

27"x 42" Official Texas Historical Marker with post
Falls County - 2/10/75 - E bank of Brazos at site of falls,
5 mi SW of Marlin along FM 712.

WM

FALLS OF THE BRAZOS RIVER

WHEN ANGLO-AMERICANS BEGAN TO SETTLE IN TEXAS, THE FALLS OF THE BRAZOS WERE LOCATED 2 MILES SOUTHWEST OF HERE. AT THAT TIME, THE WATER FELL ABOUT 10 FEET OVER A ROCKY LEDGE. THE FALLS SERVED THE INDIANS AND EARLY SETTLERS AS A TRAIL LANDMARK, MEETING POINT, AND CAMPSITE. IN 1834 COLONIZER STERLING C. ROBERTSON (1785-1842) ESTABLISHED THE TOWN OF SARAHVILLE DE VIESCA AT THE FALL LINE ON THE WEST BANK OF THE BRAZOS, BUT IT WAS ABANDONED IN 1836 BECAUSE OF INDIAN HOSTILITIES. LATER RENAMED FT. MILAM, THE SETTLEMENT LASTED ONLY A FEW MORE YEARS. IT WAS FOLLOWED BY THE TOWN OF BUCKSNORT, BEGUN IN THE 1840s ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE RIVER. THE FALLS ALSO FORMED A NATURAL FORDING PLACE FOR FRONTIER TRAVEL; THE ROCKY STREAM BED WAS THE ONLY HARD-BOTTOM CROSSING OF THE BRAZOS WITHIN 200 MILES OF THE COAST. THE RAPIDS MARKED THE LIMIT OF THE RIVER'S 19TH CENTURY STEAMBOAT TRAFFIC AS WELL.

ORGANIZED IN 1850, FALLS COUNTY WAS NAMED FOR THIS DISTINCTIVE LANDMARK. MARLIN BECAME THE COUNTY SEAT IN 1851, AND BUCKSNORT SOON DISAPPEARED. THE BRAZOS RIVER CHANGED COURSE IN 1866, MOVING THE FALL LINE TO THE PRESENT SITE AND LOWERING THE RAPIDS TO ABOUT 2 FEET. TODAY A COUNTY PARK IS LOCATED ALONG BOTH SIDES OF THE RIVER AT THE FALLS.

(1975)

NAME OF MARKER Falls of the Brazos River

TOWN Marlin

, COUNTY Falls

DATE 8-29-74

TO: TEXAS STATE HISTORICAL SURVEY COMMITTEE

FROM: TEXAS HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

4245

On this date the Texas Historical Foundation received a donation for a Design E, 27" x 42", with Post

We ask to be advised by your Committee if the history is sufficient, the location satisfactory, and all other requirements set forth by the State have been met.

Gertrude N. Amador

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS: Category: WM

Truett Latimer: Approved

BA
Initial

10-2-73
Date

Deolece Parmelee: Please ask for the following supplementary information: (1) The marker will be located at the site of the present falls or at the site of the falls of the 1830s? (2) On what highway will the marker be installed? (3) Will the falls be visible from the marker, when installed? (4) Please furnish a description of what is at the falls today; give land ownership and scenic description. D. Parmelee, 8-30-74

With the additional information sent us on October 1, we should be able to write a well documented marker (provided we supplement the file with some fruther information on hand here).

THE FALLS OF THE BRAZOS RIVER
Compiled and Composed by
Mary H. Price

4245

The falls of the Brazos River is located five miles southwest of Marlin and six miles east of Lott in the County of Falls. The County was given its name for the falls of the Brazos River, which were named by early adventurers, prospectors and settlers.

E. N. Morrell, a Baptist Preacher who came to Texas in 1835 for his health, said "the water fell about ten perpendicular feet, and the water below abounded in fish."

described Roemer, a German geologist who visited Texas in 1845, also described the falls. "After the heat of the day we covered the remaining six miles to the falls of the Brazos. The road led us diagonally across the half-rotted tree trunks strewn about in the wildest disorder. The so called falls are really only rapids and are caused by layers of bluish grey marlslate, belong to the cretaceous formation, three to four feet high, lying diagonally across the river. The river was considerably broader here than downstream, but so shallow at this time of the year that we could ford it without danger."

The river course of 1833 was located two miles southwest from the present site of the falls. The river not only changed its course to the present [?] 1866 route, but the falls itself dropped from 10 feet in 1835 to 2 feet to 3 feet high today. In the days of the steamboat the falls was the head of navigation, and an early town located there was called Bucksnot.

The falls area was alluring to the Indians. at least ~~there were~~ 176 local ~~settlements~~ have been located prior to 1974. ~~These~~ settlements ~~covered~~ ed a period of one hundred years. The Indians chose the area of the Brazos River because of the natural geographical and physical characteristics. It furnished them with fish and clams for food and also provided them with well-defined trails. The Indians of Texas were great travelers. The Falls County Indians fought with the Apaches in the southwest, the Comanches of the

Probably
he spent
was longer
than 100
years.
JP
8.30-74

Variant spelling for ~~Karankawas~~ SP, 8-30-74

northwest, the Carancawas of the coastal area and the Texas Indians of the east. When they were not fighting they were trading with them. When the white people began to settle in Central Texas there was a great Indian trail beginning at the old falls of the Brazos, skirting the Blue Ridge District, and winding its way to the Spanish settlements in East Texas. Other tribes known to be in the area were the Tonkawas, Tehuacanas and Huacas.

Perhaps a variant spelling for ~~Waco~~ SP, 8-3

Thomas Jefferson Chambers was granted 5-leagues of land and in the description of one of his leagues states "Beginning at a stake on the East bank of the Brazos River about 200 yards below the mouth of Gleanson's Creek which runs into the Brazos River below the great falls of the same on the East bank of the said river about 1/2 mile below the bluff of the said river on the opposite bank were in former times the Tehuacana Indian Village." The Municipality of Viesca is due west from this tract of land and the settlement of Bucksport is part of it.

This may mean "falls" in former times... SP, 8-30-74

site of the former site of

The falls ^{location} does carry some significance in our Texas history. At the time of Dr. James Long's expedition in Texas in 1819 there was a trading house at the falls, established by David Long (Dr. Long's brother) and Captain Johnson.

Also, the falls ^{site} has always been noted for its geographical distinction. It was an early famous rendezvous for adventurers, prospectors, settlers, fisherman, families and friends. "We'll meet at the falls of the Brazos----" were familiar agreements, instructions, or messages throughout Texas and elsewhere. The Reverend Z. N. Morrell in traveling to Texas said he was "pressed hard by a former engagement in which by agreement we were to meet ex-Congressman David Crockett from Gibson County, Tennessee, on Christmas Day at the Falls of the Brazos and have a bear hunt."

The earliest settlements in the area were at the falls, including David Long's trading Post in 1819; Sarahville de Viesca, west of the Brazos from 1834-1835, being renamed ~~to~~ Fort Milan in 1835-1852; The settlement of Bucksport east of the Brazos from 1837 ~~to~~ 1852.

Page #3

Also ^{the} Torreys ^(brothers and merchants) had a branch store at the falls in the 1840's. Sam Houston wrote to Messrs. Torrey and Brothers on December 23, 1943, informing them ^{that} at the falls of the Brazos there were many Indians who had come down to trade, ^{BRINGING} bringing quantities of pelts and some of them even specie. Houston pointed out that it was an excellent opportunity to establish a good trade, such as powder, lead, and blankets, and advised them to establish themselves at the falls temporarily until they could erect a trading house at a location more convenient to the trade.

Many stories came from the area of the well known falls. One experience was written by the Rev. Z. N. Morrell.

On May 1, 1837, the commander of the fort at Fort Milam told Mr. Morrell the ammunition was about exhausted, and money too, and knowing that the preacher had some from the sale of his property in Tennessee, asked him to go in search of powder and lead at his own expense. Realizing all persons in the fort had "all things in common" and had either to join hands, farm, fight and live together, or fall back, leaving the lower settlements at the mercy of the savages, or die, Morrell started on his trip for supplies. He left with his ox-team, willing to match wits again with savages, risk his life, fearing that his little log cabin would be burned to ashes and his family wiped out. He ^{journeyed} ~~journeyed~~ southward to Houston in his oxen-drawn wagon, having only currency of paper from the banks of the United States. This money was considered worthless in Houston and by June 1, 1837, he was in New Orleans, hoping to exchange it for more negotiable money. For fourteen days he walked the street, trying to negotiate for supplies. Finally he succeeded in exchanging his money at about sixty cents on the dollar and bought the needed supplies.

Mr. Morrell returned to Houston with goods he had acquired and, upon arrival, found letters telling him that Indians and Mexicans about the middle of June had overpowered the Fort at the Falls and had killed a ranger, Coryell. All the families had been forced to flee for their lives. The preacher's family was "safely" at Nashville

forty-five miles down the river but nearly everything in the way of provisions and household furniture had fallen into the enemy's hands. "Truly, it seemed that all my misfortunes were coming upon me at once," he wrote. "God be praised, my wife and children lived. The best crop I ever made was all lost, our household furniture and farming tools all captured."

On January 28, 1850, the State Legislature passed an Act creating Falls County. In Section I of said Act it ^{was} stated the new county should be called Falls County, ~~And~~ Section II of ~~the~~ Act ^{that} said the old municipal town of Viesca at the falls of the Brazos "shall be the County seat of said county until otherwise provided by law." The records of Milam and Falls County were burned, but presumably the people living on the east side of the river considered the Act creating Falls County including problems in their relation to their desires, and in the end petitioned for an election in which people might choose for themselves the location of the county seat. The Commissioners Court minutes of February 24, 1851, show Harlin to be the County seat of Falls County.

The falls is the oldest known landmark in Falls County and it gave our County its name. The falls still carried memories of the triumphant battles to settle our land, the land of opportunity, the land ^{that} also many people ~~came~~ came, fought, and died for.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

HISTORY OF FALLS COUNTY, by Roy Eddins, Pages 5, 19, 26, 43-59, 64, and 107.

ROEMER'S TEXAS, by Dr. Ferdinand Roemer, page 206

FLOWERS AND FRUITS, by E. W. Morrell, pages 39, 42, 70, 71

TEXANA, Vol. II, No. 2 page 112 - TORREY'S TRADING POST, by Henry C. Arbuster

TALES OF THE FRONTIER TEXAS, by Anderson, page 133 footnote
McLennan County Community College Library

Flat Book 2, Map Records of Falls County

Book 1, Page 161, Surveyors Records of Falls County.

RECEIVED

P. O. Box 482
Marlin, Texas
October 1, 1974

OCT 2 1974

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Texas State Historical Survey Committee
P. O. Box 12276, Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711

4245

RE: Falls of The Brazos River
Design E, 27"x42", w/post

Attention: Mr. Bob Watson

Dear Sir:

In reply to your letter of September 3rd requesting more information, we submit the following:

1. The marker will be located at the site of the present falls.
2. The marker will be installed at the Park site on the east side of the falls on FM #712.
3. The falls will be visible from the marker when it is installed.
4. The falls today is low, flat cleared land. A campsite is located on the east side and a park is in the process and under construction for both sides of the falls. With the water control at Lake Whitney the falls is not as deep as it has been in prior years, in fact the small falls is approximately 2 feet in height and is accessible to both sides by a road lying diagonally across the river. The County owns the property located on both sides of the falls. With the beautiful trees preserved on the east side and the natural sandy beach on the west side and the proper landscaping this should be one of the prettiest park sites in the State. Fishing in this area is one of the greatest past times as it is abundant with channel cat and yellow cat.

If you have any other questions please let me know and I will be glad to answer them for you.

Sincerely yours,

Falls County Historical Committee

By *Mary H. Price*
Mary H. Price (Mrs.)

APPLICATION FORM FOR OFFICIAL TEXAS HISTORICAL MARKER

(Revised 1974)

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
P. O. Box 12276, Austin, Texas 78711

4245

RECEIVED
AUG 29 1974
TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

FALLS August 21, 1974

County Date

1. **FALLS OF THE BRAZOS RIVER**
Title of marker

2. **East bank of the Brazos River at Park site**
Name of building, cemetery, public square, park, etc., where marker is to be placed.
5 miles southwest of Marlin

3. **Marlin**
Marker site (street address or highway number)

4. **Marlin**
City or nearest city. If marker is to be placed on a highway or in a small community, you must briefly explain how to get there from nearest town shown on a Texas Highway Department road map. For example, "Marker will be in Bastrop Beach, which is 6 miles southeast of Angleton on FM 523."

5. **at the site**
Distance (miles, yards, feet) and direction (north, south, east, west) of subject from marker site. For example, "Subject is 1/2 mile southwest of marker site."

6. **Falls County**
Owner of marker site Address City

7. **Falls County Historical Committee**
Sponsor of marker Address City

8. **George B. Wilson Jr.** **201 Live Oak St.** **Marlin 76661**
County chairman Address City
"I have reviewed the narrative for this marker and attest to its accuracy."

9. **George B. Wilson Jr.** **201 Live Oak St.** **Marlin 76661**
Person to whom marker is to shipped Street Address City
Note: If marker is to be placed on a highway right-of-way, it will automatically be shipped to your district highway engineer.

10. **Post**
Surface to which marker will be attached (i.e., wood, brick, stucco over stone) if not on post.

ORDER FORM

Please consult the marker catalog for specifications of the markers, paperweights, and signs available. Check the items desired below. Then mail this application and narrative history, together with a check made payable to the Texas Historical Foundation, to the address above. No applications will be accepted unless payment is included.

HISTORICAL MARKERS

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 27" x 42" subject marker with post \$475 | <input type="checkbox"/> 16" x 12" building marker with post \$150 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 27" x 42" subject marker without post \$435 | <input type="checkbox"/> 16" x 12" building marker without post \$125 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18" x 28" subject marker with post \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> 16" x 12" building plaque only \$ 75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18" x 28" subject marker without post \$220 | <input type="checkbox"/> 14" medallion only (for replacement purposes) \$ 50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16" x 12" grave marker (comes with mounting bar) \$125 | |

MARKER REPLICA PAPERWEIGHT

This item should be ordered at the same time marker is ordered. Indicate quantity desired. Allow six months from completion of marker for receipt of paperweight.

- 3" x 4" plastic paperweight with replica of marker inside \$ 50

SCOTCHLITE HIGHWAY DIRECTIONAL SIGNS

Please indicate quantity desired.

- 24" x 24" Historical Markers In City sign \$ 50
- black-and-white (for farm-to-market roads, state and U.S. highways)
- green-and-white (for interstate highways)

18" x 22" Historical Route sign (in black-and-white only) --- \$ 50

- with arrow pointing straight ahead
- with arrow pointing left
- with arrow pointing right



Texas Historical Commission

Box 12276, Capitol Station,
Austin, Texas 78711
Truett Latimer
Executive Director

December 16, 1974

Mr. George Wilson, Jr.
201 Shenandaah
Marlin, TX 76661

RE: Falls of the Brazos River
Design E, 27"x 42", w/post

Dear Mr. Wilson:

Before we order casting of the enclosed marker inscription, we would like for you to please review and verify the history set forth in the text, as approved by the State Marker Committee.

Will you please signify your approval of the inscription as submitted by signing and returning the enclosed card at your earliest convenience. You may retain the marker copy for your files.

Sincerely,

Truett Latimer
Executive Director

By:

Bob Watson
Director of Programs

TL/km

P.S. The foundry is experiencing a good bit of difficulty in obtaining the raw materials for the fabrication of markers. Please DO NOT set or announce a dedication date until you have received the marker.

TEXAS HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

BOX 12243 • CAPITOL STATION • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711 • PHONE GR5-6268

December 30, 1974

Mr. Bill Southwell, Jr.
The Southwell Company
P.O. Drawer 179
San Antonio, Texas 78208

NO. 4245

RE. Design E, 27" x 42", with Post

Falls of the Brazos River
Marlin, TX
Falls _____ County

Dear Mr. Southwell:

Enclosed is an application for Design E, 27" x 42", with Post,
Falls 66 the Brazos River, for the City of Marlin, Falls
County.

We would appreciate a rubbing of this inscription.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Gertrude N. Amador
Secretary

GNA/s

Enclosure

SHIP TO:

Mr. George B. Wilson, Jr.
201 Live Oak Street
Marlin, TX 76661

Texas Historical Commission Staff (CW), 12/3/74
27" x 42" Official Texas Historical Marker with post
Falls County (Order #4245)

Location: E bank of Brazos at site of falls, 5 mi. SW of Marlin along
FALLS OF THE BRAZOS RIVER* FM 712

WHEN ANGLO-AMERICANS BEGAN TO SETTLE IN TEXAS, THE
FALLS OF THE BRAZOS WERE LOCATED 2 MILES SOUTHWEST
OF HERE. AT THAT TIME, THE WATER FELL ABOUT 10 FEET
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LATER RENAMED FT. MILAM, THE SETTLEMENT LASTED ONLY
A FEW MORE YEARS. IT WAS FOLLOWED BY THE TOWN OF
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RIVER. THE FALLS ALSO FORMED A NATURAL FORDING PLACE
FOR FRONTIER TRAVEL; THE ROCKY STREAM BED WAS THE
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4245

FILE COPY - DO NOT REMOVE

RECEIVED
READY FOR

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TODAY A COUNTY PARK IS LOCATED ALONG BOTH SIDES OF

DEC 30 1974
SOUTHWELL ORDER
TEXAS HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

THE RIVER AT THE FALLS. **

APPROVED
Truett Latimer

(1975)***

T.L.
12-30-74

*3/4 inch lettering
**1/2 inch lettering
***1/4 inch lettering

DEDICATION DATE (if known) _____

MARKER NAME Falls of the Brazos River

JOB# **4245**

TOWN Marlin

COUNTY ~~Brazos~~ Falls

DATE 8-29-74

Design E, 27" x 42", with Post

\$475.00

MARKER

SIZE

PRICE

George Wilson, Jr. & Virginia Stem

SIGNER OF CHECK

PROCEDURE FOR MARKER APPLICATION

INITIAL DATE

gna	8-29-74	1. Application checked and dated
gna	10-2-74	2. Check deposited
DP MP 8-30-74 10-2-74	9-2-74	3. Folder checked and approved
Jan	9-3-74	4. Additional information sent for
Jan	10-3-74	5. Letter of approval sent, permanent record and DSA recording, labeling, listed & filed in current marker work
CW	11-26-74	6. Checkout to inscription writer
CB	12-27-74	7. Sent for State Marker Committee approval
Jan	12-16-74	8. Inscription submitted for County approval
		9. Highway permission secured (if necessary)
		10. Order sent to Southwell
ma -W-74 2-6-75	12-30-74	11. Rubbing checked
Jan	2-10-75	12. Stencil cut
Jan	2-14-75	13. Recorded for Marker Guide
Jan	2-24-75	14. News release sent, w/copy to TSHSC President (Recorded Landmark Certificate sent, if necessary)
Jan	5-14-75	15. Notice of shipment sent
Jan	5-17-75	16. Extraneous material deleted, folder given to architectural historian
		17. Folder placed in completed marker file

Falls

I approve of the inscription for Falls of the Brazos
River

as sent to me December 16, 1974.

Geo. B. Wilson Jr.

Signed

12/20/74

Date