

Early Law Enforcement in Bryan – 1878-1879

Compiled by Bill Page

The *Brazos Pilot*, of last Friday, publishes a full account of the killing of a drunken colored man of bad character, by the city officers, on Christmas Eve. A policeman had arrested the Negro and was conducting him to prison, when the prisoner broke and ran down the street, followed by the officer; the two passed the city marshal, who, with the others, joined pursuit, when firing commenced. The Negro ran into a store and fell down, exclaiming that he was shot and was dying. Notwithstanding the piteous pleading of the dying man, the marshal put his foot on his back and struck him several blows on the head with the butt of his pistol. The jury of inquest gave it as their verdict that the deceased came to his death by a pistol wound, but failed to ascertain who fired the shot, or who fired any of the shots. The *Pilot* condemns the action of the jury, and seems to look upon the investigation as a sham. Navasota Tablet, 11 Jan. 1878, p. 2.

The authorities of Bryan have purchased the old county jail of Brazos County, and will use it for a mayors office, court-house, clerk's office, council meetings, etc. Denison Daily Herald, 18 March 1878, p.3, col.1

Bryan, April 13 – About twelve o'clock to-day three alleged counterfeiters were arrested here and lodged in the county jail to await a preliminary examination before the magistrate next Monday. They came here a week ago, and two of them are strangers, whose names are unknown, but the third man, Thomas BAIRD, is well known here, having been on the police force in this city several years ago. He had not been living here for some time till within a week. Their headquarters, the back parts of an old wooden building on the lower part of Main Street, was searched to-day, and their tools, including moulds and several counterfeit half dollars of the basest kind, were found. The case was worked up by City Marshal A.B. CARR. Denison Daily News, 16 April 1878, p.1

Bryan...At 3 o'clock this morning, as the night policeman, Hinton RADFORD, was walking near the banking house of FOWLKES and Co., he discovered two men walking slowly near the bank, and upon being ordered by RADFORD to halt, started off in a run, RADFORD after them, when a third party appeared upon the scene and ordered RADFORD to hold up, at the same time firing at him, the ball passing through his coat. RADFORD returned the fire, making two shots, when his pistol refused to work. The unknown ran off after firing the second time at RADFORD. The parties were not recognized, nor have they been heard of since. Today has been hot as blue blazes. Galveston Daily News, 31 July 1878, p.1

Bryan ... The municipal elections passed off quietly and with but little excitement. The regular nominees of the democratic city convention were A.C.L. HILL for mayor, All CARR for marshal, M.D. COLE, Guy M. BRYAN, H.B. STODDARD, Ike FULKERSON and J.L. GARTH for aldermen. The independent candidates are J.M. ROBINSON for mayor, H.P. STACEY for marshal, J.P. AYRES, F. WETTER, WINKERT [MINKERT ?] and McKEY for aldermen. Both candidates for mayor and marshal had independent tickets, with the names of all candidates except their opponents on them. The vote as far as counted up to this time (8:30 o'clock) is: For mayor, ROBINSON, 141; HILL, 135. For

marshal, CARR 216; STACEY, 61. The result of the mayor's election seems to be very doubtful. Sometimes ROBINSON is ahead and sometimes HILL. A little over one-half the vote is counted. Galveston Daily News, 7 Jan. 1879, p. 1.

The city elections at Bryan on Monday resulted in the election of ROBINSON, independent candidate for mayor and two aldermen and the Democrats the marshal and three aldermen. Good men were elected. Brenham Banner, 9 Jan. 1879, p.2

Bryan ... The new board of aldermen held their first session this evening and seem to have caught the spirit of retrenchment. They have reduced their own salaries \$24 each per year, marshal's \$60 per year, policemen \$180 per year, and city clerks \$100 per year. Many tax-paying citizens think that while they are about their work of retrenchment they should abolish the city clerk's office and require the mayor to discharge its duties, as do justices of the peace, thereby saving an expense of \$300 per annum. A.H. HARBERS was elected city clerk, C.S. KAUFFER sexton, and J.C. SMITH city attorney. The Sunday law was modified so as to permit business houses to keep open till 9 o'clock on Sunday morning. It is strange that no action whatever was taken on the street ordinance, as a majority of the aldermen are pledged to repeal it. Galveston Daily News, 18 Jan. 1879, p. 1.

Bryan ... Today the city marshal and policemen traced to the possession of Adam GUILFORD, colored, a trunk full of dry goods stolen at the fire Friday night. He is in jail. Wm. CURRY and Geo. KING, both colored, also fell under a like temptation and are in bonds. Galveston Daily News, 14 Oct. 1879

Bryan...This morning, about 2 o'clock, the city calaboose, with the mayor's office above, was found to be in flames, and, despite the efforts of the firemen, the building, with the saloon of Joe HEARNE adjoining, were entirely destroyed. The fire is supposed to have resulted from an attempt to burn his way out, made by a colored man confined in the jail. It was discovered too late to rescue him, and he was burned to ashes. He was held under a telegram describing him as a horse-thief. He told the officers he was from Grimes County, and claimed different names. The city lost everything. HEARNE's stock was almost all saved. Galveston Daily News, 15 Oct. 1879, p.1, col.4.

At 2 o'clock on the morning of the 14th inst. the calaboose with mayor's office above, at Bryan, was burned. A Negro prisoner, supposed to be a horse thief, was burned to ashes. It is thought he tried to burn his way out; the fire was discovered too late to rescue him. Joe HEARN's saloon adjoining the calaboose was entirely destroyed. Brenham Daily Banner, 16 Oct. 1879, p.1, col.1