and place it in the corn crib in the barn. Sometimes their father would take it to the grist mill in Sparta to have it ground into meal and mixed with other grains for chicken
feed. The Wilhite brothers' farms had water troughs for their cattle, the Northam's cattle watered in the creek.

All of the crops planted on the farm were used on the farm by the family, except for cotton. Besides animal feed, crops included wheat, sweet corn, and ribbon cane. Everyone rotated their crops and some spread manure in the garden. The whole family worked in the fields at harvest time. When Ernestine's sisters were young, they stayed under the shade of a tree on a turn row. Bill Northam's younger brother was placed in an apple crate and watched over by the family dog.

Every family member helped in some way with cotton picking. The Wilhite sisters and Bill Northam remembered what hard work it was. Full sacks were weighed on the back of the wagon -- Ernestine remembered that her father's sacks often weighed over 100 pounds. The Wilhite mules would often "act up" in the field; the cool mornings would make them frisky and they would like to run. Earnest Wilhite would run after them, jump into the wagon and stop it. The Wilhite sisters remembered leaving early in the morning with their father and a wagon load of cotton to take to Belton for ginning and not return until late that evening.

About half of the acreage on the Wilhite brothers' and Northam's farms were planted in cotton. The children of some farm families did not start school until after the season was over, usually in late September, because they were needed in the field. But this did not stop Bill Northam and his brothers from attending school. His father was a school trustee and he arranged for the teachers to arrive at 7:00 to hold classes for any children that wanted to attend. They were then dismissed at 1:00 in order to go home and
pick cotton. T. A. Wilhite would sometimes hire neighbors to help him with cotton picking. He would pay about 50 cents for 100 pounds picked. He estimated that his farm produced about one-half bale per acre. Bill Northam remembered that his family’s best year was 1949, 250 acres of cotton produced 50 bales. His father hired migrant workers that year and they turned out two to three bales a day.

During harvest time, a thrasher would come through the valley to help the farmers harvest oats and wheat. Between 10 and 15 men were needed to harvest the crop, so neighbors would pitch in to help and then the thrasher moved to the next farm. The operator would receive a portion of the crop. On thrashing day, the farmer’s wife, with the help of the neighboring wives, would prepare dinner for the men. Bill Northam told the story of how one harvest season, Earnest Wilhite became ill. Neighbors appeared at his farm early in the morning and had the fields cleared by the end of the day. After all of the crops were gathered in the fall, the stalks were cut and tuned under with a breaking plow and the fields would lay fallow until it was time for spring planting.

The Wilhite brothers and Charles Northam owned their own farming equipment. Before they purchased tractors, they used mule teams. T. A. Wilhite purchased a four row tractor that had a hydraulic stern. His adopted son had his hand cut off in a farming accident and the new tractor made farming easier for him. Types of equipment owned by these families included different types of plows, a planter, a stalk cutter, a hay baler, a cultivator, a mowing machine, and a harrow. Bill Northam’s father owned a corn puller. He would pull corn on his neighbor’s farms for $3 an acre. T. A. Wilhite also would “hire out” himself and his plow to neighbors. He would charge them 75 cents an acre and stay
for dinner. Earnest Wilhite bought a lug-wheeled tractor in the late 1940s and when he changed over to rubber wheels, his father would not let him plow his fields because the rubber wheels would pack down the soil.

Every family, especially the boys, fished in the Cowhouse and hunted in the cedar brakes. Lorene Boren's sons would bring home squirrels, rabbits, dove and robins for dinner. T. A. Wilhite's adopted son loved to fish; and according to him, the Cowhouse had the biggest catfish around. T. A. Wilhite would hunt opossum and ringtail racoons in the winter and sell the pelts in Belton. He made extra money this way, always working toward that goal of having money in the bank. He purchased an old Model T for $25 with his hunting and plowing money.

Community Life

There was always some sort of social gathering going on in Sparta on the weekends. On Saturday nights, neighbors would take turns holding events in their homes. They would get together to play dominoes, have candy pulls and wiener roasts, make home-made ice cream, and have fox hunts or ring games. Ring games were group dances, such as doe-ce-doe and the entire family took part. These events were held mainly to give the children something fun to do on Saturday nights, although the adults enjoyed them just as much. The host family would clear furniture out of a couple of rooms, sprinkle the floor with corn meal to make it slick and have a fiddler and guitar player provide music. T. A. Wilhite was considered the best fiddler in the valley and was often asked to play in other communities. He had an old Stratoverus fiddle that carried a tune better than any fiddle around. Charles Northam was a guitar player, and he would sometimes accompany
him. The families that came to the games would sometimes chip-in money to pay the musicians.

Sunday morning, the community would attend worship services at the Sparta Church of Christ. Sometimes a neighboring preacher would lead the service and someone in the community would invite him over for Sunday dinner. That meal often consisted of fried chicken, mashed potatoes, home-grown vegetables, biscuits and for dessert, pudding or ice cream.

Often picnics were held after church in the Tabernacle, a covered area behind the church with tables and benches. Young ladies would fix “box suppers,” which were decorated with ribbons and crepe paper and held dinner for two. It would be auctioned off and the highest bidder would share the dinner with the young lady. Families also auctioned off box suppers and the proceeds went to the school.

Most families would not allow their daughters to “date.” Young people would socialize in groups, at ring games and at picnics. Most young people found their future spouses within the community. Everyone was related somehow. Earnest Wilhite’s sister married his wife’s brother. Two of Edgie Wilhite’s cousins married Earnest’s brother and sister.

Another popular event were singing conventions. These events were held on Sunday afternoons. Quartets from Sparta or from the neighboring communities of Brookhaven, Union Hill, Nolanville, and Bland would perform during the picnics. Often quartets from Sparta would travel to those communities for a concert. Earnest Wilhite was known as Preacher Earnest, not because of his preaching skills, but because of his
singing. He would lead singing at church services or any event that called upon his talent.

On some Sundays in the summer, families would gather at the church grounds to play and watch baseball with teams from neighboring communities. Bill Northam began his baseball career playing baseball in Sparta. He later played on the Belton High School team and won district and when he joined the navy, he played on that team. His father, Charles, was the team's couch for a number of years. The team would hold exhibition games to raise money to buy equipment; they would dress-up like women and everyone in the community would come and watch.

The Sparta school consisted of three classes, grades one through third, fourth through six and seventh through tenth. Between 50 and 80 students attended classes when the Wilhite girls and Bill Northam were school age (1930s-1940s). Everyone walked to school. T. A. Wilhite's son, George, sometimes rode to school with his grandmother in her buggy. Some of the children that lived on Taylor's Branch would ride horses to school. Everyone brought their own lunches, which consisted of ham, sausage on biscuits with mustard, and fried pies. The children would often trade lunches among themselves, especially if one was made with Sandwich Spread, a condiment purchased in town.

Besides the church and school, the community of Sparta had a blacksmith shop, a grist mill, a switch board and the Sparta store, operated by Lorene Boren. She opened the store at sunrise and closed at sundown. She sold mostly staples such as flour, sugar, coffee, shortening, canned milk, meat, and vegetables. It also had a gas pump which was serviced twice a week. Gas sold for 18 cents during the late 1940s. She remarked that often she would extend credit to farmers in Sparta, or exchange cedar posts for groceries.
Once, not knowing the selling price of a load of cedar, she sold a load for less than what her husband had paid for it.

Every week, she would drive the family pick-up truck to Temple to buy goods for the store. McLane's Grocery would sell goods at wholesale prices and would pack perishable items in dry ice. Once electricity came to Sparta, the Borens purchased refrigerated meat lockers for the perishable goods. One favorite item she sold in her store was ice cream, by the bucket or by the scoop.

Her oldest two sons, Royce and Wesley, played football for Belton High School (and the Sparta baseball team). It was a well known fact that on Friday afternoons in the Fall, she would close the store early and take a car load of kids to the football game in Belton. Often this was the only opportunity for children to go to Belton, and she enjoyed doing it.

Saturday mornings were busy at the store. The Sparta farmers could shop at her store, or drive to Brookhaven, eight miles west or they could make a trip to Belton, about 15 miles away. Farmers would gather at her store to talk about farming and politics and they knew that spitting tobacco on the floor was unacceptable.

In addition to the ice man and the post man, farm wives looked forward to a visit from the "Riley Man." He would come through the community once a month and sell various medicinal products out of his wagon. The Wilhite sisters remembered such items as "Adalick," a tonic consisting of beef iron and wine, Cloverine salve, Baby Percy and Black Draught, medicines given to children. The Riley Man would often take eggs and chickens in exchange for his products. Sometimes medicine shows came to Sparta, but if
someone became ill, a call was made to Dr. Pitman in Belton and he would make house calls in his buggy; later on, he made house calls in his car.

The Wilhites and the Northams, and the rest of the community were devastated when the government condemned their land for the construction of Belton Reservoir. The Earnest Wilhite house was moved to Belton, but Earnest and Edgie moved to Academy, later to Salado and finally purchased a farm west of Belton. T. A. Wilhite purchased property southeast of Belton and farmed for a while, as did Charles Northam. Watching the waters of Belton Reservoir rise over the farming community was like being buried alive, Ernestine recalled. Where the Wilhite farmhouse once stood is now an army recreational park on the south shore of Lake Belton. Looking north across the lake, a narrow valley formed by two mountains, marked the northern and western boundaries of her family’s farmland.

Everyone spoke of Sparta as a “thriving little community,” where neighbor helped neighbor. “If you happen to wake in the night and see a light on at a neighbor’s house, you knew someone must be sick. The first thing you’d do in the morning was go over and see what was wrong,” were the words of both Enestine Humphrey and Lorene Boren. “No one had locks on their doors,” recalled T. A. Wilhite. Those that lived two miles down from Sparta knew the families that lived two miles west on Taylor’s Branch.

Everyone socialized on the weekends and no one was excluded. It was a consensus that everyone was equally matched when it came to their economic standing. It didn’t matter if you owned your farm or not. What mattered was how you raised your children and how you managed your farm. Once Billie and Bert Wilhite got into the Northam’s
watermelon patch and helped themselves to one of the melons. Their uncle, T. A. Wilhite somehow found out about it and he advised them that they had better make amends before their father found out. The girls meekly approached Charles Northam, apologized, and begged him not to tell their father. He obliged and their father never found out. According to those interviewed, that was how life was in Sparta -- everyone looked out for each other's children, and helped each other whenever the need arose.
CHAPTER VII

SYNTHESIS OF STUDY AND CONCLUSION

The theoretical framework of Kolb and Snead (1997:611) defines an archaeological community as a territorially-based population, including families of three generations, capable of maintaining itself through time, including opportunities for participation in the larger society, and containing mechanisms for transmission from one generation to the next, the principle context of its culture. Three elements extracted from this definition are social reproduction, subsistence production, and community self-identification. These elements provide the framework in which to examine the archival documentation, oral histories and material culture of the 12 historic properties that represent the community of Sparta.

Social Reproduction

Social reproduction, within the context of community, occurs when a group of individuals interact regularly and when those repeated interactions socially reproduce the culture of that group. This can occur even under conditions that appear to compromise the group’s integrity, such as participation within the larger society. The community, however, remains the principal arena of social interplay (Kolb and Snead 1997:611). The farmers of the Sparta community participated in the national market economy through cotton production, however, the market did not affect their daily routine to such an extent as it did other farmers in Bell County. The primary reason can be attributed to the high level of self-sufficiency practiced by these farmers, i.e., producing their own food and that of their livestock. Lewis (1948:40-49) noted that the “integrity” of Sparta was not
compromised by the processes of change, commercial farming and urbanization that swept through Texas during the twentieth century. The community remained viable through these turbulent years and he attributed this to a number of factors; strong kinship ties, living on the land one farmed, and active membership in church and school. Life in Sparta was "reproduced" through each generation that choose to take on the vocation of the generation before.

Social reproduction begins in the family, then moves outward through the extended family and other members of the community that share common interests. This section first describes the cultural traits of the pioneering families that persevered through three and four generations; it shows how these traits were sustained through the land tenure system of each family, and finally how the role of neighbors, church and school helped maintain the culture and way of life of the valley’s pioneering families.

Pioneer Way of Life

The first lesson the backwoodsman leart was the necessity of self help... (Roosevelt 1932:466)

Pioneering families moved westward to make a new and better life for themselves and their children. Mrs. Humphrey’s generation was the last to grow up in Sparta and it was well aware of the hard work that was involved in clearing the land and planting crops and how the efforts of her great grandparents provided the foundation for their family. Even with her generation, everyday life focused on "providing for the family.” The family was dependent on the efforts of all, the young and old alike. The traits that made for success in her family were time-tested and proven to work; they were respect for elders,
obedience, patience, thrift, helping others in need, belief in God and involvement in the community (Humphrey, personal communication).

The last generation of Sparta farmers did not think of themselves as "old-fashioned" nor did they feel cut off from the rest of the world. As Mrs. Boren recalled, "We knew what the city people had. I lived in town before we moved to Sparta, but I also grew up on a farm and knew what country life was all about. It wasn't a problem, that's how most people lived anyway." (Boren, personal communication) T. A. Wilhite and his brother went to town every Saturday, and on the first Mondays of the month to the Trade Square. "If it weren't for farmers, the town would not exist," recalled Mr. Wilhite. He was proud of his way of life and the fact that he were essentially self-sufficient, "not like the folks in town." Many of this last generation, now in their seventies and eighties, remembered how they held steadfast against change they viewed as harmful, but how they adapted to change that improved their standard of living.

We were knowledgeable about what was going on. But we were cautious. I had an opportunity to purchase 125 acres of fine farmland in Sparta for $400. That was a lot of money in those days.... but it was my goal to have $500 in savings, for emergencies and such, never wanted to be in debt, paid everything in cash. Before I married, I had all the farming tools I needed. Later, I bought a tractor, could farm more land with one. When your livelihood is on the line, you're just more careful, you take your time and think seriously...farmers are patient people...you know, like with the weather. (T. A. Wilhite, personal communication)

Shawn Carlson (1984) concluded in her study of the twentieth-century farmstead of W. Jarvis Henderson that life on that west Bell County farm was more typical of the nineteenth century, due to the absence of such amenities as electricity, plumbing and gas
heating. This was also true of the farms of Sparta; however, something more fundamental than a lack of twentieth-century amenities sustained the nineteenth-century way of life in Sparta -- it was a tradition of self-sufficiency maintained by the efforts of the entire family, pride of vocation, and adapting to change in order to better one's livelihood without compromising one's standards.

**Family Land Tenure Strategies**

Families varied in how they handled property transfer. Some conveyed property to a son or daughter when they came of age, for a token amount (one dollar), and often this is the only clue that the grantee was the married daughter of the grantor. Others subdivided property among their children when they retired, while others maintained control until their death. Despite the process, parents passed their farms on to their children. While some of the younger generations left the area, some chose to remain, and they were the ones that maintained the traditions of their parents and built a community.

The families that settled in the valley during the 1850s through the 1870s were the same families that consistently and repeatedly appear in the county deed records as compared to the families that came later. These families brought with them the skills and social traditions which allowed them to survive and prosper. Not only did they persist, but they also expanded their numbers as they replaced the less stable portion of the population. It should be noted here that the deeds, tax rolls and census schedules only record families through the male line, and therefore, the ascendancy of these families in the records is most likely underestimated.
An underlying theme found in Bishop’s history of Sparta (1954) is one of family longevity. Most of the families that settled in the Sparta area from the 1850s through the 1870s had children and grandchildren that continued to reside in the area until their land was condemned by the government. This study does not mention them all, but focuses only on those that owned the historical properties selected for this study.

One such family is that of G. W. Walton from Tennessee. G. W. and his brother Nelson arrived in the valley in the 1850s and purchased property along Cowhouse Creek. The Bell County ad valorem tax schedules listed G. W. Walton as the owner of 2,600 acres in the Cowhouse valley in the early 1860s. Two of the historic farmsteads, sites 41BL442 and 41BL469, are located on property he once owned. By 1881, he had subdivided most of his property among his children. Bishop (1954:5) noted that Walton gave each child a farm once he or she reached maturity. He deeded to his son, G. W. Walton, Jr., a 65 acre tract of land on which site 41BL442 is located, and paid the assessed taxes on the property until his son sold it in 1891.

In 1852, Jesse and Violet Doss, and four of their children emigrated to Texas, via Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois. They settled near a spring on the divide between Cowhouse and North Nolan Creeks, purchased 318 acres of land for $200, and built a four room dog-trot (BCDR 74:634; Humphrey, personal communication). During the war, two of their sons, Christian Christopher and Harmon W. served in the Confederate army. When they returned in 1865, they married and began farming on their father’s land. In 1868, C. C. Doss preempted a 160 tract of land east of Taylor’s Branch and in 1873, purchased an adjoining 60 acres to the south. The ad valorem tax schedules and the 1880
Census records his move to the 60 acre tract (the location of site 41BL617). Doss died of measles shortly after the move at the age of 45 and was buried in the Doss Cemetery, an acre of land south of his homestead.

His widow, Hattie, married Barry Vineyard in 1884 and moved to Oklahoma, only to return as a divorcée in 1893. In 1894, she and her third husband J. J. Worley took up residence at site 41BL418, a short distance from her former home. She then conveyed the 60 acre tract to her son, Joel and his family. In the 1900 Census she is listed as a widow, living with her daughters Maggie Doss and Hattie Vineyard. The following year, Maggie married W. C. Hallmark and moved to his farm (site 41BL574). In 1910, she was living with her daughter, Hattie, and continued to reside there through the 1910s.

Hattie’s brother-in-law, Harmon W. Doss, his wife, Sarah, and their small children settled next to his brother, C. C. Doss on his 160 acre preemption after the Civil War. In 1871, his father, Jesse Doss died, so Harmon moved his family to the “old home place,” south of Cowhouse Creek, to help his mother operate the farm.

Mary Ann Doss, sister of Harmon and Christian, was living in Tarrant County when she married Elias A. Wilhite in 1858. In the 1870s, the Wilhites moved to Bell County to help Harmon care for their widowed mother, Violet Doss. They built a farm house on the Doss property and had six more children. All of their children stayed in the Sparta and Nolan communities except for one daughter, who moved to Dallas County when she married. The 1880 Census listed Violet Doss as the head of the household. In 1881, she sold 100 acres of her property to her son, Harmon Doss for $250 (BCDR 36:504). She retained title to the rest of the property and paid the assessed taxes until she
died. One grandson, Noah Webster Doss, a bachelor, continued to live at the "old Doss place" until 1952. Figure 12 is a photograph of the Harmon Doss family in front of their homestead in 1906.

![Figure 12. The Doss family ca. 1906. (Courtesy of Ernestine Humphrey)](image)

Elias and Mary Ann Wilhite's youngest son, George Albert, married Francis Martin in 1895; they lived on the family farm for a few years, moved to Coryell County, but finally settled on a farm on North Nolan Creek. Their oldest son, Joel Earnest married Edgie Lee Carpenter in 1922, and settled near his parents. In 1931, they moved with their four young daughters to Sparta and rented a farm on Cowhouse Creek from Bascom Davis. In 1934, Earnest's younger brother, T. A. Wilhite married. He and his
wife rented a farm from Johnny Boren, north of Cowhouse Creek and lived there until 1952. They had only one son, but adopted a young boy, whose parents had died.

Earnest and Edgie Wilhite raised their daughters on the Sparta farm, three of whom are still living, Earnestine, Billie and Bert. The girls married young men they met in the community during the 1930s and 1940s and intended to settle and raise their families in Sparta, but the war interrupted their plans as did the building of Belton Reservoir.

From 1950 until 1953, Billie and her husband Burton E. Thompson, rented a farm near the mouth of Taylor’s Branch.

The Doss family serves as an example of how the second generation made an attempt to established their own farms. C. C. Doss and his brother, Harmon, established homesteads on C. C. Doss’ preempton on Taylor’s Branch after the Civil War. Harmon, and his sister, Mary Ann, returned to their parent’s farm in the early 1870s, to take care of their widowed mother, Violet Doss and operate her farm.

One of Mary Ann’s sons, George Albert Wilhite, left the county as a young married man, only to return and settle near his parent’s farm on North Nolan Creek. Two of his sons, T. A. and Earnest Wilhite, found farms to rent in the Cowhouse valley when they married.

Another family that homesteaded in the Sparta area after the Civil War was that of John T. W. J. Hallmark of Georgia. He preempted 160 acres of land in the mid-1860s and received a patent in 1873 (Milam Land District Files 2325). He appeared in the 1870 Census as a 41 year-old farmer, married to Martha, also 41, and having eight children. Sometime before 1880, his son, George E. and his wife were renting a farm from him.
Sometime before 1880, his son, George E. and his wife were renting a farm from him. George’s older brother, James, was still single and living at home. In 1894, G. E. Hallmark appeared for the first time in the tax schedules; he had purchased 160 acres (on which site 41BL571 is situated) due west of his father’s land. From 1896 until his death in 1938, Hallmark accumulated well over a thousand acres in the vicinity of Taylor’s Branch, north of Sparta.

Between 1907 and 1910, the tax schedules indicated that improvements were made to the 160 tract that G. E. Hallmark first purchased in 1894, he may have built farm houses for his children. In 1901, Hallmark’s son, W. C. “Clem” married Elizabeth “Maggie” Doss, daughter of C. C. and H. A. Doss, and they established a farm (site 41BL574) in the southeastern portion of the 160 acre tract. The 1910 Census listed two other married sons of Hallmark, James and Charles, living along the same road and renting farms.

G. E. Hallmark never conveyed the tracts of land his sons occupied to them. He continued to pay taxes on the property until his death in 1938. His estate was left to his wife, M. A. Hallmark and when she died the following year, G. B. Hallmark, was appointed executor of the estate. The Hallmark property was partitioned among the children in 1941. W. C. Hallmark was given title for the 28 acre tract (on which site 41BL574 is located) as well as the 50 acre tract (on which site 41BL578 is located). James M. Hallmark gained title to a 50 acre tract directly to the north of W. C. Hallmark’s property. Unlike the Doss-Wilhite families, Hallmark owned enough land to support multiple households; each son that choose to stay in Sparta was given land to
farm, yet their father retained title. T. A. Wilhite recalled that there was a "slue of Hallmarks living up there [Taylor's Branch]."

Another family that homesteaded in the Sparta area after the Civil War was that of John Lafayette Sellers of Tennessee. He outlived two wives and with his third, fathered eight more children. He lived on a farm south of Cowhouse Creek until he died in 1911. A son from his second marriage, Willis Franklin (W. F.) Sellers first appeared in the tax rolls paying taxes on three horses and one head of cattle that he kept on his father’s farm in 1901. In 1906, he purchased 45 acres (on which site 41BL580 is located) on Taylor’s Branch, known as Sellers Mountain, (Wilhite, personal communication) and resided there until his wife’s death in 1934. In 1911, he purchased a 50 acre tract from G. E. Hallmark, that adjoined the tract of land on which his daughter Leona and her husband, James M. Hallmark were living, possibly as a gift to the couple. Like Hallmark, he retained ownership of the property. Sellers acquired numerous tracts of land in the Sparta community during the first three decades of the twentieth century and probably rented them to members of his extended family. The 1910 Census placed two of his step-brothers, James and Arthur living in the vicinity. Site 41BL577 may have been rented to one of them.

In 1934, Sellers partitioned his property among his five married children. Leona and her husband, James M. Hallmark received title to the 50 acre tract which they had farmed; the W. F. Sellers’ farmstead (site 41BL580) was conveyed to his son, R. L. Sellers. The *ad valorem* tax schedules indicated that R. L. Sellers lived at the farmstead from 1934 until 1937 when he then sold it to his brother, D. L. Sellers. Like the second
generation of the Doss and Hallmark families, W. F. Sellers obtained his own farm separate from his father's. Like Hallmark, he was successful enough to purchase additional property in the valley. But unlike Hallmark, he conveyed his property to his children before he died.

The Wiseman family history is another example of multiple generations of families settling in the Cowhouse valley and staying four generations. The 1880 Census enumerated the Wiseman family from South Carolina, renting farms in different locations in Precinct #7 of Bell County. John Wiseman, 63, and his second wife, Eliza, 34, had five children living with them at the time. Two of John's married sons, J. T. Wiseman, 40, and W. H. Wiseman, 38, were also renting farms in Bell County. W. H. Wiseman's third child, J. T. (named after his brother), was 10 years-old in 1880.

In 1900, J. T. Wiseman, 31, and his wife, purchased a 58 acre tract (the former C. C. Doss farmstead) on Taylor's Branch from George W. Cole, Jr., a large landowner in the valley. His older brother, William S., 32, and his younger brother, James E., 25, were renting farms from him. Wiseman's youngest brother, Thomas, 21, had purchased a farm on Cowhouse Creek.

In 1906, J. T. Wiseman purchased 100 acres of adjoining property and built a new home (site 41BL614) and lived there until he moved to Sparta in 1943. The 1920 Census placed J. T. Wiseman's brothers, William S., 52, and James E., 46, on the same farms they were renting before the turn of the century. During the 1930s, William S. moved to Sparta and settled in a house next to the school. The 1920 Census placed J. T. Wiseman's oldest son, Virgil, 28, and his wife, renting a farm from him. He may have
been the occupant of site 41BL617 during this time. The second generation of the Wiseman family, headed by J. T. Wiseman, like G. E. Hallmark and W. F. Sellers, purchased property as a young married man and during his life-time, acquired additional land and rented portions of it to his brothers and his children.

The final family discussed is that of Levi Paulk family. Extensive research was not carried out on this family because it only occupied two of the sites for a short period of time. However, it is worth mentioning because Levi Paulk, resembled G. W. Walton is his transference of property to his sons. In 1889, Levi Paulk assumed the note payments on a 151.8 acre tract located on Taylor’ Branch, subdivided the property and gave each of his three sons a 50 acre tract. None of the sons lived on the property for long; by 1893, they sold their acreage to W. F. Sellers.

The ad valorem tax schedules record a continuity and uniformity of assets from one generation to the next, which typically included a horse or two, a wagon, a number of hogs and a few head of cattle. Tracing these families through the tax records also revealed their economic success. For instance, at the turn of the century, Sellers was assessed taxes on three horses and one head of cattle that he kept on his father’s property. After he purchased his own farm in 1906, he had significantly increased his number of livestock and was assessed taxes on assets valued at $700. Ten years later, his assets were valued at $1,260. When he retired and moved to Belton in 1934, his assets were valued at $1,510. G. E. Hallmark first appeared in the tax rolls in 1894; his total assets were valued at $1,470. After he died in 1938, his sons stated in an affidavit that the
"Hallmark lands" were valued at $12,000. As for the estate of J. T. Wiseman, its value rose from $800 in 1906 to $1,320 in 1920 and then declined to $800 in 1930.

From the summaries presented above, it is evident that families "took care of their own." The families discussed above are the product of successful first generations that settled in the valley from the 1850s through the 1870s. The second generation of these families lived on their fathers' land until they had the means to purchase their own property. Most were successful enough during their lifetimes to purchase additional tracts. When their children came of age during the first decade of the twentieth century, they married, and lived on their fathers' property as renters, until the land was partitioned, either when their fathers retired or died. Most acquired the titles to the land they farmed in the 1930s and 1940s.

The Community's Role

.....the next [lesson the backwoodsman learnt was] that such a community could only thrive if all joined in helping one another... neighbors come together to do what the family itself could hardly accomplish alone. (Roosevelt 1932:466)

Common interests of the early settlers drew them together and eventually, they formed a community. Interdependence and reciprocity are key elements in the process of preserving the social order and its culture. Every person interviewed gave the same account of the community's concern for one another — if their family saw a light on at a neighbor's house in the middle of the night, the very first thing they would do the next morning, was call upon the neighbor to see what kind of problem had interrupted his sleep and what they could do to help. Neighbors came to the rescue if a neighbor fell sick
and they would plow his field or harvest his crops if necessary. This was done in the spirit of neighborliness, but in full recognition that it would be returned if disaster fell upon them. Taking care of one’s neighbor involved other customs of mutual aid, such as “making a crop,” food exchange, free range rights for cattle and the right of school children to cross property lines. Stories of 15 to 20 men showing up at thrashing time to harvest the wheat crop of a neighbor, many accompanied by their wives to help with meal preparations, was as common as families taking turns slaughtering a beef and dividing the meat among themselves. The children of each generation of the Sparta farmers witnessed and participated in these events. To them, that was what farming was all about, and these values were ingrained in their minds and passed onto their children (Humphrey, personal communication). Taking care of one’s neighbor maintained the bonds that sustained the vitality of the community.

Bishop’s (1954:30) history portrays a pioneer community that wanted its children educated, so it erected a small log structure on land donated by John T. W. J. Hallmark on Taylor’s Branch. As more families moved into the valley, the school’s location moved to a site near the mouth of Taylor’s Branch in 1869. Families donated lumber for the new school, named Cedar Grove, and the entire community was involved in the construction. A second school was established on the second floor of G. W. Walton’s store in the 1880s (Figure 10) and operated there until a new schoolhouse was built by Nelson Walton in 1895. It was remodeled over the years to accommodate three classrooms. In 1919, the Cedar Grove and the Sparta Schools were consolidated, forming the Sparta-Cedar Grove Common School District #7. Through time, each schoolhouse was used for
Grange meetings, political rallies, debating clubs and public speaking events. Many of the teachers who taught at Cedar Grove and Sparta came from within the community; some who taught from the 1910s through the 1940s were Tom Doss, Faxie Walton, Hubert Hallmark, Lucy Hallmark and Mildred Wiseman (Bishop 1954:34). In 1934-1935, the state conducted a survey of the public schools of Texas. The Sparta-Cedar Grove Common School District #7, had 81 school-aged children (ages 6-17) living in the community, of those, 66 were enrolled. Ten grades were taught by three teachers and students attended school for 147 days of the year (Texas State School Board 1935:240).

In the early 1940s, one of the Sparta-Cedar Grove Trustees, Charles Northam, a tenant farmer in the valley, needed his three sons during the month of September to help pick cotton, but did not want them to miss any school. So he and the other trustees, arranged to have the teachers arrive at school at 7:00 in the morning in order to teach classes for the children who were needed on the farm. They were dismissed at 1:00 and sent home. Although not all families took advantage of this option; it was available to them. Figures 13 and 14 are pictures of the Sparta School students ca.1918 and 1936, respectively.
Figure 13. Sparta school class, ca. 1918. (Courtesy of Ernestine Humphrey)

Once the community took form, a church was established. Moses Denman, an early pioneer, purchased property on Cowhouse Creek and organized the first primitive Baptist Church in the valley (Bishop 1954:8). Once a church was built in Sparta, it became the center of the community’s religious and social life. (Figure 15) On Sunday morning, the community would attend worship services and sometimes a preacher from a neighboring community was invited to lead the service. Figure 16 is the last picture of the Sparta Church of Christ congregation, taken ca. 1953.

Community picnics were often held after church in the Tabernacle, a covered area, behind the church. At many of these picnics, single ladies would fix "box suppers" to be
Figure 14. Sparta school class, ca. 1936. (Courtesy of Bill Northam)

auctioned off to young men in the community. The proceeds would be donated to the school. Another popular event held on the church grounds on Sunday afternoons were singing conventions. Quartets from Sparta or from the neighboring communities of Brookhaven, Union Hill, Phoenix, or Bland would perform during the picnics.

Another event held on Sunday afternoons that not only involved the families of the community but also those of the communities of Brookhaven, Union Hill, Nolanville and Bland, was summer baseball. The Sparta team consisted of men and teenage boys who enjoyed playing ball. Figure 17 is a picture of the 1951 Sparta Baseball Team. Charles Northam was the coach for a number of years. To raise money for equipment, the team would play exhibition games and dress in women’s clothing.
Other social events included hosting ring parties and domino tournaments, candy pulls and wiener roasts, home-made ice cream get-togethers and ring games. Neighbors would take turns hosting these events in their homes. Ring games were group dances, such as doe-ce-doe and the entire family took part. The furniture would be cleared out of a couple of rooms, the floor would be sprinkled with corn meal to make it slick. T. A.

Figure 15. Sparta Church of Christ, ca. 1930. (Courtesy of Ernestine Humphrey)
Wilhite often played at these events, as did Charles Northam, who played guitar.

Sometimes, a collection was taken up to pay the musicians. Ring games were held primarily to give children something to do on Saturday nights; however, the adults enjoyed them just as much. The social events described above took place in Sparta during the 1930s and 1940s. They give neighbors a time to visit and an opportunity for the young to socialize, while preserving the social order of the community.

"Sparta was a thriving little community," recalled Mrs. Humphrey as she described her home. Its pioneering families' hard work produced school houses, a
church, a grist and saw mill, a gin, a blacksmith shop, a gas station, and a number of stores that served the needs of the community through the years. These structures were places where the members of the community would gather to share stories, seek advice, ask for help, discuss politics, conduct business, educate their children and worship.

Lewis noted in his survey of Bell County, that the local country store was often more than a service center; it was a social center. It was the traditional meeting place and center of gossip in the community. Farmers would spend a good deal of time in the stores, especially in rainy weather, playing dominoes and discussing local and national affairs (Lewis 1948:48). Mrs. Boren recalled that she had one rule and all of the farmers knew it — no spitting chewing tobacco on the floor of her store.
Conclusion

To address the issue of social reproduction, two avenues of inquiry have been explored -- archival documents relating to the archaeological sites under study and oral histories of the last generation to live in Sparta.

Family histories concerning the properties under study are similar to each other in that the first generation of the Doss, Hallmark, Sellers and Wiseman families settled in the Cowhouse valley before 1880. As the deed and census records indicate, not all of the members of the subsequent generations of these families remained in the valley. However, some did, and they were the ones that carried on, or in other words, "reproduced" the life style of the generation before. The second generation of the Hallmark, Sellers and Wiseman families that stayed in the valley, as represented by G. E. Hallmark, W. F. Sellers, and J. T. Wiseman, (the residents of the sites under study) were successful enough to purchase additional properties. When their children came of age in the early decades of the twentieth century, some entered into the same vocation of subsistence farming supplemented by planting cotton, settled on their fathers' property and raised their families. These families were the last generation to live in Sparta and they were the neighbors of the informants interviewed in this study.

Those informants, members of the Wilhite, Northam and Boren families, also had large extended families that settled in the Cowhouse valley in the nineteenth century. They provided information concerning formal and informal social events that took place in the community during the 1930s and 1940s. Through events sponsored at church and school, neighbor get-togethers on Saturday evenings, and economic reciprocity among
farm families, the community remained cohesive and vital; it did not disintegrate. Its character was "reproduced" through the repeated social and economic interactions of subsequent generations.

**Subsistence Production**

Subsistence production is a central element of community life. Communities do not serve as economic units, but rather generate conditions whereby subsistence production is possible (Kolb and Snead 1997:611). Each farmer provided for his own family through his own labor, however, the extended family and the community as a whole were always there to lend support if necessary. In the Cowhouse valley, from the mid-1850s to well into the twentieth century, life on the farm emphasized self-reliance, recycling and frugality. The February 10, 1881 issue of the *Belton Journal* described the farming strategy of the southern subsistence farmer by stating: “the yankee farmer was usually more thrifty and prosperous than a southern farmer because the yankee farmer never eats anything he can sell, while the southern farmer never sells anything he can eat.” “Growing one’s living” (Sitton and Utley 1997:5) took precedence over growing cotton in the Cowhouse valley. Even as late as 1950, half of the farm acreage in the valley was planted in subsistence crops. The tradition of self-sufficiency and the adaptive measures implemented to sustain the tradition are reflected in the archival documents, archaeological remains and the oral histories of the last generation of Sparta families.

**Archival documentation**

The 1860, 1870 and 1880 Agricultural Censuses and the Bell County *ad valorem* tax schedules of Precinct #7, give insights into the economy of each family in the
Cowhouse valley. The agricultural census provides detailed information on farm ownership, crops planted, number of acres in production, livestock, products produced, value of farm production and the value of the farmstead. The annual Bell County ad valorem tax schedules assess value of land, livestock and farm implements through 1915. After 1915, assessments are made only on acreage and personal property. These records verify the practice of subsistence agriculture in the Cowhouse valley during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The Agricultural Censuses of the nineteenth century report that the farmers in the Cowhouse valley were primarily growing subsistence crops such as corn, wheat and oats and raising livestock for home use, such as milk cows and hogs. Those that owned property north of the valley in the hilly uplands during the 1870s were involved in ranching activities. Nancy Clements (site 41BL571), John D. O'Keefe (site 41BL551), C. C. Doss (site 41BL617), and Asa Reed (site 41BL616), raised horses, cattle and goats. The 1870 Agricultural Census listed 18 acres of Nancy Clements' farm as improved. Two-thirds of her acreage was planted in subsistence crops and one-third was planted in cotton. She owned a sizable herds of cattle and horses, in addition to cows and hogs. Her neighbor to the north, John D. O'Keefe, had a sizable herd of cattle and 10 acres were planted in subsistence crops. C. C. Doss appeared in the tax rolls for the first time in 1875, paying taxes on horses, cattle and goats. By 1877, he had eliminated his goat herd and replaced it with hogs. In 1879, he planted six acres in cotton, which produced one bale, and 18 acres in corn, which produced 300 bushels.
In 1869, Asa Reed’s livestock herd was valued at $1,100, the highest value of all the Taylor’s Branch farms. In 1872, he had 34 head of cattle and a small herd of goats. Over a period of two years, he acquired 40 goats and 16 horses. By 1878, he eliminated his goat herd and replaced it with 60 hogs. Reed had 16 acres planted in corn in 1869, and 10 years later, he still had 16 acres planted in corn, but had added four acres planted in cotton.

The goat venture that Doss and Reed were involved during the latter half of the 1870s, reflected a trend that was taking place in the sheep and goat industry in Texas. Throughout this decade, Texas sheep values climbed from one dollar a head to over two, and wool prices rose to 25 cents a pound. But in 1883, the sheep market began a steady decline (Earls, et al, 1993:448). These farmers may have taken advantage of the high prices and sold their herds before the market declined.

The tax assessments of the farms under study, were quite uniform through time. All listed a couple of horses, a wagon, a small herd of cattle and a slightly larger number of hogs. For instance, the 100 acre Asa Reed farm was purchased by R. L. Garner in 1889. Until he sold it to J. T. Wiseman in 1906, Garner was assessed property taxes on an average of 2 horses, 4 head of cattle, 5 hogs, and 1 wagon. When Wiseman purchased the property, his assets were similar. During his tenure, he was assessed taxes on an average of 4 horses, 6 hogs, 6 head of cattle and 1 wagon.

Site 41BL442, located in the Cowhouse valley, was the property of T. C. Robertson in the mid-1880s through the mid-1890s. During these years, his livestock herd, on the average, consisted of 2 horses, 8 head of cattle, and 15 hogs. Unlike others
farming in the valley, Robertson owned 14 goats in the late 1880s. J. G. Brown and N. H. Humphries consecutively owned the farm from 1895 to 1903; both of these owners had a minimum number of cattle, horses and hogs. When T. N. Spruell owned the property, he averaged 7 horses, 2 head of cattle and 8 hogs.

Two brothers, Z. T. and J. F. Cartwright, preempted land along Taylor's Branch in the late 1870s and appeared in the 1880 Agricultural Census. Z. T. Cartwright's farm had eight acres planted in cotton, producing two bales, and four acres planted in corn. He had only 1 horse, 1 hog and 1 milk cow. J. F. Cartwright's farm was also planted in corn and cotton; eight acres produced one bale in 1879. Unlike his brother, J. F. Cartwright had more livestock, between 8 and 15 hogs, 2 horses and 1 head of cattle. Like his brother, J. F. Cartwright sold his farm in 1881, but did not leave the valley. He purchased a 70 acre farm (site 41BL469) on Cowhouse Creek, and farmed for five years. Site 41BL469 went through a succession of landowners, who, on the average owned 2 horses, 8 head of cattle, and 6 hogs.

G. E. Hallmark first appeared in the 1880 Agricultural Census renting a farm on his father's property, on which he cultivated 20 acres. Five acres were planted in corn, six were planted in cotton, which produced one bale. His father, John T. W. J. Hallmark, had 30 acres cultivated, of which 14 were planted in corn, 4 were planted in oats and 8 were planted in cotton. He produced 250 bushels of corn, 18 bushels of oats and 3 bales of cotton.

G. E. Hallmark appeared for the first time in the tax rolls in 1894, paying taxes on 2 wagons, 5 horses, 26 hogs and 13 head of cattle. In 1900, he had 30 head of cattle, 10
hogs, 2 horses, and 1 wagon. By 1910, his assets included 9 horses, 10 head of cattle, 3 hogs and 2 wagons.

The tax rolls from 1901 through 1915, listed W. F. Sellers’ assets averaging 3 horses, 8 head of cattle, 6 hogs and 1 wagon. J. T. Wiseman’s assets were similar, from 1900 through 1915, he averaged 6 head of cattle, 5 hogs, 3 horses, and 2 wagons.

The agricultural censuses of the nineteenth century and the ad valorem tax schedules through 1915 present a uniform standard of living among the farms selected. The agricultural censuses of the nineteenth century show that the farmers on Taylor’s Branch had more livestock than those that lived on Cowhouse Creek, with the exception of G. W. Walton. The majority of the farms averaged 100 acres in size, with less than 25 acres in cultivation. On the average, between a fourth and a third of the acreage in cultivation was planted in cotton, the remainder in subsistence crops. These farms supported farm families that had on the average, eight children. The ad valorem tax schedules report similar assets among the farmers that resided at the sites under study. All owned a few horses, a small herd of cattle, and less than 10 hogs.

Material Culture

The artifacts from the surface collection reveal another side of subsistence procurement -- the use of commercially produced products. The grocery stores that served the community of Sparta from the 1870s on, stocked stables and dry goods that were either purchased for cash or bartered for farm produce or cedar posts. According to the informants, families patronized stores in Sparta and in Belton. Earnest Wilhite
preferred to shop in Belton because the prices were lower. He would go to Belton on Saturday afternoons to purchase supplies the family needed.

When asked about the tableware used in their home, the Wilhite sisters said that it consisted of hand-me-downs or products that came in the bottom of oatmeal and soap boxes. Gasoline stations sometimes gave away glass tableware with a fill-up of gasoline. T. A. Wilhite remembered that separate pieces of undecorated whiteware could be purchased in a Belton hardware store (personal communication). Ernestine Humphrey inherited a yellowware mixing bowl from her grandmother (personal communication). The Wilhite sisters knew only one family that owned a set of matching dinnerware, the Denmans, the wealthiest family in the valley.

Sherds of stoneware crocks and canning jars, used for food preservation and storage, were found at all of the sites. The Wilhite family used stoneware crocks to store sausage by placing it between layers of lard. According to the informants, during the summer months, every family would “can” their garden produce and hoped it would last until the next harvest.

A number of Belton grocery stores advertised staples such as coffee, tea, sugar, molasses, bacon, lard, salt, flour, dried fruit, canned fruits, pickles, eggs and tobacco in *The Belton Journal*. The majority of the produce items for sale were obtained from local producers in exchange for staples such as sugar, flour and coffee. A tin containing baking powder was found at one of the sites. Hardware stores sold plows, wagons, windmills, cook stoves, lumber, fence wire, window glass, nails and paint and remains of these items were recovered from the historic sites.
Druggists advertised medicines such as Parson's Purgative Pills, Sanford's Liver Invigorator, vegetable purifiers and malt bitters for sale in the Belton Journal. Examples of panel bottles, which held patent medicines, bitters and tonics were found at six sites.

Mrs. Humphrey recalled her mother giving her laxatives and iron tonics, such as "Baby Percey" and "Black Draught." Before the weather turned cold and again at planting time, T.A. Wilhite's mother would give each of her 11 children yellow pills to keep them healthy. Farm families could also purchase goods from the "Riley Man," a traveling salesman that came through Sparta once a month selling medicinal and household products from the back of his wagon, often exchanging products for chickens and eggs.

As for bottles that contained condiments, milk, food coloring, soda, wine and beer, most of the informants stated that these products came later, during the 1940s. They did not have these products growing up in the 1920s and 1930s, except for commercially produced medicines. When asked about the sherds of broken wine bottles found at a number of the sites, the informants were perplexed because the farmers they knew who made their own wine, stored it in cedar casks and never bottled it. Snuff bottles were found at two sites. Not many of the men T. A. Wilhite knew, used snuff or dipped tobacco, "too expensive," he said.

Oral histories

The memories of the last generation born and raised in Sparta are alive with images of farming as a corporate endeavor. The entire family took part, they rose before dawn, fed the livestock before breakfast, and then took on the daily tasks of farm life. The foremost memory of growing up on the farm was the high level of self-sufficiency
that existed. Next to the house grew the family’s vegetable garden, one to two acres in size, planted in tomatoes, squash, okra, onions, beans, peas, cucumbers, pop-corn and root crops such as turnips, carrots and potatoes. Some families had peach and pear trees on their farms. The Tennessee Valley community to the east grew watermelons, cantaloupes and honey-due melons which were often bartered. Native pecan tress and mustang grapes grew wild in the valley and were accessible to all. During the summer, everyone would “can” the garden produce and make jellies and preserves; some families made wine. The Wilhites planted ribbon cane and had it processed at a syrup mill near Nolanville.

All of the crops produced on the farm were used on the farm, except cotton, which was the only cash crop of most farmers in Sparta. Those that farmed the bottom lands, planted about half of their acreage in cotton. Crops grown included field and sweet corn, maize, High Gear, red top, ribbon cane, wheat and oats. Every year, they would rotate their crops to keep the soil productive.

Everyone worked in the fields at harvest time. The small children were brought to the field and put in the care of an older sibling, often placed under the shade of a tree along a turn row. Once they reached the age of five or six, they were given a cotton sack and expected to pick cotton alongside their families. Since T. A. Wilhite had only his son and his adopted son to help, he would hire the sons of neighbors and pay them 50 cents for each 100 pounds they picked. His fields produced about one-half bale per acre.

Each family owned a couple of horses or mules, six to eight head of cattle, a few milk cows, four to six hogs and dozens of chickens. Cattle and hogs were tagged on their
ears in case they got loose. Often livestock were allowed to roam in the corn fields after harvest. Everyone grew corn and maize (milo) for animal feed. Often it was the job of the children to shuck and shell the corn and feed it to the chickens every morning and evening. Sometimes the corn was ground and mixed with other grains for chicken feed. The mules and hogs were given whole ears.

Each winter, families would get together at each other’s home and help slaughter one or two of the hogs. Hams, bacon, and sausage were preserved through smoking. Most families had a small building that was used as a smokehouse. Calves and chickens were slaughtered more frequently. T. A. Wilhite would make extra money during the year by slaughtering a calf, and selling the cuts of meat to his neighbors. Some families would take turns slaughtering a calf and dividing the meat among themselves. On Sundays, Lorene Boren would kill three chickens to feed her three teen-aged sons. Ernestine Humphrey’s mother owned a kerosene incubator and she would hold back 100 eggs to incubate. Milk cows produced the milk, cream and butter consumed by the family and the job of milking the cows and making butter often fell to the children. Surplus butter, milk and eggs were often sold or bartered for other products at the Sparta store or in town. Some sold surplus milk to Borden Dairy in Belton.

Almost every family hunted, game included deer, squirrels, rabbits, dove, and robins. Ernestine Humphrey remembered wild turkeys nesting on the hill behind the family farm. T. A. Wilhite’s adopted son would head down to the creek to fish at every opportunity. According the Johnny Lee, the Cowhouse Creek had the biggest and best
catfish in the whole county. Some farmers would hunt raccoons and opossum in the winter for extra money. They would take the pelts to Belton and sell to clothiers.

The family meal after church on Sunday was special. It usually consisted of ham or roast, mashed potatoes, corn bread and corn pudding, vegetables from the garden, fruit cobbler or pies, and homemade ice cream. Breakfast normally consisted of hot oatmeal, bacon, sausage, eggs, biscuits and syrup. Children would carry their lunches to school in syrup buckets filled with biscuits, sausage and fried pies. Ernestine Humphrey recalled how the children would trade lunches among themselves, a favorite lunch being a sandwich made with white bread and Sandwich Spread, a mayonnaise-based condiment containing sweet pickles, purchased in town.

A number of stores in Sparta provided staples for the community over the decades. One of the most successful stores in Sparta began as a Grange store in 1879. From 1880 to 1887, T. E. Tomlinson (resident of site 41BL442 from 1886 to 1889) managed the store until he sold it to his brother-in-law, George W. Cole, Jr. Near the store stood a cotton gin and grist mill, built by G. W. Walton and operated by his youngest son, Dock Walton until both buildings burned down in 1921. (Figure 10) During the 1920s and 1930s, a couple of stores operated in Sparta, the largest belonging to Mr. Jordan.

In 1946, Ike Boren, a grandson of J. R. Boren, a farmer in the Sparta community, purchased the old Jordan store from S. A. York. Since he was an engineer with the Santa Fe Railroad Co., his wife, Lorene, with the help of her father-in-law and four children, operated the store. She opened at sunrise and closed at sundown. She sold
staples such as flour, sugar, coffee, shortening, canned milk, meat, vegetables and ice
cream which she purchased at McLane’s Grocery in Temple. The store had a gas pump
which was serviced twice a week and a cedar yard. She would often extend credit to the
farmers in Sparta, or exchange farm produce or cedar posts for groceries.

Life in the Cowhouse valley changed very little during the Depression. When
asked why life was not harshly affected, many of the informants believed it was because
they were basically self-sufficient. Although most grew cotton for cash, just as much time
was invested in their other crops and in their garden. T. A. Wilhite scoffed at the idea of
“putting all of your eggs in one basket...why would any self-respecting farmer want to
spend hard earned cash on products you could produce yourself [such as livestock feed
and garden crops].”

The tradition of self-reliance and frugality continued through the 1940s. Farm
families built and repaired the farm’s outbuildings and kept their water supply in working
order. Most farms had wells, and some had wind mills or gas powered pumps that kept
water towers and cisterns full. T. A. Wilhite and Charles Northam had neither; they
would fill buckets with water at the well and haul them to the house each morning. T. A.
Wilhite’s father had a cistern that collected rain water from the roof of his house. Many
times, T. A. Wilhite would have to climb on the roof and clean and repair the rain gutters.
He remembered, as a child, after a snowfall, he and his brothers would had to shovel
snow into the cistern.

Texas Power and Light ran electrical lines along the southern edge of the valley in
the late 1940s, but the labor and expense of running a line to a home or business fell upon
the owner. Only a few homes and businesses in Sparta had electricity, none of the farms on Taylor’s Branch or the north side of the creek had electricity.

Self-sufficiency was a way of life that had been practiced by their parents before them. Asked about growing up on her family’s farm, Viola Bounds Copeland recalled, “if our father’s crops failed, we had our pecan trees to fall back upon. And if that all failed, we had our cedars to cut and sell. And if that all failed, we’d trap hides up under the bluff. And we would fish.” The use of “we” describes the corporate nature of the farm family. The efforts of every member of the family were necessary for survival. They raised livestock and planted the crops to feed them. They grew their own produce and preserved it for use during the year. If they had a surplus of any product, they would sell or barter it for commercially-produced goods. Some farmers would “hire out” themselves and their farm equipment to make extra income. Cash from the sale of cotton was used to purchase farm equipment and household necessities. None of the informants remembered ever going hungry, and if a family in the community appeared to be having a difficult time, neighbors would contribute food and clothing, and credit was extended at the local grocery store.

Conclusion

As reflected in the agricultural censuses of the nineteenth century, the *ad valorem* tax schedules through 1915, the material culture collected from the surface of the sites under study, and from oral histories of former residents, a fairly uniform standard of living existed among the farmers of the Cowhouse valley; one based on subsistence agriculture. The number of livestock enumerated in the agricultural censuses and the Bell County tax
rolls are in keeping with the numbers reported by the last generation of Sparta farmers. Each family examined in the documents and each family interviewed, owned, on the average, two horses, a small herd of cattle and less than 10 hogs. Each farm examined in the agricultural censuses reported egg and butter production and each informant's farm also produced eggs and butter. The agricultural censuses also revealed that most farmers cultivated on the average, 25 acres, and between a fourth and a third of the acreage was planted in cotton, the remainder in subsistence crops. Those interviewed reported having on the average, 100 acres in cultivation, of which half was planted in cotton, and the remainder in subsistence crops. They also reported that most of the subsistence crops were used on the farm and only rarely, did they have a surplus to sell. As the archival documents and the oral histories attest, each generation that farmed the lands of Cowhouse Creek and Taylor's Branch, were primarily engaged in raising subsistence crops and livestock for home use, supplemented by growing cotton. The predominance of glass canning jars and stoneware storage vessels recovered at the sites, verify the accounts of self-sufficiency across the community.

Community Identity

Community identity is rooted in social reproduction and economic practices and is displayed through the physical and symbolic boundaries of the community (Kolb and Snead 1997:611). The physical boundaries are not only defined by the geographical landmarks that give a place distinction, but also by the sphere of social interaction, whether it be through formal institutions such as church or school, or through informal activities such as baseball games and domino tournaments. The symbolic boundaries are
defined as the bonds that unite a group of people having the same vocation and sharing a common history.

Physical boundaries

When Lewis conducted his study of rural Bell County in the mid-1940s, he noted that the area west of Belton, where the land was more heavily wooded and subsistence farming more prevalent, the population had been more stable, and resisted change to a greater degree than many other small Bell County communities. The community that he spoke of was Sparta. He noted that it was closely knit, its people were united by ties of kinship, long residence, farm ownership, and through active membership in school and church. Sparta had a voting box, an AAA meeting place, a 4-H Club, and a gas station. These services strengthened community identity by obviating the necessity for leaving the community to seek services elsewhere (Lewis 1948:40-41,49).

Lewis (1948:42) also noted that farm families intuitively knew the boundaries of their community. Sitton and Utley (1997:40) found in the farming communities of Washington and Fayette Counties, every farm family, even in the most remote farmstead knew it was part of some community. The farm family’s world was circumscribed, the horizon of its known world did not reach out very far, but what the family did know, it knew intimately, in depth and detail.

The farmers of Sparta defined the physical boundaries of their community by the white limestone cliffs and the cedar-covered mountains to the north; the western boundary ended somewhere beyond the reaches of Taylor’s Branch; the southern
boundary was Sparta Mountain and its cedar brakes, and the eastern boundary blended into the farmlands of the Tennessee Valley community.

Each farmer, even if he did not own the title to the land he farmed, looked upon the fields that he cleared, plowed, planted, weeded and harvested as his own. He knew which fields were best planted in corn and which fields produced the best cotton. The children in the community knew the best places to fish and hunt and swim. They knew the cycles of the pecan trees and where mustang grapes flourished. All of the informants could still picture in their minds the layouts of their families’ farms and the trails they took to school each day. They could remember the sounds of their family car crossing the Boren and Sparta Bridges. Some could predict the weather just by watching the color of Sparta Bluff at different times of the day. These memories are best summed up in the words of Ernestine Humphrey, “If they would drain the lake, everything would be the same, the trees and fences lines, everything would still be there.”

**Symbolic boundaries**

A place is not a place until people have been born in it, have grown up in it, known it, died in it, have both experienced and shaped it as individuals, families and communities over more than one generation. (Stegner 1996:207)

The bonds of community are strongest when its members share a common history and vocation (Selzick 1996:197). Sanderson noted that a shared history was the most important element in producing a sense of community in the rural communities he studied in the 1920s (1932:625-627). The history of Sparta that resides in the memories of its
former residents is a social history, one that encompasses the everyday, ordinary events that took place within the family and community. Outside that sphere, memories fade.

The Cowhouse valley was settled primarily by families from the “Old South” that emigrated to Texas before and after the Civil War. The Walton brothers named their new community Sparta, after their home town in Tennessee. Families of two generations and several branches (the Hallmarks, the Dosses, the Sellers and the Wisemans) arrived in the valley together and preempted or purchased lands on Taylor’s Branch and on Cowhouse Creek. They raised cattle, grew subsistence crops and cotton. They operated in a survival mode after the collapse of the monetary system of the South, and during the years that followed, continued the pattern of self-sufficient subsistence agriculture (Jackson 1982:13-14). The second, third and fourth generations maintained the same traditions well into the twentieth century. Even after most of the products produced on the farm could be purchased in town, such as livestock feed, meat products, milk, eggs and vegetables, the Sparta farmers continued to produce these goods themselves.

Conclusion

Sparta was more than an assemblage of collapsed root cellars, chimney rubble, sherds of stoneware and glass fragments; it was a place that had the ability to remain vital and cohesive through the turbulent years of the early twentieth century. Many small Bell County communities began to disintegrate during the Depression, but a few remained intact. Lewis (1948) noted that Sparta was a stable community even after World War II. Its distinction as such, was attributed to ties of kinship, to farmers living on the land they farmed, to availability of community services, and to active membership in church and
school. These elements were also noted in the accounts of six former residents of Sparta.

They portrayed a community of families committed to each other, to their way of life and to their community. The same traits are also described in Bishop's history as well as in the county histories examined in this study.

The traits of the self-sufficient farm family of the 1930s-1940s — self-reliance, hard work, pride of vocation, frugality, adaptability and mutuality — resembled the traits, described by Tyler (1936) Bishop (1954), and Limmer (1988) of the pioneering families of Bell County almost a century before. The ten decades of Sparta's existence were bound together by many threads, one thread being family longevity. It was common practice for families to stay together; grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and grandchildren lived in close proximity. Of those families, the Hallmarks, the Sellers, and the Wisemans, who owned enough land to subdivide among their children, did so in a number of ways. Some gave each child a portion of land when he or she reached maturity, others kept control of it until they retired, and still others never relinquished control during their lifetime. Maybe this was a way of maintaining authority as the head of a very large extended family. As for families that did not have enough land for their grandchildren to farm, those grandchildren did not leave the area, but found rental property. The Northam and two of the Wilhite families established homes as newly married couples and stayed on the same farms and raised their children to adulthood.

Another thread that maintained the bonds of the community through time was found in the very essence of community — reciprocity and interdependence. Customs of mutual aid, such as food exchange and help in "making a crop," strengthened community
solidarity. “Providing for the family” was the same as “taking care of one’s neighbor” in the minds of those interviewed. Formal gatherings at church and school, combined with informal events, such as ring games, church picnics, and baseball games were the fibers of yet another thread that maintained the vitality of the community.

When Ernestine Humphrey said that “everyone was more or less equally matched,” she was not only speaking of the standard of living they all shared, but also how they made their living. The agricultural censuses of the nineteenth century report a standard of living similar to that of the last generation of Sparta farmers. Throughout its history, the farmers of Sparta practiced subsistence agriculture, supplemented by growing cotton. As the market for cotton became more accessible after 1882, cotton production increased in the Cowhouse valley, but not to the extent as it did in other areas of the county. The twentieth-century Sparta farmer planted half of his acreage in subsistence crops to feed his livestock and his family. Cotton produced the cash necessary to purchase modern farm equipment, which in turn, increased the number of acres in cultivation and increased the productivity of the farms. Sharing a common history and a common vocation were still more threads that strengthened the bonds of the community.

The final thread that sustained the community of Sparta through time, was a “sense of belonging” to a place in Cowhouse valley. It was a place that provided a living and a home; it witnessed births, marriages, and deaths in families, and in turn, was shaped in the image of these families.

The census and tax records confirmed residential stability and continuity; the agricultural censuses, the tax records and the material culture, revealed uniformity of life
style across space and time; historical accounts portrayed a place of vitality which
possessed an identity; the memories of the last generation to live in Sparta gave credibility
to all three. Looking at Sparta through the model of Kolb and Snead (1997), it was a
community that provided an environment conducive to social reproduction and self-
regulating subsistence production and procurement. These combined, produced a sense
of community, rooted in the land as well as in the emotions.
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Site 41BL442

1. Clear bottle base w/ maker's mark, brown bottle base, pressed white glass and marked button
2. 2 pieces ceramicware, red-green in white stoneware with green strip
3. Clear bottle base w/ maker's mark

34/49
# 820 Inset
PK 34340 - 45040

m. Brindle 11-7-83
Site 41BL443

Sparta Road

Juniper

Juniper

Juniper

Trash dump

Path

0 5 10 15 Meters

Bill Moore, 11-7-83

31/49

#821
Site 41BL469

Collections:
- x1: Indigo floral design ceramic rim sherd
- x2: Red and Blue on white ceramic sherd
- x3: Opalescent glass (2 pieces)
- x4: Bottle neck
- x5: Blue feather edgeware
- x6: 2 pieces coming up and decorated large span
- x7: Clear depression glass (base)

BELTON RESERVOIR

34/50
* 849

M. Birdle
12-4-87
Site 41BL551

31 53
± 42

meters

Historic Road grade

A - shock tank

x1 - 3 clear bottle frags
5 - wine nails
1 - green bottle

X2 - sherdware, base frags,
ceramicware, rim sherd,
glass per lip + neck frag.

B. Ensor
2-8-84
Site 41BL573

- Modern Corral 20m
- Possible location of outbuilding
- Shock metal pile
- Fenced-in limestone in upper portion
- Tributary to Taylor's Creek

x1: brown medicine bottle, projected with no base
x2: stone pipe bottle
x3: Tomahawk (circular, broken)

BSK 943 50m
B. Entry 2/27/81
Site 41BL574

x1: metal container, 2 clear round glass w/ screw threads
x2: clear glass canning jar top, metal cylindrical container
x3: clear glass bottle base, white pressed glass
x4: clear glass bottle base, clear glass bottle neck, clear glass bottle base, green glass canning jar lip base
x5: pocket knife, clear pressed glass frag, brown bottle base, blue and white ceramic
x6: grey earthware, red + yellow glass frag.
Site 41BL616

-36/50
#1003

Meters
2650 m

- N

X1: Purple bottle base
brown glass crack sherd
X2: marbled red sherd
molded clay glass sherd
X3: 2 pieces brown-striped white ware
2 pieces decorated
X4: Green bottle neck
X5: Clear bottle neck

J. Turspin
3-22-81
APPENDIX II

ARTIFACT COLLECTION
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>41BL442/</th>
<th>41BL469</th>
<th>41BL571/</th>
<th>41BL574</th>
<th>41BL577</th>
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<td>WHITEWARE</td>
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<td>23. Molded dots and plumes</td>
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<td>27. Gold banded</td>
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<td>41. Hand-painted, blue floral, underglaze</td>
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<td>51. Flow blue</td>
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APPENDIX III

ORAL HISTORY QUESTIONNAIRE
Background on Individual:

Full name, address, age/birth date

Parents' names and where were they from

Names and ages of siblings

Aunts and uncles, extended family, did they live near by? What did they do for a living?

Time period living in the Sparta area -- what part of life spent here, ie., born here, childhood, school, marriage.

Your Home:

Where did your family live? How many acres did your family farm?

Describe your house. Was the kitchen the center of family life? How many rooms? Did your house have a porch?

What type of outbuildings did you have on the farm? Barns, smoke house, cattle pens, privy. Who built them and with what material?

How did you get water in the early days? Cisterns, wells, windmills, water towers

When did you get indoor plumbing?

Did your family have an ice box and was ice delivered regularly?

When did electricity come to the area? Did your house have electricity?

Did your family have a telephone?

How did you manage the heat in the summer and the cold in the winter?

Subsistence:

Degree of self-sufficiency:

Gardens: size, what crops, how dependable?

Domesticated animals, what kinds, how many?
How many eggs did your chicken produce, did your family sell the surplus? What about milk and butter?

How often did you slaughter hogs, chickens, cattle?

Wild game, abundance, procurement techniques, hunt, trap, fish etc.?

Did your family can home produce?

Store-bought goods:

Types of goods bought at store

Locations and names of stores and frequency of trips to store

What type of items did you buy that were not necessities? Soda, candy, personal items.

What kind of dishes and cookware did your family have? Where did they purchase them? Belton, Sears catalogue?

Meals:

What did you often have for breakfast, lunch and dinner? What store-bought items did you have regularly?

Did your family eat out? Parties, celebrations, informal suppers at neighbor’s home?

Crops:

Cotton:

Did you grow cotton? What percentage of acreage used for cotton? When did you start to grow cotton? Who planted, cultivated, and harvested the crop?

How was it picked?

Where was it ginned?

How many bales did your family produce?

How many of your neighbors grew cotton?
Corn:

Did you grow corn? Field corn for stock?

What percentage of acreage was planted in corn?

Was it milled? Sold?

Wheat:

Did you grow wheat?

What percentage of acreage was planted in wheat?

Where was it sold?

Other crops?

Livestock:

How many head of cattle did your family have?

How did you water your stock?

Where did you sell them?

Farm Life:

What types of equipment did you use in farming? Mules? Did your neighbors have the same types of equipment? Did you share or rent equipment?

Did the whole family work on the farm? What about young child care?

Did most children follow in their fathers’ footsteps and become farmers themselves? How many generations lived as neighbors?

Was it a custom for parents to give their children a portion of their land for a farm when they became adults? How would they handle the transfer?

Did most of the young adults marry the sons and daughters of neighbors?
Community Life:

What business establishments existed at Sparta?

How many churches were in Sparta? Did everyone attend each Sunday? Did children attend Sunday School? Who taught it?

What was school like? How many students and teachers? How many grades were there? Who were some of the teachers you remember? Did you attend highschool in Belton?

Types of social interaction:
- School
- Church
- Get-togethers with neighbors
- Work-related

How far would people come to gatherings?

Are these people who you would see any other time of year? Were related to you?

Could your family depend on others for help? What kind of help would you need?

Did you have a sense of community? Were you proud of what your family did and where you lived?

Did you have dreams of living in town?

Did everyone know each other in the community? How often did a new family move in?

Did most families have about the same standard of living?

Specific Sites:

Do you remember where the Hallmark family lived? The Doss family? The Cole family? The Walton family? The Wiseman family? The Sellers family?

Did tenant families stay a long time on a farm or did they move frequently?

The Doss, the Denman, the Hawkins Cemeteries were small cemeteries in the area. Where they maintained? Where these used or were burials in Belton?
APPENDIX IV

PHOTOGRAPH DESCRIPTIONS
Figure 12. The Doss family, ca. 1906.

Doss home on Sparta Road near Doss Springs. Noah Webb Doss, holding horse, Bob Denman and Joe Doss standing by the horse and buggy. Sterling Doss holding T. S. and Mary Lou Doss, near him. Pearl, Harmon (Hiram) and Sarah E. Doss, Mart Van Dyke, Viola, Laura, Lillian Doss Denman, May Evans, Clyva and Stella. Front row, Eunice, Cora, Hershal and Herbert. Johnny Evans in the other buggy.

Figure 13. Sparta school class, ca. 1918.


Figure 14. Sparta school class, ca. 1936.


Figure 16. Last congregation of the Sparta Church of Christ, ca. 1953.

Figure 17. Sparta baseball team, ca. 1951.

VITA

Carol Ann Fiorillo Macaulay received a Bachelor of Science degree in Secondary Education from the University of Texas at Austin in 1975. That year she married Michael G. Macaulay, Ph.D., and taught school in Austin for two years. Subsequently in 1977, she and her husband founded a water conditioning business in Temple, Texas, where she took up the responsibilities of Vice-President and Chief Financial Officer. Their first son, Robert was born in 1978, followed by Luke, Michael, Jr., Dane and Thomas. Her permanent address is 1018 N. Main St., Temple, Texas, 76501.