

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

1880-1884

compiled by Bill Page

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Bryan ... A substance resembling coal has been discovered in digging a well on Col. Loughbridge's place, near town. It burns, but not so freely as ordinary coal. Galveston Daily News, 20 April 1880, p.1

Millican ... An unusual condition of the heavens was noticed by a portion of our citizens at sunset yesterday. An amber cloud appeared in the zenith and gradually lengthened to the east and west, making a complete circuit from horizon to horizon, with an even edge south. North of the line the entire space was filled with banks of clouds, while to the south it was perfectly clear, not a cloud marring the beauty of a deep blue sky. A similar omen was noticed after nightfall during the year previous to the presidential election in 1860. Galveston Daily News, 10 June 1880, p.1

Bryan ... A farmers camp meeting is to begin at the Sulphur Springs, near Millican, this county, on the 26th inst., to continue a month. Exercises will consist of lectures by prominent visitors from different portions of the state on the subject of agriculture and other interesting topics, with appropriate entertainment. The committee on arrangements have done everything to insure a good programme. Galveston Daily News, 8 July 1880, p.1

Navasota ... Miss Terry, one of a party of visitors at the sulphur springs, four miles from Millican, was yesterday about daylight, attacked by a rabid polecat. It fastened its teeth in her cheek and could not be made to turn loose its hold until its throat was cut. Doubts are entertained about her recovery. Galveston Daily News, 18 July 1880, p.1

The other day a Bryan young lady stepped on a barrel hoop in some thick weeds, and imagining there was a snake around her ankle, screamed and ran till she discovered her mistake. Houston Post, 17 October 1880, p.2, col.3

A large water fowl, supposed to be a pelican, was killed at a water tank near Bryan last week. It measured eight feet nine inches from tip to tip. Houston Post, 31 October 1880, p.2, col.3

Bryan, Feb. 7 – After the heavy rain Saturday, John Anderson attempted to drive across Carter's Creek, but was overwhelmed by the current, and drawn under. When his friends got him out he was speechless and apparently dead, but recovered. Houston Post, 8 February 1881, p.1, col.5

Bryan, April 14 – Some farmers report considerable damage to the crops and fruit from last night's frost. Galveston Daily News, 15 April 1881, p.1

Bryan, April 16 ... Farmers are replanting and complain of the dry weather. Galveston Daily News, 17 April 1881, p.1.

Bryan, June 7 ... Two oxen ran away this afternoon, and ran into a well. One of them went down and was taken out dead. Galveston Weekly News, 9 June 1881, p.7

Bryan, June 25 ... The weather is very hot and rain is badly needed. Galveston Weekly News, 28 July 1881, p.6, col.3

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

Bryan ... A subscription was taken up to-day for the sinking of an artesian well. Almost a thousand dollars was raised this afternoon. Galveston Weekly News, 1 September 1881, p.6, col.4

1881: October 7: "Boost Bryan Edition of Brazos Weekly Pilot, Issued in 1881, Has Many Facts of Comparative Value," Bryan Weekly Eagle, 6 February 1930, p.3 – "There are no running streams of water nearer to Bryan than four or five miles, but the town usually has an abundant supply from cisterns, wells and tanks. However, to meet every exigency, and more especially for public purposes, a better supply is needed, and appreciating this fact, our citizens are moving in the direction of having an artesian well sunk. About \$1,000 has already been raised for this purpose." (citing the *Brazos Weekly Pilot*, 7 October 1881)

Bryan Pilot: It has been raining almost incessantly since the 4th of January. During this time there have not been exceeding half a dozen fair days. As a consequence, farmers have been unable to make any preparations for another crop. The creeks and rivers have overflowed and flooded the bottom lands, doing much damage to fences. In some instances small houses have been floated off. The Brazos is said to have been higher a few days ago than it had been for many years. Among the casualties we have heard of was the loss of a pair of fine mules and a hack, belonging to Major Tabor's stable, in the Little Brazos, on Sunday. The driver, a colored man, made his escape on a log. The

mules and hack were valued at \$400, and the loss is a serious one to Major Tabor. Galveston Daily News, 12 February 1882, p.3, col.9

Bryan - We had quite a storm at 12 o'clock last night. Several houses in town were damaged. The principal ones were the Christian Church, which lost its cupola, Henry Rhode's storehouse, Weller's shop and the Central House. These were all injured somewhat but none were blown down. Considerable damage is reported in the country. Galveston Daily News, 1 March 1882, p. 1.

Millican ... Taylor Willis, colored, while attempting to cross Big Creek last night, about 6 miles below here, was drowned. The verdict of the coroner's jury of inquest was in accordance with these facts. The Navasota and Brazos rivers are swelling very rapidly. Some little cotton is coming in. Galveston Daily News, 11 March 1882, p. 1

Jesse P. Hensarling, son of Abe Hensarling; was accidentally shot & killed while hunting. Houston Post, 30 June 1882, p.1, col.4

“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...The city election took place on New Year day, and owing to the extremely bad weather, only an average vote was polled. Major J.W. Tabor was elected mayor by a large majority. The following aldermen were elected: T.J. McQuinn [McQueen], W.F. Hooper, W.W. Hanway, J.L. Garth and M. Goldstein. A.B. Cohn [Carr] was again elected city marshal without any opposition. . Galveston Daily News, 3 January 1883, p.1

Bryan Pilot ... The ice broke and three school girls fell into the Knowles tank on Monday. Some of the girls fell into the tank while skating, but the water was not very deep, and little damage was done except to the ice. Galveston Daily News, 28 January 1883, p.4

Millican ... The weather has again assumed a spring-like appearance, and farmers are very busy planting. Galveston Daily News, 10 March 1883, p. 1.

Brazos – A party of cowboys near Welborn Station found two wolf dens, and succeeded in killing a lot of cubs and two old wolves, one day this week. (Houston) Daily Post, 2 June 1883, p.2, col.4

M.V. Burgess, Millican: "Our pastor, Rev. John L. Smith, has done good work on this charge to bring in souls to Christ. We had a fine Sunday school picnic but a terrible storm had its effect on Children's Day. We raised \$2." (New Orleans) Southwestern Christian Advocate, 12 July 1883

Bryan, July 29 – A large quantity of cotton bolls were brought in Saturday to show the ravages of the boll-worm. The reports, from the plantations in the Brazos bottoms, say the boll-worm is doing considerable damage. Mr. Kirk, who has charge of the Wilson plantation, says 200 bales of cotton will not be made on 300 acres of land in cultivation. The same reports come from the Morris and Botts plantations, and they say renters will not make much over enough to pay the rent. Parties well informed on the cotton crop say the uplands have not yet been troubled. Galveston Daily News, 30 July 1883, p.1

Bryan ... The latest information received in regard to the cotton crop in this section is that the boll worm has damaged the crop thirty to forty per cent. Galveston Daily News, 1 August 1883, p.1

Milton Parker has completed an artesian well in the bottom near Bryan, and now the *Pilot* wants an artesian well in the public square at Bryan. Brenham Daily Banner, 5 August 1883, p.2

Bryan Pilot ... The small carp which Mr. D.S. Burton put into his tank in March have grown wonderfully. The water gave out in one of his tanks recently, and the fish were removed to another place. They were all remarkably large, but the boss fish measured 21 inches in length and 13 inches around the body. Galveston Daily News, 6 August 1883, p.3, col.8

Bryan - A severe storm occurred here this afternoon late, doing some considerable damage. It blew the tin roof off the brick warehouse. It demolished Williamson's buggy factory, which, in the fall, smashed quite a number of buggies. One side fell on the livery stable of Major Tabor, injuring several of his fine horses. The rain that accompanied the storm was much needed. Galveston Daily News, 17 August 1883, p. 1.

Galveston, Texas, Aug.17 – A special dispatch to the *News* from Bryan says: "A severe storm yesterday afternoon carried the roof of a brick warehouse, demolished a buggy factory, and blew in the side of a livery stable, injuring several horses." New York Times, 18 August 1883, p.5

Bryan ... The loss to Major Tabor and Mr. Williamson by the late storm will approximate several thousand dollars ... Galveston Daily News, 21 August 1883, p.1

Bryan, October 20 – To-day, while at work on the artesian well, a freedman by the name of Campbell, suddenly dropped dead from heart disease. Galveston Daily News, 21 October 1883, p.1 col.7

Brazos County -- A freedman, by the name of Campbell, dropped dead, on Saturday, while at work on the artesian well. He jumped into a delivery wagon, intending to go for a load of tools or lumber, and leaned backward in the wagon, dying in a moment, and without speaking a word. He died of heart disease. Galveston Daily News, 30 October 1883, p.3, col.8.

Bryan ... Charles Kreighl sold his mill and entire stock of lumber to Garth, Griffiths & Co. Galveston Daily News, 11 September 1883, p. 1.

Bryan, November 3 – A fatal accident occurred this evening, about 5 o'clock, at Mr. Wamble's tank, on the suburbs of the town, which resulted in an interesting young boy, named Wyatt Thomas, losing his life. The facts are about as follows: Wyatt Thomas, John Parker, Sydney Robinson and several other boys had gone out duck hunting, and, on their return home, got to jesting and playing, in which way they used their guns by fencing with them. It seems that little Johnny Parker's gun was cocked, and Wyatt Thomas's gun struck the trigger of Johnny Parker's gun, discharging the contents into the back of Wyatt Thomas, the shot ranging upward, tearing away the side of his face and mutilating the base of the brain. The parents of both the little boys feel the loss and affliction deeply, and this sad affair has cast a gloom over our entire community. Wyatt Thomas lived only a few minutes after being shot. Galveston Daily News, 4 November 1883, p.1, col.8

Bryan ... In the rabbit chase yesterday, the horse of Claude Mitchell fell and was killed. Galveston Daily News, 27 December 1883, p.1

Bryan ... The workmen on the ice factory well struck a large stream of water today. The building is now nearing completion. Galveston Daily News, 26 February 1884, p. 1.

H.H.D. [Hardaway Hunt Dinwiddie], "Undulations in Clay Deposits," Science, 3 (61): 404 (4 April 1884). "A ditch about two feet deep, and running nearly east and west, on the grounds of this college, presents a profile as if the clay (which is of unknown depth) had been shaped into undulations, with crests from eight to fifteen feet apart, and then covered uncoformably by the sandy soil, which over the crests is about two or three inches deep, and in the troughs about two feet at most. The 'strike' of the crests is nearly north and south. This peculiar formation has been observed over a large area of country in this vicinity. A surface peculiarity is the occurrence, at intervals of one or two hundred yards on the prairies, of low mounds a foot or two high, usually covered with dewberry briars. West of this place, in Milam and Williamson counties, the nearly level prairies are mammillary, with slight elevations eight or ten feet apart, present the appearance of old tobacco or potato hills on a gigantic scale. These appearances, visible from the cars, excite the curiosity of all who observe them; and a plausible theory of their cause might not only gratify this, but lead to some very important discoveries in dynamical geology. For these reasons I desire to present this problem to your geological readers; and, if it has already been solved, my apology for ignorance of the solution must be that I am not a geologist. H.H.D. Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, College Station.

Millican, May 25 – Reports from the Brazos River are very distressing – not alone the destroying of both cotton and crops along the river, but the taking off of fences and the sweeping away of everything within reach of the floods. During a thunderstorm here this evening a large tree was struck by lightning near town, killing a horse instantly. Mr. J.C. White and others are getting their stock out of the bottoms, fearing an overflow. Cotton and corn crops on the hills, with another week's rain will be in a very critical condition. Galveston Daily News, 26 May 1884, p.8

Bryan, May 26 – Rains are still prevalent. All trains have been abandoned on the Central railroad from Hempstead to Hearne during the past two days. An engine came in during the evening, bringing passengers from Hearne to Bryan. An engine passed south this evening, carrying a canoe to a point between Millican and Navasota. The Central track and telegraph wires are under water between the above points. As the people look to *The News* for reliable information concerning the state of the flooded districts, and it can not reach here on account of the high water, there is an aching void that can not be filled. There is, in fact, a universal howl when *The News* fails to reach Bryan promptly. Galveston Daily News, 27 May 1884, p.4

Millican, May 27 – More than one hundred families have been forced to leave the Brazos River bottom on account of the overflow. It is higher than has been known for a number of years. The water has fallen nearly a foot to-day. No mails since Saturday. Fort Worth Daily Gazette, 28 May 1884, p.1

The water on the main line of the Central [railroad] between Courtney and Millican fell one foot on Thursday and the company expected to start through trains to Dallas on Friday. Brenham Daily Banner, 31 May 1884, p.2

Bryan ... The ice factory has failed to make ice up to this time on account of an insufficient water supply. The board of aldermen have determined to utilize the water in the abandoned would-be artesian well by means of a windmill. There is about 400 feet of water standing in the pipes, and the supply is ample sufficient for the city. Galveston Daily News, 30 July 1884, p. 3.

Bryan ... The ice factory have succeeded in making ice, and has an abundance of water. Galveston Daily News, 12 August 1884, p. 3.

Bryan ... The ice factory consumes 1200 gallons of water an hour, which, after being utilized, passes off as waste. The City Council is now considering the matter, and it is thought some arrangement will be made with the ice company to use the water by means of hydrants on Main Street. This would be of great benefit in case of fire. Galveston Daily News, 16 August 1884, p.3

Millican, August 16 – The light shower which fell last evening made the weather cooler, but was not heavy enough to be beneficial to the cotton crop. A great deal of our cotton in the bottom lands and on the hills is very small, and without rain will not amount to much. Galveston Daily News, 17 August 1884, p.3

Bryan *Pilot* ... Wm. Lawless, a young man living ten miles north of Bryan, shot himself accidentally while out hunting Monday evening. The entire cartridge entered the lower part of his bowels and was taken out up at the breast, where it lodged. The wound is almost certain to prove fatal. Galveston Daily News, 18 August 1884, p.7, col.6

Allen Farm ... Crops in this vicinity are very good, considering the long drouth. This station has shipped 149 bales of cotton this season, and is counting on 1000 during the season. Four cotton gins in sight are kept busy to their capacity. Cotton pickers are greatly in demand. D.C. Jarrell is the principal cotton buyer of this section. A great deal of sickness prevails, owing to the hot weather and scarcity of good water. Colonel John D. Rogers, of Galveston, arrived here last evening from the East. He left this evening for his home. Galveston Daily News, 22 September 1884, p. 1.

1884 – [Texas A&M campus] ... Monday Sept. 25th. It was very cold this morning and as Clarence had a chill, Jim made a fire in the school house ...(From May Cole Diary, Texas A&M University Archives, location MS-03-A36, box 1, file 1-50).