



#24: Humble's Top Seven Myths

It's 2020. There is lots happening this year to celebrate! The number one thing to celebrate is that the Humble Museum will finally re-open this year. I thought this might be a good time to finally put an end to some of the "myths" about early Humble. I keep running across these myths being repeated in books, articles and speeches. But, they are NOT true. Here are the top seven Humble "myths":

1) ***Humble was originally called "Hunter's Paradise."*** This is the one story I have been diligently tracking down since the beginning of my Humble research. It features prominently in The History of the Humble, Texas Area book. However, it's not true. There is no mention of a "Hunter's Paradise" in any document in the historical record. Nothing in the Harris County Archives. Nothing in the State Archives. None of the handwritten letter's we have of early area settler's ever call it by that name. Hunter's Paradise is not mentioned in any sales ad, catalog, magazine, newspaper, map...nothing. The original area was simply referred to as being along the banks of the San Jacinto River. In the 1850's, references were made to the Robert Dunman or Joseph Dunman Settlements in the area. By the last 1870's, the area was encompassed by the Lord's Mill Community. By the mid-1880s, it was known as Humble. There was no "Hunter's Paradise."

2) ***Humble was also called "Dunman's Prairie."*** Nope. This one doesn't work either. Dunman's Prairie is actually south of Humble. It's near the intersection of Wilson Road and the Atascocita Road (part of the area where River Pines Elementary is located). Joe Dunmna's Schoolhouse was located in that same place. Its name was changed to the Dunman's Prairie School in 1888 after a new school opened up closer to Humble.

3) ***Pleasant Humble was a wandering fisherman.*** Geez! This one is so absolutely wrong. It makes him sound like a vagabond. He was NOT a wandering fisherman. He was a Civil War veteran from Louisiana. He intentionally moved to Harris County, and started buying up land in the present-day Humble area. He was a lawyer and a politician...certainly not a vagabond!

4) ***Pleasant Humble was from England, that's why the "H" is silent in "Humble."*** Unbelievable. First: Pleasant Humble was not English...he was from Louisiana. His parents AND his grandparents were from the South. He was NOT English. Second: How many people from England do you know who don't pronounce the letter H?! I didn't realize that was even a thing! We don't know WHY Pleasant Humble pronounced his name with a silent "H"...but it certainly wasn't because he was from England. Someone.Just.Made.That.Up.

5) ***E.M. "Booge" Isaacks started the first school in Humble.*** E. M. Isaacks was an early Humble settler and a very good man. I have the pleasure of working with his granddaughter on the Humble Museum Board of Directors. However, he did NOT start the first school in Humble. (a) The first school in Humble was Joe Dunman's Schoolhouse in 1873. (b) The school they are referring to in regards to E. M. Isaacks was the West River School, which opened in 1888. (c) The land for the West River School was donated to Harris County by William Humble, although E. M. Isaacks did sign the deed as a witness. (d) the West River School was run by Harris County Common School District No. 28. So, it was run by Harris County and the District No. 28 School Board. E. M. Isaacks was not part of either of those organizations. Time to put this one to rest.

6) **Two brothers started the 1912 Downtown Humble Fire.** Here's how this one goes – two brothers were playing poker. One got mad at the other and threw a lantern at him. The lantern broke and caused a fire which destroyed two-and-a-half blocks of downtown Humble. It's a GREAT story...it's just not true. We have all sorts of information about the fire from the Houston Chronicle and the Houston Post. They not only reported when the fire happened, but they followed it up for days with reports on the aftermath. The fire started in a fruit stand located in a grocery store. None of the stories from that time make any mention of the two brothers fighting. That story didn't appear until years later, because it was MADE UP!

7) **There were four students in Humble's first graduating class.** Actually, there were only two. Humble's first graduating class consisted of two twin girls, Edith and Ethel Innman. The other two students the story refers to are Bob E. Smith and Garrett Herring. Bob Smith actually dropped out of school and never graduated. He went on to become a VERY rich man, and was the man who supplied the money to acquire Houston's major league sports franchise, the Colt 45s (later called the Houston Astros). In 1948, the Humble School District DID present him with an honorary diploma. As far as Garrett Herring, there is no record that he ever graduated from Humble. That in itself is odd, since his father served on the Humble School Board at the time. His name was added to the story sometime in the 1970s....but he was not in that graduating class.

Those are the seven biggest "myths" about the early history of Humble. It's time to put these to rest.

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