

The Collard Cabin

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Read by Cheryl Spencer, Library Associate in Special Collections.

This is Cheryl Spencer, Special Collections Associate in the Thomason Room at Newton Gresham Library at Sam Houston State University. Our talk today concerns the cabins on 19th Street across from Sam Houston Woodland Home. There are three old homes that house today's Homestead restaurant, the main one being the Collard Cabin.

In 1828, Lemuel M. Collard left Missouri to explore the possibilities of the Mexican province of Texas. Apparently his report was glowing, because in 1832, two of his brothers joined him. In 1834, his father, mother, and five brothers and sisters followed. Lemuel, his brothers James Harrison, Job Stark, and Jonathon Stark Collard all fought for Texas independence.

The year is now 1843. Just north of the present-day New Waverly, Lemuel Millard Collard and his bride, Elizabeth Lindley, settled on the league of land Collard had received as a settler in the untamed lands of Coahuila-Texas. Elizabeth Lindley was born in Illinois in March of 1815. Her parents were Samuel Washington Lindley and his second wife, Elizabeth Whitley. The Collard, Lindley, and Whitley families had been long-time friends in Kentucky and Missouri before their trek to Texas. A marriage record has not been found for this couple.

The one-room cabin, built by Lemuel and Elizabeth, was constructed of native pine logs that were hand-hewed and square-notched. The room was probably divided into a parlor and sleeping area. A chimney was used for warmth and light. A loft, which served as sleeping quarters for their children, could be reached by an L-shaped stairway.

Additions were added as the family grew. A second room was added with a ten-foot wide dog run dividing the two main rooms. A clapboard siding was added to the exterior, and two brick chimneys replaced the old mud and stick chimney.

The Collards sold the house around 1846. Eight of their 13 children were born in this house. Descendants of these children still live in Walker County.

The house changed hands several times and was remodeled several times before 1980, when George Russell acquired it and moved the house to 19th Street. It was restored to its near-original appearance, then opened as a restaurant. If walls could talk, many happy experiences of the Collard family would unfold.