

Weddings

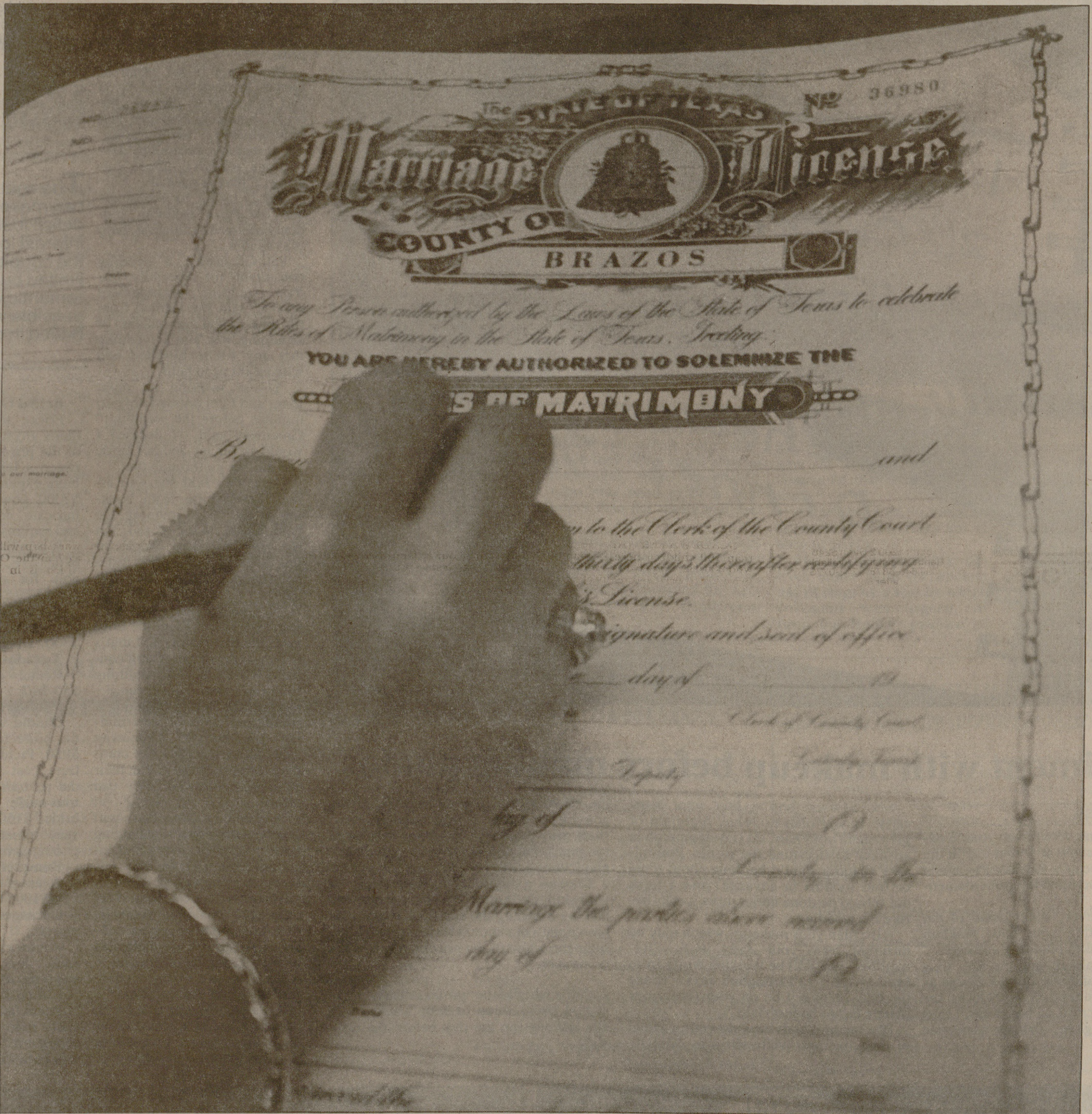


Photo by Kathy Haveman

Marriage licenses make unions legal, official

By CHIP SOWDEN
Of The Battalion Staff

In Texas, you can buy a shotgun right after filling out the paperwork, but if you want to get married, you'll have to wait three days.

Although blood tests are no longer required for a marriage license in Texas, there is a 72-hour waiting period after the license is issued before you can marry.

The waiting period was started as an effort to give peo-

ple a chance to think about it before actually getting married, said Judge Antone Dobrovolny, Brazos County's Precinct 5 justice of the peace.

Marriage licenses are sold at the Brazos County clerk's office at 300 E. 26th St. in Bryan, are valid anywhere in Texas and are required for a marriage to be legal.

You will need the \$25 fee in cash, and if you're 18 years or older, a driver's license and a Social Security card are the only other things you'll need.

You will have to affirm that you're not married to anyone

else, or related in whole or half blood to the person you plan to marry, said Mary Ann Ward, chief deputy to County Clerk Frank Boriskie.

If divorced, you must have been divorced for more than 30 days to remarry, she said.

If you're between the ages of 14 and 18, you will need a signed parental consent form and a birth certificate that has been certified by the county clerk, Ward said.

If you're less than 14 years of age, even the shotgun won't help you, since it's illegal for someone that young to marry

in Texas.

After the license is bought, the person performing the marriage signs it and sends it back to the county clerk's office, where the marriage is recorded. The office then sends the original marriage license back to the newlyweds.

The marriage is then legal, and whatever a couple buys thereafter generally is considered joint property, Dobrovolny said.

People qualified to perform marriages include Christian ministers or priests, rabbis, and judges, Ward said.

"It's surprising how many people go to the justice of the peace to get married," Dobrovolny said.

He said he charges people whatever they want to pay for his marriage services, which usually is about \$20.

"They could just stop by the office and if I'm here, I'll marry them," Dobrovolny said.

He has married people in some strange locations, including at a Red Lobster restaurant.

"If they want to go up in an airplane, I'll do it," he said. "It will cost them a little extra, but I'll do most anything."