

Tom Marsh: Noted Teen-Age Hunter

By SAM ACHESON

WITH ITS NAME, Marsh Lane, which runs throughout the northwest quadrant of Dallas County as a major traffic way, recalls one of the more important pioneer families in the Dallas area.

Long a narrow, graveled country lane extending southward from the Thomas C. Marsh farm homeplace near the present intersection of LBJ Freeway, Marsh Lane has been progressively upgraded as a thoroughfare, notably in the quarter of a century since the end of World War II. It extends now from Loop 12 on the south at Lemmon Avenue to Belt Line Road on the north, a short distance from the north boundary of the county. For most of its length it links the adjoining suburban cities of Farmers Branch, Carrollton and Addison to the parent City of Dallas.

Marsh Lane commemorates in particular one member of the Marsh clan, Thomas C. Marsh, who attained local fame as one of the most skillful of teenage hunters in pioneer days. One of Dallas' finest junior high schools is named for him.

THE PATRIARCH of the Marsh family who headed their emigration to Dallas in 1844 was Harrison C. Marsh, then 39 years old. He was a native of Harrison County. He had been a farmer and stock-raiser in Kentucky, and upon reaching Dallas acquired land on which he continued the same joint occupation for the remaining 45 years of his life.

He acquired his land, some 640 acres, as a headright from the Peters Colony Co. of Louisville, Ky., holder of

a contract with the Republic of Texas to settle some 1,800 or more people from the United States in a choice block of land in North Central Texas on the headwaters of the Trinity River.

Harrison C. Marsh had married Mary Raymond, daughter of William Raymond of Kentucky. They became parents of eight children. Two of their daughters — Sarah and Elizabeth — married into the pioneer Fort Worth and Tarrant County family of Daggett, their respective husbands being H. C. and E. B. Daggett.

Two sons who lived to manhood to achieve prominence in local affairs were John D. Marsh and Thomas C. Marsh.

IT IS REMEMBERED that Thomas C. Marsh, who was only 13 years old when the family arrived from Kentucky in 1844, promptly became known as "the hunter of the family." That is, he began keeping the family larder well supplied with deer, wild turkey and other game.

"He went on many a bear hunt," it is related, "killed game of all kind, large and small, and so skillful was he as a hunter that he gained local notoriety."

Thomas C. Marsh remained on the family farm until he was 25 years old. Then in 1856 he married, his bride being Hannah Husted, daughter of Elkner Husted, who had come with his family from New York State in 1851. Husted in early life had worked for a number of years for the Hudson Bay Fur Co.

When he was 17 years old Thomas C. Marsh had taken up 320 acres of Peters Colony land, the amount that could be allotted to an unmarried man. After his marriage he began developing his own farm, enlarging its acreage and making various improvements. He gave his principal attention to "the stock business."

It may be noted in passing that in pioneer days in Dallas County, the term of ranching, or cattle-raising, was rarely if ever used. The usual description was "stock-raising" by a "stock-raiser," whether the animals raised were cattle, sheep or horses.

IN 1862 THOMAS C. Marsh enlisted in the Confederate Army and saw active service in the Oklahoma Territory and Arkansas. At the end of the war he returned home to Dallas only to find his farm laid waste and his stock dissipated. His wife and three sons awaited his return and gave him a rousing welcome. He now undertook to begin life anew.

The children of Thomas C. Marsh and his wife were Mary, who became Mrs. J. E. Buchanan of Dallas County; his daughter Sarah, who became Mrs. A. W. Stainaker, and a son, Thomas J. Marsh, both of Dallas.

Marsh found time to take part in political affairs but only as an interested citizen, never as an office seeker. "His views are in harmony with Democratic principles," it was said by a contemporary in the post-Civil War period, "and with that party he has been affiliated."

BY THE CLOSING decade of the last century Thomas C. Marsh owned and managed one of the largest and most prosperous farms in North Texas and was successfully engaged in large-scale stock-raising.

"He now owns in the neighborhood of 700 acres of as fine land as there is in the world," it was written in 1892. "He has it all under fence, 175 acres under cultivation, and the rest devoted to pasture. He also keeps graded cattle. He has a fine jack and is giving attention to mule raising.

"Financially, and otherwise, he has made a success of life. He is ranked with the wealthy and influential farmers of this section of the country."



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