

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

1875-1879

compiled by Bill Page

22 March 2010

Bryan – The damage done to Bryan by the late storm, which was at its height here Thursday night and all Friday, is estimated at from \$5000 to \$6000. The new two-story brick store of D. Mike & Co., just finished, was blown down. Loss about \$ 4000. Other stores were more or less damaged. Dwelling houses were blown off their foundations and trees and fences blown down. The damage to the cotton is very great. This county loses from five to six thousand bales. A son of J.M. Robinson, who keeps a livery stable here, was sent out by his father last Friday morning, during the storm, to drive a man to Caldwell. On returning to Bryan he was drowned in a creek about three miles from here. The creek was high and rapid, and it is supposed that when the hack went into the water it turned over and was taken down by the water. The hack was fastened up all around, and it is thought that he was drowned before he had time to get out. The horses were found drowned and still hitched to the hack a few yards below the crossing. Robinson's body was found a quarter of a mile below the crossing half buried in the sand. Galveston Daily News, 21 September 1875, p. 1.

The third story of the Agricultural College, near Bryan, was blown down during the storm. Galveston Weekly News, 11 October 1875, p.4, col.5

Millican ... The weather is excessively hot and there is no rain. The cotton worms have not made their appearance yet. Cotton is opening fast, but shedding some bolls for want of rain. Galveston Daily News, 28 July 1876, p.1

On Martin's place, five miles north of Millican, a gray wolf snatched a Negro baby sitting in the door of a cabin, and was in the act of running off with it, when the mother picked up a rifle and shot the brute dead. Infant Africa rolled over with the wolf as he took his death tumble, but was rescued without damage. Galveston Daily News, 15 August 1876, p.2

October? 1876: From the autobiography of W.A. Trenckmann ... When, about dusk, I finally came to the two college buildings, standing along on the prairie, then swarming with grasshoppers ... (Cofer, David Brooks, The Early History of Texas A. and M. College Through Letters and Papers, 1952, p.130)

1876: October? – Trenckmann, W.A., "Pioneer Times at the A. and M.," (Texas A&M) Long Horn, 1907, pp.112-117. "... when the doors of this, the first of all the state schools for higher education, were thrown open [in 1876], deer in numbers still ran unmolested over the College prairies; that in the fall of 1876 the scream of the puma or Mexican lion frequently startled the sentries on the lower floor of the Main Building from the dreams 'of pleasures that waited on life's merry morn' ... [when he first saw campus] Great clouds of grasshoppers that had devoured the grain of Kansas, in their flight southward hid the bright autumn sun; they covered the [railroad] track, the wheels were slipping, and the engineer had to throw open the throttle to keep the train in motion ..."

“Bryan City,” Galveston Weekly News, 16 October 1876, p.3, col.6. “Farmers report the crop [cotton] on bottom will average three-fourths of a bale to the acre, while the prairie or upper land will yield one-third. This is considered a very fair yield, especially considering the great number of grasshoppers that are depredating on the weed and destroying the young green bolls. These destroyers of vegetation are fully as numerous around Bryan as they were at points further north, and extend many miles south, but seem to have come to the turning point, for when they start flying they head northwest”

They have had plenty of hoppers at Bryan. The *Appeal-Post* man has had them under advisement and says: “We pronounce the whole army of them nuisances of the first water.” Brenham Daily Banner, 21 October 1876, p.2, col.1

The people of Bryan commenced last spring to plant trees on the streets and public places. The idea is a good one and should be carried out. Brenham Daily Banner, 21 November 1876, p.2, col.1

Millican ... The young grasshoppers are doing great damage in this community to the gardens and what small grain has come up. These are destroying everything and seem to be increasing instead of diminishing in quantity as well as size ... Coon hunting is a favorite sport among the young men. Galveston Daily News, 31 March 1877, p.1

Brazos County ... The grasshoppers in this section are not generally diffused over the country, but seem to move in large families. In many places they destroy everything, and many have escaped untouched ... Many of our citizens have saved their growing peaches from the ravages of the grasshoppers by applying to the body of the trees a coating of tar, which prevents Mr. Hopper-grass from ascending ... Mr. James P. Wilson and family, assisted by Mr. Dallas Hawkins and several freedmen, have been waging relentless war upon the grasshoppers about his premises, and has so far succeeded in preventing them from destroying anything. Liberal use has been made of fire, boards, carbolic soap, tar, kerosene and turpentine ... A party of camp hunters from Bryan got worsted in the Navasota bottom last week. They had pitched their tents in the forks of the Navasota and Cedar, and while all were peacefully slumbering the rain fell in great torrents. Escape was impossible in the dark, and so the discomfitted hunters accepted the situation until morning, by which time the entire bottom was submerged. The buggies had to be tied to trees to save them from being carried away; and, finally, the hunters after losing provisions, ammunition, sundries, and the bed of a spring wagon, were compelled to improvise a flat boat of logs, etc., by means of which they reached high land. Galveston Daily News, 17 April 1877, p. 2.

Bryan *Appeal*: The grasshoppers have almost disappeared from this section of the country. Galveston Weekly News, 14 May 1877, p.8, col.3

Bryan ... A *Pilot* correspondent claims to have seen the fabled mermaid in Thompson's Creek. The rest of the world will not trouble itself about the creature until it is safely caged in a menagerie. Dallas Weekly Herald, 16 June 1877, p.3, col.2

Millican, June ... Some uneasiness during the last week about drouth, but yesterday all fears and gloom were dispelled by an abundant rain, which makes the corn crop a certainty. Galveston Weekly News, 18 June 1877, p.4

Bryan ... The worm is in destructive force on the uplands and bottoms of Brazos, Burleson and South Robertson counties. Some poisoning is going on, but much gloom is to be observed among farmers. Galveston Weekly News, 6 August 1877, p.3, col.2

Brazos County. Hon. Spencer H. Ford, of Bryan, informs the State Gazette that there is some concern in his section for the safety of the cotton from the depredations of the worms, but the county is generally prosperous and happy. Galveston Weekly News, 13 August 1877, p.4, col.4

“Brazos County,” Galveston Weekly News, 13 August 1877, p.6, col.5. About the cotton worm.

“Bryan, August 27 ... Cotton is coming in slowly. Worms are numerous and are doing great damage to cotton. Farmers are greatly discouraged. Weather very dry and warm. Galveston Weekly News, 3 September 1877, p.5, col.4

Bryan ... Weather has been raining and bad for the past day or so. Galveston Weekly News, 24 December 1877, p.1, col.3

Efnor, Kate, “Historical Sketch of Brazos County,” in American Sketch Book, vol.4, pp.237-251 (1878). “There is no finer peach country in the world.”

“A Faculty Aroused,” Galveston Daily News, 14 April 1878. By misinformation to the public; “the water used in the mess hall is from a cistern and of the very best quality ...

Brazos County – *Pilot*: From every section of the county we continue to receive the most flattering accounts of the cotton crop ... The late heavy rains have been confined principally to the uplands, and have done little if any damage. In the Brazos bottom there has not been much rainfall, and the crops there are all that could be desired. Galveston Weekly News, 15 July 1878, p.2, col.9

Bryan ... Today has been hot as blue blazes. Galveston Daily News, 31 July 1878, p. 1.

Brazos County ... There is a great deal of sickness in the country at present, produced by the great amount of wet weather we have been having for five or six weeks past ... Galveston Weekly News, 5 August 1878, p.2, col.9

Gathright, Thos. S., “The State College,” Galveston Daily News, 29 August 1878, p.4, col.4. “The complaint most current and most flippantly used against this college is, that we have no agricultural or mechanical departments ... Struggling, however, to meet every demand, we have planted 1000 apple trees, a number of peach and forest trees, and are now attempting to make a garden”

“Report of the Outgoing Directors at the January Session of the [Texas A&M] Board, 1879,” in Texas Senate Journal, 16th Legislature, 1879, pp.205-208. “One thousand apple trees have been put out, and most of them are in good condition, and ornamental trees and shrubs to beautify the grounds have also been set ...”

Brazos [County]. *Pilot* ... The fruit trees are blooming all over the county ... Galveston Weekly News, 3 March 1879, p.8, col.6

Bryan *Pilot*: The current cold weather killed a portion of the peach crop, the trees being in full bloom. This is a sad loss, as the peach is the principal fruit of this section. Galveston Weekly News, 17 March 1879, p.2, col.9.

A letter to the *News* from Bryan says: The rain did a great deal of damage to crops and to the land. Then on Saturday evening, 27th inst., we had a hail storm. It did not last long, but it has seriously damaged the fruit crop, and I am afraid the corn and cotton in many instances are very much damaged. On my farm I picked up several of the largest stones and measured them. I found them to be from 6 to 6 ½ inches in circumference. Galveston Daily News, 1 May 1879, p. 3.

“The Agricultural and Mechanical College,” Galveston Daily News, 4 July 1879, p.2. “During the present year experiments were had in wheat, oats and corn. The severe drouth in the early spring prevented the growth of small grain. Composts have been made, a large garden cultivated and four hundred trees set out on the grounds.”

Bryan is going to have an artesian well. Austin Statesman, 9 August 1879, p.3, col.1

Bryan, August 6 – A meeting of citizens was held at the court-house this evening to consider the ways and means for boring an artesian well. Galveston Weekly News, 11 August 1879, p.1, col.4

Bryan *Pilot*: Rain is very much needed in this section. There has not been a good rain since the first of May. Water is very scarce – even in the wells, and vegetation is entirely burnt up ... Galveston Weekly News, 4 September 1879, p.1, col.8

Bryan, Oct. 1 -- A few days ago Dr. Adams took eight ounces of screw-worms from the nose and mouth of a city pauper named Carter. Galveston Daily News, 2 October 1879, p.1, col.3

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