

Manganic Wells: A Panacea for All Diseases

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In the 19th Century, citizens visited mineral springs in hopes of being cured of various diseases. In many cases resorts were built at these locations. In the 1880s, a few miles outside of Bryan on the county poor farm, a water well was discovered to have heavy mineral content, apparently with medicinal value. The county sold that land to a private individual, who built a small resort named Manganic Wells there. This was never a very successful operation, being eclipsed by the far more successful Wootan Wells, located near Bremond in Robertson County. The history of Manganic Wells is not very well documented, but the following articles provide a bit of history of this early spa.

Bryan ... In a well at the poor-house, two miles north of Bryan, the water has been found to contain sub-sulphate of iron, sulphuric acid, alum, and other valuable medicinal properties. Not having the proper apparatus, an accurate analysis could not be had, but from experiments, the water is thought to be about the same as that of the Bremond well, of recent notoriety. Galveston Daily News, 30 October 1879, p.1

Brazos County commissioners allocated money “to have the mineral water on the Manual Labor & Poor House farm analyzed.” (Brazos County Commissioners Minutes, Book C, page 192).

Brazos County commissioners ordered that the well at the County Poor Farm be walled up with brick or stone. (Brazos County Commissioners Minutes, Book C, page 193).

Brazos County commissioners paid \$15 to Danl. Coleman for curbing and walling up the well at the County Poor farm. (Brazos County Commissioners Minutes, Book C, page 197).

A new medicinal well has been discovered near Bryan and the water from it is being peddled on the streets. Brenham Banner, 6 August 1881, p.2, col.3

The commissioners court of Brazos County have decided to sell the land upon which the poor farm is located, it having a valuable medicinal well. Brenham Banner, 17 August 1881, p. 2.

Bryan, August 15 ... The Commissioners’ Court have decided to sell the land upon which the County Poor-house is situated, to speculators, who desire to improve the grounds and develop the medicinal wells. An analysis of the water by a celebrated chemist of New York has convinced them that this water is superior in medicinal properties to that of some other famed wells. The use of the water has affected several remarkable cures here in Bryan and in the country. Galveston Weekly News, 18 August 1881, p.6, col.4

On 14 September 1881, Brazos County commissioners ordered the mineral wells and 20 acres of land sold at auction. (Brazos County Commissioners Minutes, Book C, pages 211-212).

On 14 November 1881, Brazos County commissioners received a report concerning the sale of the mineral wells, located in the Moses Baine league. There were two mineral wells. They sold to Louis McQueen and E. Myers for \$2330. The county kept a vendor's lien on the land. (Brazos County Commissioners Minutes, Book C, pages 216-217).

For sale. Manganic Acid Water – Nature's Remedy – Drink and Live. Particulars given and water shipped as ordered. McQueen & Myers, Bryan, Texas. Galveston Daily News, 18 March 1882, page 1

It has been the pleasure of many to visit the McQueen Mineral Well, near Bryan. Many remarkable cures have been effected. All who have tasted it admit that it cures dropsy, all diseases of the kidney, nervousness, female complaints, general debility, malarial fevers, neuralgia, rheumatic and kindred diseases. The analysis, as given by Professor Chandler, demonstrates the fact that there is no more reliable remedial agent to be found in the United States. The water is being shipped daily to all points. Ample improvements are being made to accommodate the public. Address McQueen & Meyers, Bryan, Texas, if you are a sufferer with any of the above ailments. Galveston Daily News, 15 April 1882, page 4

McQueen & Myers Wells. These wells are three miles north of Bryan, near the H.& T.C. R.R. They contain mineral properties rendering them of the highest value medicinally. They are particularly valuable in all scrofulous affections. In the hands of the enterprising gentlemen who now own them they are destined to become a place of resort for hundreds seeking either recreation or remedy for disease. Brazos Pilot, 1 September 1882, page 3

“Mineral Waters of Texas,” Galveston Daily News, 1 September 1882, p.1. “All the mineral wells of Robertson and adjoining counties are somewhat related to each other. The manganese is in combination with many of them. We have found traces of manganese about Franklin and Buffalo in many of the wells. Near Bryan, Texas, are wells of peculiar combination of medicinal elements, pronounced by Professor Dinwiddie, of the Agricultural and Mechanical College, as not inferior to any chalybeate water in the United States.”

Bryan, March 30 ... Mr. James Harrison, an old and respected citizen of Huntsville, died to-day of dropsy, at the Manganic mineral wells, and was buried by the Masons with Masonic honors. Mr. Harrison was Captain in the Confederate service, a member of Hood's brigade, also at one time sheriff of Walker County. The deceased was kindly cared for by our citizens. Galveston Daily News, 31 March 1883, p.1, col.6

[ad] E. L. Castleton & Co., Pharmacists. Cor. Market and Tremont Sts., sole agents for Bethesda Mineral Water from Waukesha; Manganic Acid Water, from Bryan, and keep a full stock of Imported & domestic waters. Ice-cold Soda & Vichy. Galveston Daily News, 10 May 1883, page 1

From J.M. Brown, Esq., late president First National Bank, Galveston: I have been troubled with Sciatica 25 years. Since using the Manganic Well Water am entirely relieved, and now feel that I can not do without it. Yours truly, J.M. Brown. To Lewis McQueen, Bryan, Texas. Galveston Daily News, 22 May 1883, page 1

McQueen Manganic Wells, Bryan, Texas. Testimonial. A few days were pleasantly spent at the Mineral Wells, near Bryan. The proprietor, Colonel McQueen, claims for them superiority over all other mineral waters in the State, on account of the large quantity of manganic Acid which is found in them. A few years ago this rare ingredient was unknown to chemists, although some of them ventured the assertion that manganese was capable of combining with oxygen in such proportion as to form acids. Now manganic acid is well known in pharmacy as a most powerful agent in arresting inflammation of any kind. This has already acquired a wide-spread reputation, and shipments of it are constantly being made ... (illegible) ... Many persons in and around Bryan say they cannot do without it. The invalid can find at these wells fresh country air, pretty rustic decorations, polite and courteous attention, excellent fare at reasonable rates, and above all, health restoring waters. Ladies may leave their cosmetics and hair restoratives at home, for the waters will soon give the health-bloom to the complexion, and a beautiful gloss to the hair. Numerous and wonderful cures have been made by these waters, and we consider them a great blessing to this country, where malarial influences are constantly undermining the constitution. Mary Richardson Lesone, June 8, 1883. Brazos Pilot, 27 June 1883, page 1

Bryan ... Quite a large number of visitors are spending the summer in Bryan, enjoying the benefit of the mineral wells. Galveston Daily News, 7 July 1883, page 1

Texas Medical Association, Transactions, p.211 (1884?): "Manganic Wells, Bryan, Texas, March 29, 1884. Dr. J.M. Willis, Wootan Wells: Dear Sir – Replying to yours of March 29th inst., I herewith enclose analyses of my "Manganic Acid" and "Carbonic Acid" wells ... Respectfully, Lewis McQueen. Analysis of Well No. 1. Contains in one US gallon of 231 cubic inches – Chloride of Sodium, Sulphate of Potassium ..." (article continues)

Bryan, February 29 – James Henry, living about three miles west of Bryan, discovered the body of a man buried in the woods west of the mineral wells. Sheriff Dawson and Judge Cearnal went out and found the body, which was much disfigured and beyond identification. There was on the person a bunch of keys and a check, No. 21, with the letters G. and G. The hat was a checkered straw and the coat worn a navy blue. The officers are suspicious. They are investigating the affair and believe the party was foully murdered and robbed. Baggage-masters will confer a favor on Sheriff Dawson by examining and seeing if they have any baggage at their stations corresponding to the check, No.21, G. and G. Galveston Daily News, 1 March 1884, page 2

For sale – 20 acres land, containing 3 mineral wells, known as the Manganic Well Property; residence of 4 rooms, kitchen and srvts.' room; also, a cottage, 7 rooms, 2 bath houses of 4 rooms, garden, fruit trees, etc.; within ½ mile of H.& T.C.R.R., and 2 miles n.w. of the city of Bryan, Tex. At a bargain. H.M. Trueheart & Co. Galveston Daily News, 26 April 1884, page 5

On 12 May 1884, Brazos County commissioners ordered that an execution be issued against McQueen & Myers for the balance due on the mineral wells, if the debt was not paid by June 1. (Brazos County Commissioners Minutes, Book C, page 364).

On 30 June 1884, the county obtained a decree foreclosing the mortgage lien on the mineral wells; this is a copy of that decree. (Brazos County Commissioners Minutes, Book C, page 375).

On 30 June 1884, Brazos County commissioners authorized transferring the judgment against McQueen & Myers to T.J. McQueen. (Brazos County Commissioners Minutes, Book C, page 379).

The Manganic Water cures many of the most malignant diseases that baffle the skill of physicians. For board at Wells or shipments apply to Lewis McQueen, Proprietor, Bryan, Texas. Galveston Daily News, 28 March 1885, page 5

"Bryan," Galveston Daily News, 1 September 1886, p.1. "Two miles west of the town, in a picturesque grove of trees, are located the Manganic Wells, whose curative properties are a panacea for all liver, kidney, blood and nerve diseases known. There is a rich bonanza for some enterprising man or body of men who will purchase the property on which these wells are situated and erect a hotel and sanitarium."

On 14 November 1887, Brazos County commissioners ordered the fence around the Manganic Wells and adjoining the poor farm lands be removed off the county land by 5 December 1887. (Brazos County Commissioners, Book D, page 177).

Mrs. Isa Beaumont, has rented the Manganic Wells, two miles north west of Bryan, and invites all in search of health, to try the healing waters of these wonderful wells. (weekly) Bryan Eagle, 26 June 1890, p.5, col.2

Nature's Own Remedy!
Manganic Wells,
Bryan, Texas.

The best mineral waters in the world. They have cured many cases of kidney and liver diseases, dyspepsia, chronic diarrhea, dropsy, nervous debility and many other diseases. It is a most wonderful blood purifier. The effects are tonic, alternative, laxative, diuretic, anti-spasmodic, guarantee a cure for all of the diseases mentioned above. Wells will be opened the 1st of June and cottages for rent. Send for catalogue and further particulars to Mrs. J.E. Ford, 28 Jefferson Street, Algiers, La., where water is also for sale, or Eugene May's, New Orleans. The Daily Picayune (New Orleans), 29 June 1890, p.12

Bryan, Tex., July 23 – The manganic wells, near here, are the favorite resort for those who have not the inclination to go further. These wells are frequented every morning and evening by the people of Bryan, and the cheap accommodations and the proximity of the place to our town have induced many families to take up a temporary residence there. Galveston Daily News, 24 July 1890, page 4

*Prof. G.T. Jones, Brazos Co. resident; died at the Manganic Wells, after a "lingering illness". (weekly) Bryan Eagle, 14 August 1890, p.5, col.2

The well near the bath-rooms at the Manganic Wells has again been put in order, and parties desiring the benefits of a refreshing mineral bath will find it to their advantage by applying to Master Sterling Beaumont, manager. The pasture fence has also been repaired and parties driving out there to spend a few days will find fine pasturage for their horses. (weekly) Bryan Eagle, 21 August 1890, page 6.

1892: The Manganic Wells are also mentioned in Taking the Waters in Texas; Springs, Spas, and Fountains of Youth, by Janet Mace Valenza, which includes a copy of an 1892 advertisement for the springs. That ad says in part: "The rooms at this water place are elegantly furnished, well ventilated, and erected with a special view to the comfort of guests who are assured of every reasonable care, police and courteous attention, good substantial diet, well cooked and prepared. Special and prompt attention given to shipment of Manganic Water to all points. For full Descriptive Pamphlet containing Analysis of Waters, Certificates of Cures, Rates, etc., Address C.C. Parsons, Proprietor, Bryan P.O., Texas"

Fourth Annual Report of the Geological Survey of Texas, 1892, p.59: Brazos County ... Only two mineral springs or wells are known to exist. Manganic wells are a series of shallow wells about three miles northwest of Bryan, and the other, Boiling or Sulphur spring, occurs on the west bank of the Navasota river on the J. Gray headright. This last is a sulphur water, highly charged with sulphuretted hydrogen. Both of these localities are used as pleasure or health resorts, and have local reputations.

Bryan, Tex., Jan. 23 – Strayed or stolen at Bryan, Tex., from C. G. Parsons, Manganic Wells, on the night of January 21, one dun pony, about thirteen hands high, and between 9 and 10 years old, branded E O on hip, dark brown or chocolate colored stripe down place saddle marked, roached mane, though back, rather long, thick and bushy, has two or three places on shoulder and side, probably three or four inches in extent, where the hair has shedded off caused from itch. Also a bay pony between twelve and thirteen hands high and about 9 years old, braided C E on hip and had on a short piece of grass rope, has two noticeable places on each side, especially the left, where traces have worn the hair off from long continued use. A liberal reward will be paid for their capture and return to owner above named. T. C. Nunn, sheriff. Galveston Daily News, 24 January 1892, page 2

Bryan ... Mr. John Dedu and Mrs. Isabel Ray were married Sunday at Manganic Wells, near here, by Rev. Eaves ...Galveston Daily News, 29 July 1892, page 3

Bryan, Tex. ... Mrs. R. L. Freeman of Sandy Point, Tex., is here, the guest of Mr. E. B. Lomax and lady. Mrs. Freeman has just placed a son at the agricultural and mechanical college, and is remaining over to try the effects of the manganic water. Galveston Daily News, 14 September 1892, page 5

Bryan, Tex., April 24 – To-day, at the Manganic wells near here, Captain G. W. Farris died. He was an old resident of Walker County and Huntsville and is also one of Texas' early settlers, being an old Mexican War veteran and pensioner, and having also fought in the Confederate cause in the late war. He had been removed to Bryan for the benefit of the waters of the Manganic wells. His remains will be interred at Huntsville. Galveston Daily News, 25 April 1893, page 6

C. G. Parsons

Proprietor "Manganic Wells Store"

Headquarters for fine cigars and tobacco, fruits, nuts, cakes, candies of all kinds, canned and bottled delicacies, fancy groceries, notions, toilet and fancy articles, etc., serves all the latest ice cold drinks and frozen delicacies, including the celebrated "Manganic Water", plain and carbonated. Mr. Parsons opened business here a little over a year ago, and the liberal patronage which he has received, the marked and steady growth his business has attained is sufficient to show what the people think of his manner of dealing, quality of goods, low prices, etc. Operates the neatest and most elegant oyster and ice cream parlor in the county. Combined trade edition of the Brazos Pilot and the Bryan Eagle, 12 September 1895

Mr. and Mrs. Dean, who reside at Manganic Wells, returned from a visit to Liberty County Sunday. Bryan Daily Eagle, 19 January 1897, page 4

On the Road. Notes gleaned by the Eagle's traveling representative ... Manganic Wells was another point of interest. Lying about two miles northwest of Bryan, the fine medicinal properties are well known here and have attracted considerable attention elsewhere. Mr. Dean is in charge of the wells. Bryan Weekly Eagle, 27 October 1898, page 3

The City of Bryan ... The Manganic Wells, celebrated for their medicinal waters, are two miles from Bryan. Dallas Morning News, 23 April 1902, page 15

C.G. Parsons brought to the Eagle office yesterday unripe Keifer pears, grown at Manganic Wells ... (article continues), Bryan Daily Eagle, 4 August 1904, page 2

C.G. Parsons has about recovered from an illness of some weeks duration and attributes his recuperation to the use of Manganic water. Mr. Parsons says the people have a health resort right here at home in the Manganic Wells, and do not realize it. Bryan Morning Eagle, 6 July 1905, p.3

Mrs. A.H. McCurry and daughters, Misses Allwin and Dora McCurry of the Manganic Wells neighborhood were in the city yesterday. Bryan Morning Eagle, 15 October 1905, page 2

For Rent – Manganic Wells and Farm: 80 acres in cultivation. Good orchard, plenty of pasturage and water. Good houses. Apply to C.G. Parsons. Bryan Morning Eagle, 17 December 1905, page 2

Geo. W. Brogdon of Manganic Wells attended the revival yesterday. Brazos Pilot, 26 April 1906, page 5

W.H. Brogdon of Manganic Wells was in the city this afternoon and subscribed for the Pilot. Brazos Pilot, 6 September 1906, page 5

Mr. and Mrs. W.H. Brogdon of Manganic Wells, went to San Antonio today. Brazos Pilot, 8 November 1906, page 7

The Eagle is requested to announce that the Christian Church Sunday school picnic will be given on next Saturday at Manganic Wells. All the members of the Sunday school are invited to attend. All are requested to be at the church at 8:30 and all will bring their buggies who have them, and those who have no conveyance of their own will be provided for. There will be plenty of wagons and room for all, and all are urged to go. Bryan Daily Eagle, 4 May 1910, page 3.

Mr. G.S. Parsons, owner of the Manganic well property, informs The Eagle that he has had the well thoroughly cleaned out and put in first class condition. The water is now all right and in future the well will be protected with a securely locked cover. Bryan Daily Eagle, 11 July 1910, page 3, col.6

Orders for Manganic Water will be filled at Parsons & Ray. Bryan Daily Eagle, 12 July 1910, page 3

The reporter of the Eagle, in conversation with Mr. C.G. Parsons to day, learned that it is his purpose to organize a stock company for the improvement of his manganic wells. Mr. Parsons says that he has the strongest testimonials as to the qualities of the water, and says he has plenty of it. His plan is the establishment of a regular resort like other places where there is mineral water. He thinks this can easily be done by the organization of a stock company and the extension of the interurban line to the wells. The distance is only about two miles and there is no reason why such an enterprise should not be successful. All that is needed is to promote it with energy and good judgment. Every intelligent person must realize what the success of this enterprise would mean to Bryan. It would bring thousands of visitors every year, who would leave much money and carry away nothing but good health. Bryan Daily Eagle, 8 September 1910, page 1

[ad] Manganic Wells and my adjoining tracts, have been duly posted according to law. All hunters or other trespassers are warned to keep out. C. G. Parsons. Bryan Daily Eagle, 2 November 1925, page 4