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*Prairie View Texas
and College*

THE
HANDBOOK OF
TEXAS

WALTER PRESCOTT WEBB

Editor-in-Chief

H. BAILEY CARROLL

Managing Editor

ILLERENA B. FRIEND

MARY JOE CARROLL

LOUISE NOLEN

Editorial Assistants

IN TWO VOLUMES

Volume II
WALLER COUNTY LIBRARY
HEMPSTEAD, TEXAS 77445



AUSTIN

The Texas State Historical Association

1952 L-183

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Prairie View College

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Prairie Hill (Washington County) was the site of a rural school and church in 1936.

Prairie Lea, Texas. Prairie Lea, in southwestern Caldwell County near the San Marcos River, is a trading center for a farming and stock raising area. One of the first settlements in Caldwell County, Prairie Lea was established about 1848 and populated largely by slaveholding families. In 1853 a local firm sold \$7,000 worth of merchandise in one month. The first school, established in 1854, was the Masonic Female Institute, which in 1860 became the Prairie Lea Female Institute and between 1875 and 1885 was partially controlled by the Grange.⁹⁷ The earliest church, organized about 1856, became known as Shiloh Church in 1860. The town was the scene of considerable disturbance during and after the Civil War. In 1922 the development of the Old Luling Oil Field added to the resources of the community. Eight stores and a population of 775 were reported in 1940.

J. Henry Martindale

Prairie Mountain. Prairie Mountain is in southwestern Llano County west of the village of Oxford.

Prairie Point, Texas. Prairie Point, a small farming community in southwestern Cooke County, in 1940 had one store and a population of twenty-five served by mail delivery from Forestburg.

Cora Allen Staniforth

Prairie Siding, Texas. Prairie Siding, in central Waller County, is a shipping point on the Texas and New Orleans Railroad serving Prairie View University.⁹⁸

Prairie View, Texas. Prairie View (DeWitt County) is a school community ten miles from Yoakum. The school, established in 1900, had an enrollment of fifteen in 1948.

Prairie View (Waller County), five miles east of Hempstead on the Texas and New Orleans Railroad, takes its name from the original settlement of Alta Vista, plantation home of Colonel Jack Kirby. After the death of Jared Ellison Kirby, son of the original owner, his widow, Mrs. Helen Marr Kirby,⁹⁹ used the plantation for a girls' school. In 1876 she sold the property to the state and the Fifteenth Legislature established a college for colored youth on the site. In 1879 the college was reorganized as Prairie View Normal and Industrial College (later Prairie View University⁹⁷). The village had two businesses and a population of two hundred in 1940.

Prairie View University. Prairie View University is a negro land grant college in central Waller County on a 1,434-acre campus one mile north of Prairie View and five miles east of Hempstead. An institution called Alta Vista Agricultural College was planned under the provisions of the establishment of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas,⁹⁷ but it failed for lack of students. Governor O. M. Roberts⁹⁷ proposed that the college be changed to a normal school for training teachers for colored children, and in 1879 the Fifteenth Legislature provided for the establishment of Prairie View State Normal School, a co-educational institution to train negro teachers to instruct in trades and agricultural subjects. Under supervision of the regents of A. & M. College and with I. C. Anderson as principal, the first term opened in the fall of 1885. Attendance was small for

the first decade, and in 1889 the legislature changed the name of the college to Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College and provided for modification of the curriculum to include courses leading to high school diplomas, teachers certificates, trade qualifications, military science, and nursing. Degrees came to be given in the usual academic fields, and a graduate department was added. By 1931 the campus contained thirty-one main buildings and fifty cottages. The school issued an annual catalogue and various bulletins. Called Prairie View University by 1947, the college was recognized as a class A college by the state department of education and by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools and was approved by the American College of Surgeons. Enrollment in 1947, exclusive of summer school, was 1,507.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Frederick Eby, *The Development of Education in Texas* (1925); Dudley G. Wooten, *A Comprehensive History of Texas*, II (1928); Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College, *Annual Catalogue* (1885-1947).

Prairieville, Texas. Prairieville, in southeastern Kaufman County, was established about 1870. Three businesses, a gristmill, and a cotton gin were operating in 1880, when W. A. Taylor had the post office in his general store. Population was 120 in 1910 but declined to fifty by 1920, the same figure being reported in 1930 and 1940. An outdoor amphitheater at Prairieville was the site of the Pioneer Theater of Texas presentation of *Centinela* in 1937 and *Gran Quivira* in 1938.

Prater, William. William Prater (Prather) came to Texas in 1822. He voted in the election of April, 1824, which sent the Baron de Bastrop⁹⁷ as Texas deputy to the convention of Coahuila and Texas. On July 19, 1824, Prater received title to a league and a labor of land in present Brazoria and Austin counties. In the fall of 1824 he was living on the Brazos River near the Moses Shipman⁹⁷ family. The census of 1826 classified Prater as a farmer and stock raiser, aged over fifty. His household included his wife, Maria, three sons, and a daughter.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: E. C. Barker (ed.), *Austin Papers*, I (1924); Lester G. Bugbee, "The Old Three Hundred," *Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association*, I (1897-1898); Daniel Shipman, *Frontier Life* (1879).

Prather, William Lambdin. William Lambdin Prather, son of George W. and Lucretia P. (Lambdin) Prather, was born near Paris, Tennessee, on May 1, 1848. In 1854 his father moved to Texas and acquired a large plantation near Waco. Despite his title of "Colonel," by which he was generally called, Prather was not a Confederate soldier for he was too young for army service, but his father, in 1867, sent him to study under General Robert E. Lee, at Washington College, Lexington, Kentucky, where Prather received the D.L.B. degree in 1871. His standing is shown by his selection as one of the pallbearers at Lee's funeral in 1870.

Prather was admitted to the bar in Waco, Texas, in 1871 and practiced there for twenty-eight years. From 1875 to 1878 he was Waco city attorney. For three years he was a master in chancery for the Houston and Texas Central Railroad. For the term 1895-1896 he was president of the state bar association.

On February 3, 1875, he married Frances H. Kirkpatrick; they had five children.

Prather's connection with the University of Texas⁹⁷ began with his appointment as regent by Governor L. S. Ross⁹⁷ in 1887. In 1895 Prather

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