

**Koppe
and
Koppe's Ferry and Bridge**
collected by Bill Page
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Mr. William KOPPE is putting in a new ferry at the Rocky Ford and he informs us that he is going to do all of his shipping from this point. (weekly) Bryan Eagle, 30 Jan. 1890, p.8, col.2

Wellborn, Tex., Aug. 29 – Wednesday a little Negro girl five years of age, while playing with other children in a skiff tied to the ferry boat at Koppe's crossing on the Brazos River fell in and was drowned. The body was carried by the current down the stream and was not found until Thursday evening. Dallas Morning News, 31 August 1892, page 6

Bryan ... The News correspondent, accompanied by Messrs. William Koppe and J.W. Johnson, early one morning last week left Bryan for a bird's-eye view of the great Brazos bottom plantations, about fourteen miles from Bryan, in general, and the model plantation of Mr. Koppe in particular. Arriving at the magnificent Brazos County iron bridge which spans the Brazos River at the old Jones ferry, we entered this widely celebrated, fertile farming valley. The well known W.J. Moore place to the right, the John Newsom place down the river, and next Major H.K. White, James O. Chance and divers other farms. Arriving at the premises, we entered through a large avenue or "turn row," as they are called, and to the right and left presents a picture to behold. The great improved long staple cotton, now just profusely open, hanging in great snowy white bolls intermingled with just enough green foliage to set off the picture, looks like a myriad of snowballs strung upon wires ... [article continues at length] ... Dallas Morning News, 22 November 1892, p.6

Mrs. Laura KOPPE is circulating a stock subscription list for the purpose of organizing a company to build and maintain a toll bridge at KOPPE's Ferry on the Brazos River between Brazos and Burlson Counties, said bridge to cost not exceeding \$16,000.00. This is an enterprise which has long been needed by the people on both sides of the river, and one will be the means of bridging a large amount of trade and cotton regularly to Bryan which now goes elsewhere oftentimes on account of the difficulty of getting here. Mrs. KOPPE is meeting with much encouragement in the way of liberal stock subscriptions from planters and business men and there seems to be no doubt that the enterprise will succeed. (weekly) Bryan Eagle, 8 Nov. 1906, p.1

The organization of the KOPPE Bridge Company, with \$16,000.00 capital stock, was completed at a meeting held here yesterday afternoon. Jno. K. PARKER, Judge J.F. ROBINSON of Houston, Jno. M. LAWRENCE, Jas. O. CHANCE and R.S. NEWSOME were elected members of the board of directors, subsequent to which the board elected the following officers: Jno. K. PARKER, president; Judge J.F. ROBINSON, vice-president; Jno. M. LAWRENCE, secretary and treasurer. The Eagle learns that the

charter of the new company has been applied for, and that the plans and specifications for the bridge are in the hands of a competent engineer and will be submitted for bids on construction to the various bridge building companies in a few weeks. Upon closing the contract all possible haste will be made in the construction of the new bridge. The bridge will be located at KOPPE Ferry on the Brazos River, and is destined to prove a valuable and lasting benefit to Bryan in inducing the trade of the lower bottom to come to this city more conveniently. For this reason, if not for the general benefit it will prove to the people on both sides of the river and to the traveling public, the people and business men of Bryan should lend the enterprise all the aid in their power. (weekly) Bryan Eagle, 21 March 1907, p.1

At a meeting of the commissioners' court, held yesterday afternoon, the Missouri Valley Bridge Co., of Leavenworth, Kansas, represented by F.E. HESS of Dallas, was awarded the contract for the building of the Brazos river bridge at KOPPE's Ferry, on a bid of \$17,190.00. The contract calls for the completion of the bridge in eight months. The bridge will be built according to the plans of the Missouri Valley Bridge Co. adopted by the court recently. There were five bids before the court. (weekly) Bryan Eagle, 27 June 1907, p.1

"Negro Woman Killed Near Koppe," Bryan Daily Eagle, 4 July 1907, p.2, col.2.

Just at the hour of going to press news was received at the Sheriff's office that a murder had been committed at Koppe near Wellborn. The report stated that a Negro named Will Mays had killed his wife. The report did not state how he killed her nor for what reason. Deputy Sheriff Conlee boarded the southbound H. & T.C. passenger and left for the scene of the trouble. Later – It was learned that he shot her and soon after the tragedy surrendered to the constable at Wellborn. Brazos Pilot, 4 July 1907, p.4

Bryan, Tex. – Following the fatal shooting of a Negro woman near Wellborn yesterday afternoon, the husband, Will Mays, surrendered to J.J. Le Febure at that place and was brought here last night and lodged in jail by Deputy Sheriff J.D. Conlee of this city. According to May's statement the shot was fired at another Negro. Galveston Daily News, 5 July 1907, p.1

By the courtesy of County Judge A.G. BOARD and Commissioner P.H. ARRINGTON, Mr. H.O. SMITH, representing the Pilot, and a representative of the Eagle, went down to inspect the work on the new bridge in process of construction between the KOPPE plantation and Wellborn. The state was made at 5:15 a.m. and a brisk drive brought the party to the camp of the road graders, near Providence Church, where Mr. Bob McMAHAN, the superintendent, had a good warm breakfast awaiting, for which the fresh morning air had given each of the party a good appetite. The location of the camp was selected because of its convenience to construction work on the JONES bridge, the Providence and the KOPPE bridge roads. Mr. McMAHAN's force is now on the JONES bridge road, which he is grading and ditching in the best approved style. The most necessary work on each of the other roads has been done, and Mr. McMAHAN will continue the construction until all three are put in the best possible condition. The late

flood did considerable damage to the JONES bridge. An immense pile of drift lodged against the twin concrete piers at the west end of the main span, and the weight of the tide pressing against this pushed them out of line, until like the celebrated tower of Pisa, they lean at an angle of several degrees from the perpendicular, their tops being two and one-half or three feet out of line. An effort will be made to restore them to their proper position, but it is not certain that this can be done. The approach to the bridge on the west side was carried away bodily. A trestle of false work, made almost entirely of rough timber, from the forest, was hastily constructed as soon as the water went down. It is a flimsy affair and looks to be hardly safe for heavy loads. As soon as practicable, it will be replaced with a substantial, permanent structure. From the JONES bridge, the road through the plantations of the FOUNTAIN brothers, the Jas. O. CHANCE, and KOPPE and ROBERTSON, parallels the river at no great distance. At a distance of several miles a part of the trestle of the new bridge, surrounded and surmounted by "the traveler" could be seen looming up high. On arrival it was found that the middle section of the long span of 280 feet was nearly complete. In a short time the last bolt was driven, the last tap was tightened and the traveler was rolled eastward to begin another section. The inspectors saw the heavy steel uprights and girders and the lighter struts and laterals loaded on the trucks, drawn over the track resting on the false trestle work and hoisted into their several places by the power of a stationery steam engine operating through a complicated system of cables and pulleys. Everything moves with the precision of clock work and the work is progressing rapidly. It is expect that the main span will be completed Monday. The work on this bridge has been much retarded by the floods which have twice washed out the false work, in the first instance carrying away all the timbers. One notable feature of this bridge is the steel web between each pair of piers, by which they are mutually strengthened, and the accumulation of drift between them will be prevented. One effect of the late flood was the sinking and sliding of a large section of the eastern bank, splitting the concrete abutment with a large crack. Before this occurred, the trestle of the eastern approach had been erected, but it had to be taken down and a new abutment will be built further back from the bank. Midway between this and the twin piers at the east end of the main span a substantial pair of concrete piers will be erected, dividing the eastern approach into two sections. The bridge will thus be made secure, even though the entire loosened section of the bank should slide into the river. When completed, the KOPPE bridge will be a grand viaduct and will do much to promote the development of the adjacent portions of Brazos and Burleson counties....(weekly) Bryan Eagle, 16 July 1908, p. 2

"Work Started on Good Roads," Bryan Daily Eagle, 11 May 1916, p.2, col.5

"Bryan Briefs," Houston Informer, 21 February 1931, p.8, cols.2-3. Mrs. Jennie Mae Ashley of Koppe Settlement died.

"Two are Drowned in Brazos River at Koppe Bridge," Dallas Morning News, 15 June 1936, p.3. Daniel G. Cox, 24, of Wichita Falls, and Dawn Holick, 7, of Bryan, were the victims.