

THE WILLIAM HUDSON HUNT FAMILY  
FIRST SETTLERS OF WESTERN WISE  
COUNTY

William Hudson Hunt was a Land Surveyer and due to his ability he was commissioned by several different firms to survey their Land Grants of Texas Land. Wherever possible he took his pay in Land Certificates. He was allowed to select his holdings anywhere he wanted and this accounts for his selection of the western Wise County.

His holdings ran from the West Fork of the Trinity River in Wise County to a distance down into Parker County. His name can be found on many of the land titles of this area today. It is not known as to the exact reasons as to why he lost title to his holdings but in many cases it was done by crooked work.

Mr. Hunt established his Headquarters between Hunts Creek and Jasper Creek that was above flood area and named the Place "Cactus Hill". This became known to the United States Postal Department as Cactus Hill and the first Postmaster at this place was Mr. William H. Hunt, appointed June 30, 1858 and the office was discontinued July 7, 1860. On the account of the Civil War which was then starting, Mr. Hunt then moved his family to Decatur for protection. Records of this appointment can be verified by the General Service Commission, Washington D. C. This Office was reopened on Feb. 11, 1878, and was again discontinued Jan. 8, 1883, being combined with the office at Bridgeport.

The Crossroads of Commerce and Education was at Cactus Hill. Here every traveler was welcome. The settlers moving west, freighters taking products east. The Indians from the north and Mexicans from the south and a short distance away at the mouth of Big Creek (then called Village Creek) was a small village of Caddo Indians.

These Indians were friendly and were farmers and hunters. This group of Indians were referred to by Mr. W. A. Sensibaugh in the Historical Issue of the Bridgeport Index in 1930. Mr. Sensibaugh's father being a good friend of Mr. Hunt. As to what became of this band of Indians nobody knows.

Mr. Hunt was very active in the affairs of the community, he opened his home to organize the First Methodist Church in western Wise Co. Church services were held in his home each Sunday morning. And anyone was welcome to worship with them.

Decedents of Mr. William Hudson Hunt have disappeared from the life of Wise County, however, a number of people who are closely related are now a part of the living Wise County people.

Mary Hunt, neice of William Hudson Hunt was married to James A. Proctor at Aurora, Texas, January 3, 1856, and was known as the first couple to be married in Wise County after the organization of Wise County. Of the many families that are related to Mary Hunt are the Proctor's, the Woods, The Cox's the Pope's families. Doubtless there are others that are not known to me. It is not intended that I might have over-looked others.

Some efforts have been made to preserve parts of the Hunt Family handiwork. And one of the articles to be kept is a huge flat rock about six feet in diameter, it was used as a well cover at the well at the Ranch Headquarters. This large stone was moved across the Lake by several small boats and placed a short distance from the Bridgeport Lake Custodian's Home. This stone has been written about by several writers and they refer to it as being where the Old Butterfield and Overland Stage stopped. Some think that there is a well under this stone in its present position, which is wrong.

The task of moving this stone was accomplished by Mr. Owen T. Funk and Mr. Embry Nines with workers to help being furnished by the Works Progress Authority, an agency of the Federal Government.

The old Fort Building that Mr. Munt had built for protection was not moved due to the lack of time and indifference of the local people. This building was about twelve feet square and about ten feet above ground with additional basement of three or four feet under ground. There were several Fort Holes on each side and at different heights. It was covered over with logs and dirt. Its walls being brown sand rock.

Mr. Munt and Mr. James A. Proctor and others built the first toll bridge across the West Fork of the Trinity River. To do this they asked the Texas State Legislature to pass an act of the legislature to incorporate the West Fork Bridge Company. Its final approval was made December 30, 1861. The State Legislature also gave the West Fork Bridge Company further protection granting them franchise to the river a mile and a half each way from the bridge and stated that they would not permit any other bridge to be built in the described territory.

The first bridge was built about where the Rock Island railroad is today and with the exception of the county bridges in the area and railroad, there has not been any other bridge built at this location.

"MUNT'S CREEK BRIDGE"  
NEAR MUNT'S RANCH HEADQUARTERS

This bridge fell in the creek a few days after this picture  
was taken in 1930.

The county never recovered the bridge.

THE HUNT FAMILY CEMETERY  
SEVEN MILES WEST OF BRIDGEPORT

\* UNFINISHED \*

\*\*FAIN WOULD I SLEEP,  
I KNOW NOT IF THE DAY  
WILL BRING ENLIGHTENED GRIEF OR GREATEST JOY

"Belle Hunt"

This picture taken in the summer of 1928  
Reproduction made by Snap Shots Inc. 1964  
Poem by Belle Hunt, Wise County Poetess.

THE HUNT FAMILY CEMETERY  
SEVEN MILES WEST OF BRIDGEPORT

Beneath Two beautiful Live Oak Trees rest the family of William Hudson Hunt, The first family to live in the Western part of Wise County. Their desire, to be left in peace, but progress of the times disrupted their Eternal Rest and the remains were moved to the EastSide Cemetery of Bridgeport to make possible the construction of a dam on the Trinity River, known as Lake Bridgeport. This Cemetery was located about two miles west of Collums Twin Hills Camp, Lake Bridgeport.

Parties in the Picture are;

Jim Hudson - Barber

Arthur Easley - Highline work

This picture was taken in Mid-Summer of 1929 - by W. E. Membree

Pictures in this binder were reproduced from negatives  
March 1964

THE HUNT FAMILY CEMETERY

Entrance to the Hunt Family Cemetery

Belle Hunt - Shortridge was a writer of many poems of friends and acts of disaster, such as "The Spring Palace Fire" in Fort Worth, and a poem to Texas titled "Lone Star Lights". In this poem she made a very beautiful request;

"GIVE ME ONE HEART'S SMILE AND I'LL WIN THE WORLD\*\*\*  
AFTER A WHILE.

In the picture is:

W. E. Membree, a Carpenter  
Jim Hudson, a Barber

Picture taken Mid-Summer of 1929  
Reproduced from negative March 1964

"BELLE HUNT"

WIFE OF

SAMUEL A. SHORTRIDGE



MY LAST TRIP TO THE HUNT CEMETERY

In my life time I made several tripsto this beautiful cemetery. And when this picture was taken I knew this would be my last trip. As you see I walked away and never went back.

This picture was taken in the summer of 1930 and reproduced from a negative in 1964.

"CATHERINE HUNT"

WIFE OF

W. H. HUNT

DIED APRIL 5, 1861

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE HUNT FAMILY BURIED AT THE  
OLD HUNT CEMETERY

LANSING HUNT

Died May 5, 1867

died in Los Angeles, Calif

Elizabeth Hunt Crutchfield

Died December 13, 1872

William Hudson Hunt

Died January 13, 1864

Died from injuries caused by a run-away team between Decatur and Bridgeport.