

The Bethel Community, School and Church

Flower Mound, Texas

Historical Narrative researched and written by Ray Morriss Martin for 1990 Texas Historic Commission
Marker application for Denton County

THE BETHEL COMMUNITY, SCHOOL AND CHURCH

APPLICATION FOR TEXAS HISTORICAL MARKER

Flower Mound, Texas

1989

This paper was researched by Ray Morriss Martin, fourth generation resident of Bethel Community. Maternal side of family - great grandmother, Jane Curtis Crawford, grandfather, William (Bill) Crawford, mother, Etta Crawford Morriss. Father's side - grandfather, J. H. Morriss, father, A. E. Morriss.

Frankie Sprabary, Olin Millican and Myrtle Watson gave invaluable information and assistance in compiling this material. Thanks to each of them.

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INTRODUCTION

Roots are deep in the Bethel Community through colorful heritage that is ours who are descendents of the early families. We wish to preserve this heritage and show the love and integrity that existed within this wonderful community and to receive an historical marker to manifest our love and appreciation of our forefathers. It is for this purpose we have humbly compiled the historical facts and stories of the early days of the Bethel community.

LOCATION OF THE BETHEL COMMUNITY, SCHOOL AND CHURCH IN
RELATION TO 1989 SETTLEMENT

Bethel Community does not exist as such in 1989. The Bethel community was located north and west of present day Lewisville and included all of the present City of Highland Village, incorporated in 1963, and parts of the cities of Flower Mound, incorporated in 1961, and Copper Canyon incorporated in 1973.

The school was located on FM 407 at the northwest corner of Highland Village Road. The church was across the road on the south side of 407 (See freehand drawn map on next page)

THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS AND THE PETERS COLONY

The Bethel community had its beginnings with "The Republic of Texas".

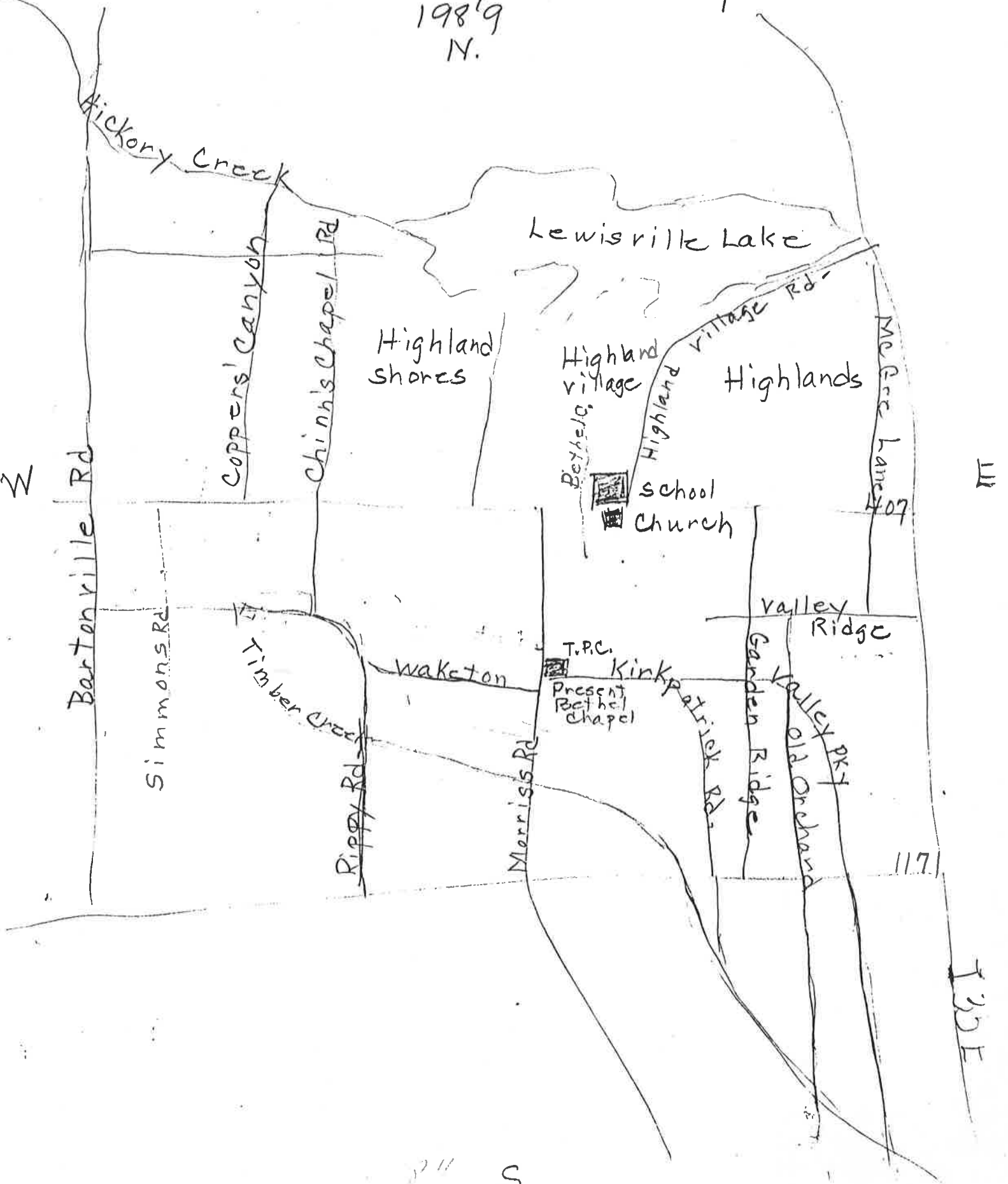
"The young Republic of Texas was in dire need of men and means, and strenuous efforts were being made to colonize the country. Colonization contracts were made on easy terms."

(1)

"The Fifth Congress on January 4, 1841 passed an act granting to married settlers 640 acres of land, to single settlers 320 acres, under certain conditions of settlement."

(2)

Location of Bethel Community - School-Church in Relation to today's Development 1989 N.



"Section four of said act authorized the President to make a contract with W. S. Peters and eighteen others (collectively) to colonize land covering much of North Texas, the whole of what was afterwards set off as Denton County. (3) The contract was afterward amended and many legislative acts were passed explaining and validating land titles under it. It was a prolific field of contention for years afterward." (4)

"W. S. Peters and his company were to receive as their compensation ten sections of land for each one hundred families, and ten half-sections for each one hundred single men colonized in their territory and who complied with the colonization laws." Peters and Company had only to pay the State for the patent office fees which amounted to about fifteen dollar for each patent with the understanding that these fees could be passed on to the settlers. (5)

On February 5, 1842 the Sixth Congress authorized the President to make colonization contracts with other parties on the same terms and conditions. A good number of such contracts were made. Dissatisfaction and confusion arose among the settlers. On Jan. 16, 1843 Congress passed a joint resolution authorizing the President to modify said contracts and extend the same. The contracts became a source of fraud and contention and the Eighth Congress repealed the law authorizing the President to make such

contracts and ordered him to have forfeited all contracts whose terms had not been rigidly observed. (6)

"The Peters Colonization contract had so much to do with Denton County's land titles and her colonists that it became necessary to go more into its details. The settlers were not getting their land patents. The Third Legislature of the State of Texas on March 21, 1850 passed an act to secure to the actual settlers of the colony the lands to which they were entitled and authorized the governor to appoint a Commission to adjudicate the rights of the settlers to land surveyed, where the field notes could not be found. The Commissioners met the people at Dallas, McKinney, Sherman, Alton (then the county seat of Denton County) and Waxahachie. This adjudication with the settlers was to be without prejudice to the Company in their settlement with the State. (7)

The Peters Colony had an office in the southeastern part of Denton County where its business was transacted. Oliver Hedgecock was employed as their agent and Judge S. A. Venters as their land clerk. Their land surveyors were engaged in sectioning the Colony's lands and probably had most of Denton County sectioned and ready to turn into the land office. (8)

"Problems arose about the location of the land. The settlers wanted to make their own choice of lines. Hence the land lines in many part of Denton County run at various angles, much to the detriment to good roads." (9)

The Fourth Legislature passed an act relating to lands in the Peter's Colony. There had been four contracts by the President and the Colony 1) August 30, 1841, 2) November 20, 1841, 3) July 26, 1842, and 4) January 20, 1843, making altogether one modified contract. (10)

"This act gave the metes and bounds of the Colony as follows: beginning at a point on the Red River, in said four contracts specially defined and running thence along the extreme eastern boundary to said grant south 100 miles; thence west 164 miles, thence north to Red River, thence down said river to the place of the beginning. This act was to compromise the differences between the Colony and the settlers and the State of Texas and to have suits dismissed which had been brought at Austin to forfeit their contracts" (11)

"This act provided for the recognition of the Certificates issued by Thomas William Ward, Commissioner for the Colony, and proof and oath of the Colonists in the absence of a certificate; for the recognition of the surveys made by the Colony's officials or the surveys made by the district or County surveyers, and the right of the colonist to select his own land." (12)

The compromise permitted the Colony to locate their land outside of the Colony and in a body. They were allowed 1,700 sections of land in a body, or about two counties. This land eventually became Young and Throckmorton counties. The act was passed February 10, 1852 giving the settlers until July 4, 1852 to file on the land. A supplementary act was passed in 1853 extending the time for the settlers to file on their land, requiring the Colony to file their records with the Commissioner of the General Land Office.

(13)

Before these contracts were closed the amount of land given to the immigrant had been reduced to 320 acres for a married man and 160 acres for a single man. The settlers were required to make improvements and live upon the land three years and have proof of same before a patent could be issued. (14)

The land within the Peters Colony was virgin land known only to migratory Indians, the Texas Rangers and occasional prospectors passing through. (15)

Seymour Connor's Peters Colony gives maps showing the land entitlements for the four contracts as well as a map of the actual settlement in the Peters Colony. (16) Each map clearly shows Denton County to be in the midst of the territory. (See appendix)

Among the provisions of the Peters Colony contract was the offer to them of one section of land for the erection of a church within a settlement of 100 families,(17) and a final clause that required that the immigrants be of good moral character. (18)

HOW THE PEOPLE REACHED THE AREA

The Eighth Congress of Texas in February 5, 1844 passed an act establishing the Central National Road of the Republic of Texas. It was to begin near the mouth of the Big Elm on the banks of the Trinity River and run north to the Red River opposite the mouth of the Kiomisha River (which enters the Red River from the north). The President appointed a five member commission to lay out the road which the people called Preston Road.(19) Preston Road ran one and one half miles east and 30 miles parallel to the present day eastern boundary of Denton County. It started near the present Courthouse in Dallas and ran north up the Collin County Ridge to Preston Bend on the Red River, a distance of nearly seventy miles.(20)

There were fords and ferries on the Red River at Preston Bend as well as on the Trinity River and on the Brazos River at Waco. Only small branches needed to be crossed the entire length of the road. Thus this great public highway was the open door to Texas for the immigrants coming from the north. (21)

Settlers came to Texas from Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas and Missouri to lay claim to the land grants and headrights that were given them in the Peters Colony.

Peters who lived in Tennessee was a musician and owned a music store. He was a close friend to Stephen F. Foster. It is not known if Peters ever actually came to Texas.

Four or five families settling close to one another called themselves by the name of one of the settlers and were known by these names to people in other settlements. (22) "In later years more impersonal names were chosen. As a result the old settlements and their early designations have almost lost their identity". (23)

The first settlement in Denton County was in the southeast corner of the county in 1843 or 44 and was called the Bridges Settlement. By 1844 the settlement extended west of Elm Fork. When Holford settled on the prairie, Holford (also known as Hallford) Prairie Settlement came into being. (24) The eastern end of the Prairie, present day Lewisville, was settled by John W King family who had come from near Bonham.

In the fall of 1844 a large contingent of families from Platt County, Missouri arrived and settled on the west end of the Prairie. (25) "They brought with them their families,

their dogs, guns and religion - Baptist". (26) They settled close to each other for self-protection from the Indians. (27)

The first church house of note was called the Holford Prairie Hall. It was about midway of the Prairie from East to West and on the north side of a grove of trees that extended out into the prairie. The Masons occupied the second floor of the two story wooden structure which also contained port holes to ward off Indian attacks. The first floor was used as a church and school. All denominations worshiped in the building. The building eventually burned. Burials were made on the land adjoining the hall and eventually the cemetery became known as The Old Hall Cemetery.

Old Masonic records state that the only requirements for the use of the hall were that there would be no religious debates; no one could make remarks that would cast any reflection on another person's religious beliefs; the hall had to be swept clean after being used and people had to furnish their own candles. (28)

With the coming of the railroad in 1881 (29) a church and school came into being in the town of Lewisville.

The region west of the Holford Prairie was filling up fast. Instead of settlements, the people were considered

communities. It is the community just west of Holford Prairie and overlapping Holford Prairie that is the subject of this paper - the Bethel Community.

WAGON TRAIN ROUTE

Wagon trails made their mark in Denton County. The ruts cut deep into the soil. One such trail came by what is now Old Hall Cemetery. According to Olin Millican, years later the marks still could be seen on the Millican farm until developers removed them forever.

Settlers followed the "Old Wagon Trail" to arrive in the region that later became known as the Bethel Community.

A January 7, 1977 unpublished article written by Olin Millican, grandson of G. T. Millican an original settler, deals with the Pioneer Settlement Trail in an article entitled "A Pioneer Hallford Prairie Settlement Trail".
(See appendix)

Map plotted by Olin Millican can be seen in appendix.

FRIE SCHOOL

The early settlers formed settlements for protection against the Indians as well as for social purposes. Usually the settlement took the name of one of the families. Land was donated for the early schools and frequently carried the

name of the grantor of the land.

The strong desire for schooling for their children and the fear of God in their hearts was the motivating force for the establishment of combined school-church facilities which became the center for community life. Also the Peters Colony set aside land for such purposes. From the map, Vol 1, page 81 in Denton County Record, we find that a portion of both the E. T. Clary #2488 and the Elisha Smith # 1160 Surveys became such a center in the Bethel Community.(30) The school was located on the southern end of the E. T. Clary Survey and the church on the northern end of Elisa Smith Survey.

The Peters Colony patented to Elisha T. Clary and his heirs six hundred and forty acres No. 248 by commissioners of Peters Colony on the 11th day of April, 1850. However, the official transfer of the land by Governor E. M. Pease and S. Crosby, Commissioner of the Gen'l Land Office did not occur until October 20, 1855. (31) According to the Deed Record Vol. 12 No. 439 this land is situated in Denton County on Hickory Creek , a tributary of the Elm Fork of the Trinity River about 4 and 1/2 miles S and E from Alton (County Seat).(32)

In 1854 Anderson Nowlin bought the E. T Clary Survey #248 for \$240.00 dollars (about .375 cents per acre). This was located by virtue of Clary's headright certificate of his

Emigration Grantee to Peters. The transaction was signed by Denton County Clerk, A. P. Lloyd at Alton July 31, 1854.

(33)

F. M. Frie bought land on the north side of the Elisha Smith Survey #1160 March 29, 1870 from S. H. Crawford and an additional 73.5 acres on the north side of this survey in 1872 from Wm Woodrum. (34)

The Fries set aside two acres for a school-church from the Smith survey and the Nowlins set aside two acres for the same purpose from the Clary survey.

"Know all men by these present that we Anderson Nowlin and F. M. Frie for and consideration of the advancement of learning and promotion of school in our naborhood and have grant, donate, and grante and do by these presents do give donate and grant each of us two acres of the land belonging to tracts, which we now own, to Philop Eaglas, (Sigler?) John Crawford, and Meradeth Fox Trustees for the School District No. 3 - District No. 1 in said county and to their successors in office for the purpose of building a school house upon to be used as such and for no other purposes only public worhip Saturdays and Sundays so as to not enterfere with school hours - free to all denominations, said four acres of land is situated west of and near to the present

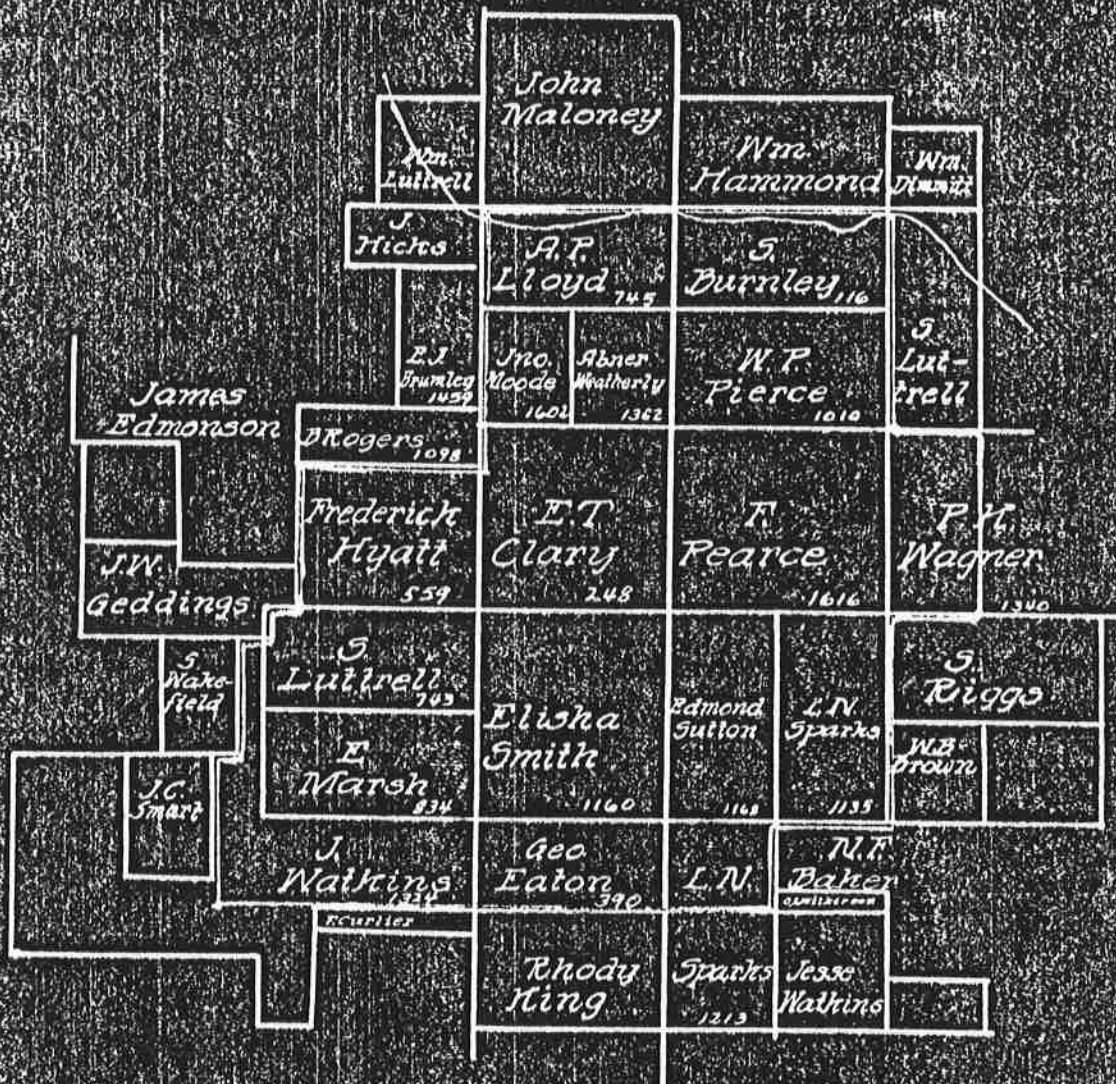
Residence of said F. M Frie and will be identified by the building of the schoolhouse extending in such form around the house as said trustees may desire. To have and to hold the said tract or parcel of land for the use and purpose already named unto them the said Philop Eaglas, John Crawford and Meradeth Fox and their successors in Office for ever. Provided always that if said school house should ever be appropriated to or for any other use than the one herein already named this deed shall be void and our lands revert to us again, our heirs, executors or administrators." The document was signed February 21, 1871.(35)

The school was built on the Clary Survey side of the road (North side of FM 407) and was called the Frie Schoolhouse. It was a one room building and was used for worship on Saturdays and Sundays, thus serving as a community center.

FRIE - BETHEL SCHOOL DISTRICT # 63

The map showing the surveys constituting the Frie - Bethel School district No. 63 is shown on the following page. Many of the names of the early settlers are represented by the land patents.

Frie School was built on the land donated by Anderson Nowlin sometime after 1871. The exact date has not been found.



VOLI Page 81

I, V.N. Harris, County Engineer of Denton County, Texas, do hereby certify that the above plat of Common School District No. 63, in Denton County, Texas, is correct, the red line showing the boundaries of said Common School District No. 63, as re-established by the County Board of Education, of Denton County, Texas, at their regular meeting on this, the 11th. day of January, 1927.

FILED FOR RECORD

At 9 o'clock, A. M.

SEP 13 1927

V.N. Harris
County Engineer of
Denton County, Texas.

When the Fries sold their property to C. S. Wilkins on December 25, 1873 the two acres set aside for school and worship were not included in the transaction.(36)

In 1884 Texas State law required the establishing of numbered common school districts by Commissioners Court. The numbering of the school districts started in the Northeastern portion of the county with No. 1 and crisscrossed the county. By this system Bethel-Fry school was assigned number 63 which had to be displayed over the door of the school in large numbers. Commissioners Court records refer to Frie School in 1877, but in 1884 school district No. 63 was referred to as Bethel - Fry. (37)

The changing of the school's name coincided with the building of the Bethel Church in 1882. According to an article appearing in The Record Chronicle, September 7, 1952 by Dr. W. N. Rowell, who had attended Frie School, the named changed to Bethel when the church was built.

Dr. Rowell stated that the Fry Schoolhouse was the center of all activities for the growing community of farmers and cattlemen. Children attended the school from within a radius of several miles. The school term was only four or five months each winter, often under the instruction of poorly qualified teachers. Under these conditions the

students were supposed to acquire an education that would fit them for any position that would come along in future years.

Although the exact date when the Fry school was erected is unknown, it was thought to have been among the first schools built in Denton County. The building was constructed of heavy lumber hewed and sawed from native timber. It was weather - boarded but with no under pinnings or inside ceiling. One fireplace heated the school. On cold days there would always be a group of children standing before a roaring wood fire, twisting and turning in an effort to keep both back and front warm.(38)

The first seats were very crude and far from comfortable. Few of them had backs and many were of the kind known as split log benches. These were made by splitting in half an oak log eight or ten inches in diameter and from 6 to 10 ft long, care being taken that the tree selected to be used had a smooth body and straight running grain. The flat side of the log was the seat of the bench. Holes were bored in the bottom, or round side, into which legs made from well seasoned oak or hickory were driven and securely wedged. "While by the use of the broadaxe and froe, some effort was made to smooth the surface of the seats".(39)

The curriculum included reading, writing, spelling, grammar, geography, algebra and United States history. The teaching of spelling was particularly emphasised for to be able to spell was considered essential. Spelling was so important that regardless of age, every body had to recite a spelling lesson. Spelling matches were held on Fridays. They usually spelled by syllables.

Rules governing conduct were rigid and strictly enforced. If problems arose at school, the student had to face parents when they got home where more punishment was administered.

Occasionally a musician came through the country and organized singing school. "One of the dominant traits of the early settlers of Denton County was their love for music. They sang in their homes and encouraged their children in every opportunity that seemed to help the children in music." (40)

"Among those whose children received a part of their education at Fry School were Anderson Nowlin, Henry Nowlin, Meridith Fox, Hugh McKenzie, James Madden, William Madden, Philip Sigler, Belew Crawford, William Crawford, Taylor Brown, George McLeod, Dr. E. H. Rowell, and C. S. Wilkins". (41)

In 1910 the one room school was torn down and replaced with a two room structure. Two former students, Fay Morriss Meador and Olin Millican, remember the date 1910 since they were in the first grade when the new building was built. Fay Morriss Meador also remembers that in 1912 the community built a "Music Hall", a one room building just west of the school building. Les Nowlin was teaching and his wife Ina Portwood Nowlin taught music, piano. The one room building was built for her. Lona Simmons later taught piano in the same building.

Olin Millican, Rowell's cousin, still has at his home a post oak log from the Frie school. Olin came by the log when his father helped tear down the building. No nails were used in the construction. Holes show where one log fitted into another.

About 1912 Alien Nowlin started teaching at Bethel. She continued teaching there until the school was consolidated into Lewsiville Independent School District. She then taught in the Lewisville school system.

In 1913 a third room was added to the back of the two room school house making Bethel School No. 63 a three teacher school.

The two front rooms had sliding doors which, when opened,

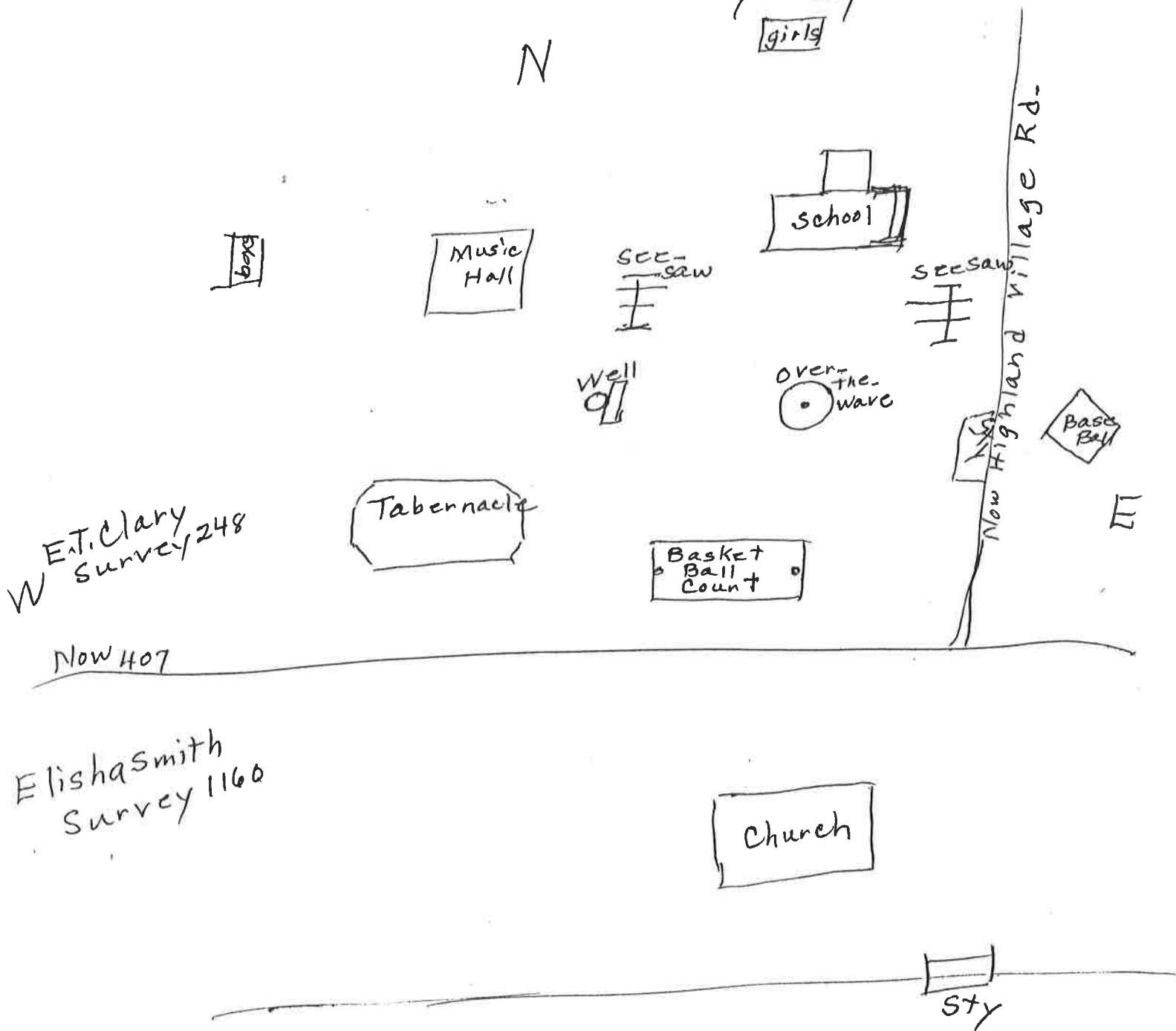
provided an auditorium. This facility was used for special programs and gatherings. For "end of the school" programs, men from the community built a stage from bridge lumber on which the children performed. Wagon sheets and bed sheets were used for curtains. Men and boys in the community furnished music in between acts with their fiddles, guitars and banjos.

The community was justifiably proud of its playground equipment, especially the over-the-wave. Other play facilities consisted of seesaws, basket ball court, base ball diamond and track equipment. A volley ball net was put up in the spring.

The school participated in the Interscholastic League both in athletics and scholastics. Home Demonstration agents used the Music Hall for meetings and classes as did the 4 H club. On the following page is a free hand drawing of the possible layout of the school property. The Bethel School was a progressive school. Both the boys' and girls' basketball teams were champions. The basketball court was near the road just north of the church and south of the school. Students practiced on the outside court even in the coldest weather. The baseball diamond was in the pasture east of the school. A sty over the fence gave easy access

Map of Bethel School and Church

By Ray Morris Martin



to the field.

A large bell in the school bell tower signaled that school had started or ended. The bell also tolled for recess and the noon dinner period.

Most of the children walked to school, although some rode horses which were tied to a post under the shed or tabernacle until school was over. A sty over the fence just south of the church gave the children who lived south of the school a faster route home via the path across the pasture.

In the 1940's the rural schools began to lose their identity. The State required a certain number of pupils in order to maintain a teacher. As the school population decreased, the school lost teachers. Bethel school did not escape this dilemma. According to an article written by the Superintendent of the Lewisville Independent School District that appeared in the Lewisville News, February 17, 1985 the Bethel School consolidated with Lewisville in 1940.

When the school moved to Lewisville, the community activities also moved to Lewisville. Now buses transported the children to school. Better roads were built. The first graveled road in the Bethel community was Kirkpatrick. The gravel came from the hill on the Morriss farm which is now in the Timberview development.

The land and school buildings of the old Bethel School reverted to the Nowlin heirs. The Highland Village Shopping Center now occupies the hallowed ground of first Frie School and then Bethel School.

BETHEL CHURCH

Elisha Smith signed Barksdale's list to emigrate to Texas in July 1845 but died before 1850. Therefore his brother Samuel K. Smith was issued a certificate by Commissioner Thomas William Ward in 1850 and Elisha Smith's heirs patented 640 acres in Denton County. (42) The 1850 census places the 35 year old Samuel K. Smith in Texas working as a farmer.

On March 29, 1870 F. M. Frie bought land on the northern end of the Elisha Smith Survey 1160 from S. H. Crawford (32) two acres of which were set aside for a school-church. Although Frie subsequently sold his land to Charles S. Wilkins (43) who sold to Nannie Simpson(44) and she to an Insurance Co.,(45) the two acres always were excluded from the transactions. Eventually these two acres became known as Bethel Presbyterian Church property.

The map on the next page drawn by C.F. Ballard & Associates in 1968 locates the Bethel Church property on FM 407.

SURVEY PLAT

TO ALL PARTIES INTERESTED IN PREMISES SURVEYED:

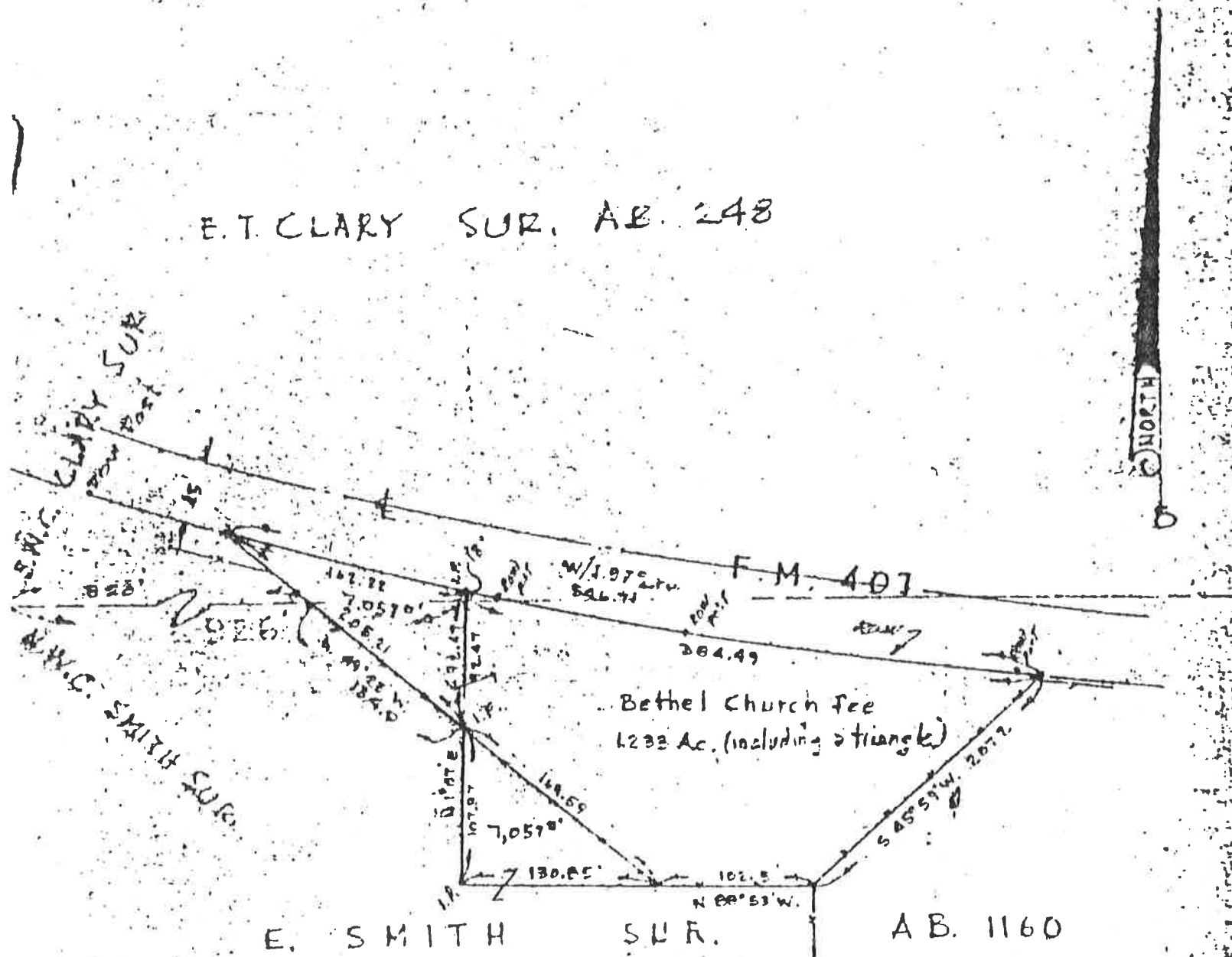
This is to certify that I have, this date, made a careful and accurate survey on the ground of property located at
 No. Acceage Survey, in the city of Rural, Texas, described
 as follows:

Lot No. Tracts in Smith Sur. AB-1160 and Block No. City Block No.

of E.T. Clary Sur. AB. 248 Addition, an addition to the City of

Texas, according to the plat recorded in Volume at page of the Map Records
 of Denton County, Texas.

E.T. CLARY SUR. AB. 248



T. Kirkpatrick, fee

A church definitely existed at the Frie schoolhouse before 1882. Records of transfers of membership from the Flower Mound Presbyterian Church (1854) to the Presbyterian Church meeting at the Frie Schoolhouse are in Ancestors and Friends by W. L. Crawford on p. 140. William Crawford Sr., William Crawford Jr. and Susan M. Crawford transferred in 1881 and William (Bill) Crawford and Jinna Crawford transferred in 1883 according to Flower Mound records. The first Minute Book of the Presbyterian Church (at Frie School) had been burned.

In 1882 a church was built on the two acres set aside in the Elisha Smith Survey # 1160 on the south side of the road. William Crawford was the builder. The minutes of the old Record Book of Bethel Presbyterian Church, page 1, (see appendix) state that on September 16, 1883 a new church, named Bethel, was organized by Rev. M. L. Bullard. The church with a membership of fourteen adopted the principles of the government of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. William T. Minor was elected Elder and P. N. Seigler, Deacon. (46)

The Frie school across the road changed its name to Bethel and thereafter the community was known as the Bethel Community.

The tabernacle that had been built on the school grounds was used for summer meetings and for both social and religious gatherings.

All religious demoninations had been welcome to use the Frie School for their meetings. This tradition carried over to the new Bethel Church. Since very few churches had a full time minister, the entire community attended the service whenever a minister was present on any given Sunday. The people were simply followers of Christ. If no minister were present, the congregation met together in fellowship to sing and worship.

According to early records the following ministers served the Presbyterian Faith of Bethel Church:

M. L. Bullard	1883-85
Hodges	1885-86
W. M. McClurken	1887-88
J. L. Moore	1889-1894
Jolie	1894-96
Bar	1897-98
N. B. Baker	1899-1904
J. J. Moore	1904-06
N. B. Baker	1906-09
R. F. Wilkins	1910-13
W. A. Bingan	1914-15
Norman	1925

The above information was taken from a note left in the Bethel Register by Andrew Morriss. Reverand Norman was the last regular pastor of the Presbyterian Faith at Bethel.(47)

The minutes of March 7, 1908 refer to the Bethel Presbyterian Church U.S.A. instead of Cumberland.(48) Many of the early Cumberland Presbyterian Churches merged into the U.S.A. form of church government.

Frankie C. Sprabary, daughter of Roy and Lorena Wilkinson Lester, and the granddaughter of Jim and Ida Wilkinson, used the original Register(1883) of the Bethel Presbyterian Church U. S. A. to compile an alphabetical index of members, information about church membership, and offices held. This information can be found in the appendix of this paper. The Register for the church that met at Frie School had been burned.

"In 1925 Andrew Morriss was ordained as Elder in the Bethel Presbyterian Church U. S. A.".(49) Since there no longer was a regular Minister for the Bethel Church Andrew Morriss acted as leader of the congregation of Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists and kept the services in tact. He was also Superintendent of the Sunday School.

He had been a trustee of the Bethel School for several years but resigned when his daughter, the first of three, started teaching there. Morriss Road bears his name.

The Missionary Baptist Church was organized about 1890 by a Rev. Farington. They reorganized about 1927. Later students from the Baptist Seminary at Ft. Worth officiated.

The Methodist Church was organized about 1920 by Brother Atchley. He preached in other country churches in the area. Hugh Olin Isabell was also a Methodist Minister who preached at Bethel.

Each demonination had its own organization, but everybody attended the services regardless of the denomination of the officating minister. The congregation met for worship both in the morning and at night every Sunday whether a minister was there or not. The young people prepared programs - good programs- and occasionally presented programs at the Lewisville Presbyterian Church and Hemphill Presbyterian Church at Ft. Worth. These young people learned to stand on their feet and talk before a group of people. Sometimes the congregation met "just to sing". Bethel was truly a Community Church.

All religious and social activities revolved around the Bethel Church, the Bethel School and the tabernacle.

The tabernacle was a large wooden shed located on the northern side of the road (FM 407). Summer revivals were held under the tabernacle. Revivals were an important time for the people. Ministers from Lewisville and Ft.Worth helped in these services. Some of the ministers who helped in these revivals were:

Methodist - Bro. Atchley and Hugh Olin Isabell.
Presbyterian - Bro. Cleveland - Lewisville
 Evert B. King - Ft. Worth
Baptist - Bro. Walker, Young and Shaw - Lewisville
These were Missionary Baptist. Later different
students came from the Seminary at Ft. Worth.

When the Baptists needed to baptize their new members, they were taken to Lake Dallas at Shady Shores. Before Lake Dallas was put in, they would use swimming holes on the creeks or rivers which made for a beautiful service.

Sometimes the revival would be conducted by a pastor of one denomination and sometimes there would be a pastor of each denomination. Everybody from "far and near" came. That was "old time religion".

In 1940 when Bethel School moved to Lewisville, the church also moved. People lost interest in the church on FM407 and the church doors were closed for a few years.

About 1945 the people decided to reorganize the community church. The building needed a new roof along with other repairs. Andrew Morriss then past 70 was on top of the steeple pulling off shingles when the steeple gave way. He fell with the steeple about 30ft. into a pile of shingles. Fortunately he knew that he had to relax as he fell and was hospitalized only a couple of days with a not too serious back injury. William Crawford's beautiful, unique steeple was not replaced. The front of the building was squared off

and only a small spiral was put up instead of a steeple.

This congregation was Baptist, but not Missionary Baptist. When they moved to Lewisville, the church was vacant again.

NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

In the summer of 1986 Dr. Bob Hanson and his wife, Joann moved into the community to establish a new church development program for the Presbyterian Church U. S. A.. The Bethel church, now in the hands of the Grace Presbytery, was still standing but in very bad condition.

The new people worked together as in the olden days to clean up the old building so that it could be used again. The Presbytery had obtained land in the same Elisha Smith Survey #1160, but on the southwest corner. (Morris Rd and Kirkpatrick Ln.) The old building was moved from its location since 1882 to its new home at 2100 Kirkpatrick Ln. The building was remodeled and an addition built onto the church. The spiral was not replaced in the hopes of eventually replacing the steeple. This hope materialized on Saturday, July 29th, 1989 when a replica of the original steeple was installed.

The congregation of the Trinity Presbyterian Church U.

S. A. was chartered September 27, 1987 with over 100 members. However, the historical Bethel name has been retained in the developing community with the rededication of the Old Building on July 26, 1987 as the "Bethel Chapel" to be used for the "Glory of God".

The congregation of Trinity continues to grow with the same spirit that existed in the Bethel Congregations over the years. A building program has been launched for a new sanctuary.

THE BETHEL COMMUNITY

The Bethel Community was in the midst of the Indians' "happy hunting ground", but the settlers' land "flowed with milk and honey". The area was good for growing almost anything. Fruits and vegetables were plentiful. The people were all farmers who grew their own food and raised the animals and fowl that provided their meat, their eggs and their milk. Water was available from springs and eventually the settlers dug their own wells since water could be reached with shallow wells. Windmills soon dotted the country-side.

Neighbor helped neighbor in any kind of need. The settlers were people of great integrity. A man's word was his bond!

TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION

The settlers came into the area in wagon trains and ox carts. Some wagons were pulled by horses and mules - others by oxen and cows - yes cows. The oxen and cows could eat grass along the way, whereas the horses had to be fed at night thereby increasing the load to be transported. Furthermore cows provided fresh milk for the children.

Occasionally a wagon train would leave this area of Texas for California. Below is a recorded story of such a wagon train.

"When the Civil War began, Seth Howard shouldered a musket and served in the Confederate Army through the entire conflict. He returned home after four years of service and shed his gray jacket for more peaceful work. The war-mutilated South was beginning her effort of recuperation. About three years later in 1868 he took to the road for the west. He apparently traveled in the train of J. H. Gray who advertised in the Dallas Herald, April 11, 1868 that eight families were leaving for California by way of Belknap and El Paso about April 25 and asked for other interested families to sign up.

Seth Howard was elected Captain of the wagon train which numbered thirteen grown men and two boys who carried arms

and drove the mule and horse teams. The Indians occasionally shot at passing wagon trains, but fortunately they did not attack the Howard train. But the other troubles of the train people were many. This seemed to be the year of heavy cloudbursts. The sudden showers swelled the streams and dry washes. They caulked their wagonbeds and ferried the families over, then swam the stock across. They saw war signal fires among the hills and knew the Indians were sending the news by "wireless". The trains frequently traveled by night to throw the signals off the line. They arrived safely in California".(50)

Seth Howard had settled on Hickory Creek at Lockhart Springs. He helped to build the Antioch church named after the home church in Monroe County, Kentucky. Later the church was called Chinn's Chapel.(51)

THE RAILROAD

The Dallas and Wichita Railroad was chartered by the Thirteenth Legislature on May 24, 1873. The railroad was granted 16 sections of land per mile of completed track. Certificates to be issued on the completion of each ten miles and the charter was to be forfeited unless twenty miles of road were completed and in running order by July 1, 1875. The company barely saved the charter by completing

the road to a point just below Lewisville in Denton County on July 1, 1875. J. W. Calder was killed in Dallas in a difficulty growing out of the financial affairs of the road. The tracts were laid on to Denton. The railroad built a total of 20.3 miles in Denton County for which they received 329 sections of land, or 210,560 acres.(52)

The MK&T RR, T and P RR, Santa Fe RR and Frisco RR also came through Denton County.(53)

The railroad was invaluable to the people of this community for now they had access to transportation other than wagon trains to haul supplies and their produce.

In the early days transportation facilities consisted of ox trains for freight hauling. Five or six yokes of oxen were hitched to a large wagon, sometimes called a prairie schooner, and could haul from 5,000 to 6,000 pounds of freight. An ox train consisted of two or three wagons. Lumber for houses was hauled from Uphur and Wood Counties.
(54)

J. H. Morriss came to the Bethel Community in a covered wagon drawn by a one-eyed team. One horse had only one eye and the other was blind! However he drove ox wagons from Dallas to the eastern Texas counties for lumber.

The railroads sold land to settlers. When Samuel and Nancy Crawford arrived in Denton, Texas, they bought land

from Darius Gregg, assignee of the Buffalo Bayou, Brazos and Colorado RR Co. The land was located 3 miles southwest of the town of Alton on Hickory Creek and adjoined the Fredrick Hyatt Survey of 240 acres. The railroad had acquired the land by patent from the State of Texas on 5 April, 1856.(55)

The automobile changed the community from horse and buggy days to a faster pace. Andrew Morriss swapped a carriage and a team of mules for his first Model T Ford in 1918. The first cars appeared in the community about 1914. Dr. Kirkpatrick and (Uncle) Sam Lusk owned the first cars in Lewisville. By 1918 most of the people were driving cars.

After the Model T Fords came the Model A Fords. Model A's were good ones! They were enclosed and had self starters eliminating the Model T's need for cranking which could be a chore. Men sometimes jacked up the back wheels to aid in starting.

The first bus was called a "Gitney" and ran between Dallas and Denton. The bridges on Hwy 77 were only oneway. When one car approached a bridge, the car on the other side had to wait for it to pass over the bridge.

With the automobile came the need for better roads. They were graded but still muddy when it rained. You had to

follow the ruts. If you met someone, you had to work to get out of the ruts so you could pass. The first highway was Highway 77. It came by Old Hall Cemetery and northward crossing the Hickory Creek on an Old Iron Bridge just west of the current day I35 bridge over Lake Lewisville.

A MODEL T FORD TRIP

The Morriss family consisting of mother, father, five girls and one boy along with a nephew decided to visit relatives in Tulia, Texas since the nephew would soon be leaving to serve in World War I. The five girls rode in the back seat. Mother, father and nephew sat in the front seat and brother rode in a bucket by the front door of the front seat. The Model T had fenders to which a luggage carrier was bolted. The luggage, bedding and food were put into the carrier. There were no motels along the road! The family had to sleep out at night on the ground. The roads were just trails part of the time and really sandy. It took two days for the Model T to make the trip to Tulia. The trip back home offered the same crowded condition.

TELEPHONE

The coming of the telephone was a real asset for the rural communities. Each community had lines and each house had a different ring. Line 13 was one of the lines that came

through the Bethel Community. Andrew Morriss's ring was one short, one long and two shorts. Central had one ring. There were 13 boxes on line 13. You could ring any of these but if you wanted to call anybody else on another line, you had to go through Central. You could listen in when someone on the line got a call. It was not uncommon to hear receivers clicking when the telephone rang.

THE CIVIL WAR

The Civil War had its effect on the men and women of the Bethel Community. Brother actually fought against brother when William (Bill) Crawford served four years for the Confederacy and his brother Bliew served on the Union side. Bliew had not yet moved to Denton County from Kentucky when he was called into service.(56)

John Crawford married the third time after the Civil War. "John was attempting to recover from the loss of two previous wives and the Civil War. This war and the freeing of the slaves was a drastic blow to the farmer who grew up in a family that owned slaves and whose livelihood depended on their assistance". (57) John enlisted March 23, 1861 and was thought to have served in the 21st Brigade T. S. T., Denton Rangers, Denton Co., Texas.(58) His home was where the Lewisville Independent School District Office now stands (1989) on Timbercreek Drive.

Samuel Harland Crawford left for war in 1862. His grandson, Gordon Grasty, relates that his grandfather had his negro slave with him until the Battle of Mansfield when he sent the slave home with the horses(59). Crawford was captured on April 9, 1864 at Pleasant Hill, Louisiana but was delivered to Major General Taylor C. S. A. April 20, 1864.(60)

Samuel Harland Crawford owned the land on the corner of what is now Main Street and Garden Ridge where the Skaggs Alpha Beta store is located (1989).

Captain Sam V. Lusk, born in Monroe County, Tenn. October 9, 1833, came to Denton County, Texas in 1854. He enlisted in Captain Main's Company, Fourteenth Texas Cavalry October 28, 1861 at Denton. He served as a Sergeant, a second Lieutenant and then Captain. After he returned home he joined the Presbyterian Church. He was reputed to be the "greatest" singer Denton County ever had singing the gospel.(61)

Olin Millican recounts this Civil War experience as told him by his grandfather, G. T. Millican who owned the land just north of FM407 and west of McGee Lane(1989). G. T. Millican was wounded during fighting at Petersburg, "the corn field" as it was known. He was left on the battlefield over night. The next day when the "stretcher team" came by

his severely injured leg was placed on a log and chopped off with a wood axe. He was then taken to Richmond where he recuperated for several months before returning to the Bethel Community on his peg leg.

ELECTRICITY

The Rural Electric Association brought electricity to the Bethel Community about 1939. Before electricity coal-oil (kerosene) lamps, alladin lamps and Coleman lanterns were used for light. Ice boxes kept food cool. Before ice boxes large pans with holes in them to let water pass through were completely draped with cotton cloth to soak up the water. The wind blowing on the cooler kept the food cool by evaporation of the water. Milk was kept cool by lowering it down into the well. The electric refrigerator was truly a blessing.

Electricity also took the drudgery out of wash day. The electric wringer washing machine was eventually replaced by the automatic washer and dryer. Ironing was improved from heating flat irons on the stove to gasoline irons and then to electric irons.

Thus the residents of what used to be called the Bethel Community have progressed from candles for light and fireplaces for heat to the comforts of an all electric home with a thermostatically controlled environment.

FOOTNOTES

1 Edward F. Bates, History and Reminiscences of Denton County Denton, Texas: Terrill Wheeler Printing, Inc., Bicentennial Edition (1976), p 5

2 Ibid., p 5

3 Ibid., p 5

4 Ibid., p 5

5 Ibid., p 5

6 Ibid., p 5

7 Ibid., pp 5-6

8 Ibid., p 6

9 Ibid., p 6

10 Ibid., p 6

11 Seymour V Connor, Kentucky Colonization in Texas, A History of the Peters Colony, Baltimore, Maryland: Geneological Publishing Co. Inc., 1983, p 75

12 Bates, History of Denton County, p 7

13 Ibid., p 7

14 Ibid., p 7

15 Ibid., p 7

16 Connor, Peters Colony, pp. 38,40,44,56,75,95

17 Ibid., p 8

18 Ibid., p 23

19 Bates, History of Denton County, p4

20 Ibid., p 8

21 Ibid., p 5

22 Ibid., p 13

23 Ibid., p 13

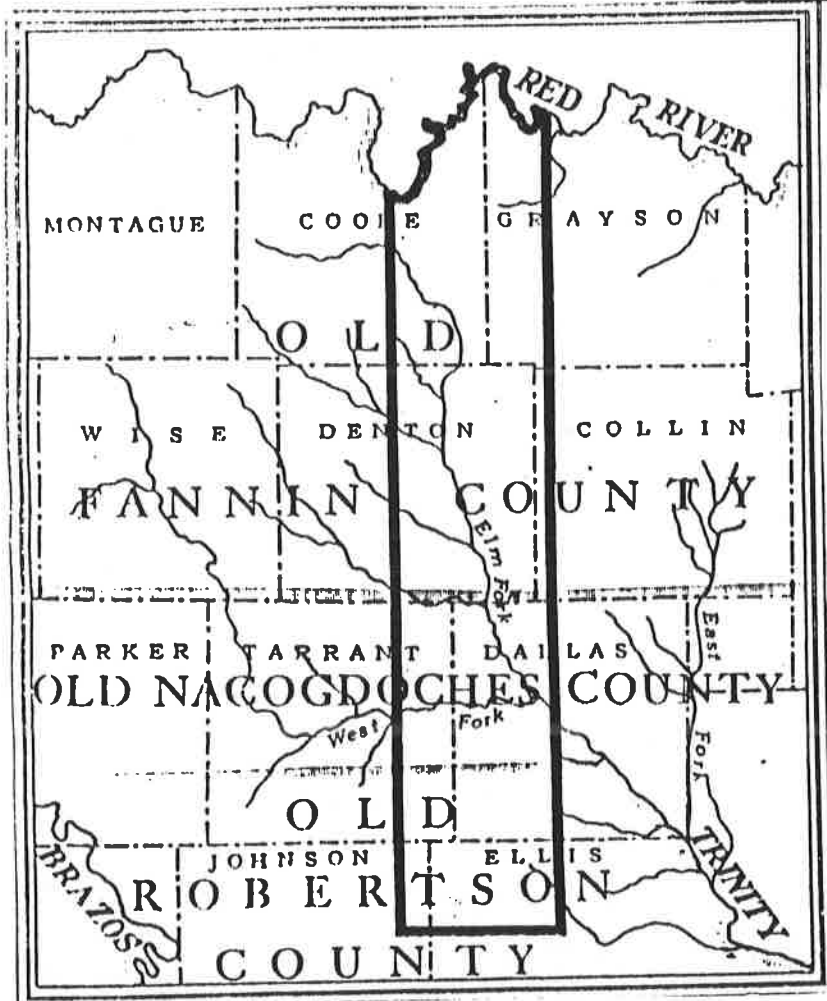
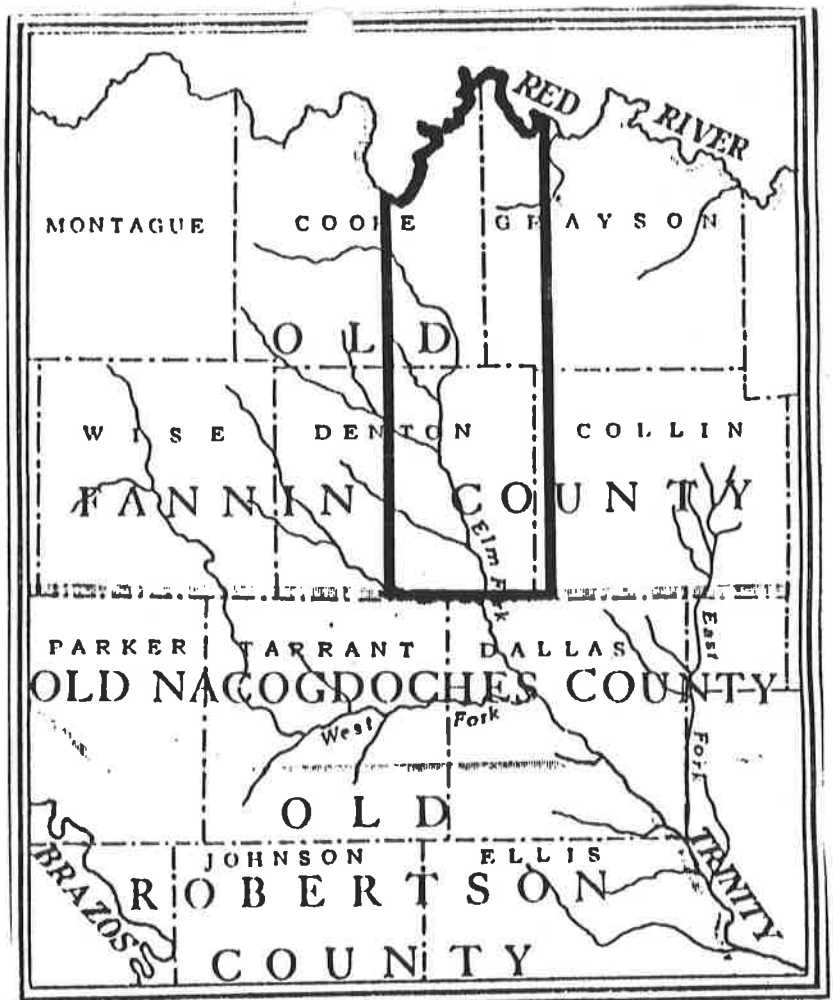
- 24 Ibid., p 13
- 25 Ibid., p 29
- 26 Ibid., p 29
- 27 Ibid., p 29
- 28 Olin Millican, Notes (See appendix)
- 29 Lewisviller Leader, Lewisville, Texas, Sunday February 26, 1981, 13 E
- 30 Deed Record (Denton County, Texas), Vol. 1, p 81
- 31 Ibid., Vol 12, p 439
- 32 Ibid., Vol 12, p 439
- 33 Ibid., Book A Vol 3, p 77
- 34 Ibid., Vol 27, pp 31-32
- 35 Ibid., Vol.27, pp 31-32
- 36 Ibid., Vol 1, pp 36-37
- 37 Watson, Myrtle "Education. A Debt the Present Owes to the Future", pp 7 and 20
- 38 Denton Record Chronicle, Denton, Texas, September 7, 1952, Section 2, p 7
- 39 Ibid., p 7
- 40 Ibid., p 7
- 41 Ibid., p 7
- 42 Connor, Peters Colony, p 394
- 43 Deed Record, (Denton County, Texas). Vol. III p 263
- 44 Ibid., Vol. III p 263
- 45 Ibid., Vol. III p 263
- 46 Page 1 of the Bethel Presbyterian Church Record Book is reproduced in appendix.

- 47 Old Bethel Presbyterian Church USA Church Record, Flower Mound: Trinity Presbyterian Church Library, p 1
- 48 Ibid., p 8
- 49 Ibid., 119
- 50 William Lusk Crawford Sr., Ancestors and Friends, Dallas, Texas: Farmer Genealogy Co., (1978), p 213-214
- 51 Ibid., p 213
- 52 Bates, History of Denton County, p 172
- 53 Ibid., p 173
- 54 Crawford, Ancestors and Friends, p. 142
- 55 Ibid., p 143
- 56 Ibid., p 223
- 57 Ibid., p 242
- 58 Ibid., p 223
- 59 Ibid., p 245
- 60 Ibid., p 245
- 61 Bates, History of Denton County, p 33

APPENDIX

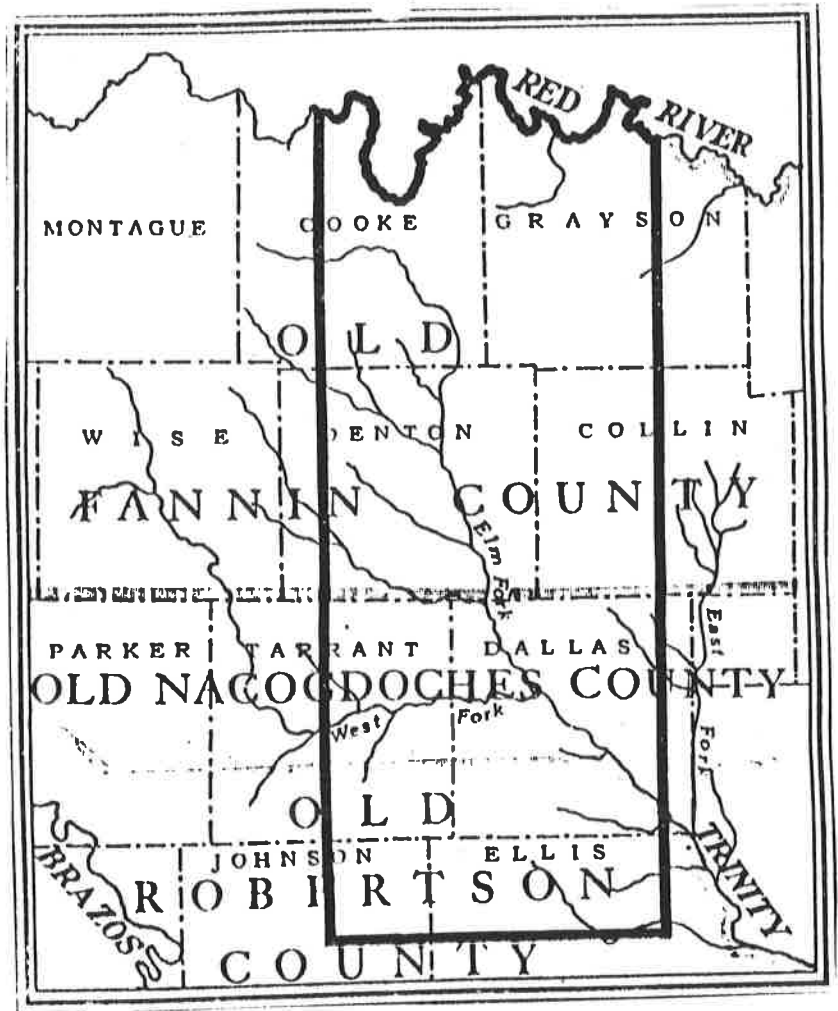
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First Contract of Peters
Colony, August 30, 1841



Second Contract of Peters
Colony, November 20, 1841

Third Contract of Peters
Colony, July 26, 1842



Fourth Contract of Peters
Colony, January 20, 1843

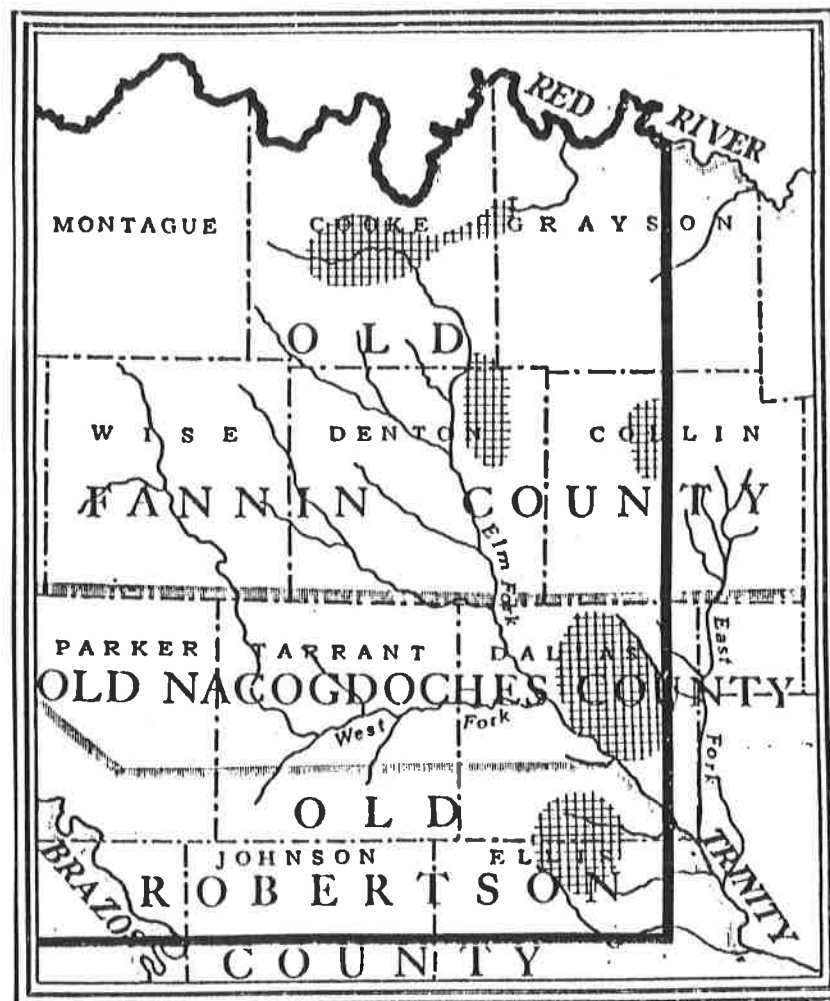


FIGURE 5
Settled Area of the Colony

A PIONEER HALLFORD PRAIRIE SETTLEMENT TRAIL

Faint traces of short sections of an Old Trail made by Peters Colony pioneer settlers on Hallford Prairie in southern Denton County, Texas, may still be seen as old worn down roadways in a few places on yet uncultivated area sod lands. The many new housing developments here of late, indicates that these remaining traces may soon be dozed, leveled, gone and forgotten.

Beginning at the Peters Colony Office Branch Office, (1843), just north of the intersection of FM 423 with Hwy 121, some six miles east of Lewisville; the Old Trail led west along Office Branch and by Ritter's Lake to a hazardous crossing of Elm Fork, (Big Elm), at Ritter's Ford; just below the present Lewisville Dam and north of the Old Iron Bridge crossing on the Old Hebron road.

Westward to the King's Settlement, (1844), at the east end of Hallford Prairie and the present site of Lewisville. Northwest to the "Rock Crossing" of Prairie Creek, about 100 yards west of the present Prairie Creek crossing of Interstate 35E, and having "Mason Hole" just above - a well remembered long lasting water hole of pioneer days. Northwest across the Jones-McNeill lands to Old Hall Cemetery; then called Hallford Prairie Hall, (1855,?), a two story log building housing the first public meeting place and school in the area.

Northwest across McGee, Woodrum-Kirkpatrick lands and crossing FM 407 into Millican pasture; sunken roadway may still be seen about 200 yards west of the Millican entrance gate and about 1.2 miles west of Interstate 35E on FM 407.

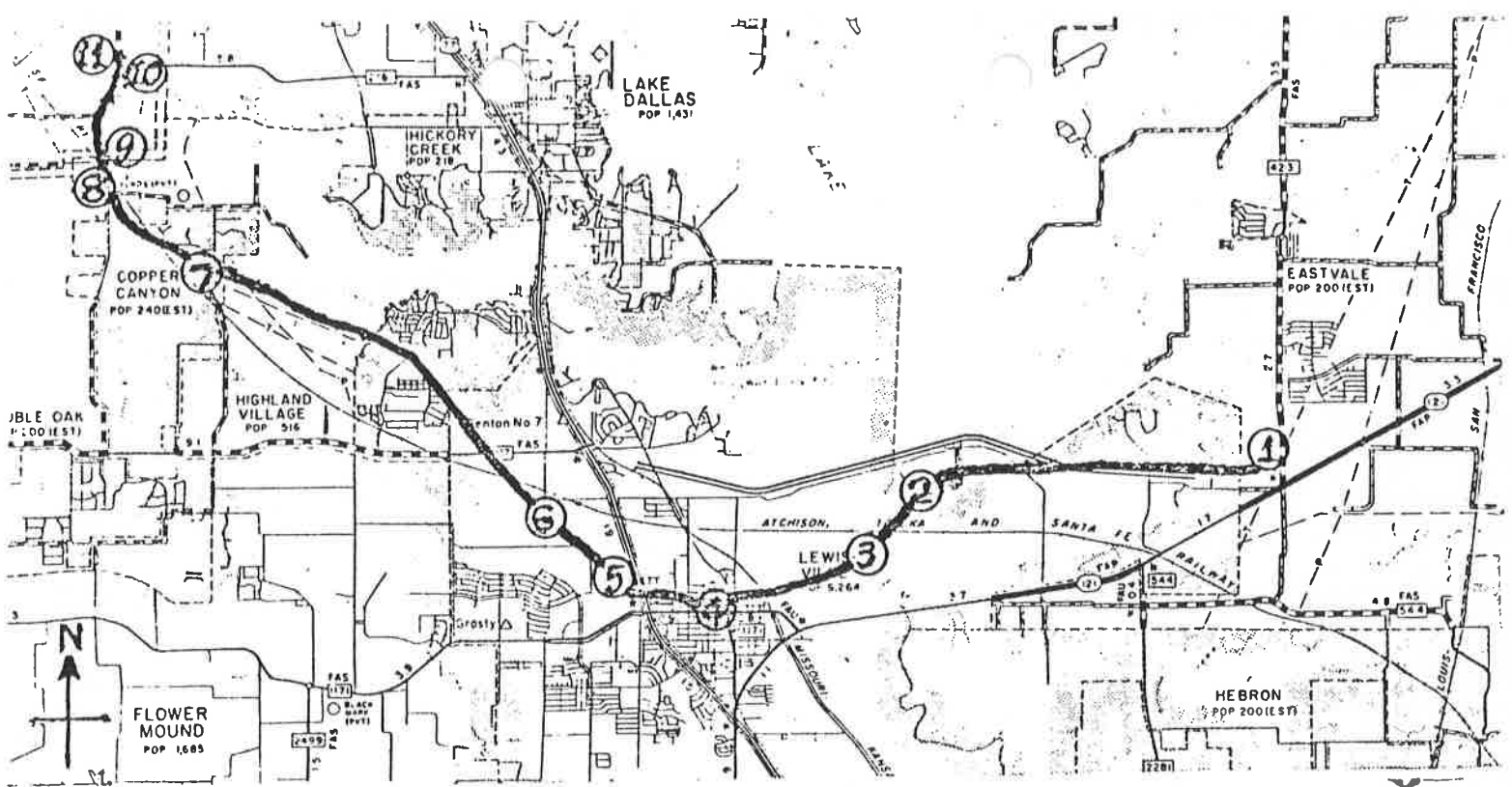
Continuing northwest through Maxwell, Nowlin, Berry and Dixon places in present Highland Village; west of northwest through Clearwater Estates; fording Bethel Branch into present Mobil planned development; by pioneer Whyburn, (Or Loving, ?), Spring - an Indian village site. Westward, south of Poindexter Creek to top of Murphy Hill, or to the head of the canyon now called Copper Canyon; where, most of the large flat rocks were found for the building of the foundations and chimneys of the early log cabins over a wide local area. (Some of these old rock chimneys are still standing).

North down Murphy Hill or Copper Canyon; old worn roadway can be seen on the west side of the present road at the foot of the hill and the beginning of Hickory Creek bottom and across the road from the long known and vital Murphy Spring at the mouth of the Canyon.

North through heavy timber of the bottom to the Hickory Creek Ford; a few yards west of the west end of the present Old Iron Bridge across Hickory Creek. Up the north bank to Alton or Old Alton, (1850), an early Denton County seat located on the east side of the present road at the top of the hill. Signs of the Old Trail may still be seen on the west side of the road and south of Old Alton Cemetery. This old road connected here with other early pioneer trails and roads including a Preston Bend to Bird's Station mail route and the early northeast-southwest Texas Ranger Patrol Trail guarding against Indian

Written in the hope that this Old Pioneer Trail may not be completely forgotten.

Olin M. Millican
1/7/77



Old Trail Overlaid on Part of Texas State Highway Map of Denton County.

1. Peters Colony Office Branch Office, where settlers came to file on new lands, located SW of Lebanon on Preston Road.
2. South end of Ritter's Lake.
3. Ritter's Ford of "Big Elm", Elm Fork of Trinity River.
4. King Families Settlement; present, Lewisville.
5. Rock Crossing of Prairie Creek with "Mason Hole".
6. Hallford Prairie Hall, first public meeting place and school which developed into Old Hall Cemetery.
7. Whyburn, (Or Loving ?), Spring, strong spring furnishing water for early settlers and the site of a former Indian village.
8. Top of Murphy Hill, (Now called "Copper Canyon"), where settlers found good building and chimney rocks.
9. Murphy Spring, large spring at mouth of canyon; used by Indians and near vital to early travelers and settlers.
10. Alton, (Old Alton), third county seat of Denton County and crossing place of early trails and roads.
11. Old Alton Cemetery.

MINUTES OF SESSION.

This is to certify that I did
 on the 16th day of September 1883.
 Organize within the bounds of
 the Guthrie Presbytery a Congregation
 named Bethel according to the
 requirements of the Cumberland Presby-
 terian Conference of Smith with (14)
 fourteen members One (1) Elder and
 one deacon M. L. Bullard, Mt.

To the Presbytery of Guthrie, the under-
 signed respectfully represent, that
 on the 16th day of Sept, 1883. There
 was Organized by Rev M. L. Bullard
 within your bounds, a new
 congregation named Bethel, adopt-
 ing the principles of the government
 of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church
 with a Membership of 14, and elect-
 ing the undersigned, William T. Minor
 Elder, and P. N. Seigler as Deacon.
 And by authority of said
 Church we do apply to be
 received under your care
 and we permit a careful
 compliance on its part as well
 as our own. With all the
 faithful and able cooperation

MINUTES OF SESSION.

2

enjoined upon particular
Churches and their officers ~~and~~
the Government of the United States
Churches. W. T. Hays, Clerk
W. L. Bullock, Treas.

For Reference to Old Min.
See the former Book of
Church Register

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NOWLIN,	S.A. (Clerk) (Deacon) (Delegate)	profession	8-1909	p.12-18;22,26
NOWLIN,	W.A.	profession	8-1912	p.27
NOWLIN,	W.E.	letter	10-1887	p.23,24
		death	3-1909	p.32
NOWLIN,	Zula	profession	8-1913	p.27
OVERSTREET,	D.E.	letter	10-1914	p.29
OVERSTREET,	Ruby	profession	8-1914	p.29
OVERSTREET,	Sarah	letter	8-1914	p.29
OVERSTREET,	Willie	profession	9-1916	p.29
PAINTER,	Annie	profession	9-1906	p.25
PAINTER,	Lillie	profession	9-1908	p.26

<u>NAME</u>	<u>OFFICE</u>	<u>UNITED BY</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
WILKINS,	R.F. (Pastor) (Choir)		1910-1913	p.10-14; P.I.
WILKINSON,	Ferndell	baptism	8-1925	p.28,30
WILKINSON,	Ida Mae (S.S. Teacher)	profession	8-1909	p.26
WILKINSON,	James F. (Deacon)	profession	8-1909	p.9-17;22;26
WILKINSON,	Lillain B.	profession	8-1909	p.26
WILKINSON,	Lorena F.	profession	8-1914	p.27;28,30
WILKINSON,	W.F. "Frank"	profession	8-1916	p.29,30
WILLIAMSON,	L.M.	letter	9-1908	p.25
WISE,	Edna	profession	8-1909	p.26
WISE,	Lula	transfer	2-1902	p.23,24

* BUCKNER, Herman A.	profession	8-1914
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* ADDENDUM TO REGISTRY

This name was omitted in error. Through correspondence, Mr. Buckner made known that his name was not found on the membership roster of the Bethel Presbyterian Church. He stated that he made a profession of faith in August of 1914.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>OFFICE</u>	<u>UNITED BY</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
PATTERSON,	Amy	letter	4-1915	p.29
PATTERSON,	G.W.	letter	4-1915	p.29
PERRY,	Mary	profession	9-1908	p.25
PERRY,	Mattie	profession	9-1906	p.25
PERRY,	Sallie	profession	9-1907	p.25
PHIPPS,	Rillie	profession	8-1914	p.29
PORTER,	Alice	profession	10-1900	p.24
PURNELL,	C.C.	profession	9-1890	p.24
PURNELL,	S.D. (Clerk) (Treasurer)	transfer	9-1905	p.3-12;24
SAVAGE,	B.L.	profession	9-1906	p.25
SAVAGE,	Mattie	profession	9-1906	p.25
SIGLER,	Josie	marriage		p.31
SIGLER,	P.N. (Clerk)	transfer	9-1883	p.1-6;21-24
SIGLER,	Rebecca	transfer	1883	p.23,24
SIMPSON,	F.	profession	9-1908	p.26
SIMPSON,	Gladys	profession	8-1914	p.29
SIMPSON,	Nannie L.	letter	9-1906	p.25
SINGLETARY,	Edith	baptism	8-1925	p.30
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SINGLETARY,	Marjorie	baptism	7-1930	p.30
SMITH,	Oval	profession	8-1909	p.10;27
SPINKS,	M.R. "Ray" (Deacon)	profession	8-1909	p.17;22;26
STOCKARD,	Effie Morriss	profession	8-1914	p.29,30
STONE,	J.A.	profession	8-1912	p.27
STREET,	Bluit	profession	8-1909	p.26
STREET,	Caroline	baptism	8-1925	p.30
STREET,	D.H. "Dave" (Deacon)	profession	9-1906	p.6-17;22,25, 29
STREET,	Donia	profession	9-1906	p.25
STREET,	Earl	profession	8-1909	p.26
STREET,	Guy	profession	8-1916	p.29
STREET,	Olin	profession	8-1916	p.29

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June 18, 1990

RE: Bethel Community

Denton County, Job #01490

Request for additional information

Ray Morriss Martin

1. The Bethel Community did not begin with the Peters colonists. Families, such as Samuel K Smith 1850, the Nowlin family 1854, the Sam Lusk family 1854 and the Crawford family, had settled the area before it became known as the Bethel Community.

The actual recognition of the area as Bethel Community occurred in 1883 after the Bethel Presbyterian Church was organized (1883) and Frie school trustees' adopted the name for the newly designated School District # 63.

2. There were between 75 and 100 families in the Bethel Community according to the Presbyterian Church roll and including an estimate of the number of Baptist and Methodist families. The population hit its peak between 1900-1925.

All the families in the Bethel Community were farmers. The area was divided into the Blackland Prairie and the

Cross Timbers. The people on the Praire grew cotton and small grains, such as wheat, corn and oats for money crops. The farmers in the Cross Timbers grew peanuts, watermelons, cantaloupe and similar truck farming produce for a cash crop. Each family had its own garden and fruit trees along with farm animals (horses, cows, hogs, chickens and turkeys).

3. The Bethel community was never a highly developed community, it consisted only of the church and school.

4. In 1875 the railroad came 3 miles to the east missing the Bethel area completely. Thus the Bethel area was sandwiched between the commercial center that developed in Lewisville to the east and the town of Waketown that existed about 2 miles to the west where there was a cotton gin, a blacksmith and a general store.

During the World War II period a railroad track was built across the Bethel Community and is in use today(1990). However, there never was a railroad station in the Bethel Community.

5. The documents found in the Denton County Courthouse show the name of the man who donated the two acres of land for a school - church in 1871 as FRIE. F. M. Frie was a preacher who taught in Frie Community School in the 1870's. Frie Community School existed until the school trustees changed the school's name to Bethel after the Church was organized in 1883. Minutes of the Commissioner Court in 1884 designate District # 63 as "Bethel (Fry's)"

Henceforth the spelling of Frie became Fry although a marker with the name F. M. Frie exists in the Old Hall Cemetery in Lewisville.

Common usage has adopted the spelling Fry.

Thank you for taking care of this matter of a marker for the Bethel School-Church Community. We are very anxious to get this done before all of this generation has passed away!