

The Founding of Huntsville

Episode 25: Nov. 1, 2007

Adapted, by permission of the Walker County Historical Commission, from: Pleasant and Hannah Gray. (1986). In Walker County Historical Commission (Ed.), *Walker County, Texas: A History* (p. 51). Dallas: Curtis Media.

Read by Cheryl Spencer, Library Associate in Special Collections.

This is Cheryl Spencer with the Newton Gresham Library at Sam Houston State University. Our talk today is about the founding of Huntsville, from the *History of Walker County*, page 51.

In the early 1800s, a colonization plan was presented to the Mexican government in order to develop the land called Texas. This plan passed and was called the State Colonization Law of Coahuila and Texas. It was designed to encourage people to come into the area and establish homes and towns.

The Mexican Government appointed 24 *empresarios*, or land contractors, who were given a certain amount of land under the stipulation that they were to bring settlers into their land areas.

These *empresarios* advertised that land was available in Mexico's State of Coahuila and Texas. Many people left their former homes and moved into Texas.

One such family by the surname of Gray left their homes in Tipton County, Tennessee, and began a long journey into Texas.

The Grays arrived in the Nacogdoches area of Texas in the early spring of 1834. Pleasant Gray went to the Government Official in Nacogdoches and took an oath to obey the laws of Mexico.

On July 10, 1835, Pleasant received his land grant and was given a league of land, or 4,428.4 acres.

The Grays moved onto their land and set up their homestead. Pleasant and Hannah, with the help of his brothers, built a trading post on the land.

More people came into the area. Many of these had read and heard about an advertisement that Pleasant had put on the riverboats and in towns in Alabama, Tennessee, and New Orleans, Louisiana. A blacksmith came into the area, other merchants set up their stores, and a small town began to form.

In 1836, many men in this area, including Pleasant Gray, fought in the Texas Revolution against Mexico.

In 1837, this small town was within the boundaries of Montgomery County in the now independent Republic of Texas. The town was given the name of Huntsville.

Texas joined the United States in 1845. The following year, the First Legislature of the new state established Walker County, and Huntsville became the County Seat.