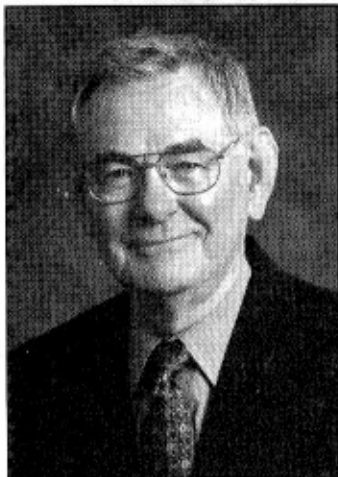




ALL THINGS HISTORICAL

A WEEKLY LOOK AT EAST TEXAS HISTORY FROM
THE EAST TEXAS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Restoring Davy's Spring



Archie P. McDonald

An East Texas landmark remembered by motorists from the last century has been given a long-deserved face lift at Crockett.

Anyone over fifty who traveled down El Camino Real, known today as Texas Highway 21, probably remembers stopping at the Davy Crockett Spring and sampling its cool water.

For children, it was a easy-to-digest lesson in Texas history. Some told their friends in school, "I drank water where Davy Crockett did."

Thanks to a renovation effort, the spring site in downtown Crockett now includes a mural depicting a reunion between Davy Crockett and A.E. Gossett, a old family friend from Tennessee, as Crockett made his way across East Texas in 1835 on his way to the Alamo in San Antonio.

A log cabin, perhaps similar to the one Gossett built near Crockett when he settled in what is now Houston County, is being moved to the site from Davy Crockett

Memorial Park, also in Crockett.

A fort will also be built in the middle of the park, along with a "snake tail" fence of the type used by pioneers in East Texas.

The spring fountain, which has stood at its site for longer than most people can remember, was cleaned and spruced up. And a creek bed has been cleared of debris.

Another addition will include banners of Davy Crockett along El Camino Real from East Houston Avenue though the town square to the park for tourists to follow.

Created by local artist Lucas Short, the colorful mural captures Davy and Gossett meeting in a woodlands setting in late 1835. Three months later, Crockett and about 180 other Alamo defenders died at the Alamo, becoming symbols for liberty.

When Houston County was created by the Republic of Texas in June of 1837, A.E. Gossett donated land for a county seat and, because of his donation, he and his father Elijah were given the privilege of naming the county and the county seat.

Since both Gossetts had

served at the Battle of San Jacinto in April of 1836, they named the county for Sam Houston, who led the troops during the battle, and the county seat for Elijah's boyhood friend from Rutherford County, Tennessee.

When the Gossetts settled in East Texas, it was so remote that when they wanted a pound of coffee or other supplies, someone had to ride a horse to a trading post at Nacogdoches, more than 60 miles away.

It was a journey of two hard days and required A.E. Gossett to leave his wife and children alone at home. But friendly Indian women often stayed with the family as Gossett made his way over a dim, rough woodland trail.

Next time you're in Crockett, be sure you stop at Davy's spring. You, too, can boast that you drank water where Davy did.

(Distributed by the East Texas Historical Association. Bob Bowman of Lufkin is the author of more than 30 books, including "124 Things You Might No6 Know About East Texas Unless You Read This Book.)