



THE STORY OF



HURST



THE EVOLUTION OF A
COMMUNITY BUILT ON CONNECTION



EARLY SETTLEMENT

Settlement of the area we know today as North Texas did not really begin until the mid-1830's. Hailing mostly from the border southern states and lured by free and fertile land, several families began to make their way into this part of Texas. Very few Anglos, however, were tempted to colonize the Indian lands of the upper Trinity River basin. Several Indian tribes (Anadarko, Biloxi, Caddo, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Delaware, Hainai, Kichai, Tawakoni, Waco and others) inhabited the area and early settlers were often plagued by Indian attacks, as both plains and woodland tribes grew restive over settlement on land they regarded as theirs. When the Texas Revolution freed settlers from Mexican rule, the fledgling Republic of Texas (1836-1845) began encouraging settlement in north Texas despite the possibility of Indian attacks.

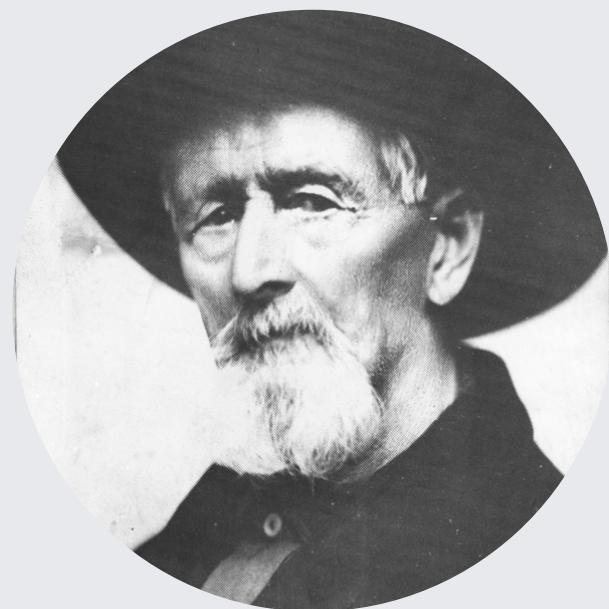


The first known Anglo-American expedition into present-day Tarrant County occurred in 1838, when some 90 Northeast Texas frontiersmen waged a punitive raid against Indians who had attacked their homes in Fannin County. After several clashes, most notable being the Battle of Village Creek led by General Edward H. Tarrant and which occurred near the present-day landfill in Arlington where several Indians were killed, brought about a request in 1841 by Brevet Major Jonathan Bird, a famed veteran of the Texas Revolution, to ask Texas Militia Calloway Lake. In 1843, Bird's Fort, as it came to be called, was the site of negotiations by President Sam Houston to establish a treaty line where the Indian hunting grounds would be located northwest of the Trinity River. The treaty, known as Bird's Fort Treaty, helped lure settlers to the area, which promised fertile land abundant with game.



One of the first arrangements for colonization by the newly recognized State of Texas was made with W. S. Peters and Associates, who agreed to bring 600 families into the area within three years in 1841. The Peters Colony was a strip of territory whose boundaries shifted several times but soon stretched 100 miles long in North Central Texas and over 160 miles wide south of the Red River. Tarrant County, one of 26 counties created out of the Peters Colony, was established in 1849 and organized the following year. The county was named in honor of General Edward H. Tarrant of the Republic of Texas militia. White family men were eligible for a section (640 acres), and single men were eligible for 320 acres. The immigrants had to live on the free land for three years, cultivate at least ten acres, and have the land surveyed and marked to obtain a clear title.

From that point forward, early pioneers settled along the Trinity River basin and the lush green valley, teaming with wildlife and fertile land for farming.



**William "Uncle Billy"
Letchworth Hurst**

EARLY PIONEERS

No one can confidently identify the first permanent settlers in Tarrant County. Still, it is clear that with the promise of free land, settlers began to trickle into the area. Many of those early pioneers chose to settle in northeast Tarrant County. Some of their stories are below:

John Hust

Perhaps one of the first Peters Colony settlers in the area was John Hust, who settled on a tract of land roughly between Walker Creek and the Trinity River between 1846 and 1848. He patented 640 acres in 1854, shortly before he and three partners built a grain mill on Hust's land. The mill was erected on the south bank of the Trinity River, about a hundred yards west of present-day Precinct Line Road. The mill became an industrial center for the North Texas area.



Hurst Train Depot

Hamilton Bennett

One of the first Peters Colony settlers in the area was Hamilton Bennett. Along present-day West Hurst Boulevard, considered part of the Birdville community at the time, Hamilton Bennett filed on 640 acres of land in 1848 and built a cabin there. He was a Church of Christ preacher from Virginia via Missouri. Bennett served as one of Tarrant County's commissioners at one point. After the death of Bennett's wife in 1851, he sold his land to Isaac Parker and left for South Texas in 1853.

Isaac Parker (1793-1883)

Isaac Parker, born in Georgia in 1793, just seventeen years after American Independence, fought in the War of 1812 and under Andrew Jackson in the Creek Indian War of 1813-1814. Parker moved to Texas in 1833 and fought with Sam Houston in the war for Texas's independence from Mexico.

In 1836, when Isaac Parker was living in the family's Fort Parker in Limestone County, Comanches, led by chief Peta Nocona, attacked the fort. Parker survived the attack, but his father and two brothers were killed, and his niece, Cynthia Ann Parker, age eight, and nephew, John Parker, age six, were abducted.

In 1841, Parker fought Indians in the Battle of Village Creek in present-day Arlington. Eventually, Isaac Parker traded smoke-filled battlefields for smoke-filled rooms. The soldier became a politician. He was a representative and senator in the legislature of the Republic of Texas from 1838 until 1845. Upon annexation in 1845, he was a delegate to the state constitutional convention. Parker then served as a senator in the state legislature (1846-1853). From 1855 to 1856, while living in Tarrant County, Parker represented Ellis and Tarrant counties in the House, where he introduced a bill to establish Parker County, which was named for him.

Migrating from Limestone County with his family (wife Lucy, children Joseph Cheatham, Isaac Duke, William Eldridge, Virginia America, and Lucy Ann), Isaac Parker purchased a section of land owned by Hamilton Bennett. The purchase included a log cabin located near the present-day intersection of Loop 820 and Trinity Boulevard.

Isaac Parker's wife, Lucy, died in 1867. Parker, aware of a cemetery on the northern edge of his property called the Post Oak Cemetery, decided to set aside a small patch of land adjacent to the Post Oak Cemetery to become the Parker Family Cemetery. Lucy is buried in the Parker Family Cemetery located on Cardinal Road in Hurst, which has been designated a historic site by the State of Texas. In addition to Lucy Parker, Parker Cemetery is the final resting place for several members of the Parker family clan. Three years later, at age seventy-six, Isaac Parker remarried. In 1872, Parker and his second wife, Virginia, moved west to a farm in his namesake county, eight miles from Weatherford. They had four children, with the last child, a boy, born in 1879 when Isaac Parker was eighty-six.

After a distinguished career, Isaac Parker died in 1883 and is buried in Turner Cemetery in Parker County.



**Issac Duke Parker and his
double log cabin circa 1850s**



Daniel Arwine (1830-1887)

The Arwine family came to the area from Indiana in 1865 and settled on a farm that soon developed into what was variously known for some years as Red Sulphur Springs or the Arwine Community, located where present-day Pipeline Road intersects with Brown Trail. Pre-war ties with families from their old state of Indiana soon brought neighbors, and by 1881, the Arwine Community included the Souder, Anderson, Brown, Robertson, and Sexton families (all of whom knew each other from Indiana and intermarried with one another). This collection of Indiana families and others from Tennessee and elsewhere across the post-war South comprised the mostly agriculture-based community that would eventually become Hurst. Other communities began to spring up around the same time in present-day Northeast Tarrant County, including Bear Creek, Bedford, Birdville, Euless, Isham, Mosier Valley, and Randol Mill.

The Arwines' most notable contribution to Hurst's founding was in 1879 when they deeded six acres to the community for a school, a church, and a cemetery. Arwine cemetery, with nearly 300 identifiable graves, was deemed a historic site in 1977 and is preserved as such today near the Bellaire Shopping Center. The first person buried in the Arwine Cemetery was Daniel Arwine's seven-year-old daughter. She had been playing with a friend when she mentioned that when she died, she wanted to be buried under the big tree they were playing under. Soon after, she became ill and died quite suddenly, and the friend told her granddaddy what she had said, so they buried her under the tree.

William Letchworth Hurst (1833-1922)

In 1870, "Uncle Billy" (as he was popularly known) moved into the area with his wife and seven children. In the late 1890s, Hurst moved his family into a house approximately one mile north of the present Highway 10, and he found success in trading and speculating in land and horses. Uncle Billy was most well-known as the area's most popular fiddle-playing entertainer. Still, it was his deal in 1903 with the Rock Island Railroad that eventually led the community to take his name. He agreed to let the railroad lay track connecting Fort Worth and Dallas on his land with the condition that a stop be established there and a depot built and given his name. The Rock Island Station was built in 1903 and, along with the surrounding community, was officially named Hurst in 1909.



HURST BECOMES A COMMUNITY

The first half of the twentieth century saw minimal growth in the rural communities of Northeast Tarrant County. Trains stopped at the Hurst Depot less and less as east-west routes were moved further south to go through Arlington. The lack of direct access to bulk transport made agricultural expansion more complex, and area communities were slow to adapt. Families less able to make do with hardier crops like cotton - goods that could make the arduous journey to depots in the south - found themselves looking for other ways to make ends meet. Even the community's most prominent families (like the Hursts) tell of their bootlegging exploits during the leaner years. In the early 1900s, sand and gravel excavation in the Trinity River bottoms joined farming and ranching as significant industries in the area. By the 1920s, Fort Worth Sand & Gravel was the county's largest employer.



Hurst saw little growth in the first half of the century, with developments like the brick school built by the Work Projects Administration in 1940 and the 1949 establishment of the Hurst post office (when the Souder Family added a postal station to the corner of their grocery store) constituting big news for the 1,000-or-so residents they served. In 1951, however, everything changed when Bell Helicopter opened a \$3 million plant next to the southeastern border of Hurst that pioneered the helicopter aviation industry in Texas and caused a growth boom for the area.

Hurst was incorporated as a general law city on September 25, 1952, with a total population of 2,700. During the next five years, the population increased to 5,700. By 1960, the population had almost doubled, with 10,165 residents. In 1968, Tarrant County Junior College (TCJC), now known as Tarrant County College, opened its newest Northeast campus in Hurst. Growth continued, and by 1970, the population had increased to 27,215. Two significant events occurred in the '70s. First, the construction of the Northeast Mall in 1972 provided growth, financial stability, and flexibility for development. Two years later, the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport opened, bringing more growth and development to the area now referred to as the Mid-Cities area, comprised of Hurst, Euless, and Bedford. With these solid economic engines driving development, Hurst continued to grow.

HURST TODAY

Hurst's current population (as of 2018) is approximately 39,160, with average household income estimated at over \$75,000. The City's markedly stable political and economic condition has allowed the community to focus on sustaining and encouraging developments that improve the quality of life for Hurst families.





Demographic data is available from the North Central Texas Council of Government's (NCTCOG) Research & Information Services Department, which performs demographic research on such topics as population, housing, and employment estimates; population, household, and employment projections; development monitoring; major employers; land use; and tabulation/analysis of Census data. Learn more about the data provided by the NCTCOG through the Research & Information Services page on their web site.

<http://data-nctcoggis.opendata.arcgis.com>

Additional information may be found at the following web sites:

For U.S. Census Data for the City of Hurst, Texas, click here.

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/hurstcitytexas/PST045217>

For open access to aggregated data & statistics relating to the City of Hurst, Texas, go here.

<https://datausa.io/profile/geo/hurst-tx/>



HURST TOMORROW

Hurst is a first-class city with fantastic assets, resources, and city leadership. However, like many cities, Hurst is beginning to experience some of the challenges of an aging community. Recognizing this reality, the City leadership has initiated a community-based redevelopment strategy that will help stimulate private investment and prioritize public involvement. Through this process, called "Transforming Hurst," Hurst recognizes some emerging challenges, such as outdated commercial buildings, declining housing stock, aging infrastructure, and high concentrations of older multi-family housing in some neighborhoods. As part of the Hurst redevelopment initiative, several goals and issues have emerged. These include preserving Hurst's character and high quality of life and improving commercial quality and neighborhood integrity through thoughtful and incremental economic development and planning policies. The City of Hurst believes its future is bright and sustainable, safe, and a dynamic place for all individuals to live, work, and play.



REFERENCES AND NARRATIVE NOTES

In 2018, Larry and Carolyn Kitchens updated the original Hurst History narrative. This version is an excellent resource for students and historians to use as a reference for their research. This narrative, reviewed and approved by the City of Hurst Historical Landmark Preservation Committee, provides the reader with an accurate and comprehensive account of the prominent historical figures and events that shaped the City of Hurst.

Special thanks to Dr. Haynes, University of Texas at Arlington Professor and Director of the Center for Greater Southwestern Studies, for reviewing the document.

Information for this narrative was gathered from the following sources:

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