



## **#4: Who Was Pleasant Humble**

There is no single person more misunderstood in the history of our community than our town founder, Pleasant Humble. Most people view Pleasant Humble as some kind of wandering fisherman from England that set himself up as postmaster and Justice of the Peace, back before there were laws in this part of Harris County. This couldn't be further from the truth.

First of all, Pleasant Humble wasn't English. His parents were married in Mississippi in 1827, but made their home in Louisiana. Pleasant Humble was born in 1834, while they lived in Louisiana. When he was 17, his was living in Tyler, Texas. Pleasant Humble eventually made his way back to Louisiana and worked as a clerk in a store owned by L. N. Markham, a plantation owner who operated a store and was also an active Baptist preacher.

Pleasant Humble and Markham's daughter, Jane Elizabeth, were soon attracted to one another. Markham didn't like this. He didn't think Pleasant Humble was good enough for his daughter. So, Markham decided that his daughter would go to Shreveport, where she would attend a female academy. The day before her boat was to sail, she and Pleasant Humble made a break for it. They eloped and got married in Caldwell County, Louisiana on October 1, 1860, and kept running. The outraged Reverend Markham and his five sons rode in pursuit.

Now, that story has been told over and over again. It's a romantic story...two lovers get together despite insurmountable odds. But, some important facts tend to get left out when people tell that story: [#1] Pleasant Humble was 25 years old at the time, while Jane Elizabeth was only 17...so, you could understand the father being a little upset, and [#2] she was 6 months pregnant when they eloped. Their son, Williams Smith Humble, was born in January 1861. NOW we see why he was upset. Reverend Markham eventually forgave her.

Pleasant Humble served in the Confederate Army, as a member of the Louisiana infantry in 1861, and later in Ragsdale's Battalion Texas Cavalry in 1864. By 1866, he and his family had moved to Texas and purchased land here in Harris County. In 1869, Pleasant Humble purchased 100 acres here, near the San Jacinto River, where he operated a ferry across the San Jacinto River and ran a small grocery store. In late 1876, he helped create and served on the school board for Harris County School Community No. 13, the Durdin School Community, which was located near present-day Lee Road and FM 1960.

Most people don't realize that Pleasant Humble was a politician, and a very successful one. Harris County was not the Wild, Wild West. You couldn't just appoint yourself to as postmaster or sheriff. Harris County had rules. In 1876, Pleasant Humble was elected as a Harris County Commissioner. That was a powerful position. The Commissioners Court was responsible for making decisions for Harris County, including which roads were built, oversaw public education, and much more. After serving as a Commissioner for two years, he went on to work as an Attorney.

By February 1886, the local community of Lord was falling apart, and their U. S. Post Office was closed down. Pleasant Humble took over responsibility for local mail, most likely out of his store or home. In August 1886, he worked with the postmaster in Houston to apply for a new U. S. Post Office for the community. The name of the town that he listed on the application was "Humble, Texas." The word Humble was pronounced with a silent "H," because that was the way he pronounced his name. The application was granted, and Pleasant Humble was

appointed the town's U. S. Postmaster. He was later elected and served as the local Justice of the Peace for Harris County Precinct No. 4, serving from 1887 through 1895.

His wife died in January 1906, and their son, William Humble, also died later that same year. By 1910, Pleasant Humble was becoming feeble, and went to live with his sister in Hardin County. It is suspected that he died between 1910 and 1912. We have no way of knowing, because there are no more record of him after that time...no death certificate, no more census records, no tombstone...nothing.

His son did not have any children, so there are no more descendants of Pleasant Humble. But we, the town folk of Humble, Texas are the true descendants of the brilliant Civil War veteran.

---

*This article originally appeared in the Humble, Texas newspaper: The Tribune, 11 July 2018.*

---