

**Brazos County Natural History:
Plants, Animals, Weather, Geology and Related Topics**

1861-1869

compiled by Bill Page

22 March 2010

Headquarters District of Texas, &c.

Near Millican, September 4, 1863

Brig. Gen. W.R. Boggs,

Chief of Staff:

General: ... Millican, 7 miles from here, is the northern terminus of the railroad in this direction. There is no water, though, at that point, and the troops have to be encamped in the neighborhood where they can find it ...

J. Bankhead Magruder,

Major-General, Commanding

(Official Records of the War of the Rebellion, series 1, vol.26, pt.2, p.203)

Brazos County ... Water for drinking purposes is good and abundant. The surface is undulating, more than half of which is covered by a growth of the various species of oak. The soil in the bottoms, which compose a large portion of the lands, is red loam, and for productiveness is unsurpassed by any in the South ... There are two mineral springs in the county, whose principal property is sulphur and magnesia ... The climate is mild and healthy, seasons generally regular ... Stock of every description get fat during the spring, and do not decline much until the winter months set in, at which time they go to the Brazos and Navisota bottoms, and remain until spring. They then return again to the uplands, having fared well during the winter, the wild rye, which is abundant in the bottoms, having kept them from declining much ... Wood is abundant for fencing and for fuel. Hogs are raised at a very small cost, the hills and the bottoms affording fine range of sweet and bitter mast, and any quantity of pecans ... We have not undertaken as yet to cultivate the vine, though we make considerable quantities of wine from the Mustang grape, which grows on the hills and in the bottoms in the greatest profusion ... The peach-tree grows very well, much better than the apple-tree ... Texas Almanac, 1867, pp.83-84.

Bryan ... Carpenters seem to be plenty, and there are two brick-machines, which will soon turn out brick ad infinitum Galveston Daily News, 18 April 1867, p. 2.

From the *Millican News Letter* of the 10th ... We have on our table the first cotton we have seen open and fully developed, this year. It came from the farm of Mr. Sargeant, near this place, and was taken from the field on the first day of August fully opened. Mr. S. thinks that fully five bales could have been picked from his field on that day, and the bolls are opening rapidly. The army worm has begun to make its appearance on some of the farms near here, and it is thought, that since the heavy rains of this week, it will do considerable damage... Galveston Daily News, 13 August 1867, p.1

1868 –“Bryan of Half Century Ago is Pictured by H.O. Boatwright ...,” Bryan Daily Eagle, 3 May 1929. Speaking about 1868, he said, “As we left Bryan that Wednesday morning, we stopped about two miles north on the road, at the T.W. Higgs pasture, and walked to Gum Springs, near the road to get some water. These springs are still flowing, they tell me, after more than fifty years since that day ...”

1868: Feb. 2 -- Sunday, Feb. 2, I went to Millican to organize a Sabbath school but the weather was so cold that no one was present at the church ... (From W.S. South Journal, in Hull Papers, Cushing Library, Texas A&M University, box 1, file 1-14).

The *Houston Telegraph* learns that twelve Negroes drowned, a few days since, about fifteen miles from Bryan, on the Brazos, by the overflow of that river. They were farming between the river and a small creek, and before they were aware of danger, both had overflowed and made it impossible for the Negroes to get out. The Brazos is out of its banks for miles, completely inundating a large number of farms. Galveston Daily News, 17 March 1868, p.2, col.3

Letter from Bryan ... The grasshoppers have not reached within 50 miles of Bryan, and are fast disappearing further north ... We have had rain for the past two days, and it still rains. Galveston Daily News, 7 April 1868, p.3

The *Bryan News Letter* of the 1st inst. says: A little girl about 11 years old, daughter of W.T. Wright, Esq., of Millican, was precipitated down a well of sixty feet in depth, receiving slight wounds, from which she is fast recovering. The little girl was standing upon the bucket, when suddenly the lid gave way, and she was hurled through the opening down the well; fortunately she succeeded in grasping the bucket as she fell, and holding on until the bottom was reached, where she clung to the rope until the alarm given by her brother, who was standing near, brought assistance, when she was successfully extracted from her perilous situation. Galveston Daily News, 5 January 1869, p.3, col.2

The up-country farmers were prepared to start their plows this week had the weather continued fair, but another rain storm has visited a large portion of the State and indefinitely postponed operations. A rain storm commenced at Bryan last night about 12 o'clock, and continued until the whole country round was submerged, and all the streams again swollen... *Houston Times*, Feb. 2. Flake's Bulletin (Galveston), 6 Feb. 1869, p.7

The *Times* has the following as a special telegram from Bryan: Last night about ten o'clock, a severe wind, accompanied by rain, snow and hail, visited this section, and raged during the night with unabated violence. Hail stones as large as hen eggs fell upon us, doing no small amount of damage to window panes and other breakable material. The storm abated somewhat this morning, but it is still excessively cold and sleeting. Galveston Daily News, 24 February 1869, p.2, col.5

Bryan, April 29, 7 p.m. A severe norther commenced in this place about 6 o'clock this P.M., and still continues with unabated violence. Overcoats and blankets have been in demand since that time. It will probably reach Houston by to-morrow, so you had best be on the *qui vive*. No other news of importance. Houston Daily Times, 24 April 1869, p.3

The *Houston Times* of yesterday has a special of the night before announcing a norther at Bryan. Galveston Daily News, 25 April 1869, p.3

The *Bryan News Letter* says ... No indication of cotton worm at present. Galveston Tri-Weekly News, 28 June 1869, p.2, col.4

"Navigation of the Brazos," Galveston Tri-Weekly News, 25 October 1869, p.2, col.5. A letter from Bryan stated, "Every year since the war the Brazos has been navigable as high as Port Sullivan, for at least six months of the year; and last year it was in good boating condition as far as the Falls, near Marlin, for about nine months."

...The *Bryan Appeal* of the 11th inst., says Millican is still in a very flourishing condition. Cotton is coming in rapidly, and the platform is now crowded to overflowing with cotton bales. It is said that the pecan crop in the bottom is abundant, and the value of this product gathered from the adjacent bottoms will equal one-fourth of the cotton crop ... Galveston Daily News, 13 November 1869, p.1

The *Bryan Appeal* laments: A good many hogs are dying in and about town, we suppose from the great scarcity of water. So dry a time has not occurred in several years. Flake's Bulletin (Galveston), 20 Noember 1869, page 7

The *Bryan News Letter*, 19th inst., says: On Monday night last we had one of the most terrific storms that has visited our place for years. The unfinished hotel of D. Mosely, opposite the Commercial, was the only building that was blown down by the tempest. Galveston Tri-Weekly News, 22 November 1869, p.3, col.3