

A HISTORY OF GROVETON

A THESIS

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A HISTORY OF GROVETON

A THESIS

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By

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PREFACE

This thesis is, as the title implies, a history rather than the history of Groveton. A perusal of it will confirm that fact. The author is cognizant that it is incomplete and has imperfections, but he hopes that it will serve as an incentive for others to make a more comprehensive study. Much of the early history of the community was gleaned from pioneer citizens, a source fast becoming extinct. Some of the records have been obliterated by fire or otherwise destroyed. An attempt, however, has been made to write a history of a mill town boomed into existence, and subsided somewhat after the exploitation of the forest, but which survived all misfortunes.

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CHAPTER I

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TOWN

The site upon which the town of Groveton is now situated is located in the southwest central corner of the Maria Guadalupe de Castro League. The original owner acquired the league of 4,428 acres by applying to the government of Coahuila and Texas, a state of Mexico, in 1835.¹ The land granted this widowed lady of Mexico was for the purpose of making a home.²

The question whether the settlement above referred to was actually made on the ground or merely on paper is of historic interest. At this time the land office had just closed and a state of war between Mexico and Texas soon began. None of the early settlers of the Groveton section have substantiated the settlement by Maria Guadalupe de Castro and suspicion has not been wanting that this and similar grants were fraudulent; but they have been held valid.

Maria Guadalupe de Castro sold the league of 4428 acres to Frost Thorn and George Pollitt for \$1,000, by deed dated March 16, 1837.³ On December 19 of the same year George Pollitt sold his interest in the Castro league, along with

1 Deed Records, Book 54, p. 217.

2 See Appendix A.

3 Deed Records, Book 0, pp. 78 and 79.

several other leagues of land, to Frost Thorn.⁴ Haden H. Edwards, however, possessed a claim against this land; and he filed a petition in the County Court of Nacogdoches County, Texas, November 24, 1846, substantiating this claim. Frost Thorn had died in the meantime, so the petition was against his estate and widow, Susan W. Thorn. The court allowed Susan W. Thorn the southern half of the Maria Guadalupe de Castro League and Haden H. Edwards the northern half. Each plot of 2214 acres was valued at \$2214 or \$1.00 per acre. In order to partition fairly each party on March 4, 1856, was given alternate south and north halves of the joint-owned leagues.⁵ The Trinity and Sabine Timber Company acquired the southern half of the Maria Guadalupe de Castro League from Susan W. Thorn, by deed of June 15, 1881, for \$1.00 per acre.

While the Maria Guadalupe de Castro League of land was passing through the different ownerships from 1835 to 1881, the actual settlers of this league had no title to it. Before the Civil War Ed Sims lived about a block east of the present courthouse, in the southwest central corner of this league. A replica of the well where he got his water stands today on the lawn of the L. P. Atmar home. His field of four or five acres, an average sized one for a family at that time, extended to include the present courthouse lawn.⁶

4 Deed Records, Book O, pp. 604-607.

5 Deed Records, Book F, pp. 38 and 39.

6 Personal Interview, C. J. Hinson, Groveton, Texas

Ed Sims lived on the edge of the civilization of his day. Pine Springs Church and School was three miles to his north, while Sumpter, the county seat of government, was four miles to the east.

The ravages of the Civil War caused the abandonment of many farms. Death on the battlefield prevented numerous confederate soldiers from returning to their homes after the war. Many Negroes who had labored on the farm took advantage of their freedom and left work. The Sims farm was one of those abandoned in the early part of the war.

About 1875 Mose Randolph, a former slave of E. Y. Randolph who lived near Apple Springs, repaired the old Sims place and settled on it, in a little cabin about fifteen miles from where he had been reared. Since the Negro Randolph did not have anything to speak of in the way of tools and was without oxen or horse, he rigged up a crude plow which his wife held while he pulled. As people began coming in about 1881 to build a town this family was crowded out. Jack Eaves next lived on this place.⁷ Half a mile east of the Sims farm was a low place in the pine forest where a pond held water almost all of the year around. Near it several years before the town was established the cattlemen of the vicinity built a log pen where they began branding their cattle.⁸

7 Personal Interview, W. L. Avery, Groveton, Texas.

8 Personal Interview, A. J. Pruitt, Groveton, Texas

Main Street of Groveton in 1885. (Founded 1882).
Looking toward the depot, sawmill and grove of oaks
from the court house. Box cars can be seen on the
Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railway tracks.



1. First Court House built by Major W. S. Peters.
2. John Ed Smith & Dennis Store.
3. Stubb's Barber Shop.
4. Bill Mechem's Saloon.
5. Putty Smith's Hotel.
6. Nathan Magee's Saloon.
7. Depot.
8. Goody John's Store and Meat Market.
9. Bill Buffington's Grocery Store.
10. George Burke's Confectionery.
11. Bob Smith's Saloon.
12. Jim Gates' Saloon.
13. Pool's General Merchandise Store.
14. A. M. Furlow's Drug Store.
15. Muncen's Grocery Store.
16. Kentucky Boarding House.
17. Trinity County Lumber Company Store and Office.
18. Trinity County Lumber Company Boarding House.
19. Trinity County Lumber Company Sawmill.

Such is a brief account of the environs of Groveton before the railroad and sawmill were built. The town was firmly established when the Trinity and Sabine Timber Company acquired the Maria Guadalupe de Castro League of land, as previously stated, along with other leagues of land in the county and selected a site for a sawmill. At about the same time the Trinity and Sabine Railway Company built a railroad from Trinity through the county. The Sawmill was built on the railroad. As the ground work was being done for a town a group of citizens met to choose a name. They deliberated long and earnestly but could not agree on any which had been proposed. The stalemate was broken when some one proposed "Grovetown" which was suggested by a grove of oak trees south of the present court house. These trees, covering about a fourth of an acre of ground, made an unfrequent break in the vast extent of pine trees. The w in the name was soon omitted and the settlement became "Groveton".⁹

With the exception of an occasional field and small patches of hardwood trees, the forest of tall, straight, long leaf pines extended in every direction from the new town of Groveton. In places where they were thickest pine burs and straw covered the ground and an absence of sunlight prevented the growth of grass. It grew profusely, however,

9 Personal Interview, the late J. L. Dawson, Groveton, Texas.

in the thinner parts of the forest. Since the pine trees did not have low branches, an animal, such as a cow or deer, could be seen a mile away in almost any direction.¹⁰

The promoters of the sawmill and railroad very readily saw that it would be to their advantage to move the county seat of Trinity County, then located at Pennington, to Groveton. It would naturally increase trade and shipping for the railroad to have more population along the line. Pennington was ten miles from the proposed railway line which was being built. The advantages of a larger town and, consequently, more laborers, were an advantage for the sawmill. The nearness of the county seat in which to transact business with the county was an advantage to both railroad and sawmill.

Colonel W. S. Peters, an agent and promoter for the sawmill and railroad companies, had a town laid off just north of the railroad and mill site. All of this land for the proposed county-seat town was a part of the Maria Guadalupe de Castro League which belonged to the sawmill company except the 200-foot right-of-way traversing the south boundary line of this league and the north boundary line of the Pedro José Caro League of 4428 acres. The Trinity County Lumber Company had obtained the Caro League in much the same manner in which the other leagues were

10 Personal Interview, C. J. Hinson, Groveton, Texas.

Main Street of Groveton in 1904. Looking from the depot toward the court house.



1. A. J. Wood's General Merchandise Store.
2. H. C. Harry's Racket Store.
3. First National Bank.
4. C. D. Poe's Dry Goods Store.
5. Hardy Standley's Grocery Store.
6. Aunt Tishia Magee's Store.
7. Court House.
8. H. J. Mangum's General Merchandise Store.
9. John R. Collins' Drug Store.
10. Furlow & Linder's Drug Store.
11. B. A. Platt's Store.
12. J. J. Baker's Barber Shop.
13. I. Friedman's Store.
14. Blanchard's Restaurant.

acquired. The railroad property was transferred by deed dated December 9, 1882.¹¹ Colonel Peters offered to donate the land for a courthouse if the county seat were moved to Groveton. This deed, dated August 12, 1882, stipulated that if the change of the county seat was not consummated within a year the deed would become null and void.¹² The county voted favorably within the one year period.

Colonel Peters also offered a building to be used as a courthouse until one could be built. This temporary courthouse was located just opposite the permanent courthouse site where the H. J. Mangum building now stands.¹³ Bricks were made locally for the new courthouse, and it was completed shortly. A few years later it was necessary to insert rods through the building in order to keep it from spreading. The second and present courthouse of red brick, financed by the issuance of the first county-wide bond issue of 1913 in the amount of \$50,000, was completed in 1914.¹⁴ Groveton has been the county seat of the county since 1882, a period of sixty years. This permanence is in contrast to the period of thirty-two years from the creation of the county in 1850 to 1882 wherein the county

11 Deed Records, Book F, pp. 280-281.

12 Ibid., p. 223.

13 Personal Interview, the late C. H. Kenley, Groveton, Texas.

14 See Appendix B.

seat was located and then moved three times. Groveton has the advantage of being nearer the center of the county than any of the three previous county seats.¹⁵

The history of Groveton from the beginning until 1930 is to a great extent that of the Trinity County Lumber Company. The history of the town and that of the company, however, are not as well merged as that of many sawmill towns. Most other such towns were completely deserted after the corporation exploited the timber resource and moved. The giant corporation of Groveton affected every phase of community life. The superintendent, or manager, locally was responsible to the head office at Chicago, Illinois. In Groveton he was all-powerful and not unlike a benevolent dictator.

The foremen under the manager and the skilled workers of the plant received fairly good wages. Other wages were low. The laborers did not have a union at any time in the history of the plant in Groveton. Each of them depended on the manager of the plant directly or indirectly for sustenance. Of course, they could leave if they wished; but conditions were about the same elsewhere. The worker was powerless when a victim of the manager's displeasure. Some of these all-powerful managers cooperated with the town

15 Water from one side of the elementary school building flows toward the Neches River and from the other side toward the Trinity River. These rivers form the east and west boundaries of the county, respectively.

people of Groveton better than others did. All candidates for public office were careful not to antagonize the manager unless it were a case where the majority of the county voters were definitely on the other side. These managers did not always use the potential power which they possessed in politics. A nod from the manager, however, would be apt to cause a majority of his crew to vote a certain way. There were cases before the Terrell election law was passed when the mill manager voted the tickets on election day and handed them to his employees as they lined up to come by and get them.¹⁶

When Trinity County Lumber Company acquired vast holdings of land at the end of the reconstruction period the credulous natives cooperated whole heartedly. This was a chance to have the country developed after years of war and reconstruction hardships. Business began to boom, with jobs for every one and real money to handle. Eighty-five cents for a work day of eleven hours did not seem bad. Those in the vicinity of Groveton who continued to farm had a market in the white and Negro quarters of the sawmill for their vegetables, milk, eggs, chickens and beef. The construction of the sawmill in Groveton offered a boom and development never before dreamed of.¹⁷

16 Personal Interview, C. J. Hinson, Groveton, Texas.

17 Personal Interview, W. L. Avery, Groveton, Texas.

The largest single purchase of land by the Trinity County Lumber Company was that of 29,557 acres for \$41,000 from the Trinity and Sabine Timber Company. This land had been accumulated by the original company, and the merger of the two companies occurred in a deed dated June 1, 1882.¹⁸ This acreage covered Groveton and its environs. This company acquired more land from time to time until its holdings aggregated 90,000 acres at the time of largest expanse.

The first sawmill which was erected began operation in 1882, and had a daily cutting capacity of 40,000 board feet of lumber. Logging operations were simple, as the timber supply was all about the mill. Houses were constructed for the workers near by as the timber was cut and hauled by ox teams. One of the early orders was for lumber to be used in the state capitol building at Austin. This bill was cut from select long leaf pine trees from the part of town near the present cemetery.¹⁹

As the pine timber was depleted near the mill, logging operations became more extensive. At the end of forty-eight years cutting, the trees were cut and hauled a distance of eighty miles. As the distance increased the cost of logging became more expensive.

The Trinity and Sabine Railway Company which built a railroad through the virgin pine forest of Trinity County,

18 Deed Records, Book F, pp. 175-181.

19 Personal Interview, W. L. Avery, Groveton, Texas.

helping to make possible the town of Groveton, was soon acquired by the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railway Company. This road ran from Trinity through Groveton, nineteen miles east of the point of origin, to Colmesneil in Tyler County. The entire length of the road, which was completed in 1882, was sixty-five miles. Connections were made at each terminal and at Corrigan, nineteen miles east of Groveton, with other railroad systems.

This railroad was important to Groveton for hauling to the markets cattle and farm products as well as forest products. Freight needed in the development and upkeep of the town was brought in. The lack of improved highways made the railroad the chief mode of travel. Until the advent of the automobile Groveton supported one or two livery stables. At these places buggies and teams were kept for hire to those going to or from Groveton, who found it inconvenient to abide by the train schedule.

The passenger business on the railroad was so heavy that one passenger train left Trinity in the morning. It consisted of two coaches for white passengers, one of which was used by the men for a smoker. One coach was for Negroes and one for baggage, express and mail. This train returned from Colmesneil to Trinity in the evening, which gave Groveton an outlet daily in each direction. Freight trains came through Groveton daily except Sundays, bringing long trains of empty box cars to be spotted for loading or

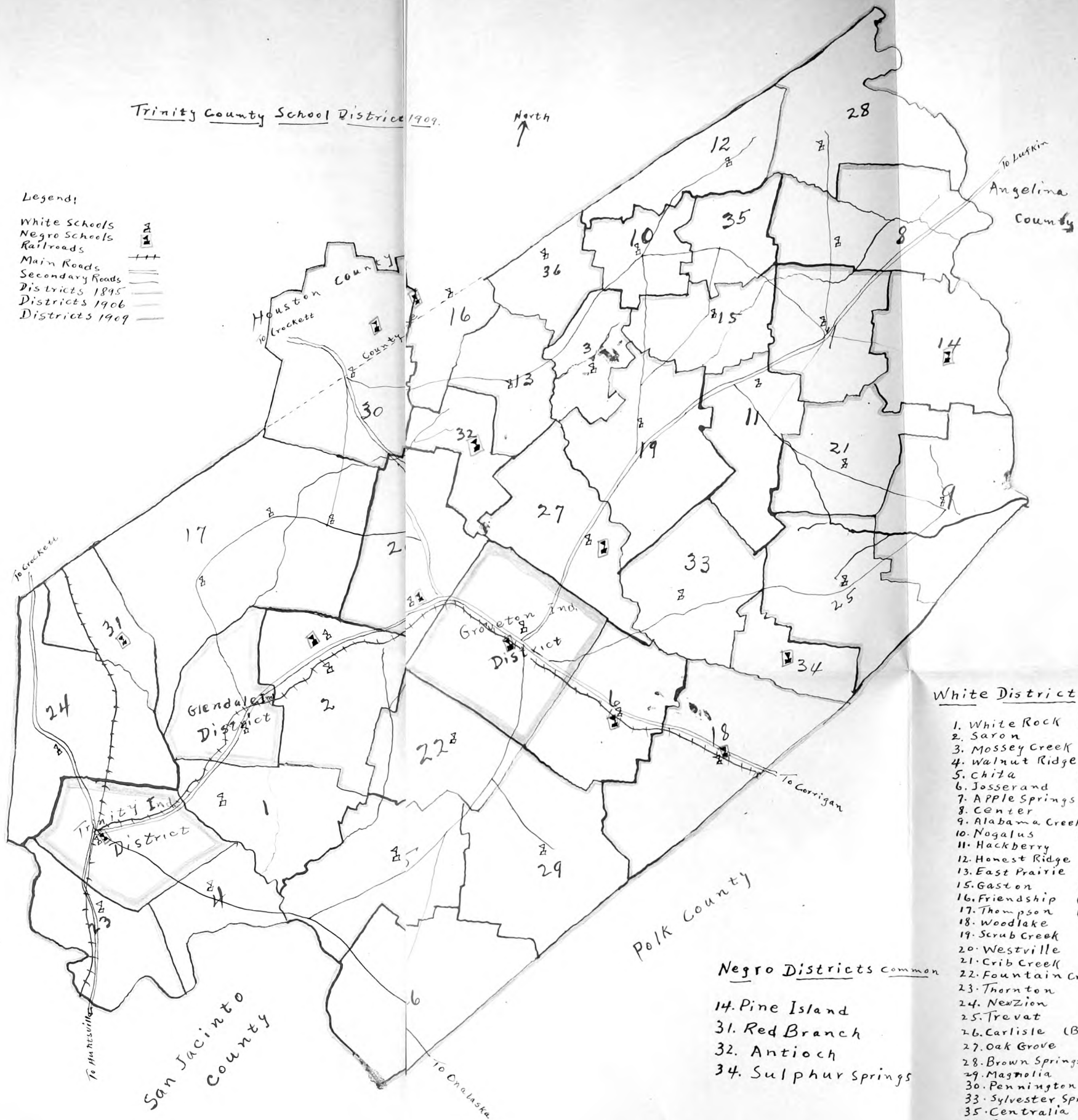
cars of freight to be used locally. Cars filled with lumber, cattle, hogs or cotton were hauled away.

Trinity County School District 1909.



Legend:

- White Schools
- Negro Schools
- Railroads
- Main Roads
- Secondary Roads
- Districts 1895
- Districts 1906
- Districts 1909



White Districts Common old name

1. White Rock (Skains Chapel)
2. Saron
3. Mossey Creek
4. Walnut Ridge (Taylor)
5. Chita (Caney Church)
6. Jossierand
7. Apple Springs
8. Center (South Cedar Creek)
9. Alabama Creek (Prairie View)
10. Nogalus
11. Hackberry
12. Honest Ridge
13. East Prairie (Possum Walk)
15. Gaston (Easton Church)
16. Friendship (Spurlock)
17. Thompson (Zion Hill)
18. Woodlake (Willard)
19. Scrub Creek
20. Westville
21. Crib Creek
22. Fountain Creek (Ashworth)
23. Thornton
24. New Zion
25. Trevat
26. Carlisle (Bold Springs)
27. Oak Grove
28. Brown Springs (North Cedar Creek)
29. Magnolia
30. Pennington
33. Sylvester Springs (West Prairie)
35. Centralia
36. English

Negro Districts Common

14. Pine Island
31. Red Branch
32. Antioch
34. Sulphur Springs

CHAPTER II
PRE-WORLD WAR HISTORY

Lumbering became the chief industry of Groveton from the time the town was founded. The first sawmill which had a capacity of 40,000 board feet of lumber in a day was replaced in 1896 by a much larger one. This latter mill, in fact, was the largest in the South at that time. Its destruction by fire in 1904, however, necessitated a replacement by one of approximately the same size. The capacity of this third mill was 160,000 board feet a day, while the planing mill was capable of handling 300,000 board feet a day. In 1907 the Trinity County Lumber Company built a railroad through its timber from Groveton north as far as Lufkin, thirty-three miles away. The value of their plant and the Groveton, Lufkin and Northern Railroad was \$1,875,000.¹ A combination passenger and freight train operated daily over this road, in addition to the trains hauling logs to the mill.

After the large mill was built the Trinity County Lumber Company gave employment to 500 men. Most of them lived on the south side of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad track, near the mill in company-owned houses. The company maintained in Groveton a commissary for its

1 Letter from Ross Haralson to C. A. Brannen, Feb. 22, 1942.

employees during the early years of its existence. The company and the town merchants reached a "gentleman's agreement" by which the company commissary was discontinued. The wife of W. F. N. Davis, mill manager in 1907, returned a ham to one of the grocery stores on the grounds that it was unfit for use. The store manager refused to exchange it, and as a consequence Davis built a large brick general merchandise store for the company. The management in Chicago disapproved of this move and Davis lost his job. The store, however, was continued in use.²

Cotton was the principal farm crop exported from Groveton. Farmers from every direction brought their cotton to be ginned, after which it was purchased by one of the cotton merchants. These men shipped the cotton and seed by rail to the outside markets. As previously stated, other products of the farm were sold in Groveton for local consumption.

Groveton was one of the best centers in East Texas for the cattle industry. The native cattle which the early settlers found were very thrifty. They were able to maintain themselves on the luxuriant grass of the pine forests in summer and the switch cane of the creek and river bottoms in winter. They were not large in size, and many were wild. The only expense incurred by their owners was the trouble

2 Personal Interview, I. Friedman, Groveton, Texas.

of branding, gathering, and protecting them from theives. Many carloads of them were shipped out by rail each year.

The cultural aspect of Groveton demands attention. When the town of Groveton was founded the county schools operated under the community system. The sheriff took the school census yearly as he assessed taxes. If a group of patrons desired a school at a certain place they procured the signatures of all patrons agreeing to this location. This petition, indicating the number of children pledged to attend the school, was presented to the county judge. He then granted the school desired, and appointed three trustees to supervise it. Such procedure was invoked in the first Groveton school of 1883-84.³ Under this system there was no territory encompassed in a district. One set of white trustees, operated the white school and a set of Negro trustees the Negro school, even though the two were within half a mile of each other.⁴

The sawmill company at Groveton furnished the lumber to build the first white school building and the county judge allotted \$225 in school funds to pay for it.⁵ This building consisted of one room about twenty feet wide and thirty feet long which was located at the site of the present Methodist parsonage. Benches were installed as the

3 Records in the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Trinity County.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

initial equipment. As was the custom over the county, the school building served for church purposes until churches were built. The first white school which began in 1884 was taught by A. B. Magee. At that time the Negroes were not provided with a new school building but used any house that was available.

The school law of 1883 provided for a division of each county of the state into school districts, but a clause exempted certain named counties from this provision.⁶ The fact that Trinity was not among the exemptions apparently elicited a storm of protest from its inhabitants because the next year in a subsequent law Trinity County was exempted. During the year of the district system Groveton was one of the schools among several in a district. The following year, 1885, the community system was recreated.

Under the community system the state per capita was the only money received to finance the school. With no additional funds from any source this permitted only a very short term. A patron could enroll his children in any community school, and was not confined to the one nearest him. Records show, in fact, that some patrons living near Groveton sent their children to Pine Springs school two miles north, and others to Jossierand two miles east. Conversely, pupils from near those schools were

6 H. P. N. Gammel, editor, The Laws of Texas, Vol. IX, p. 584.



TRINITY COUNTY TEACHERS' INSTITUTE DECEMBER, 1910.

GROVEFON SCHOOL BUILDING

*Trinity County Teachers' Institute
December 1910*

often sent to Groveton. Personal friendship for a teacher influenced the parent in sending his children to a school, or his connection with those patronizing a school often swayed his decision on that score.

The contest throughout the county between the community and district advocates waxed bitter, with the district school group gradually gaining. The aversion to taxes was responsible for the attitude against a school district. One argument on this side was that children did not need schooling. Groveton took the lead for the county and provided the first permanent district in 1889.⁷ Afterwards the opponents of the district system raised the cry, "It is all right for town children but would never do for country children."⁸ Trinity formed a district in 1898 and Glendale in 1906, but the rest of the county was not districted until 1909.

The district was formed principally for the purpose of levying a tax in order to have more money, and consequently a better school. Immediately a rate of twenty cents on the hundred dollar evaluation was assessed against all property in the district. Evaluations were necessarily low, however, owing to the fear of increase in taxes. A portion of the tax money was used for building purposes. As the school attendance increased, another room was

7 Commissioners Court Minutes, Book C, p. 397.

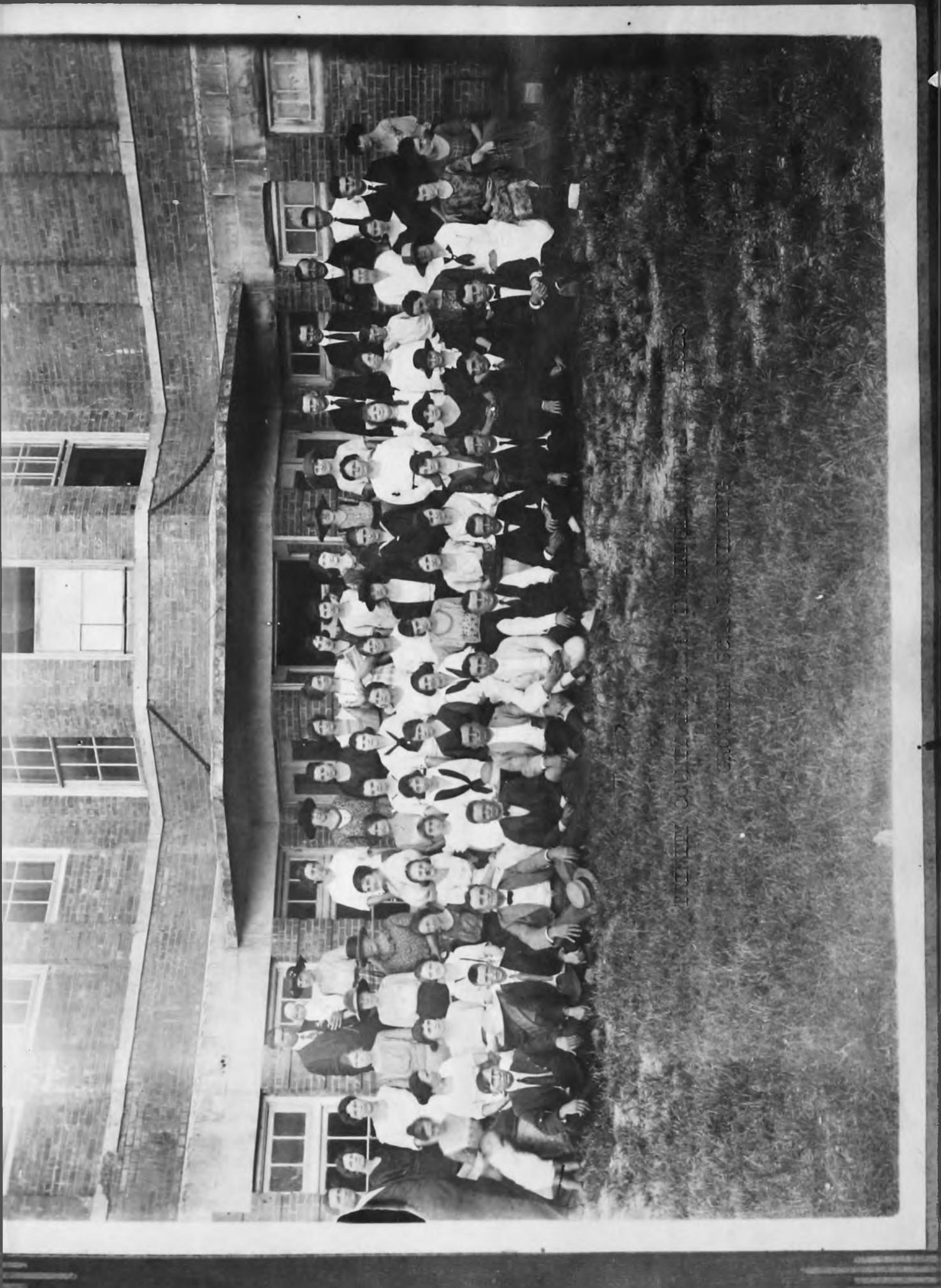
8 Personal Interview, C. H. Crow, Groveton, Texas.

added. After the third teacher was added, in 1889, a room, smaller than the original one, built on each side of the larger original room gave the entire structure a T-shape.⁹

In 1895 another milestone was reached in the growth of the school when the Groveton district voted to become independent. The number of trustees was then increased from three to five.¹⁰ The population of the town, and consequently the children of school age, increased so much that in 1898 it was necessary to construct a new school building. Thus, after fourteen years of use, the old building was abandoned for another of two stories on the site where the grammar school now stands. The white scholastics of the town were now approximately two hundred, but increased in seven more years to five hundred. This made the new school building very inadequate.¹¹ Many of the school patrons who saw the necessity of a still larger building began clamoring for a brick structure. Visions of one of the best high schools in East Texas seemed attainable. The school had grown from one teacher to eight teachers in twenty years.

The dream of a fine new brick school house was realized in 1910. A bond issue of \$26,000, dated July 1, 1909, made this possible. Within two years after its occupancy, the building accidentally caught fire and suffered much damage,

9 Personal Interview, Charles Cox, Groveton, Texas.
10 Commissioners Court Minutes, Book D, p. 360.
11 The Trinity County Star, March 31, 1905.



TRINITY COUNTRY CLUB
1910

but was rebuilt in 1913. This building which consisted of four floors was considered very imposing for its time.

While the white school expanded so rapidly, the Negro school changed very little. When the district was formed the Negroes lost the control of their school which had been wielded by them under the community system. In the district system there was one set of white trustees for the entire district. The Negro population, and consequently the number of Negro children, increased as the town grew in size. Regardless of the growth in scholastic population the white trustees continued a one-teacher school in a very poor building.

One of the other chief cultural agencies exercising influence on the town during this period was the church. As previously stated, all denominations held services in the school house the first few years. The first church in Trinity County was organized at Pine Springs in 1858. Reverend James Simmons, a Baptist preacher, was most active in this endeavor.¹² After the founding of Groveton many members of this church moved to the new town and formed the nucleus for the Groveton Baptist Church. The Baptists soon began planning a church of their own. The Trinity County Lumber Company donated a lot a block west of the court house, and by 1884 the building was under construction.

¹² The Trinity County News, December 12, 1927.

Many of the church members were employees of the mill. The Trinity County Lumber Company advanced material for the construction of the church, while committees went to work soliciting funds to pay for it. A letter was written to David Joyce, owner and president of the company at Chicago, supplicating a donation. He replied that before contributing he would like to know how the church was to be managed. It was his opinion that the church should be open to all creeds and colors. To most people, however, the thought of Negroes attending the same church with the whites was utterly repulsive. It need not be said, therefore, that Joyce did not make a contribution directly; yet his manager, L. T. Sloan,¹³ who was on the ground at Groveton and understood conditions, gave liberally. The material for building the church amounted to some six or seven hundred dollars in value. Sloan charged off the debt and settled with the church members for seventy-five dollars.¹⁴

Some of the early Baptist preachers besides Simmons were S. W. Henderson, E. M. Francis, and Dr. J. T. Griffith. Most of these preached on a circuit and did not serve as pastor to the one church at Groveton. As the church grew

13 Mrs. L. T. Sloan, wife of the manager, organized the first Sunday School in the town.

14 Personal Interview, C. J. Hinson, Groveton, Texas.

in strength, however, it became possible to erect a parsonage and retain a resident preacher.

In 1905, while Reverend John Mare was pastor, a division developed in the church. All Southern Baptist churches were divided by this cleavage into the Board Party and Church Party Baptists. The Board Party group in Groveton continued in the original church, but the Church Party group constructed another building a block north of the court house.

Reverend W. A. Reagan became pastor of the original Baptist, or Board Party church, in 1910, and has filled that place ever since. During his long tenure he has exerted great influence for good in Groveton. The new church continued in existence for some years but gradually grew weaker and discontinued. The building was sold later to one faction of the Christian church.

Soon after the founding of Groveton, the members of the Methodist Church began the construction of a church building and parsonage on lots which had been donated by the Trinity County Lumber Company. This building and the parsonage were burned in 1905. The liquor element of the town are purported to have committed this deed due to resentment against the pastor, Jesse Lee, who worked diligently to abolish whiskey from the town. For a building in which to preach the Methodist communicants alternated with the Presbyterian members who did not have a pastor for

every Sunday in the month. For the other services the lower floor of the Masonic Hall was used.

Within two years sufficient preparations were made to rebuild the church house. Reverend Jesse Willis, the new pastor, had a petition with a sufficient amount subscribed to build a brick church. One of the subscribers was Colonel J. C. Anderson, manager of the Trinity County Lumber Company, who pledged \$1,000 for the company. Anderson called Willis to his office and asked him if it were true that he (Willis) favored incorporating the town. Upon his answering in the affirmative, Anderson asked for the subscription list and struck from it the company pledge.¹⁵ Since his predecessor had succeeded in eliminating whiskey from the town Reverend Willis had undertaken to incorporate it, thereby expelling the livestock. The company did not want to pay any additional taxes, and therefore, opposed incorporation.

The foundation of an imposing brick church had been begun. Owing to the repudiation of the \$1,000 donation the Methodists were forced to alter their plans and construct an ordinary frame building. Many if not most of the members of the Board of Stewards of the Methodist Church were employees of the mill and worked under Colonel Anderson.

The first Methodist Church of 1888¹⁶ was one of several

15 Personal Interview, W. A. Reagan, Groveton, Texas.

16 See Appendix C.

served by a pastor residing at Trinity. The pastor attended his charges by traveling on horseback. Two years later the Methodists in Groveton and Trinity had become strong enough for a preacher to live at Trinity and serve only the two churches. In 1896 a third church at Lovelady was added to the circuit for one year. The following year Groveton became the home of the pastor who served several smaller churches in the vicinity. Six years later, in 1903, Groveton became a permanent station occupying the full time of a pastor in charge.

While the Methodist and Baptist members established the two strongest churches, they were followed by the Presbyterian Church members who in 1900 acquired land and constructed a church two blocks east of the main street on the Corrigan highway. In 1927 when the members of the church were no longer able to maintain it, the building and lot were sold. Most of the congregation now worship at the Methodist Church. At no time during its activity was the Presbyterian Church able to maintain a full time pastor. They were usually on a circuit securing a pastor one Sunday in the month but having Sunday School regularly.

In 1893 land was acquired two blocks west of the main street on the Trinity highway for the purpose of building a Christian Church. The congregation never became large enough for a full time pastor but probably would have if a division had not occurred among the members. The issue

was over the use of music in the services. The music group, being in a majority, secured a piano for the church. Some of the opposition often turned the piano around facing the wall, necessitating another turning before it could be used. The Christian Church kept Sunday School regularly from its founding. A pastor always served at least one Sunday in a month, and two Sundays during much of the time.

Of the fraternal organizations, the Masonic Lodge contributed most to the cultural development and also as a moral uplifting force in the town. Eastern Star Lodge number 284 was chartered at Nogalus Prairie June 15, 1866.¹⁷ The lodge operated in this vicinity until the year 1885, when it was moved to Groveton.¹⁸ At this time, after only three years of history, the town had grown large enough to over-shadow the former home of Eastern Star Lodge. The Groveton members, many of whom had come from Nogalus Prairie, asked for and received permission to make the change. The Masonic Lodge building, constructed just west of the court house lawn, burned in 1910. The present two-story building was constructed in 1911. The first floor is used for social affairs and the second for the work of the lodge.

Within twenty years from its removal to Groveton this lodge grew until the conferring of higher degrees was

17 Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Texas, 1924, p. 191.

18 Ibid., 1885, p. 96.

permitted. Thus Groveton Chapter Number 268 was chartered December 6, 1905.¹⁹ Two years later the Grand Lodge of Texas allowed the bestowing of additional degrees and Groveton Council Number 203 was chartered December 3, 1907.²⁰ This marked the greatest expansion of the lodge. The standing achieved at that time was held until the population of the town declined.

Several fraternal organizations made their debut in Groveton to flourish temporarily but subside and vanish when the promoters ceased to exist or the members had lost their enthusiasm. The records of most of them have been destroyed or lost. The Columbian Woodmen of the World began in Groveton in 1910 but by the time of the World War had quit functioning. Most of the members dropped their insurance policies when the rates were raised. A few, however, held them longer and their beneficiaries collected the insurance.

The Knights of Pythias and Woodmen of the World began in 1901. The latter organization continued longer than any others except the Masonic Lodge. The Woodmen met at different places over town, but later secured the upstairs room of a wooden building on the corner now occupied by the Baptist Church. Shortly afterwards Yellow Pine Camp

19 Proceedings of the 79th Grand Annual Convocation of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Texas, 1928, p. 196.

20 Proceedings of the Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters, 1931, p. 147.

No. 429, as it was designated, and the Knights of Pythias paid A. J. Woods and Brothers \$1,266.84 for the joint ownership of the back upstairs section of their building. This was by a deed dated December 19, 1904.²¹ These two organizations held the property jointly until the demise of the Knights of Pythias lodge at the time of the World War.

Most of the Woodmen of the World Members carried insurance policies but many began dropping them as the premiums increased. Regular meetings were held and the membership reached one hundred fifty during the greatest expansion. Though there was a decrease in size of the lodge the faithful members remained steadfast and kept the organization alive. Occasionally suppers and other social functions were held in which the families of the Woodmen participated. The quarters were well furnished and attractive and the steady members took pride in keeping them that way. As a whole, the morale of the organization was good. Most of the faithful ones went to Trinity in 1915 to hear the speech of Morris Sheppard at the unveiling of the monument over the grave of J. S. McDowell, a departed brother. Most deceased members received a monument and the living brethren wore their regalia in administering the late rites. The loyal ones of the

²¹ Deed Records, Book 31, pp. 346, 347.

organization were diligent in holding a protecting hand over the family of a departed brother much as did the Masons.

CHAPTER III
THE WORLD WAR PERIOD

When the United States went to war in 1917 few men living around Groveton had ever had any military training with the Texas National Guard. Some of them had served on the Mexican border, and a few others had attended military colleges. Most prominent of this group was N. H. Phillips, who became superintendent of the Groveton High School in 1903, and the next year took up the practice of law. He returned to the teaching profession, however, and again became the head of the Groveton Schools in 1914, in which capacity he served until the spring of 1917. Military equipment belonging to the Texas National Guard to which he was attached was stored in the high school building. A contingent had left for a few weeks' training during each summer for some years preceding the war.¹

General John A. Hulen, Commander of the Texas National Guard, commissioned Phillips a Captain, June 4, 1917, and authorized him to recruit a company in Trinity County. Jacke Clegg received a first lieutenancy and Fred Evans a second lieutenancy at the same time.² This staff of officers set to work recruiting the company. They held

1 The Groveton Times, August 1, 1912.

2 The Trinity County News, June 22, 1917.

meetings in the different communities over the county, in which the advantages of enlisting in the company were pointed out. Many of those who had registered for the draft and expected to be called into service joined so they could serve with men whom they knew. Some of those who joined thought that this force would not be moved out of Texas, since it was a state organization.

Company K³ of the 5th Texas Infantry, as it was designated, assembled at Groveton about the middle of July, 1917. They were stationed on the court house lawn before other quarters were provided. Some slept at night on the few cots available while others sprawled out on the ground. Uniforms were as imperfect as sleeping equipment; so not every one was completely furnished with all parts of the uniform. Accommodations were soon provided at the school building. The campus was convenient for drill purposes as the commissioned and non-commissioned officers began the earnest task of trying to make soldiers out of the recruits. The company was not provided with kitchen equipment nor rations. Neither was there one place, locally, large enough to provide meals for all of the men. So, for this purpose they were divided among different hotels.

This condition did not obtain long for the movement to Camp Bowie at Fort Worth began about the first of

3 See Appendix D.

September. The troops entrained on a special train at Groveton and amid tears and boasts about getting the Kaiser, and with much shouting, took leave of relatives and friends. The train stopped a few minutes at the different stations on the nineteen mile ride between Groveton and Trinity. The entire population seemed to be gathered at those depots where similar scenes were enacted as those at Groveton. There were representatives of each of these communities in the company. At Fort Worth Company K was merged with a similar group from Timpson, Texas, to form Company F of the 143 Infantry.⁴

The over-enthusiasm of the organizers may have contributed to the heavy casualties in the winter of 1917-18. The country was poorly prepared for war and could not equip all of the soldiers in training. As a result the Trinity County boys in Company F suffered fifteen deaths at Fort Worth. They lived in tents and wore summer clothing during a severe winter which was several degrees colder than they had ever endured before. Most of the deaths were from pneumonia.⁵

The company trained during the fall, winter and spring at Fort Worth, and having been federalized July 16, 1917, moved to Newport News, Virginia, July 12, 1918. They set sail for France July 14th and reached the battle line the

4 Personal Interview, A. J. Hutson, Groveton, Texas.

5 Ibid.

9th of October, 1918. They took an active part in the battle of Blac Mont Ridge in the Argonne Forest sector, and lost another fifteen men. The return to America was made in May of 1919 after spending the winter in France.

The draft board was composed of J. R. Collins, and Dr. I. N. Devine of Groveton and George Waller of Trinity. A total of 1,253 men registered for the draft in Trinity County. Of this group approximately two hundred were inducted into service and many went overseas with different units. The government was better prepared to handle those who were drafted when they went to camp. Consequently, their casualties were largely confined to the battlefield, and were not as heavy in camp as the National Guard Company had been. There were few if any enlistments from Groveton in other branches of the service, such as the navy and marines.

Most of the drafted men were organized into the 90th division along with men from Oklahoma. Many, however, were sent to replace losses in the regular army divisions. These went into action first. Some members of Company F had been used for this purpose also. There was not any inhibition about transferring men between Regular, National Guard, and Draft Divisions.

The men of the 90th Division trained at San Antonio and fared much better during the winter than the Trinity

County men of the 36th Division, as previously stated. The 90th Division left New York City June 14, 1918, and arrived at LeHavre, France, June 23. The division saw action first at the battle of St. Mihiel and later in the battle of the Argonne Forest.⁶ After serving in the Army of Occupation in Germany during the winter they left France for the return home June 7, 1919. Within a month and near the time for demobilizing Company F of the 36th Division the men of the 90th Division received their discharges.

Anticipating the return of the soldiers the Groveton people formed numerous reception committees. The decoration committee raised \$600 to decorate the town with flags and bunting. The following notice was inserted in the town newspaper on May 30, 1919:

Word is received that most of our boys are enroute to New York City, and will probably land there this week. They should be demobilized soon and will probably reach home before the middle of June. When they arrive practically all our boys will have returned home, and it will be our privilege to give them a fitting reception.

For this purpose the Trinity County Council of Defense met at the court house in Groveton, Tuesday, the 27th, instant, and planned to engage the entire county in a great reception to all the boys called to the service during the World War, whether they went across or not. Groveton would claim the privilege of entertaining these fine boys, but such plan would have seemed selfish; it was therefore decided to make it a Trinity County celebration, given by all of the people, so that every friend of the boys could participate as host and feel that he or she was doing something to make the boys know they have an abiding place in our hearts.

6 Records in County Clerk's Office, Trinity County.

The celebration will, therefore, be your celebration, and you will be here to give the boys the glad hand. Every friend to the boys and every patriot should be present at Groveton on the day and date hereafter to be agreed upon, and should bring a basket full of good things to eat. This will be your celebration and your reception, and we must therefore get ready now to make it the biggest day in the history of old Trinity County.

Let each community council of defense get busy with their people, so that the largest publicity may be given the occasion. Write the secretary of the Trinity County Council of Defense, Groveton, Texas, that your community will be here with the eats and joyful hearts.⁷

After the welcoming functions were disposed of, the returned soldiers squeezed back into their old jobs and things settled down to normalcy again. The home folks were a little disappointed over not finding out more about the war from the returned veterans. The experiences were too recent and their reaction was to get back into civilian life and forget. Each soldier disclosed his escapades, however, little by little and eventually the whole story was told.

Groveton furnished the majority of the leaders for the county during the war for the purpose of contacting the different communities in an effort to sell bonds in the several Liberty Loan drives. The volunteer speakers of proven ability divided the rural communities of the county so that one or more appeared in each community during the solicitation period. The local people attended

⁷ The Trinity County News, May 30, 1919.

the meeting enmass which was usually in the church or school house. With few daily newspapers in the hinterlands and no radios, this was an opportunity for one of the county intellectuals to analyze the war news. The program, as a rule, consisted of patriotic songs and speeches. At the close of the program an opportunity was given by members of the local committee to buy bonds. The response was always to the limit of the majority of the people's financial resources. Occasionally a recalcitrant needed extra persuasion. Many times when the roads were bad the speaker remained overnight in the community. It was safer to risk his T-model in the daylight hours on the return to Groveton. Through the efforts of these talented people Groveton and the other communities came through with its quota at all times.

The county seat town was also headquarters for the Trinity County Council for Defense. This organization was instrument 1 in protecting both public and private property from saboteurs. Injury to the several sawmills producing lumber for the war effort would have curtailed the output. The county also had three different railroads to protect so that the only means for moving the large amount of freight should not be impaired. In this way the county cooperated with the state and national governments.

CHAPTER IV

POST WAR DEVELOPMENT: MATERIAL

The end of the World War witnessed a decline in the business of the branch line of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad which ran through Groveton. This railroad, as has been noted, was the main outlet for Groveton from the time of its establishment until 1907 when the Trinity County Lumber Company built the Groveton, Lufkin and Northern between Groveton and Lufkin. Two main factors were responsible for the difficulties of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad. The automobile which first made its appearance in Groveton about 1910 offered more competition year after year for passenger traffic and for some freight. The other factor was the decreasing of lumber as a commodity. The Trinity County Lumber Company routed most of its lumber over its own railroad after 1907 and many of the other sawmills along the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad had been abandoned by the end of the War.

The Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad tried to lease this railroad to the Trinity County Lumber Company when the Company began logging from Colmesneil in 1922 but the bridges on the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad were considered too weak.¹ Such an arrangement would have given

1 Letter to C. A. Brannen from R. A. Haralson, March 22, 1942.

a forty-six mile log haul. The logs were actually hauled a distance of eighty miles from Colmesneil over four different railroads. The Texas and New Orleans track was used by the Trinity County Lumber Company log trains to Huntington in Angelina County; the Cotton Belt track from Huntington to Lufkin in the same county; the Tyler and South Eastern track from Lufkin to Vair in Trinity County; and the Groveton, Lufkin and Northern track to Groveton. When this long log haul began the Trinity County Lumber Company had to build a separate depot at Groveton in order to comply with the state charter.² Both railroads had used the same depot prior to this time.

On April 1, 1923, the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad Company passed into the hands of the Waco, Beaumont, Trinity and Sabine Railroad Company, with Colonel R. C. Duff as president.³ Colonel Duff became very active in working on the project of extending a line from Waco to Beaumont and Port Arthur by building the connecting links. The line through Groveton would have been strengthened by this move and the Groveton people were very eager for the undertaking to succeed. This plan was almost realized but the depression of 1929 and competition of highways were obstacles too great to overcome. The Groveton people were desirous of keeping a railroad and securing a good

2 Ibid.

3 Trinity County News, April 13, 1923.

highway also. The railroad could not continue to operate at a loss. In order to satisfy the creditors the district court appointed Paul T. Sanderson of Trinity as receiver for the Waco, Beaumont, Trinity and Sabine Railroad on February 8, 1930.⁴ The railroad ceased to operate between Colmesneil and Corrigan in 1934. The remainder of the railroad which ran through Groveton was discontinued the next year.⁵ The rails have been sold for scrap iron. The 200-foot right-of-way is being sold as calls are received for it. Occasionally a land owner buys the part adjoining his land. A brick hardware store and a theatre have been built on the right-of-way near the old depot site in Groveton. The Waco, Beaumont, Trinity and Sabine Railroad Company creditors were paid on a percentage basis. The Groveton Independent School District settled for ten years' taxes at forty cents on the dollar. Other taxing agencies were paid likewise.

As early as 1913 Groveton voted bonds to build roads in the commissioners' precincts.⁶ This resulted in graded roads radiating from Groveton instead of the winding narrow roads. Adequate outside highway connections were made with county wide bond issues in 1925 and 1929. This permitted the building of an asphalt highway through

4 Personal Interview, Paul T. Sanderson, Trinity, Texas.

5 Personal Interview, T. B. Leggett, Trinity, Texas.

6 See Appendix B.

Groveton paralleling the Waco, Beaumont, Trinity and Sabine Railroad from Trinity toward Corrigan. An asphalt highway perpendicular to this one at Groveton parallels the old Groveton, Lufkin and Northern Railroad toward Lufkin which had been discontinued when the mill shut down. Another asphalt, leading toward Crockett, connected with the Trinity road two and one-half miles west of town. The highway from Crockett to Corrigan is now designated United States highway Number 287. The highway from Trinity through Groveton to Lufkin is state highway Number 94. The other roads extending in each direction from Groveton have been graded and improved considerably in recent years. Extensive use of WPA funds helped for this purpose. The designation of school bus routes has been responsible for this improvement as well as commercial desires. A Civilian Conservation Corps camp located two and one-half miles west of Groveton, from 1934 to 1938, aided immensely in the building and upkeep of roads in the Groveton trade territory.

The demand for lumber during the World War elicited the utmost from the Trinity County Lumber Company sawmill. The end of the war found their timber in Trinity County almost exhausted. The company had timber in Tyler County near Colmesneil, the terminal of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad. They were faced with the question of hauling the timber to Groveton or dismantling the mill and

moving it to Colmesneil. Ross A. Haralson, the manager at Groveton, wanted to move the mill site, but the head office in Chicago decreed otherwise. The mill could have been moved to the timber at a saving of \$2.00 per thousand board feet but the decision to remain at Groveton was made in order to prolong the life of the Groveton, Lufkin and Northern Railroad.⁷ This decision in 1922 gave Groveton eight more years of big scale lumbering.

The last logs were cut by the Groveton sawmill on November 30, 1930; but the planing mill operated eleven months longer before the rough stock was disposed of. The Groveton, Lufkin and Northern tracks were taken up in 1932. The same year saw the wrecking and selling of 200 dwelling houses on the mill side of Groveton. The mill plant was entirely salvaged and very little is now left on that side of town to remind one of the mill, except the man-made lake.

Before selling any of its land the company leased all of it to the Gulf Oil Company for a bonus of \$50,000 and an annual rental of \$1 per acre.⁸ The Trinity County Lumber Company sold all of its land north of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas tracts to the United States Government for \$3.75 per acre. The price on this 60,000 acres would

7 Letter to C. A. Brannen by R. A. Haralson, March 22, 1942.

8 Ibid.

have been \$5.00 if the company had not reserved the mineral rights for a period of fifty years.⁹ This deed of January 1, 1935,¹⁰ left the Trinity County Lumber Company still in possession of 30,000 acres south of the railroad.

Many thousand acres of forest land near Groveton have been fenced with hog proof fencing during the past few years. The hogs subsist in the forest partly on roots of the young pines. Their exclusion from the pastures enables the pine trees to grow better. Successful measures have been taken to keep fires from the forest. A few indictments have helped educate the people against burning the woods intentionally. The forest is fast becoming one of the principal sources of income again. Small land owners are beginning to realize the importance of cultivating trees, even on a few acres. According to E. C. Dominy,¹¹ in charge of the Trinity County Lumber Company holdings around Groveton, the company already regrets having sold so much land to the United States government.

Those Groveton people who had thought lumbering was forever dead in this region have since learned the folly of that view. The sawmill at Groveton could have been a perpetual industry, if the timber had not been cut so rapidly. The underbrush which grew so vigorously after

9 Personal Interview, E. C. Dominy, Groveton, Texas.

10 Deed Record, Book 87, p. 173.

11 Personal Interview, E. C. Dominy, Groveton, Texas.

the virgin pines were cut in the early logging had not covered all of the land from which pine trees were taken. Since that time mature trees have again appeared. The logs from these trees are hauled by truck to the mills at Trinity or Corrigan. The United States government land is being logged scientifically. Twenty-five per cent of the income from this land goes to the taxing agencies which suffered a loss when this property was excluded from the tax rolls. The county government and the school districts which lost the evaluation now receive more funds from the sale of timber on United States Government land than they formerly received from taxes on this land. Small portable mills are set up in the forest; when they cut the pine timber around them they then are moved to other places. Some of the pine forests near Groveton furnish timber for the paper mill at Lufkin. Hardwood trees provide lumber for different purposes. All of these lumbering operations furnish a small annual income for Groveton; but it is nothing when compared with the former yearly lumbering payroll.

During the early history of Groveton the population of the county was small. The resulting unoccupied land made possible numerous open ranges for the native cattle and razor-back hogs. Then nearly all people had some of these animals. A few individuals had many of them. As the number of people increased the open ranges decreased.

The lumbering industry, in fact, produced a large population which did not have any native stock at all. They could not work at the mill all day and also look after stock in the woods. They, therefore, had only a milk cow and perhaps a hog or two around the house. Many farmers around Groveton and over the trade territory of the town did not possess the native woods-stock. Some combined farming and native stock raising; and others depended on stock raising altogether. There were degrees of difference between these three groups but most of the latter lived in the town.¹²

The cattle fever tick was the greatest obstacle to pure bred cattle. Registered Jersey milk cows could be kept confined and protected in town, but were sure to die if they became infected. The beef cattle, such as Herefords, were also unprofitable for a similar reason. An effort was made in 1921 to clean the country of the fever tick, so that pure bred cattle could be brought in. Dipping vats were constructed and some progress made, until those who objected dynamited the vats, making them useless. They considered the difficulty of finding the wild native cattle in the brushy timber and driving them out twice a month too great an obstacle. They thought the burning of the woods was the proper way to kill ticks.¹³

12 Personal Interview, S. J. Eaves, Groveton, Texas.

13 Personal Interview, J. J. Rustin, Groveton, Texas.

The United States government entered the field to destroy fever ticks in 1937; and the county was cleaned. The natives thought it inadvisable to dynamite the federal government vats as they had the state vats. They had also been better educated to the advantages of a high bred type of cattle. Even before the obliteration of the fever tick the Groveton cattle men were finding the Brahma breed able to subsist at a profit, and, like the native cattle, were immune to the fever tick. A cross between them and the native cattle produced a profitable type of cattle.¹⁴ The Vocational Agriculture Department of the Groveton High School has been instrumental in encouraging the introduction of pure bred stock.

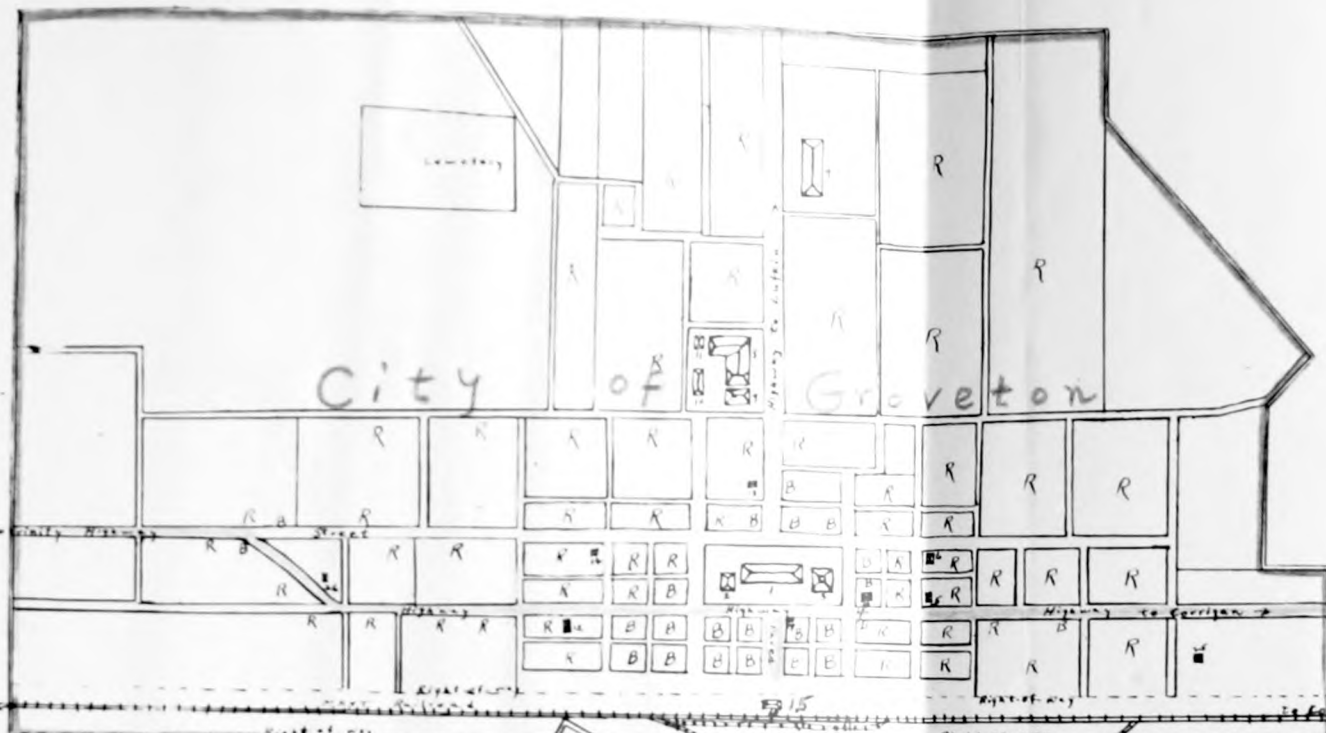
The county agricultural agent and home demonstration agent are helping immensely to educate the farmers. Each farmer is encouraged to diversify to the extent of growing food for his family and livestock on the farm. He is using pure bred poultry and live stock to a greater extent. Clovers to help make the year around grazing for livestock are planted. Marguerite Avery of Groveton has a pasture of 344 acres, including the sawmill site and pond which was purchased from the Trinity County Lumber Company. In 1937 she bought twenty head of high bred beef cattle and put them in this pasture. The sale of the bull calves each

14 Personal Interview, Walter Dial, Groveton, Texas.

February 1920

Maria Guadalupe de Castro League

Maria Guadalupe de Castro League



Legend:

1. Court House
2. Jail
3. Agriculture Building
4. Baptist Church (west of Sims well)
5. Methodist Parsonage (old school site)
6. Methodist Church
7. Elementary School
8. High School
9. Gymnasium
10. Shop and agriculture
11. Home Making
12. Christian Church site
13. Church of Christ
14. Old Baptist Church site
15. Old Depot site
16. Company Office
17. Company Store
18. G. L. N. Dupot
19. First Court House site
20. Colored Church
21. Colored Church
22. Colored School
23. Early Mill site
24. Lumber Mill site
25. Ice Plant
26. Highway Barn
27. Residential White (Abandoned)
28. Residential Negro
29. Planing Mill

B. Business District
R. Residential District

— Highway
— Paved

League Line

Pedro Jose' Caro League

Pedro Jose' Caro League



year has paid the upkeep. The herd has increased to sixty head, which is a profit of forty head in five years' time.¹⁵

On March 30, 1938, the Groveton Livestock Commission was incorporated with I. Friedman, H. L. Taylor and Charles Morgan as directors. Each Thursday since its beginning a professional auctioneer sells stock at the pens near the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railway depot site. The buyers are principally men living away from Groveton who pay the local farmers and stockmen much more for their stock than they could get by selling them individually. The average yearly sales at present are 8222 hogs, 6363 cattle, 640 sheep and goats and 95 horses and mules. The weekly sales average \$2934, while \$100 a week is paid for the labor of conducting the sale.¹⁶ The local farmers have been able to sell many of their native cattle at a good price since the cattle company was organized.

Numerous efforts had been made before the end of the nineteenth century to incorporate Groveton as a city; but elections for that purpose were always unsuccessful. The incorporation element of the town gained strength as time passed. Most opposition was from the inherent aversion to taxes. The Trinity County Lumber Company led this group, with considerable support from some tax payers

15 Personal Interview, W. L. Avery, Groveton, Texas.

16 Personal Interview, H. L. Taylor, Groveton, Texas.

on the town side. The crusaders for incorporation on the other hand had supporters on the mill side who could not be outspoken because of their position. One of the most effective arguments for incorporation was the improving of the generally filthy conditions of the town. Stock ran at large and grocery clerks had ever to be on guard against hogs entering the stores and destroying the goods. These marauders also kept mud holes for wallowing purposes over town and frequented the public and private toilets.¹⁷

By the end of the World War the incorporation group felt strong enough to call an election with the expectation of succeeding. They prepared field notes of the proposed City of Groveton including the town and mill sides. The Trinity County Lumber Company saw that their plant was going to be included in the proposed city, and that the vote for incorporation would likely succeed. This would call for city as well as state, county and school taxes. The management, with their lawyer, hurriedly and secretly prepared field notes for incorporating their side of town. The final steps were taken for incorporating the "City of South Groveton" on September 10, 1919.¹⁸ The north boundary was the right-of-way of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas railroad tracks which was the natural dividing line between the two sides of town. Consequently, all the property of

17 Personal Interview, W. A. Reagan, Groveton, Texas.

18 Commissioners Court Minutes, Book H. pp. 52-53.

the City of South Groveton belonged to the sawmill company. The charter provided for a mayor and four aldermen.

Since South Groveton was incorporated to prevent the company property from being taxed further, the city officials of South Groveton who were company employees did not plan any city expenditures. The Trinity County Lumber Company bore the expense of sanitation in their city and paid the salary of the city marshal. The company contributed indirectly to the other part of town through their payroll.¹⁹

Having been outwitted by the mill side, the "town-side" redrafted their field notes leaving out South Groveton and incorporated the "City of Groveton" on October 1, 1919.²⁰ The charter provided for a mayor and aldermen or city council.

The city tax rate increased from 40 cents on the hundred dollar evaluation in 1921 to \$1.50 in 1930. This latter rate has continued ever since, except a reduction of ten cents in 1931 which was added back the following year. The evaluation also gradually increased until 1929, but while the tax rate has remained at the \$1.50 level the evaluation has experienced a gradual decrease until the present.²¹

19 Letter to C. A. Brannen from R. A. Haralson, March 22, 1942.

20 Commissioners Court Minutes, Book H, pp. 79-80.

21 See Appendix E.

For this added tax burden the people of Groveton received many benefits. Fire protection improved from a two wheel horse cart to a fire truck in 1929 which by means of occasional repairs is kept in service. The tax payers have been aided inasmuch as they pay smaller fire insurance premiums. The city marshal and night watchman provide further cooperative police protection. The exclusion of stock from the town environs contribute immensely to its beautification. Shrubbery and flowers are now safe on the lawns of the homes without fencing. Stock are no longer a menace on the streets, and the hogs are especially conspicuous by their absence.

After the tree stumps were removed from the main street of Groveton the thoroughfare became rough with ridges in wet weather. The sand and dust became deep in dry weather and blew into the business houses. It was often necessary for the bystanders to help push cars out of the sand on main street when they became stuck. The city government was instrumental in paving the main street with concrete in 1929. Great clouds of dust are no longer kicked up by the hoofs of animals or wheels of vehicles to plague and discomfort the people.

A deep well which was provided when the city became incorporated was matched by a second one in 1935 assuring the town a reserve water supply to cushion against a possible scarcity should one of the wells run dry. The sewer

lines laid soon after the town was incorporated were extensively expanded by WPA labor in 1935. The refinancing of the city bonds at the same time relieved some of the financial strain, which was gripping the city government.

The business houses away from main street have shifted to the highways instead of the railroad. Many filling stations have made their advent since the World War to service the growing number of cars on the highway. The hitching posts and watering troughs of the town are only a memory.

CHAPTER V

POST WAR DEVELOPMENT: CULTURAL

As we turn from post war material to the cultural development of Groveton, the school is found to be the most prominent agency. School affairs overshadowed everything else, especially after 1950.

The agitation for an accredited white high school from which graduates could enter any college or university of the state became manifest about the time of the entrance of the United States into the World War. The Groveton school board at that time approved a drastic increase in evaluation with which to meet the added cost. Evaluations were practically doubled from 1917 to 1920.¹ Full affiliation was gained by 1920. The length of the school term had become nine months, and has so remained ever since.

A decided raise in property evaluation permitted the Negroes to receive some attention in the form of a new frame building. The new structure erected in 1921 housed the three teachers and those who attended of the 238 children on the census roll. At the same time there were 593 white children on the census roll housed in a brick building and taught by fifteen teachers.²

1 See Appendix F.

2 Records in the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Trinity County.

As previously noted, by 1921 the Trinity County Lumber Company finished cutting all of its timber in the county and moved their logging crew to Tyler County. This removal lowered the school evaluation and reduced the number of students slightly. From this time until the discontinuance of the sawmill in Groveton, the lumber company gradually charged off its assets so that at the closedown the bulk of its salvaged plant could be sold as junk for a profit.³ The school evaluation reached its peak in 1920 and declined from that date until the annexation of others districts.

The lumber company men and the town people were about even in control of the school. At times there would be three town men and four mill men on the school board. At other times the situation would be reversed. The last outstanding decision made by the coalition board was the building of a new grammar school, in order to relieve the crowded condition. This was not done, however, until at a time when the pressing need no longer prevailed. This building was erected by a bond issue of \$35,000, dated September 23, 1929. A debt of \$17,000 still existed on the old 1909 bond issue. In 1930, when the company abandoned its plant the school district had a bond debt of \$51,000 and the evaluation of the district was plummeting downward.⁴

3 Personal Interview, J. P. Courtney, Groveton, Texas.

4 See Appendix F.

As some of the workmen left to hunt new jobs the scholastics began decreasing. The Groveton school was facing a contraction unless some expanding could be done into the adjoining school districts. Most of the town people living in Groveton after the mill "cut out" were families of county office holders, merchants, professional men, cattlemen, farmers, and stranded sawmill workers. Some mill laborers owned their homes on town side. Most residents of Groveton had come from the surrounding farm communities. They had friends and relatives in those communities, and many people of Groveton possessed farms in the outlying school districts. All of these factors gave Grovetonites a leverage by which to encourage the surrounding school communities to send students to the Groveton School. Another strong point was the fact that for several years the most ambitious students from the outlying communities finished high school at Groveton after they had completed the home school. This gave the students an opportunity to board with relatives or friends and graduate from an accredited school.

The original Groveton district was in the shape of a square and contained sixteen square miles. There was a school within three miles in one direction and four in another; and three other schools were within five miles of Groveton. Efforts had been made to consolidate these adjacent school districts before the mill was abandoned.

Appeals were made through the Groveton newspaper. The following article is an example:

Mr. Reader, are you satisfied with your school? Do you feel that you get value received for the school tax that you invariably have to pay? Just ask yourself these burning questions, 'Is my community getting a nine month term - is my child entitled to what the city child is?' To those who live in the rural districts the answer is in the negative. What then is the solution? One of the best ways known to increase the efficiency of our rural school is to consolidate the small ones. Very often we find three or four two or three-teacher schools within a radius of five miles. Each of these schools have ordinary buildings, poor equipment for teaching, and is very greatly overcrowded. We find the primary teacher endeavoring to teach, perhaps as many as the first five grades, with an enrollment of from fifty to sixty children and the principal or second teacher attempting to teach the next four grades with an enrollment of as many as forty children. These teachers can do nothing more than "keep" school and endeavor to keep order. They crowd in the recitation periods somehow during the day, sometimes for ten minutes, often less, so that Johnie will not go home and tell dad that the teacher is no good, because he or she didn't "hear" his lesson that day. Under these conditions we cannot expect very thorough work on the part of the teacher, even though he or she were qualified.

So many of our rural fathers think that they have done their part by their children when a house that will turn the rain and wind has been provided, and the teachers employed. However, in our immediate country, round about, we do have fairly nice buildings considering the type of schools we have. Other things being equal--we do not have any criticism to make of our buildings--yet if the money spent on buildings and for teachers in our small schools could be concentrated, bringing two and three together, then we could, without additional expense, have a first class affiliated high school, thereby giving the rural school child an equal opportunity with that of the child that lives in the city.

Then again, so many of our rural mothers think that their obligation to the children is ended when Sally's or Johnie's face has been washed and he or she bundled off to school. They feel a great relief when the kiddies are out the front gate and on their way to school. The conditions under which the children have to live, really a greater part of their young days--at least from six to eight months out of the year, does not concern them, if we are to judge by their interest, since not over five per cent of the men and women of the average community visit the school more than once during the school year, and that visit is usually the first morning, and is made usually out of curiosity to see what the new "Tutor" looks like.⁵

The smaller school districts around Groveton were almost unanimous in their fight against consolidation; and since it took a majority vote in each district, none was moved. Patrons feared they would have to pay higher taxes if they became a part of the Groveton district. The leaders in the smaller communities did not like to give up control of their school.

The school transportation law of 1933⁶ provided an avenue by which to reach the rural students at a profit to Groveton school without creating so much antagonism as prevailed with reference to consolidation. The county school board was induced to set up a county transportation system with Groveton as a receiving school. Against some opposition the rural schools were classified by the county school board to teach fewer high school grades than they were accustomed to teach and send high school students in

5 The Trinity County News, April 14, 1927.

6 Public School Laws of Texas, Bulletin No. 345, pp. 164,165.

in those grades to Groveton school. Since the rural school districts were too poor financially to pay their transportation to Groveton the State paid it for them. For a similar reason they could not pay the Groveton district for teaching their high school students. In accordance with the law in this kind of case the State paid the high school tuition for the rural students sent to the Groveton district. This gave the Groveton school board an opportunity to maintain their expensive plant in full use and receive revenue from another source to offset in some measure the loss of local taxes.

The strongest opposition to this plan was found among the largest of the rural schools. They had visions of growing and expanding. Apple Springs, Helmic, Scrub Creek, and Pennington especially objected to sending any high school students to Groveton. These districts were also trying to consolidate the smaller districts around them. Apple Springs and Helmic held an election by mutual agreement to consolidate in 1934, but the vote failed in the Helmic district, principally because of the proposed school site. Each of the above schools sent the upper two grades of their high school to Groveton for a few years but continually attempted to get them back; and each eventually succeeded in having the county school board classify their school to teach all grades.

The gravest indictment of the school system which was inaugurated for Groveton in 1933 was the fact that the transportation system did not provide under the law enough money to sustain itself. Influential men of the rural school districts were employed to transport the children; and in the early history of the plan it was necessary to pay them high salaries in order to overcome their reluctance to "break up" the home school. The Groveton district could ill-afford to take their own funds in order to keep the system going. The cost of drivers for the buses could be decreased as adherents for the system increased. Such economizing on transportation, however, did not suffice and a change was necessary.

Many elementary children in the Groveton and other districts were eligible for transportation on the basis of one dollar a child for a month. This was in addition to the high school students for whom money was paid on the basis of two dollars a month. A clause in the law made the base two dollars for both elementary students and high school students in the districts of one hundred square miles or more.⁷ The school leaders saw that if Groveton could be expanded to this size the income could, therefore, be increased. In this emergency the county school board was induced to order an election in 1936,

⁷ Ibid.

annexing five adjacent districts to Groveton. All of the six districts combined contained more than one hundred square miles. The county board could do this when the territory voting was that large, and all of the votes were then counted together. Since Groveton could out-vote all of the other five combined, it was a foregone conclusion that the annexation⁸ would be made. The following order passed the county board:

ELECTION NOTICE

THE STATE OF TEXAS |
 COUNTY OF TRINITY | An election is hereby ordered by the County Board of School Trustees of Trinity County, Texas, to be held May 9th, 1936, within the hours prescribed by law, to determine whether there shall be an annexation of Westville Common School District No. 20, Oak Grove Common School District No. 27, Antioch Common School District No. 32, Jossierand Common School District No. 6, and Fountain Creek Common School District No. 22, to the Groveton Independent School District, for the purpose of forming a unit for high school purposes, under Section 218, Article 2922-a and Article 2922b, of the Revised Statutes of the State of Texas.

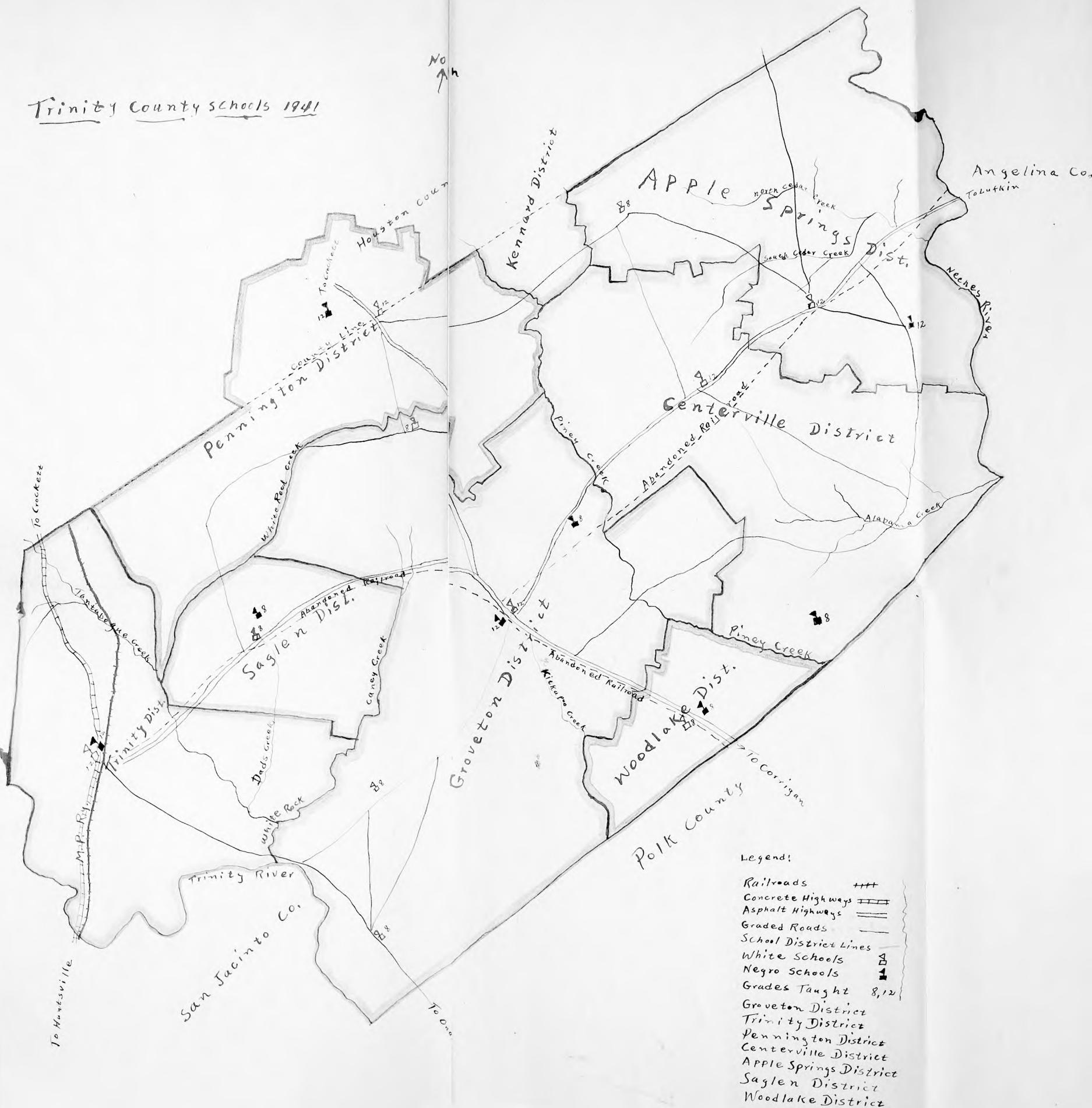
The territory herein described is more than one hundred square miles, and is more fully, but not more accurately described in the field notes by which the Board will be guided in forming said unit, if election should carry. The boundary lines of the proposed district shall be outside lines of the included districts; that is such lines of Westville District No. 20, Oak Grove District No. 27, Antioch District No. 32, Jossierand District No. 6, Fountain Creek District No. 22, and Groveton Independent District as are not common to any of them, these lines

8 In a consolidation the county judge orders the election and a majority vote is required in each district. If a group of schools contains over 100 square miles an election can be ordered by the county school board for high school purposes only and a majority vote over the entire area is necessary.

Trinity County Schools 1941



Walker County



Legend:

- Railroads + + +
- Concrete Highways = = =
- Asphalt Highways - - -
- Graded Roads — — —
- School District Lines — — —
- White Schools □
- Negro Schools ▣
- Grades Taught 8, 12
- Groveton District
- Trinity District
- Pennington District
- Centerville District
- Apple Springs District
- Saglen District
- Woodlake District

being already established and recognized without controversy.

The six districts named above are contiguous, and contains less than 1200 scholastics.⁹

After the results of the election were canvassed, the annexations were ordered by the county board on May 22, 1936.¹⁰ The five small areas retained their status as elementary districts. A majority vote in the original district would be necessary to obliterate the district entirely. The old district lines were considerably dimmed but not entirely erased. Owing to enormous "missionary" work, by Groveton people, only one of the five districts voted a majority against annexation. Since the total opposition votes were in a minority, this district had to come in like the others.

The enlarged Groveton district¹¹ was more loosely constructed than the case would have been in an outright consolidation. It was strong enough, however, for all practical purposes. Besides increasing the transportation revenue, it enabled Groveton to meet requirements for teacher salary aid from the state equalization fund. This was possible because there were less than twelve hundred students in the enlarged district; or, in other words, the average of each original district was below two hundred.

⁹ County Board Minutes, Book A, p. 138.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ See Map, page following 55.

Groveton was required to maintain a nine months elementary school in each of the original five districts. This it did for a while. Eventually, however, the home schools have been discontinued one by one; and none of them is in operation today. The residents of the original districts gradually approved of these moves even before they were consummated. They lost their aversion to the larger school and some even insisted on the change.¹² This certainly met the approval of the Groveton school board because of the reduced cost. The students averaged at least thirty per teacher in the Groveton school and the teacher taught only one grade. In the smaller elementary school the average usually ran about fifteen children to a teacher who taught several grades.

The Groveton school district likely would have been content to make no further annexations, but continue to receive high school students from the twenty other districts, in the center and north end of the county. That would have provided Trinity County with two excellent high schools. The Trinity High School District was in the south end of the county. Groveton would have served for the central and northern section of the county. There was rivalry with Trinity district over the high school students from the three buffer districts of Chita, Carlisle, and Saglen,

¹² Personal Interview, the late John Owens, Westville, Texas.

geographically between Trinity and Groveton. Pennington, Apple Springs and Centerville¹³ were desirous of creating high schools. At this stage of the game Groveton decided to annex more territory. A desire for more evaluation to uphold the financial load was mostly responsible for this decision. The outlying districts were bonded lighter in proportion to their evaluation than the original Groveton district.¹⁴ Annexation did not raise their taxes, for they were bonded light and did not put much of the tax into bond. Chita was annexed by the grouping method in 1939.¹⁵ Carlisle, Magnolia and Sylvester districts were brought in one year later.¹⁶ Chita and Carlisle had been two of the buffer districts with Trinity. These two annexations joined Groveton and Trinity district leaving Saglen as the only remaining buffer district.¹⁷

In 1939 Trinity, Pennington, Centerville and Apple Springs formed a coalition and elected a majority of the county school board.¹⁸ This board did not object to the

13 Helmic, Scrub Creek, Mossey Creek, and Gaston consolidated in 1935 to form Centerville. This had prevented Apple Springs from annexing them. Rivalry between this group and Apple Springs had become very intense.

14 See Appendix F.

15 County Board Minutes, Book A, pp. 181-188.

16 Ibid., pp. 195-206.

17 See Map

18 This was somewhat of a surprise as Centerville and Apple Springs had been enemies and were not expected by Grovetonites to pool their strength.

1939 and 1940 annexations to Groveton, since the patrons of those districts demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Trinity member of the board that they preferred Groveton. The buffer districts of Chita and Carlisle were led to think that if they did not annex to Groveton they would be forced to annex to Trinity. They decided Groveton was the lesser of the two evils. Their high school students had been sent to Groveton since 1933; and consequently they knew more about Groveton.

The coalition county board eventually sat down in a meeting in 1940 and theoretically divided the county into five districts. Elections were ordered annexing all of the remaining small districts to one or the other of the five larger districts of Groveton, Trinity, Apple Springs, Pennington and Centerville.¹⁹ The elections carried and the annexations were made to Pennington, Appel Springs and Centerville.²⁰ Each of these districts was increased to more than one hundred square miles by the annexations. This allowed a larger participation in state school funds. in 1927-28 Trinity County received \$10,615 from the state equalization fund. This same fund disbursed \$90,845 in 1941-42 to the county.²¹

19 County Board Minutes, Book A, pp. 199-201.

20 See map, page 67

21 Records in Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Trinity County.

The one district of Saglen which was ordered annexed to Trinity put on a vigorous campaign against it. They convinced a sufficient number of the Trinity people that the method was wrong and should not be carried out. So the issue was defeated at the polls. Saglen itself voted solidly against the annexation. The Saglen High School students have attended Groveton since 1933 and are continuing to do so.

The election to annex Woodlake to Groveton was not called at the instigation of either party. The two districts did not hold an election, but reached an agreement by which the Woodlake high school students would attend Groveton. The Woodlake High School has been discontinued since 1940.

The brick high school building which was constructed in 1913 had much waste space. Its appeal to the eye was evidently of more importance than its utility at the time of construction. The octagonal shape caused many nooks and corners. The stairway caused loss of room. It was inconvenient for the students to go up and down the stairs between the four floors in changing class rooms. The center of the building was principally unused space. The auditorium was insufficient for the student body and there was no gymnasium at all. The stranded mill population which did not have anywhere to go when the sawmill stopped was without work until the WPA came into being. For the

foregoing reasons the school board of Groveton school launched a great school building program. A gymnasium, agriculture and shop building, and homemaking cottage were constructed. The high school building was wrecked and a new modern building erected. All of this work was either by NYA or WPA.²² Much of the building is from native rock dug from the ground about six miles from Groveton.

The task of securing school funds with which to match the projects has been of mammoth proportions. The bond debt of the district has been increased, however, only \$8,000. The remainder of the school cost has come by economizing on current expenditures. The school has a new high school plant valued at approximately \$125,000. The elementary school still has the 1930 brick which cost \$35,000. The school district has a bond debt of \$57,200. Of this \$51,000 was voted during the life of Trinity County Lumber Company and was unpaid when this plant was abandoned.

The number of teachers has increased from twenty to thirty-three since 1930 when the mill ceased operations. In the same period the student body has increased from 486 to 989. There was a graduating class of twenty-three in 1928.²³ The graduating classes now number between

22 Personal Interview, C. E. James, Groveton, Texas.

23 The Trinity County News, May 24, 1928.

sixty and seventy each year. In the period following the loss of the sawmill, the life of the town has centered around the school.

The building program of the Negro school has recently equalled the white, except that their school is a frame building. Vocational agriculture and homemaking have been added to the curriculum to match those courses in the white school. A defense shop is also carried on. The Negro school is affiliated, and runs nine months a year, as does the white. The Negroes have a faculty of fourteen teachers, the number required for their 426 students.

A post war fraternal organization affecting the life of the Groveton people for a few short years was the Klu Klux Klan. Soon after the World War the general unrest or social upheaval produced this organization similar to the one which followed the Civil War. The local body in Groveton was active and enrolled many members. This invisible empire worked in secret and was a law unto itself. Its purpose was to cope with problems which were considered beyond the scope of the regular law enforcement officers. Their slogan was "100 per cent Americanism." They were hostile to the Catholic Church and promulgated the supremacy of the white race.

The leaders of the movement were the most prominent men of the town. The pastors were especially active in

the first stages of the organization. As more members were initiated the quality declined and one could often hear the expression, "He joined in order to cover up his meanness."²⁴

All meetings of the members were held in secret and usually at night, since most of them were working men. The meeting place was upstairs in the Womack Building on the corner just northeast of the courthouse. Each member paid a fee to join and took an oath. He provided himself with a robe to go over his clothes and a head piece covering the face, with the exception of holes for the eyes, nose and mouth. When the klansmen went about their fraternal duties in their robes a non-member could only guess who they were. During the heyday of the organization, its activities consisted of floggings of a few offenders among the whites, warnings to Negroes to stay in their place and money donations to the churches of the town. In order to impress the public, several parades were held through different towns in the vicinity of Groveton. One such procession was held in Groveton July 4, 1921. The town was already full of people enjoying the national holiday and most of them remained when it was whispered around that the Klu Klux Klan would have a parade that night. On such occasions the klan members in Groveton did

24 Personal Interview, J. P. Courtney, Groveton, Texas.

not parade but those from surrounding towns did. When other towns had a similar display, the Groveton Klan went to help them. That was in order to have strangers for the most part doing the parading and there would be less likelihood of recognition. Even though all robes were of uniform make, men often have peculiar mannerisms which show up even under a robe.²⁵

By 1924 the klan had become powerful enough to seriously influence, if not control, local politics. The candidate who was endorsed by the klan was sure of election. Complications arose when most of the candidates became members. After this date the local organization declined fast and soon passed out of existence.²⁶

Following their return from the World War in 1919, the ex-soldiers formed an American Legion Post in Groveton. The choice of a name for the post produced quite a bit of discussion. It was decided to select a name from among the deceased of the battlefield. The choice was eventually narrowed down to Forrest B. Mullins of National Guard Company F, who was killed in action and Sid Hutson, one of the draft men who lost his life on the battlefield. The Guard men among the ex-soldiers were in a majority and it was Chartered Forrest B. Mullins Post No. 443. During the

25 Personal Interview, A. J. Hutson, Groveton, Texas.

26 Personal Interview, the late S. W. Latham, Saron, Texas.

first years of its existence the meetings were held on the second floor of the Womack Building just northeast of the courthouse. As noted, this is the same place where the Klu Klux Klan met about the same time and very likely many belonged to both organizations.²⁷

Within a few years the Legionnaires began planning a building of their own. John R. Collins, a druggist and public spirited man of the town, donated five acres of land one mile east of town on the Woodlake road. The Legion members set to work with a will and soon began the construction of a building on this site. It was to consist of logs, and have an auditorium large enough to be used as a gymnasium. Rooms on either side of the auditorium served as meeting places for the men and for their wives of the American Legion Auxiliary.

This building was never completely finished, due to the cost in proportion to the resources of the ex-soldiers. It was floored, however and the outside walls put on. This was not sufficient to prevent its shifting out of alignment. For several years the large room was used for dances and and basket ball games. When the Groveton school constructed a gymnasium in 1936, the Legionnaires donated the material in the building to be part of the schools contribution on the WPA Project. By this time interest had waned

²⁷ Personal Interview, A. J. Hutson, Groveton, Texas.

considerably and the post declined to two or three members. Most of them had joined at Woodlake.

In 1934 an American Legion post was organized at Woodlake which is six miles east of Groveton. Captain J. Lewis Thompson, an ex-officer of the war and owner of much land in that vicinity, was the principal instigator of this post. It was chartered Woodlake Post No. 311. This establishment was unique inasmuch as the men, their wives, sons and daughters each organized their divisions of the post at the same time. Most of the members who had belonged to Forrest B. Mullins Post No. 443 came from Groveto to join. Land with a house already on it was procured and the structure converted into a club house. The building was furnished by ex-Sergeant Malcomb Crim, a veteran of the war from Kilgore. Crim is an oil man and a nephew of Captain J. Lewis Thompson. The members of Woodlake Post are now struggling to finish paying for the building and land.²⁸

The decrease in population of the town following the World War is reflected in the Masonic Lodge, which reached the high water mark of one hundred forty eight members in 1926. A decline in membership set in and continued down to sixty-two at the present time. Regular meetings are still held and the lodge is apparently strong enough for

²⁸ Personal Interview, S. J. Eaves, Groveton, Texas.

the size of the town. The higher degrees of the chapter and council are no longer conferred. The members are enthusiastic and faithful. The younger members are studying the work of the different degrees which are conferred in Groveton and apparently will be capable of taking up where the older members leave off through death or a change to another lodge.

The post World War decline in the membership of the Woodmen of the World dropped precipitately with the Depression of 1929 and the cutting out of Trinity County Lumber Company, both of which occurred almost simultaneously. The greatest catastrophe for the Woodmen of the World, however, was the destruction by fire of the Woods Building in 1929. The organization suffered a total loss since their property was not insured. At the present time the membership is twenty. They have not met regularly since the destruction of their property but keep their monument and insurance dues up-to-date.

The post World War position of the churches of Groveton was one of strength. They had contributed immensely to the war effort. Morals were on a high plane and financial support was good. By 1920 the frame house of the Baptist Church in constant use since 1884 was in need of replacement. The Board Party and Church Party had become fairly well reconciled so all Baptists began using the Second Baptist, or Church Party, frame building while the original

one, Board Party Church, was wrecked. The intention was to build another church house on the original spot where the house was being torn down. The location was changed, however, to one just east of the courthouse. A very fine brick structure was completed in 1924, for the sum of \$21,047. Former Groveton men who had become millionaires made donations to the new brick church. J. M. West and W. T. Carter, both of whom were lumber men of Houston, subscribed \$1000 each. The church was built without depending on the Trinity County Lumber Company.²⁹ The Baptist Church has had Reverend W. A. Reagan for the regular pastor since 1910, a period of thirty-two years.

The frame building which the Methodists constructed after the fire in 1905 is still in use, although improvements have been made from time to time. In 1927 Eugene Ford³⁰ was manager of Trinity County Lumber Company, and a devout Methodist. The company bore the expense of raising the church building and constructing a concrete basement under it. This provided another auditorium and several classrooms. The decrease in purchasing power of the town since the lumber company left, coupled with the 1929 depression, has cut the church budget in half. Yet a full time pastor is still kept in charge.

29 Personal Interview, W. A. Reagan, Groveton, Texas.

30 See Appendix G.

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A P P E N D I X

APPENDIX A

THE GOVERNMENT OF COAHUILA AND TEXAS TO MARIA GUADALUPE
DE CASTRO TITLE TO LEAGUE OF LAND

THIRD STAMP

(L.S.)

For the Biennial Term of

Two Seals

1834 & 1835

Petition | To the Special Commissioner of Citizen Joseph
No. 244 | Vehlein's Colony:

Maria Guadalupe de Castro, a native of Mexico with due respect, would appear before you and say, That, induced by the liberal provisions of the colonization laws of this State, I have come with two children, being a widow, to settle in it, if, in view of the accompanying certificate, you deem it proper to admit me as colonist granting me the quantity of land to which I am entitled in the vacant territory of the same colony, being a farmer and stock raiser. Therefore, I request you to do so aforesaid, wherein I shall receive favor and justice.

Nacogdoches, April 6, 1835.

Signed of the cross X of
Maria Guadalupe de Castro.

Decision: The party interested will call with the accompanying certificate on the proper Empresaria for his report upon the foregoing application.

Nacogdoches, April 6, 1835.

George Ant. Nixon, Commr.

Report: Mr. Commissioner:

APPENDIX B
COUNTY BONDS

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Area Covered</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
1913	\$50,000	County Wide	Build Courthouse
1913	60,000	Precinct No. 1*	Build Roads
1914	100,000	Precinct No. 2	Build Roads
1919	200,000	Precinct No. 2	Build Roads
1920	200,000	Precinct No. 4	Build Roads
1925	577,000	County Wide	Build Roads
1929	159,000	County Wide	Build Roads

*Groveton is the largest town, and consequently has most of the voters, in Commissioners Precinct No. 1. Trinity is the largest in Commissioners Precinct No. 2, and Apple Springs in Precinct No. 4.

APPENDIX C

PRESIDING ELDERS AND PASTORS OF GROVETON

METHODIST CHURCH*

<u>Year</u>	<u>Station or Circuit</u>	<u>Presiding Elder</u>	<u>Pastor</u>
1888	Trinity Circuit	U.B. Phillips	A.J. Frick
1889	Trinity Circuit	U.B. Phillips	A.J. Frick
1890	Trinity & Groveton	J.T. Smith	W.H. Crawford
1891	Trinity & Groveton	J.T. Smith	V.A. Godbey
1892	Trinity & Groveton	J.T. Smith	V.A. Godbey
1893	Trinity & Groveton	L.M. Fowler	V.A. Godbey
1894	Trinity & Groveton	L.M. Fowler	Julian Woodson
1895	Trinity & Groveton	L.M. Fowler	J.B. Turrentine
1896	Trinity & Groveton	L.M. Fowler	J.L. Dawson
1897	Groveton Circuit	O.P. Thomas	W.F. Hardy
1898	Groveton Circuit	V.A. Godbey	J.T. Kirkpatrick
1899	Groveton Circuit	V.A. Godbey	J.W. Mills
1900	Groveton Circuit	W.F. Davis	J.W. Mills
1901	Groveton Circuit	W.F. Davis	G.E. Parsons
1902	Groveton Circuit	J.B. Sears	G.E. Parsons
1903	Groveton Station	J.B. Sears	Jesse Lee
1904	Groveton Station	J.B. Sears	Jesse Lee
1905	Groveton Station	J.B. Sears	Jesse Lee
1906	Groveton Station	H.C. Willis	W.M. Sherrell
1907	Groveton Station	H.C. Willis	Jesse Willis
1908	Groveton Station	H.C. Willis	Jesse Willis
1909	Groveton Station	F.M. Boils	Jesse Willis
1910	Groveton Station	F.M. Boils	Jesse Willis
1911	Groveton Station	J.B. Turrentine	J.W. Cullen
1912	Groveton Station	E.L. Shettles	J.W. Cullen
1913	Groveton Station	E.L. Shettles	C.C. Bell
1914	Groveton Station	E.L. Shettles	C.C. Bell
1915	Groveton Station	E.L. Shettles	S.D. Herger
1916	Groveton Station	J.E. Morgan	S.D. Herger
1917	Groveton Station	J.E. Morgan	J.W. Bridges

* From 1888 through 1889 the pastor lived at Trinity and served Groveton along with other churches. In 1890 Trinity and Groveton became half stations with the pastor still living at Trinity. Lovelady was added to the charge for the one year of 1896. The next year, 1897, Groveton became the home of a pastor who served other smaller churches in the vicinity. Groveton became a station in 1903 and from that date a pastor has devoted his full time to the Groveton church.

APPENDIX C

PRESIDING ELDERS AND PASTORS OF GROVETON
METHODIST CHURCH

<u>Year</u>	<u>Station or Circuit</u>	<u>Presiding Elder</u>	<u>Pastor</u>
1918	Groveton Station	C.U. McClarty	C.T. Cummins
1919	Groveton Station	C.U. McClarty	C.T. Cummins
1920	Groveton Station	C.U. McClarty	A.A. Tharp
1921	Groveton Station	C.U. McClarty	A.A. Tharp
1922	Groveton Station	D.H. Hotchkiss	A.A. Tharp
1923	Groveton Station	D.H. Hotchkiss	A.A. Tharp
1924	Groveton Station	D.H. Hotchkiss	L.W. Nicholds
1925	Groveton Station	Jesse Lee	L.W. Nicholds
1926	Groveton Station	Jesse Lee	W.A. Craven
1927	Groveton Station	Jesse Lee	J.W. Shoemaker
1928	Groveton Station	Jesse Lee	M.R. Turner
1929	Groveton Station	F.E. Few	Allen Tooke
1930	Groveton Station	F.E. Few	Allen Tooke
1931	Groveton Station	F.E. Few	Allen Tooke
1932	Groveton Station	F.E. Few	H.V. Rankin
1933	Groveton Station	E.R. Barcus	T.I. Beck
1934	Groveton Station	G.F. Jones	M.J. Biggar
1935	Groveton Station	G.F. Jones	M.J. Biggar
1936	Groveton Station	G.F. Jones	M.J. Biggar
1937	Groveton Station	G.F. Jones	I.J. Waldon
1938	Groveton Station	W.F. Bryan	I.J. Waldon
1939	Groveton Station	W.F. Bryan	I.J. Waldon
1940	Groveton Station	W.F. Bryan	I.J. Waldon
1941	Groveton Station	W.F. Bryan	O.H. Zimmerman

The Groveton Church was in the Palestine district from 1888 through 1910. It was in the Navasota district through 1924 and in the Huntsville district since that date.

APPENDIX D

COMPANY "K" 5th REG. TRANSFERRED TO COMPANY F 143rd
REG. 36th DIVISION TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>				
Captain	Nathan H. Phillips	Pvt.	1st. Cl.	Bradberry, A.D.	
1st. Lt.	Jake B. Clegg	"	"	Bradley, J.A.	
2nd. Lt.	Charles F. Evans	"	"	Clayton, W.	
1st. Sgt.	Sam T. Walker	"	"	Cooper, J.	
Mess Sgt.	Ollie E. Joplin	"	"	Crabb, B.	
Sup. Sgt.	A.S. Bower	"	"	Edwards, O'dan	
Line Sgt.	W.R. Barclay	"	"	Fort, H. W.	
Line Sgt.	L.T. Stovall	"	"	James, W.	
Line Sgt.	L. Buffington	"	"	Johnson, C.L.	
Line Sgt.	J.R. Rush	"	"	Jordan, E.	
Line Sgt.	A.D. Stovall	"	"	Kenner, W. T.	
Line Sgt.	A.J. Hutson	"	"	Kostris, J.	
Line Sgt.	P. Burden	"	"	Lakey, G.M.	
Line Sgt.	L.W. Bell	"	"	Lewis, J.	
Corporal	N.R. McDougald	"	"	Lewis, J.W.	
Corporal	S.R. Whitehead	"	"	Mansell, G. C.	
Corporal	J.B. Safford	"	"	Money, G.M.	
Corporal	A.H. Pegoda	"	"	McGilvra, J.A.	
Corporal	R.L. Vickrey	"	"	McQueen, C.W.	
Corporal	L.F. Martindale	"	"	Riley, C.	
Corporal	A.R. Noblitt	"	"	Wallace, J.A.	
Corporal	A.T. Holley	Privates		Ainsworth, B.B.	
Corporal	M.R. Hendricks	"		Anderson, J.J.	
Corporal	S.S. Manry	"		Andrews, E.J.	
Corporal	M.O. White	"		Arnold, J.E.	
Corporal	Carey Collins	"		Alston, J.W.	
Corporal	C.D. Hill	"		Baker, F. L.	
Corporal	C.E. Hunter	"		Bates, R. H.	
Corporal	J.P. Stevenson	"		Byrd, A.F.	
Corporal	J.B. Sumner	"		Christian, C.T.	
Corporal	C.E. Trueblood	"		Coleman, J.A.	
Mechanic	W.E. Bradley	"		Courtney, A.M.	
Mechanic	D.V. Powell	"		Creel, S.D.	
Cook	C.T. Peebles	"		Davis, A.J.	
Cook	T.P. Ramey	"		Dewalt, L. C.	
Cook	S.J. Eaves	"		Dixon, J.W.	
Bugler	E.B. Goettee	"		Dowley, W.A.	
Bugler	F.B. Mullins	"		Dubose, C.R.	
Pvt. 1st.Cl.	Ainsworth, J.	"		English, L.T.	
Pvt. 1st.Cl.	Alexander, T.A.	"		Finley, G.C.	
Pvt. 1st.Cl.	Allen, B.S.	"		Fort, C.R.	
Pvt. 1st.Cl.	Anderson, N.	"		Frederich, W.A.	
Pvt. 1st.Cl.	Antley, J.	"		Freeman, W.W.	

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>
Privates	Freeman, W. W.	Privates	Shirley, C. A.
"	Fussell, C.	"	Stringer, D.
"	Glass, W. G.	"	Spencer, S. A.
"	Goodwin, J.	"	Stevens, E. K.
"	Goode, L. R.	"	Skains, E. L.
"	Grimes, J. B.	"	Stepleton, J. D.
"	Gross, D. S.	"	Stagner, D.
"	Ivy, J.	"	Stovall, O. K.
"	Ing, F.	"	Stoker, R. M.
"	Lucas, W.	"	Taylor, J. R.
"	Mott, N.	"	Tanner, M. M.
"	McMichael	"	Thornton, C. H.
"	McQueen, S. A.	"	Taylor, C. F.
"	Martin, W. A.	"	Taylor, E.
"	Nicholson,	"	Taylor, M. M.
"	Nash, P.	"	Trawick, J. F.
"	Nash, R. L.	"	Turner, T. R.
"	Oats, E. M.	"	Townsend, W. D.
"	O'Donnell, E. T.	"	Thornton, S.
"	Pipes, L.	"	Varnon, C. B.
"	Powell,	"	Vestal, A. L.
"	Parker, W. A.	"	Vance, G. A.
"	Pierce, A. E.	"	Vickrey, R. P.
"	Price, D.	"	Whitehead, C. D.
"	Pegoda, J. W.	"	West, O.
"	Pegoda, G. F.	"	Wright, E.
"	Rushing, W. H.	"	Whitten, B.
"	Red, R. R.	"	Womack, R. E.
"	Redden, A.	"	West, E.
"	Ringo, F.	"	Wilburn, G. M.
"	Rushing, G.	"	Wilburn, W. C.
"	Rice, C. C.	"	Whitten, M.
"	Sweetser, W. H.	"	Zinn, O. E.

APPENDIX E
CITY OF GROVETON

<u>Year</u>	<u>Tax Rate</u>	<u>Evaluation</u>	<u>Mayors</u>
1919			J. A. Platt
1920			Nayne Nelms
1921	40 Cents		Hayne Nelms
1922	65 Cents		Hayne Nelms
			F. B. Russell
			R. R. Robb
1923	65 Cents		R. R. Robb
1924	65 Cents	297073	R. R. Robb
1925	65 Cents	420118	R. R. Robb
1926	65 Cents	543869	R. R. Robb
1927	\$1.50	557350	C. H. Kenley
			I. Friedman
			C. H. Crow
1928	\$1.50	574886	J. F. Hall
1929	\$1.50	616420	W. Hooks
1930	\$1.40	588659	W. Hooks
1931	\$1.50	564250	E. E. Mangum
			A. W. Midgley
1932	1.50	493919	Ellis Campbell
1933	1.50	460901	L. W. Burr
1934	1.50	416438	L. W. Burr
1935	\$1.50	416011	C. C. Chessher
1936	\$1.50	417897	C. C. Chessher
1937	1.50	414812	Gordon Riley
			W. L. Gibson
1938	1.50	408735	W. L. Gibson
1939	\$1.50	405671	W. L. Gibson
1940	\$1.50	389926	W. L. Gibson
1941	1.50	388256	W. L. Gibson

APPENDIX F

GROVETON SCHOOL VALUATION & BOND INDEBTEDNESS

Date	Original District	Annexed Districts	Total Bond in Original	Bond in Annexed	Total	
1915	1,052,000		1,052,000	26,000	26,000	
1916	1,133,585		1,133,585	26,000	26,000	
1917	1,144,280		1,144,280	26,000	26,000	
1. 1918				26,000	26,000	
1919	2,170,407		2,170,407	26,000	26,000	
1920	2,289,804		2,289,804	26,000	26,000	
1921	2,265,110		2,265,110	26,000	26,000	
2. 1922	2,169,917		2,169,917	26,000	26,000	
1. 1923				26,000	26,000	
1924	1,416,076		1,416,076	26,000	26,000	
1925	1,469,215		1,469,215	26,000	26,000	
1926	1,437,434		1,437,434	26,000	26,000	
1927	1,520,188		1,520,188	26,000	26,000	
1928	1,544,314		1,544,314	26,000	26,000	
1929	1,357,775		1,357,775	26,000	26,000	
3. 1930	1,102,554		1,102,554	51,000	51,000	
1931	868,860		868,860	50,500	50,500	
1932	698,521		698,521	50,000	50,000	
1933	618,583		618,583	49,500	49,500	
1934	618,995		618,995	49,000	49,000	
1935	639,064		639,064	48,500	48,500	
1936	620,010		620,010	48,000	48,000	
4. 1937	587,636	302,504	890,140	47,500	6,300	53,800
1938	575,086	313,465	888,551	47,000	8,100	55,100
1939	570,203	716,173	1,286,376	46,500	11,100	57,600
1940	569,296	698,801	1,268,097	46,000	12,200	58,800

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1. No record.
 2. Trinity County Lumber Company began logging from Colmesneil in Tyler County.
 3. Grammar School built and Trinity County Lumber Company sawmill finished cutting all timber and moved.
 4. Rural districts around Groveton annexed. Others were annexed until 1940. The valuation and bond of the annexed districts was not kept separate after this time.

APPENDIX G

LOCAL MANAGERS OF TRINITY COUNTY LUMBER COMPANY

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Native State</u>
1882-1890	M. L. T. Sloan *	Iowa
1890-1895	Mr. Graves	Iowa
1895-1905	A. B. Ives	Wisconsin
1905-1907	W. F. N. Davis	Illinois
1907-1913	Colonel J.C. Anderson	Illinois
1913-1916	A. E. Ball	New York
1916-1917	Sheffield Bridgewater	Louisiana
1917-1922	Baxter Stallcup	Texas
1922-1924	Ross A. Haralson	Texas
1924-1928	Eugene Ford	Texas
1928-1930	Herbert Moss	Texas

* The Trinity County Lumber Company was chartered under the laws of Iowa in 1882. M. L. T. Sloan was also President of the company until 1890. At this time David Joyce became President. The chief ownership of the company has remained in the hands of the Joyce family since. At present Clifton Dominy is surveyor and superintendent of Trinity County Lumber Company interests in Trinity County. He has an office in the original company office in Groveton.

APPENDIX H

GROVETON MASONIC LODGE (Eastern Star No. 284)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Worshipful Master</u>	<u>Members</u>
1885	C. D. Warner	27
1886	H. W. Pennington	20
1887	H. C. Hazard	24
1888	C. D. Warner	27
1889	H. W. Pennington	29
1890	H. C. Hazard	28
1891	H. W. Pennington	29
1892	D. L. Thompson	37
1893	H. C. Hazard	38
1894	H. C. Hazard	40
1895	W. C. Backus	41
1896	H. C. Hazard	46
1897	W. J. Womack	45
1898	A. V. Wood	45
1899	A. V. Wood	52
1900	A. V. Wood	58
1901	W. J. Womack	65
1902	J. R. Towns	65
1903	A. V. Wood	74
1904	A. V. Wood	81
1905	S. T. Best	88
1906	R. H. Moore	105
1907	L. E. Wood	107
1908	C. R. Hazard	113
1909	C. H. Bradley	86
1910	C. H. Bradley	87
1911	C. R. Hazard	93
1912	C. R. Hazard	85
1913	J. A. Platt	90
1914	J. A. Platt	89
1915	W. O. Evans	78
1916	W. E. Satterwhite	70
1917	H. A. Briscoe	80
1918	H. A. Briscoe	92
1919	Hayne Nelms	99
1920	J. I. Atkinson	118
1921	T. L. Arthur	126
1922	C. H. Williams	130
1923	Z. F. Devine	133
1924	R. H. Dominy	135
1925	W. P. Barrett	139
1926	H. B. Dudley	148
1927	H. D. Lovett	127
1928	R. S. Davis	129
1929	R. S. Davis	130

<u>Date</u>	<u>Worshipful Master</u>	<u>Members</u>
1930	W. I. Gibson	135
1931	Z. F. Devine	106
1932	J. I. Atkinson	107
1933	J. I. Atkinson	110
1934	R. S. Davis	86
1935	R. S. Davis	85
1936	W. B. Thomas	64
1937	E. L. Craven	60
1938	S. F. Magee	53
1939	E. C. Dominy	62
1940	E. C. Dominy	62
1941	Jesse Baker	62