

State and Local

A&M area, A&M owe existence to Boonville

By Carolyn Garcia
Staff Writer

Texas A&M, College Station and owe their existence and success primarily to the railroad, the men of Daniel Boone and particularly to a pioneer whose sharp organizational abilities put him before men in the unsettled West.

That man, often called the Father of Brazos County, was Harvey Mitchell — patriarch of Boonville. Mitchell and his family, along with relatives of Boone and a handful of other pioneers, settled in the community they named Boonville in 1841.

Daniel Boone was really a hero to pioneers," said Margaret Lips Bavel, author of "Birth and Death of Boonville: First town of Brazos County."

He opened up the West by laying a road over the Cumberland which is a pass over the Appalachians," she said.

Plans for Boonville were drawn in 1841 by Hiram Hanover, a settler from Maine who came to the area to try and make a fortune in land-transfer business.

The new town had no money — a situation that would not change — so the first courthouse was in the center of town by volunteer labor. Judge R.E. Baylor presided as judge of the district and, at encouragement, a jail was built.

Plans he had drawn up himself.

One prisoner of the jail who managed to escape turned himself back in and pleaded with the judge to try him because anything — even hanging — was preferable to the flea-infested dungeon, the book says.

Because it was a cashless society, the construction of the jail was paid for with land, which became a common form of payment.

Mitchell handled much of the town's business transactions himself, and while he lived in Boonville, he served the community as hotel manager, store clerk, blacksmith, postmaster and gristmill operator. He even took a term as county judge, and served as the first Brazos County teacher, offering the pioneers' children a variety of courses.

Children were especially vulnerable to diseases that swept the area, and Mitchell and his wife lost four daughters to spinal meningitis within two months.

Boonville settlers nearly were wiped out by a plague of dysentery in 1844.

The residents lived on poor diets, since pioneer women didn't have time to grow adequate gardens. What they did manage to grow had to be protected from wild animals.

But life in Boonville could be as good as it was bad.

The second courthouse was a large one-room building with a smooth pine floor — perfect for dancing. It also was used for church

services, school classes, a dance school and a place for singing lessons.

Quilting bees and barn raisings were included in the social activities of the community.

In 1852, only two families actually lived in the town — one being the Mitchells — because the settlers found it easier to live on their homesteads outside of town.

A census taken two years earlier had put the population of the area at 614.

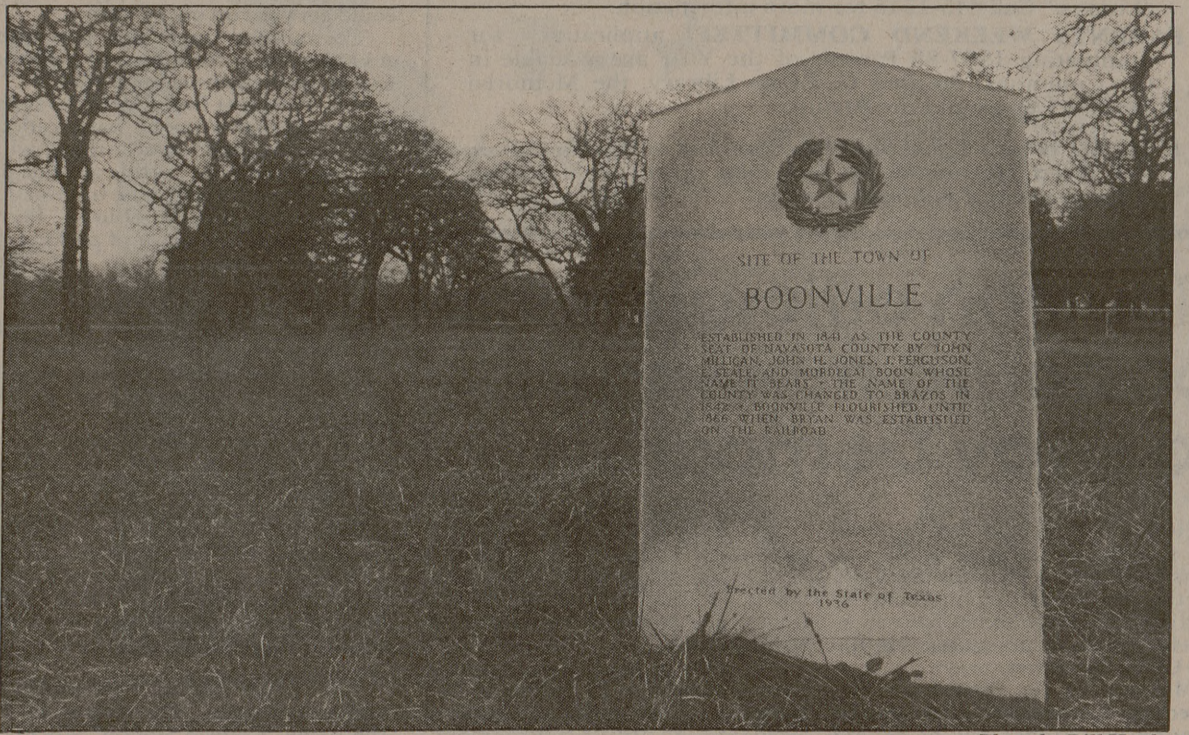
Following the Civil War, the railroad became interested in the area and everything began to change. Boonville began to die.

So, 25 years after the birth of Boonville, residents changed the county seat to Bryan.

"Many of the residents of Boonville took their cabins apart and moved them by wagon to be near the railroad," van Bavel said. "Harvey Mitchell became a real estate broker in Bryan. He went to Houston to meet a committee to establish the site for the land grant college and persuaded them to establish it here. . . ."

"They established it (the college) six miles from Bryan because they were afraid for the morals of the students, because Bryan was a real wild-West town. It had saloons on every corner because of the railroad workers."

The Boonville cemetery is now all that is left of the town. The tall mon-



The town of Boonville was established in 1841 as the first town in Brazos County.

Photo by Bill Hughes

uments stand as quiet reminders of what was.

The grave markers, ordered from Europe and delivered to Galveston, were brought to Boonville by ox cart, van Bavel said, and although

four Boone men and their families helped establish Boonville, there are no "Boones" buried in any Brazos County pioneer cemetery.

"The Boonville cemetery is the only part of the town that is public

land," she said, "therefore the most historic place in Brazos County."

Van Bavel is organizing a committee which hopes to raise \$25,000 to clean up the cemetery and erect an ornamental fence.

A&M study: Alcohol remains factor in Texas traffic deaths

By Russell Pulliam
Reporter

Despite recent emphasis on drunken driving, neither the percentage of alcohol-related fatal accidents nor the degree of intoxication of those drivers killed in Texas has been reduced significantly, a Texas A&M study says.

The research, conducted by A&M's Transportation Institute for the Department of Highways and Public Transportation, studied 1,742 driver fatalities from 1983 to 1985.

Blood alcohol concentration test results,

taken from a sample of fatally injured drivers in 10 Texas counties, reveal half of the drivers were legally drunk when they died.

The counties that participated in the study were Bexar, Dallas, El Paso, Galveston, Harris, Johnson, Nueces, Tarrant, Travis and Wichita.

"Since we were able to obtain test results for only 65 percent of the driver fatalities in the 10 counties, these results do not necessarily provide an accurate estimate of alcohol involvement among all drivers killed in motor vehicle collisions," TTI researcher Nancy Hatfield said.

But this data does suggest an answer to

what may be happening across the state in terms of the drinking and driving problem, Hatfield said.

While blood alcohol concentrations that are equal to or greater than the legal limit of .10 percent were found in half of all the drivers sampled, the survey says more than 60 percent of the drivers had at least some measurable amount of alcohol in their systems.

The data also shows that among the 50 percent whose blood alcohol concentration designated them as legally intoxicated, the average concentration was .21 percent — more than twice the legal limit.

"The fact that average levels among all drivers who had been drinking . . . approached twice the legal limit suggests that it is more than just the social drinker who is involved in these fatal accidents," Hatfield said.

The level of intoxication among the legally drunk drivers did not vary significantly between sexes, she said, nor was age of the drivers or time of the accident a distinguishing factor.

Several demographic distinctions uncovered by the research show that most fatalities occurred between 11 p.m. to 3 a.m. and

involved 21- to 25-year-old males. The data also shows that all males surveyed had an average blood alcohol concentration of .12 percent as compared to .06 percent for females.

The study also found discrepancies between blood alcohol concentration test results and the reporting of alcohol involvement in police officers' accident reports.

Comparisons between the accidents and police reports of those accidents revealed only 31 percent of the reports for legally intoxicated drivers cited alcohol as a contributing factor to the accident.

Celebrate

Cotton Bowl

Downtown Countdown '87

Live on Channel 8 at the corner of Young St. and Lamar St. in downtown Dallas 8pm-1:30am

Bands:

The Byrds

Herman's Hermits

National Secret

Wood	Lamar	Market
Young		

Plus Spectacular Fire Works over Dallas at Midnight
Food, Soft Drinks and Beer Available

\$2.⁵⁰ Admission
(\$2.⁰⁰ with A&M ID)

Midnight Yell 12:10-12:40
Entertainment continues after Yell Practcie