



#41: The Humble Ferry

We hear lots of stories about Pleasant Humble and the things he did for the young town of Humble. One of the stories is about a ferry he operated to cross the San Jacinto River. The ferry in question crossed the West Fork of the San Jacinto River...just downstream from where the train currently crosses the river. The ferry launched from land that was originally owned by John B. Jones.

Harris County authorized a ferry at this location (John B. Jones's land) starting in 1849. Operating a ferry was a business and required the approval of the Harris County Commissioners Court. The Court also set the price on the passenger fees for the service, including the price for transporting livestock on the ferry. There were other ferries in operation in Humble around the same time. Mary Blanton was granted a ferry franchise, about 3/4 of a mile from the railroad crossing in 1861, which was later operated by Patrick Morley, then Rachel Morley, and later by Mrs. Dora Stanfield. There was also a ferry in operation east of Humble (where Lake Houston is now).

In 1853, John Brown Jones sold 984 acres of this land to Sarah Goodman. Sarah was the daughter of early Humble settler, Joseph Dunman. Sarah had a tenant named Jesse B. Woodyard who lived on this land as early as 1854. Woodyard built a house, cultivated a few acres, and operated the ferry across the San Jacinto River. In 1858, Sarah Goodman and her husband T. J. divided up the land, selling 279 acres to Joseph Dunman, and 602 acres to Adelard Bourgeois. The Goodmans kept about 100 acres, including the land used for the ferry. Jesse B. Woodyard continued to live on the Goodmans land and operated the ferry.

In 1860, Sarah Goodman sold the remaining 100 acres to her tenants, Jesse B. Woodyard and Eliza Morgan. The land was known as the Woodyard Place. Eliza Morgan was Sarah Goodman's sister. Eliza's husband, Richard Morgan, had died in 1856. Eliza Morgan lived on the land with Woodyard. A few years later, Woodyard left and J. J. Roberts occupied his land as his tenant. Roberts was authorized as a franchisee by the Harris County Commissioners to operate the ferry across the river. During this time, Eliza Morgan married Absalom Hogan. On 21 August 1867, Eliza and her new husband attempted to oust Roberts from the land, but Hogan was killed during the attempt. Ultimately, Woodyard and Morgan split the land, with each receiving 50 acres.

In 1868, Woodyard sold his share of the land (50 acres) to John and Mary Thornton. Thornton operated the ferry for about two years. Eliza Hogan (formerly Eliza Morgan) sold her 50 acres to Pleasant S. Humble and his wife in 1869. The following year, the Thornton's also sold their 50 acres to Mr. and Mrs. Humble. So now the Humble's owned the entire 100 acres, including the ferry. Humble and his family lived at the homestead for several years. He operated the ferry and ran a small grocery store in a house he built near the ferry. He also continued to cultivate the land that had originally been cultivated by Woodyard.

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