

# SCENES OF OTHER DAYS.

## A Sketch of the Oldest Preacher in Dallas County.

### SOME EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

A Spoon Manufactured in 1661—A Silver Knee-buckle of Ancient Date—An Old English Publication in Which Texas Is Described.

CARROLLTON, Dallas Co., Tex., March 26.—Rev. John M. Myers was born in Grayson county, Ky., in 1823. He moved to within half a mile of his present home near Carrollton, Dallas county, in December, 1845, and drew a hedright under the Peters colony contract and improved a farm. His life has been devoted to farming and preaching. He was in the organization of the first church ever organized in Dallas county, namely, the Union Baptist church near the present village of Farmers' Branch. In 1849 Mr. Myers was ordained to preach by this same church, being among the first; if not the very first minister ever ordained in Dallas county. His father, Rev. David Myers, preached the first sermon ever preached on Elm Fork, and also the first one in the town of Dallas—then a very small village.

The subject of this sketch was married to Miss Kizzia Wiley when he was 20 years old, and from that marriage are now living a large family of children and forty



REV. JOHN M. MYERS.

grand children. A biographical sketch of Mr. Myers was published in the Texas Baptist Herald of Dec. 11, 1890, from which the following excerpts are taken:

"While working on the farm for the support of his family, he preached in Dallas, Denton, Kaufman and Tarrant counties, in which he planted some of the strongest churches to be found in Texas. He was pastor and missionary for more than thirty years."

"He is perhaps the best posted man in the history of Elm Fork Baptist association now living, and was moderator three years."

"Mr. Myers' first wife died in 1834, and he afterward married, in Denton county, Mrs. M. E. Ricon, an earnest christian lady and a zealous Sunday school worker."

Mr. Myers underwent all the privations of the early pioneers, and has cut and split his hundred rails many a day on the slender diet of plain corn bread and sour dock greens, boiled in Elm fork water, with a little salt as the only seasoning. He says water and sour dock were the only articles of diet of which he had a plentiful supply in those early days. The corn was reduced to meal after the Indian process mainly, that is, in a wooden mortar beat with a wooden pestle. These old mortars were made by burning a hole in the end of a block of hard wood. Later on he procured a steel hand mill which made coarse corn-meal very well. These hand mills were in common use in this country thirty or forty years ago. Speaking of those early times, Mr. Myers said:

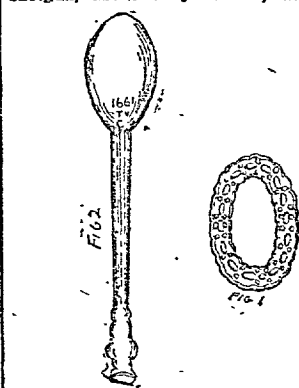
"We had plenty of game then, especially deer and wild turkeys. I have counted as many as twenty-six deer on the prairie in one day, but as I never had time nor inclination for hunting I never killed any myself, though most of my neighbors killed a great many. I have never fired a gun in Texas."

"Yes, I belong to the Dallas county pioneers' association, and for the last four or five years have been its chaplain. My immediate neighbors in the pioneer days were: Alexander W. Perry, Preston and Wade Witt, Wm. Morris, J. M. Kennedy, Robert Chowning, Wm. Lerner, John and Dan Harris and John Jackson. Of these Aleck Perry and Jim Kennedy still live in the neighborhood. A postoffice was established at Farmers' Branch, as well as I remember, pretty soon after Dallas was made a postoffice."

The accompanying cut of Mr. Myers was made from an old daguerreotype, which was taken soon after the war, and of course is much younger in appearance than he is now, and Mr. Myers thinks it "does not give the old gentleman justice by any means." The long white beard he now wears gives him a much more patriarchal appearance than this portrait shows.

### Some Relics.

Mr. W. H. Kennedy, near Carrollton, Dallas county, has several interesting old relics. One is an old hand-hammered, flint lock rifle, which has, however, been shortened several inches from its original length and modernized into a percussion cap gun. It was made many years ago in Alabama, and brought to this state by some of Mr. Kennedy's ancestors. It is probably 80 years old, and has been restocked several times. He has also a fine double-barrel shotgun, about 40 years old, which he



SILVER RELICS.

bought from an old hunter from Illinois. Antedating these relics of the chase, however, Mr. Kennedy has a silver knee-buckle and an old silver spoon, both of which came "from far across the sea." The knee-buckle (Fig. 1) is of unique pattern, and quite handsome. It was worn by Mr. Kennedy's great-uncle, Mr. Wm. B. Rowe, an old English gentleman who lived at Forquer, England. The spoon (Fig. 2), however, is evidently older than the knee-buckle. It is seven inches long and the handle terminates in a grotesque figure of a man with a broad hat on. The spoon is solid silver, while the figure on the end of the handle seems to be of some other metal and soldered to the handle. The bowl of the spoon is rounder and rather deeper than those of the present day, and on the back are engraved: "1661" and the letters "I V" and "C V." What these letters mean Mr. Kennedy does not know. He thinks the spoon is of German make, as it formerly belonged to his grandmother Kennedy, who came from Germany.

Mr. John Bryan, a neighbor of Mr. Ken-

nedy's (and who, by the way, was the first white child born in Dallas county,) has a very old volume, the title of which I do not now fully recall, but it is an old English publication—a sort of geographical gazetteer. I turned to the word "Texas," and read this description: "A large province in the audience of Mexico, New Spain, bounded on the south by the gulf of Mexico and New Leon, west by Cohahuila and north and east by Louisiana. It is about 700 miles long and 200 broad and inhabited by numerous nations of Indians who have but few settlements. It is woody and well watered and abounds in wild horses. St. Antonio is the capital."