

IX. Sabinal

The town of Sabinal is located on the main line of the Southern Pacific Railroad about sixty-five miles west of San Antonio. Open ranges, and later ranches, occupied the land for many years prior to 1908. In fact in the 125 miles from San Antonio to Del Rio there were only Castroville where some Germans had started a farming community, and Uvalde which was a ranchers' town. At cattle shipping points on the railroad were a few stores and a handful of nearby farmers who were tempting the weather god with their hardy ventures.

The occasional stark farm houses stood forth naked in the almost treeless country. The stunted mesquite gave no substantial shade. A few wild pecans, cypress and live oaks were found in the valleys of the widely scattered streams but in the open country only an occasional scrub oak or live oak offered refuge against the glaring sun.

Starting in 1905 good rains brought the farmers sudden

prosperity. In Sabinal the population was reported to have increased from 1,000 to 2,000 between 1904 and 1907. The next year when George and Mary arrived the numbers reached a peak of 2,500. Thereafter Mother Nature returned to normal and only 1,458 citizens could be counted in 1920 (Irene Hart Bates, "History of Sabinal Christian College," MS at Southwest State Teachers' College, 1948, p. 1).

In May 1907 the flourishing little town took an advertisement in the San Antonio Express in which it boasted that in the previous year it had shipped 500 cars of cattle, 30 cars of wood, 250 cars of mine products (Kaolin for the most part), 75 cars of hay, 15 cars of guano, 3,100 cars of cotton, 50,000 pounds of honey, 40,000 pounds of wool and 175,000 pounds of mohair. It also reported seven churches and no saloons.

On returning from their prospecting trip in April 1908 George and Mary reported that they had bought one farm of about a hundred acres of land located some five miles west of the town of Sabinal, and another of about two hundred and fifty acres near Knippa, or some twelve miles west of Sabinal as the roads then ran. Later George acquired another farm in the same general direction to give him upwards of five hundred acres in all. From these he anticipated a good living. Unfortunately, none of the new acquisitions had a good residence on it. Also they were so located that school attendance for the boys would be difficult. The solution was the purchase of a five-room house in town. This was located on about an acre of land and had a barn for the accommodation of a cow, a couple of pigs, and a horse or two.

Now all was bustle and preparation for the great venture in town living. Part of the household furniture and most of the farm machinery were loaded on a railroad freight car. This, however, would have to make a slow trip for it must be transferred from one railroad to another in San Antonio. To have sent the livestock (the cows had been sold in San Marcos) in this fashion would have been both expensive and difficult. Also two families of Mexican renters on the Hill House property wanted to make the move with "Mr. George."

Herbert came by train from Sabinal to help with the preparations. The freight car was loaded in San Marcos and sent ahead. The two best wagons were checked carefully and then a light load was placed on each. One of them contained a barrel to carry drinking water during the trip. Household goods difficult to crate for freight shipment made up the balance of the loads. One of the wagons had a space reserved so that Herbert and Frank, both of whom were to accompany the safari, could sleep. Tied to the rear of each wagon was an extra horse or mule or two that could be used to replace tired animals at need. Each wagon was pulled by four mules but the trip was to be a long one. In addition each of the Mexican families had its own conveyance pulled by its own animals. These were badly overloaded even though George had sent part of their household goods in the freight car. Inevitably here was the weak spot in the arrangements. These conveyances were unable to keep pace with the rest of the group.

When most of the packing was completed George and Mary left for San Marcos to take the train to Sabinal. They were to use Herbert's home (his wife and baby had remained in Sabinal) as a base while they prepared the new house for occupancy. When the packing was finished Ethel and Wilfrid too went to San Marcos for the trip by train.

The next morning the wagons left the farm. Their route was via San Marcos to New Braunfels and on to San Antonio, Castroville, Hondo and Sabinal. From San Marcos to San Antonio the road followed the lower edge of the Balcones geologic Fault that so sharply divides the Hill Country from the coastal plain. West of San Antonio the road followed the Old Spanish Trail along which multiple generations of Spanish explorers and traders had travelled from Florida via New Orleans to San Antonio, ^{thence west and south.} ~~then west toward Mexico or the Pacific.~~ Beyond Uvalde the old road divided, one branch going by way of Del Rio or Laredo to Monterrey and Mexico City, the other proceeding through El Paso to California.

Following the Balcones Fault west of San Marcos the travellers had the limestone hills with their fragrant covering of scrub cedar on their right. To the left the rolling hills of the Mesquite plains extended toward the Gulf of Mexico. On these the farmers had carved out their small holdings at the expense of the ranchers. The temperamental roads were muddy in wet weather and painfully dusty when dry. In either case

this meant delays. Four-mule wagons could get through mud but the last of several vehicles, especially when overloaded and pulled by inferior animals, had a hard time of it. When the roads were dry it was almost as bad. A four-mule wagon stirred up a lot of dust so the following vehicles either had to fall back a long way or both the animals and human occupants took ^{severe} serious punishment.

Finding a place to make camp for the night was a problem. Farmers were hesitant about providing water for fifteen ^{or more} thirsty animals so a campsite near a stream was essential; and to find such a spot at the right time was not easy. Seldom did the expedition make more than twenty miles in a day. And this was about all that the heavily loaded Mexican teams could stand anyway. If no camping place was available and the roads were good they simply had to keep going.

One complication was the lack of road signs. Occasionally a home made sign or a merchant's advertisement indicated the ^{approximate} distance to the next town but official markings had not been heard of and the local folk knew the roads anyway. During the days of the open range the road had maintained a steady general direction. But once farmers fenced in their holdings the highway was frequently diverted at right angles from its proper course. The stranger had to guess which fork he should follow. San Antonio ^{could advertise} boasted of all-weather roads through the main streets but other communities boasted if they had two or three miles of macadamized roads through the center of town.

Herbert and Frank and their Mexican followers set out early on a fine November morning. West of San Marcos a fall shower had made the roads "heavy" so the first day's trip had to stop at the small community of Hunter. Camp was made and the Mexicans proceeded to sleep on the ground. Herbert and Frank preferred the crowded accommodations of the wagon bed for they did not relish the idea of a visit from some prowling rattle snake or a foraging skunk that had caught a whiff of the smell of food.

At daybreak all were awake and on the job. Each vehicle was checked and the axles greased for the day's haul. For the light Mexican conveyances this was not too much of a job but for loaded wagons it was more difficult. The hub cap of each wheel was removed. Then a man grasped the top of the wheel firmly with both hands and smartly jerked it towards himself. The cautious man first placed a prop under the axle but most old hands relied upon their skill. If he pulled the wheel too far out the axle slipped out of the hub and crashed to the ground. With an empty wagon a pry pole was placed on a block to lift the axle back up and replace it in the wheel hub. With a loaded wagon, however, the jolt when the end of the axle struck the ground could easily crack or break it — and replacing a broken axle on the road involved serious delays. Once the wheel was pulled out three or four inches to reveal the bared end of the axle a liberal layer of axle (cup) grease was applied. The wheel was pushed back in place

and the hub cap screwed on. Meanwhile the animals were fed with corn carried along for the purpose, watered at the stream, and other odds and ends cared for. By that time the Mexican women had hot coffee ready and after a light breakfast the teams were hitched up and the caravan again took to the road.

The second evening found the travelers ten miles east of San Antonio. Then came the problem of crossing the city itself. To ^{complicate} make matters worse the road ran directly through Fort Sam Houston which was on the outskirts of the city. The Mexicans had serious qualms about going through the fort, and Frank was almost as nervous when he saw soldiers all around. However, not a single rifle shot was heard and the few soldiers in sight were apparently harmless fellows who waved to the passers by. The caravan rumbled safely through the fort and the town, and again reached "safe, free air" west of the city. A bit of excitement came that night after camp was made a few miles west of the city. Herbert and Frank were awakened by suspicious noises made by a prowler rummaging in the unoccupied wagon nearby. Herbert, aroused, reached for his pistol as the frightened visitor hastily disappeared.

West of San Antonio the roads deteriorated. Few of the streams were bridged for the creek beds were dry for nine-tenths of the time anyway. Even if they held a trickle of water the fords were easily negotiated. Once every few years a tropical hurricane swept

inland from the Gulf of Mexico. As it reached the edge of the Hill Country, where the ground elevation rose rapidly from about 600 feet to 2,000 feet or more, it would unload a fantastic amount of moisture. One such climatic aberration^r dumped over twenty-two inches of rain on the Sabinal countryside in a three-day ordeal. Most of the storms were less torrential but a rain of six or eight inches in a couple of days occurred every few years. And both before and after the deluge the drought often lasted for many months.

But back to the travelers. Crossing the occasional small creek was not too troublesome. If it was dry, as usual, the chief problem was that the down hill bank might be so steep that a loaded wagon would overrun the rear team and break the animals' legs if the wagon brakes failed to hold the vehicle steady. ^{For} In such cases the driver pushed a strong pole about eight feet long ^{which he could push} through the spokes of the rear wheels of the wagon. As the two wheels revolved the pole would be carried along until it came up, or down, against the wagon bed. This locked both wheels and caused them to skid. Herbert later reported that he had to do this at least once on the trip.

In going through Castroville the Old West began to appear. Numbers of the original houses of the 1840's still had loop-holes in the upper stories or attics that could be used for rifle fire in case of Indian attack. Also for the first time the travelers saw adobe houses built of clay of the countryside. The clay was first pulverized,

dampened and thoroughly kneaded until smooth. Next it was mixed with straw to hold it together, then molded into bricks about two or three inches thick, six to eight inches wide, and twelve to sixteen inches long. After the bricks were thoroughly dried in the blazing hot sun they were ready for house building without benefit of kiln.

Walls of the houses were usually made two bricks thick (about eighteen inches). The doors and windows were small and the interiors dark. In the heat of summer, however, they were delightfully cool; and on a cold winter day they were surprisingly warm. This type of structure had been introduced by the Mexican Indians and was still used in spite of the fact that during occasional long continued rains walls were likely to crumble. One good reason for using adobe was the fact that there was no lumber grown nearer than east Texas so building costs were exceptionally high.

By the fourth day the slow moving Mexican vehicles could no longer keep up the pace. Herbert went on in advance and Frank brought up the rear with the slow group. The latter camped for the fourth night about ten miles east of Hondo and the fifth night found them eight miles east of Sabinal. Finally the trip was over: George and Mary had the house in town waiting. As soon as Herbert arrived on the fifth day he started to unload the freight car which was waiting on a convenient sidetrack. Household equipment was taken to the new house. The farm implements were reassembled and readied to take out to the

farms with the tenants' furniture as soon as the rest of the caravan arrived. Each of the tenants reclaimed his own supplies, the wagons were again loaded and the weary families proceeded to the farms. The new life had begun.

George had learned from his uncle in England that children should be kept occupied. He had no intention of allowing his boys to loaf around street corners. The acre of land around the residence held considerable promise. Sabinal had direct connections with San Antonio on the main line of the Southern Pacific ^{with} and two good passenger trains per day in each direction. Was not Sabinal a better place to raise chickens than the old farm which had been ten dirt-road miles by horse-drawn vehicle from the railroad? With this in mind the incubator was included with the household furniture.

The chickens were to be kept in small pens about four and a half by nine feet in size. Built in pairs the pens had a small coop attached to each. By placing a kerosene heated brooder in the coop a hundred small chicks could be accommodated even in cold weather. As the fowls grew they were transferred to other coops in decreasing numbers until they reached frying size when there were only twenty-five or thirty to each pen and coop.

All food had to be provided for these birds could not forage for themselves. In 1908 no fortified foods were on the market so to raise

chicks to frying size took about three weeks longer than is now required. For roughage alfalfa, which had been shipped in, was used. Also whole oat grains were soaked in water for twenty-four hours. When swollen to about twice their original size they were spread in flat galvanized pans in a layer about half an inch to an inch in thickness. Heavy "gunny" sacks were placed over them and kept wet until the kernels sprouted. Three to five days after the sacks were removed the young shoots had grown to three or four inches in height while the roots growing out of the swollen kernels formed a matted pad. A six-inch square of this was torn in pieces and tossed into the pens daily where clamoring chicks gobbled tops, kernels and roots. As a matter of fact this fare was not unlike sprouted grain used in certain Oriental dishes.

The chicken business started off vigorously. A new 250-egg incubator was bought. George somewhere, probably from the United States Department of Agriculture, secured a description of a water-heated incubator that was said to provide a more even temperature and to produce stronger chicks than the hot air machines. Using his old blacksmith shop skills he followed instructions and made a third incubator of galvanized iron sheets cut and soldered together at the cost of many days of labor.

Now he was ready to start 150 eggs each week. These were shifted from one machine to another as infertile eggs were discarded

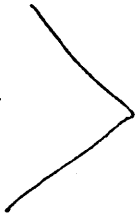
while the temperature was adjusted to the stage of development of the embryos. All three machines were heated by kerosene lamps. An old carriage house became the incubator house that turned out a hundred to a hundred and seventy five chicks per week. The grist mill had been brought from San Marcos and was used each week end when a Mexican tenant came in for supplies. While the tenant got his groceries up town the team was used to grind corn, milo maize, shorts, bran and various ingredients including dried animal's blood and bone meal to form a rounded feed. The output took the form of weekly shipments of broilers and frying chickens that went to the San Antonio market.

Unfortunately the plans failed to take into account the danger of infection and of pests such as mites and lice when a few thousand fowls were kept in town in such close quarters. Cleanliness was all very well but neighbors allowed their chickens to range freely. They flew over fences to pick up scraps of food or simply to visit their penned up neighbors. These brought in a variety of diseases. Roup, sorehead and other complications developed in spite of precautions taken.

The whole project had to be considered an eminent success in preventing the boys from becoming street corner loafers. From the financial standpoint, however, the venture paid its own way but did little more than that.

(Extra page)

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The boys were delighted with town life and the "West" where they saw at first hand what they did not realize was a rapidly disappearing way of life. The house was located about half a mile or a mile from the railroad and on the northwestern edge of town. Up in the Hill Country, which began ten or fifteen miles above Sabinal, ranches extended for scores of miles. Many of these used Sabinal as a shipping point. It was still a common sight in 1909 for herds of a thousand or more steers to be brought by the front of the Callcott home. This route was taken to avoid driving the cattle through the town itself and this side-road or street led directly to the cattle pens on the railroad. The dust was stifling as the animals crowded through a town street completely devoid of paving. The work of the cowboys striving to keep these range animals from breaking away from the herd to race down side streets; the soothing calls of the cowboys trying to quiet the excited and restless animals, naturally punctuated from time to time with picturesque expressions; the fact that these men still wore chaps (a kind of leather overpants which were suspended from the waist and covered each leg as a protection against chaparral and mesquite thorns on the range) and were regularly armed; all harked back to days fast disappearing.

In fact, another type of drive was also taking place once or twice each fall in striking contrast with the old life of the West. Certain enterprising folk, usually among the new farmers who were invading the ranching territory, had gotten the idea that turkeys were a promising crop. These creatures, too, were shipped by railroad to market. They had been raised in the open and were leggy creatures that carried little breast (How to-day's A&P buyers would have scorned them!) but much muscle. They, too, were driven through the country. In front of the flock one or two patriarch birds stalked grandly, each with a small bell attached to his neck. Like the cattle they were accompanied by outriders on horseback.

The day before a turkey drive a rider went through the country and warned all farmers whose birds might wander as far as the highway to care for their fowls. When a drive came through farm birds were *Likely* wont to join a passing flock and go on to market with them.

On one such drive (probably in 1910) a flock of some 1,500 birds were supposed to reach town late one day to be loaded to catch the night train to San Antonio. Regular cattle cars with slatted sides for ventilation but with special decks built in to accommodate two layers of turkeys were waiting on a side track near the cattle pens. Though an unexpected shower had slowed the progress of the flock, the drivers still hoped to reach town by nightfall.

They reached the Sabinal river, about a mile and a half northwest of town, just as dusk was falling. The stream had suddenly risen as a result of the rain so the normally dry ford was flooded. The drivers were still not too worried. They simply caught two of the bell birds and tossed them into the air headed across the stream so they would fly to the other side. A short flight did not faze these range birds and the whole flock was expected to follow the leaders. The old birds, however, were tired and dusk was approaching. Once in the air the two leaders by one accord circled to one side to roost for the night in some cypress trees that were growing along the side of the stream and just south of the road. True to turkey habits the whole flock followed, to roost aloft ten to twenty feet from the ground. Railroad schedules were a minor matter. The drive was over for the day.

Some features of the West were not so pleasant. One varmint that gave occasional trouble even in town was the picturesque armadillo. This possum with a shell on his back that makes ^{such} such attractive baskets when the animal has been extracted, had an insatiable appetite for young chickens and hen eggs. He was to be shot on sight.

In the next block down the street from the Callcott home was a family that had domesticated ^{another wild creature.} an unusual pet. While hunting one day the man of the family killed a female havelina (a peccary or wild hog) that was found in brushy places of the countryside. Half as a joke

he brought home a tiny pig. His youngsters were delighted and made a pet of the small animal which soon grew into a scrawny ugly looking beast with a shaggy, rusty black coat and projecting tusks. The creature was always hungry. It would escape from its backyard pen to follow eagerly after any pedestrian walking along the street. Trotting behind him it would snuffle and grunt to attract attention while its chewing jaws and over-flowing saliva were well calculated to alarm the sedate. Neighborhood protests brought about the animal's early demise as another denizen of the great open spaces joined others of his kind in rapidly approaching extinction.

More interesting to the boys were the occasional glimpses and tales of the still recent Indian days. Living about six miles south of town was "old man Shane" who was about seventy years of age. He came to town from time to time wearing a coonskin cap. He had a small farm, raised some sheep, chewed tobacco, trapped a few wild critters and brought the pelts to town ^{wearing a coonskin cap regardless of the} Summer and winter he appeared in his coonskin cap to stimulate the romantic tales told about him.

44 ← The story went that as a boy about six years old he was captured by Indians near El Paso. There he lived until he became a young man, when he escaped back into the white community.

These Indians grew very little hair on their faces as nature made them. As a result with little difficulty they reached the conclusion that a beard and mustache were dirty and unattractive. When the young

adoptee, or prisoner, reached the appropriate age hair began to appear on his upper lip. After a few weeks the old women of the tribe, gleefully aided by some young and attractive girls as a crowning indignity, seized him. While four of them held him spread-eagled on his back the others firmly and not too gently pulled each of the young evidences of budding manhood out by the roots. He was then released with instructions to do this for himself at regular intervals, else the women would do it for him as often as they considered necessary.

This was the local version though the facts appear to have been different. Henry J. Shane was born in old Germany in 1836. He migrated with his mother and other children in the late ^{1840's} 1840's to join the father who had already come to the New World. The latter, however, was adventuring with the United States army in Mexico during the Mexican War. After the hostilities the family was reunited at Laredo in 1850. The teen age boy soon became a sheep herder on the Frio River though he periodically served with United States troops in repelling Indian raiders. One day he was captured by Indians while carelessly skinning a deer. They whipped him and forced him to ride with them all day and much of the following night. Meanwhile news of the raid had spread and troops pursued the band. In the skirmish that ensued young Shane escaped but was shot through the arm with an arrow. He broke off the point to enable him to pull the shaft back through the wound, then continued his flight.

As he later told the story to A. J. Sowell (Early Settlers and Indian Fighters of Southwest Texas. Ben C. Jones and Company, Austin, Texas, 1900, pp. 483-497) he that day saw "tigers, bears, panthers and Mexican lions". In 1871 he married and settled south of Sabinal where he continued his ranching, trapping and occasional skirmishes with Indians until 1876. His own account states that in that year he saw the last of the wild Indians who were on sight considered enemies. Time and an enthusiastic memory probably added, ^{modified} even to his own account for today one doubts the variety of animals seen in a single day. Regardless of this he was a romantic character and both his own account and the tales told of him are revealing.

Several of the leading Sabinal families had originally run their cattle on the open range. Later they acquired large ranches. To supplement their Texas ^{holdings, in the open range days it had not been} activities it was not unknown for West Texas ranchers to acquire property south of the international boundary which was only sixty to eighty miles west of Sabinal. International operations were profitable. The Rio Grande constituted the boundary but was conveniently dry in many spots for extended periods each year. It was a matter of constant official surprise to tax assessors to find how few cattle were on such ranches when it came time to make tax returns. With convenient dark nights and a cooperating international boundary river the cattle could be relied upon to be where the assessors were

not — or not to be where the assessors were. Anyway, what tax assessor could wander over several hundred square miles of territory to prove a friend's tax return was slightly conservative in its estimate? When animals were ready for market they were simply driven into the railroad cattle pens and there was no possible way to tell from which side of the line they originated. And there was not even an income tax return to provide a clue to ^{the source of} suspicious sales and large incomes.

Many of these ranchmen appeared rough on the surface and their language was earthy but they had a real code of their own. They would stand by a friend and had an almost unbelievable respect for the education they did not themselves possess. Their children were given a chance to go to the local schools. Few Sabinal youths, however, thought in terms beyond the local high school — if the term "high" could yet be properly applied.

The more recently arrived farmers were nearly all of English speaking stock. They had spread out from the railroad as it penetrated the West. The German settlement around Castroville had retained some of the German characteristics but the few Germans around Sabinal rapidly adopted the English language, ^{while numbers} soon anglicized their names and merged with the dominant "whites" as contrasted with the "Mexicans."

Of the 2,000 people in Sabinal fully half were Mexicans. The schools of the town were segregated in fact though technically the

segregation ceased when a child was able to handle courses in English speaking schools. This was happening in larger towns but was still in the future for Sabinal ^{where} ~~there~~ the Mexican families were more or less migratory and seldom indeed did a Mexican child ever advance beyond the third grade.

The Mexicans lived in one to three room wooden houses that were little better than shacks and for which they paid a few dollars per month rent. The fact was that most of them had recently been peons in Mexico and derived from varying Indian stocks. Indeed many knew little or no Spanish. Schooling of any type was practically unknown among them so parents merely thought of it as a means by which their children might learn a difficult and useful language.

For their part the "whites" of the community held themselves strictly aloof. Nearly all of the men could speak "Mexican" because they needed it for their daily contacts on ranches and farms. Their wives and daughters too picked up a smattering of the language but used it very little.

Unfortunately these Mexican women came from such a limited social background that they knew little of housekeeping tasks that would recommend them as household servants. Some were employed as cleaning women but American cooking was unknown to them. Also very few of them could understand English, so common understanding and confidence were difficult to establish. Probably the

major point of contact for the women arose from the spicy and aromatic Mexican viands. When ranchers or foremen were on their properties the Mexican women freely fed them frijoles (pinto beans), tamales, tortillas and enchiladas. The men learned to like them and soon persuaded their wives to provide similar food at home.

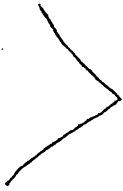
Sabinal opened a new high school building (the first it had ever had) about 1909. In its four class rooms were offered the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth grades. But in 1913 the tenth grade had only four members, and as late as 1911 only three or four boys from the community had gone to college. Graduates who aspired to college reported to their chosen institutions and there took entrance examinations. Fortunately nearly all the colleges of the day maintained preparatory departments where background work could be made up.

Real trail blazers were the devoted local teachers. Mrs. Wyatt Heard, Mrs. Nina Mahaffey, Miss Alma Schuddemagen, Mrs. W. B. Brunt and others were community leaders in the best sense of the term. They took children with haphazard background preparation and introduced them to many of the finer things of life and civilization. It was little less than amazing how they exerted a mixture of pressure and coaxing to inspire some sort of respect from the irreverent in spite of school boy pranks that varied from placing horned toads (a kind of west Texas lizard of hideous m^ein) in the teacher's desk, to the introduction one night of a deodorized skunk in a classroom to greet early arrivals.

On one occasion the school board, at the request of the superintendent, Professor Williams, decided to introduce a laboratory course into the curriculum. Chemistry was too ^eisoteric and biology might become indecent so the more practical physics was decided upon. Some pulleys, levers and other simple instruments were solemnly dedicated to laboratory research. Those farm and ranch boys had been using such tools all their lives so a text book which laboriously explained the theory back of what they already knew was looked upon as rank foolishness. Why befuddle a chap with complicated maneuvers when he already knew what would happen?

One day word was sent out that school would be dismissed at 2:00 P.M., instead of at the regular 4:00 o'clock. All the children walked a mile to the edge of town where they waited ^{beside a level but} on the edge of ^{unplowed field} a-level pasture for the arrival of one of the marvels of modern science, an airplane. It was piloted by a man named Rogers and sponsored by a soft drink company. He had agreed to land at Sabinal for a few minutes. After a wait of an hour or more in the hot sun the biplane came in at about sixty miles per hour. The pilot sat in full view looking like a spider in the center of his web of struts that appeared to radiate from him to the wings. A few weeks later word came that this daring flight ended in disaster when the pilot lost his plane and his life on the shores of the Pacific. But the school children got a partial holiday and, unrealized by them, had caught a glimpse of the future.

Extra page



Life in town provided many new experiences. In the first place the new home had running water in the kitchen and a bathroom (in itself something new) furnished with a tin bath tub. Running hot water was not yet available. The household water supply came from a shallow bored well about 163 feet deep. This gave a moderate supply of water that was normally raised by a wind mill. If the wind failed a hand operated pump could be used.

About the time the Callcotts reached Sabinal the town council undertook to extend the city water system. The water came from a deep well that tapped a strong flow of water so George agreed to have the city water piped into the house. Marvelous indeed, to have water travel through pipes for a distance of from two to three miles. The city water tank installed on a hill to the south of town maintained a fair pressure for that section, but in the flat northwestern part of town neither the southern nor the northeastern high-level tanks could maintain pressure through small pipes that corroded quickly and were periodically clogged with sediment. At frequent intervals these leaked, clogged or burst. Even after an emergency crew had located and remedied the trouble the water would be red with rust or clay for a day or so. At such times the well in the back yard stood the household in good stead.

But the domestic supply too had its shortcomings. A four-inch casing protected a two-inch well pipe. Down the pipe ran a wooden rod in sixteen to twenty-foot sections. Attached to each end of the sections were metal fixtures by which one section could be screwed into the next. At the bottom of the 163-foot rod were a series of leather washers which worked somewhat on the principle of a piston in an automobile engine.

When the washers wore thin, like piston rings, they would allow the water to leak past them. If this happened the water could not be raised above the level of the water table.

Normally the windmill or hand pump raised the rod about six to eight inches at a time. At the top of the stroke a valve at the bottom of the pipe closed to support the column of water. Then the rod plunged back down, with the washers collapsed against the rod, to raise the column still higher while the bottom again filled up. Once the water had been raised to the top of the well each additional stroke caused it to spurt out into a bucket or receptacle for use.

in such a case

When the valve or washers began to leak the remedy was simple in theory, though arduous in application. George and the boys, with the help of a man from the farm if possible, would "pull" the rod. Detached from the windmill and pump it could be raised by a pulley if one was available, otherwise the job had to be done by hand. As soon as a full length of the rod was clearly above ground it was unscrewed from the lower sections and laid on one side. This

was repeated until the recalcitrant valve or washer was revealed.

The damaged parts were replaced and the rod reassembled, ^{and lowered into} section by section, in the well. This in itself demanded more care than pulling the rod in the first place. For one thing it was necessary to be very sure that each joint of the rod was securely fastened to the next. For another thing it was easy to let the rod slip out of the workers' wet hands — and they were always wet when working at this job. If that happened the wayward piece of the jointed rod smashed down to the bottom of the well. Even if nothing was broken in the process there ensued the job of "fishing" for the lost pieces. To get a grip on a one-inch rod from fifty to one hundred or more feet below the surface when the pipe in which it operated was only two inches in diameter was an operation that involved both skill and plain good luck. If all efforts failed the only recourse was to pull the pipe itself. This required a block and tackle for 150 feet of 2" pipe weighed a few thousand pounds.

The wells on the farms were deeper than the one in town, one of them being over 300'. Herbert's diary remarks that on February 21, 1912 he helped his father and two Mexicans pull the rod of one of the farm wells "as some children had put gravel in it." A month later he states that he again "helped Father with well." Unable to get the rod out they had "to pull the pipe as someone had put some pieces of wire in it." This dry remark must have suppressed

the writer's real if it did not censor his
~~truly-picturesque feelings and heavily-censored-any-normal use of~~

the English language in view of the sheer hard labor thus laconically recorded. Just what mischievous brats were involved is unknown but certainly the adult tenants, whose water supply was involved, could be relied upon to protect the wells to the best of their ability.

The lack of inside water closets was taken for granted, for only half a dozen families in town had them. In fact in 1912 a rather wealthy rancher built a fine new home in Sabinal. Rumor had it that all modern facilities were being installed so the ladies rushed to pay their respects to the newcomers in their new home just at the first proper moment. Wholly unknown to the rest of the Callcott family was the embarrassment brought to its youngest member as a result of all this. At the time he was working at a local store on Saturdays. One day the stylishly dressed new housewife came in and modestly asked for the proprietor. When told that he was out she hesitantly asked the young clerk if they sold toilet paper. He had never heard of such a product. The reason was simple. His experience had been limited to the use of out of date copies of the San Antonio Express or of last year's Montgomery Ward and Company's catalogue. When his puzzlement was quite obvious the lady stated: "Well, if you don't know what it is, you evidently do not have any." She was right.

(Extra space)

Here

George also had a telephone installed. Of course San Marcos had had a telephone system and shortly before the family moved to Sabinal a line was extended to serve Staples and one or two families at Long Branch. For miles the wires were strung along fence posts at the side of the road. Inevitably, reception varied from poor to non-existent. In Sabinal, however, the service was quite good.

The instrument itself was housed in a small oak cabinet composed of two wooden boxes, each about 2" x 6" x 10", affixed to a wooden base. This was attached to the wall at some convenient spot. A mouth piece projected from the front of the contraption, a receiver hung on one side and a small crank projected from the other. Winding the crank called "central", who was given the name of the party to whom one wished to speak — seldom did anyone ever bother with numbers, that was the job of the operator. Central rang the desired party over lines each of which served from two to half a dozen families. Various combinations of long and short rings summoned the right party. Forthwith the caller could hear receivers being lifted as neighbors who were unoccupied at the moment prepared to listen in.

Still other improvements were appearing. A few years after George and Mary reached Sabinal an ambitious electric light company

proposed to extend its lines to that part of town. Throughout the community there was serious and learned talk of the danger of electrocution and of house fires. George, however, had been entranced by the electric displays at the world's fair in 1904 and was ready to give the new proposal a trial. The wires were run through the attic and a drop-cord with a light globe at the end was suspended from the center of each room. The light globe itself hung about seven feet from the floor. After dark, therefore, he who would have light advanced to what he considered to be the center of the room and waved his arms around in the air until a hand encountered the drop and turned the light on. If a breeze was blowing and the globe was weaving back and forth the hunt became more baffling. A few hardy souls installed wall switches but these were considered very dangerous because of the necessity of running the wires charged with electricity through wooden walls.

When the current was turned on each globe provided an eight or a sixteen candle-power light. This was developed by a filament which started at the top of each globe, swept downward and performed a graceful circle without touching itself and then mounted upwards once more to the top of the globe to complete the electric circuit. Later tungsten filaments with a white light were introduced but for many years all were satisfied with the soft red glow that was more or less bright depending on the amount of current provided at any

one moment. When the venturesome first takers continued alive and were apparently enjoying unburned houses and the elimination of sooty and smelly kerosene lamps there was a steady increase of subscribers for the new luxury.

Another innovation was undertaken when a local contractor proposed to build sidewalks if he could get all the families living on one side of a town block to agree to pay for a continuous walk in front of their properties. The owners of the two blocks south of the Callcott house and in the direction of town agreed to do so. George lived on the corner of the next block but beyond his place there were no residences for a considerable distance. As a special favor, therefore, the sidewalk in front of his house was included in the contract. It was a proud day when a person could walk two and a half blocks on sidewalks. Unfortunately the new installation did not do too much good when it came to keeping a pedestrian's feet clean. None of the streets were paved so whenever it rained there yawned a stretch of mud between the ends of the sidewalks at each intersection. Even so the new and gleaming cement was a status symbol well worth its cost.

