



Figure 40. Arcadia School, 1954, May Fete in Quonset building, Runge Park

Camp Wallace, the Army post on Highway 6 between Alta Loma and Hitchcock, ended the War as a Naval Separation Center, closing Labor Day, 1946. After its deactivation, most of the buildings that could be moved were sold or given away in 1948. The Santa Fe School District secured about nine of these buildings, one of which was placed at Arcadia, on the east side of the brick school, and made into two classrooms. This made it possible to have five grades in **1948-1949**, taught by **Thelma Franks**, principal and grade 1; **Miss Rees Marie Carroll**, grade 2; **Annelle Kloecker**, grade 3; **Elizabeth Cowan**, grade 4; and **Delpha Powers McCray**, grade 5.

The **1949-1950** school year continued the same plan of operation with this faculty: **Thelma Franks**, principal and grade 1; **Juanita Bussell**, grade 2; **Delpha McCray**, grade 3; **Elizabeth Cowan**, grade 4; **Emma Tucker**, grade 5. After the Quonset building (The Barn) was built at Runge Park, the school always had a huge spring musical program there. Miss Thelma's husband, Evans Franks, provided properties (lots of hay bales) and animals.

In **1950-1951** the faculty included **Thelma Franks**, principal and grade 1; **Miss Martha Ingram**, grade 2; **Delpha McCray Long**, grade 3; **Elizabeth Cowan**, grade 4; **Juanita Bussell**, grade 5.

In 1953-54 school year saw an Arcadia campus almost comically overcrowded. The stage had long since been removed from the west end of the second floor of the brick building, to make a full classroom space, but this year saw seven teachers with six classrooms. A Camp Wallace building acquired by the Arcadia Methodist Church was rented as a third-grade classroom – seven blocks away from the edge of the school campus. This faculty struggled through the year: **Thelma Franks**, principal, grade 1; **Novela Cardin**, grade 1; **Nellie Anderson**, grade 2; **Miss Cortez Kendrick**, grade 3 at the Methodist Church; **Elizabeth Cowan**, grade 4; **Miss Ruby Hardy**, grade 5; **Oneita Delaney**, grade 5.



Figure 42. Arcadia School Children, c. 1949-50
 Betty Ward, Patsy Ward, Shirley Orem, Loretta Ward, James McCormick

All my children

In September of 1954, Santa Fe Elementary School opened – 24 classrooms under one roof, providing for three sections of each of grades one through eight, which would become inadequate after only one year. But that problem

belongs to another story, whose final chapter remains to be written. At last there was an elementary lunchroom: two Camp Wallace buildings joined together north of the new elementary school, providing kitchen and lunchroom space.

Most of the Arcadia teachers moved on up to the Santa Fe Elementary, and Miss Thelma continued to ride down Cemetery Road in the Jeep at dawn to take hay or feed to the cattle in pasture, then wash her pink Cadillac in the driveway of the showplace home she and Evans built on the site of the old Owens place (4th and Terry) after the Franks oil field was developed, then drive to War Path Avenue for another day of school. But it was never quite the same. One last end-of-school extravaganza came in 1959, crowding the football stadium with the Pilgrim fathers landing at Plymouth Rock, the pioneers marching westward across the plains with their livestock, and a measles outbreak during the last week of rehearsals threatening to alter the course of American history.

After forty-two years of use, the red-brick Arcadia School building was sold for salvage and disappeared in 1955. But even now, people turning north anywhere along the nine-block sweep of Jackson Avenue are sometimes startled to see the double lines of sycamores leading the eye up to a patch of bare sky where they half expect to see the flagstaff. And they still tend to give directions to “turn left where the schoolhouse used to be.

*Betty McAviney
 Pat Hamilton
 Shirley Cole
 Loretta Diman*

1900

The new century marked the first decade of the settlement of Arcadia. There were a depot, several small business buildings (one housing a US Post Office) clustered near the Jackson Avenue-Ida Bee center of town, The White Horse Inn, two church congregations and a Union Sunday School all in one building, a public school at the head of Jackson Avenue, and numerous houses on lots in the townsite and on the outlying farms. Community members participated in church outings, patriotic celebrations, school programs, and other gatherings that promoted a growing sense of community.

The first store in the town had been established by David D. Hill, on the northeast corner of the intersection of Jackson Avenue and Ida Bee, one block west of the White Horse Inn, and one block north of the depot. It was a two-story frame building with a Western false front rising above the gable, advertising dry goods,

groceries, hardware, stoves, lumber, sash doors, blinds, paints and oils. The second floor housed living quarters, with a balcony on the roof of the one-story porch across the front. It is believed the U. S. Post Office was within the store.

A steady stream of settlers had moved into Arcadia during the 1890's, and the first US Census to include the community was taken in the first week of June 1900. Justice Precinct #4 (the Census tract) included both the Alta Loma and the Arcadia areas, making it impossible to say positively in which town to include certain families, now forgotten, and others that were in fringe areas such as Hall's Bayou and Mary Austin. Some families had associations with both towns, and some lived in first one and then the other over a period of years. However, approximately 77 households, comprised of about 330 persons can be reasonably assigned to Arcadia in 1900.



Figure 1. David Hill Store, 1890's, Jackson Avenue at Ida Bee

it is known that box-cars are being improvised as houses and hay as bedding. Only fourteen houses in the town of Alvin are standing on their foundations, and they are badly damaged" (p. 181).

Relief train, Sep. 11. The first station out was **Arcola**. The dwellings in this locality were a complete wreck, and only the depot remained standing. At **Manvel**, the next station, the ruin seemed even worse. The depot had been completely demolished and was lying across the track. Not a house standing in good condition. We came down farther within three miles of Alvin and found the track washed out" (pp. 201-202).

"Captain Owens stated this morning that in the jumble of confusion mention of the practical destruction of the towns of **Arcadia** and **Alta Loma** had been omitted. At Arcadia there are about 150 people living. Arthur Boddeker lost his life during the storm and two or three were hurt. At **Alta Loma** two children of Mr. Steele were killed. There are six houses standing. All the groceries at both places were damaged by water and these people are in great need of provisions, medicines and food for stock" (pp. 251-252).

"The Chicago corps of surgeons and nurses, under Dr. L. D. Johnson, buried thirty-two bodies between the hours of 1 A.M. and 8 A.M. to-day in **Alvin**, **Hitchcock** and **Seabrook**, and gave provisions, clothing and medicine to 300" (p. 271).

Houston, Report from Gov. Sayre's agents, Sep. 20. **Algoa**. Twenty-five families to be supplied; enough provisions for the present. **Arcadia**. In the town there are 300 destitute, and those in the immediate vicinity will make the aggregate 500. Provisions already supplied sufficient for immediate needs only. **Hitchcock**. In this town and immediate vicinity are more than 500 destitute. Of about 300 houses, only about ten are standing. A wave of salt water, from four to ten feet in depth, covered this section; thirty-eight lives were lost, and, for the time being, it is

feared that the soil has been seriously damaged by the effect of salt water. Supplies of provisions were sent yesterday. There are probably 10,000 dead cattle within a space of a few miles south and surrounding the town. **Alta Loma**. This committee reports about seventy-five families, or 300 persons, to be cared for. Have received 530 rations. People have no money and their property destroyed. In the neighborhood of 100 houses existed; forty destroyed and about twenty untenable. There are about four houses now on blocks. Two lives were lost. The population is mainly of northern people. A shipment was made them of provisions and medicines, but other things are needed at once" (pp. 350-351).

The storm surge in 1900 came several miles inland onto the coastal plain south of Hitchcock. At its margin lay a miles-long windrow of debris: household furniture, trunks, roofs of buildings – anything that would float or could be pushed ahead of other wind-and water-borne wreckage. For several years residents took their teams and wagons and salvaged timber and lumber to rebuild houses and barns, silent witnesses to a time of horror across the Bay.

No local photographs or memoirs of the 1900 Storm seem to exist in this area. No television crews poked microphones in local faces, asking, "And how did you feel when your house came to pieces around your head?" So the survivors put it on the back shelf of their memories, just one more thing gone wrong, one more mess to clean up.

Some families pulled up stakes and left after 1900, some of them abandoning their land entirely. This led to the clouding of titles, as large tracts of land remained empty, with no taxes paid for years on end. Title to many pieces of land was eventually acquired by claimants who fenced and used the land, and paid the taxes on it for the required number of years.

Vaya con Dios

In planning Arcadia, Mr. Runge set aside town lots on the northeast corner of Jackson Avenue and 6th Street for a site of public worship. In 1893 congregations of the Christian Church and the Methodist Church North were formed. A building was erected by members of the community, and the two congregations held worship services on alternate Sundays, and operated a union Sunday School. This sharing of facilities and activities was to continue for seventeen years.

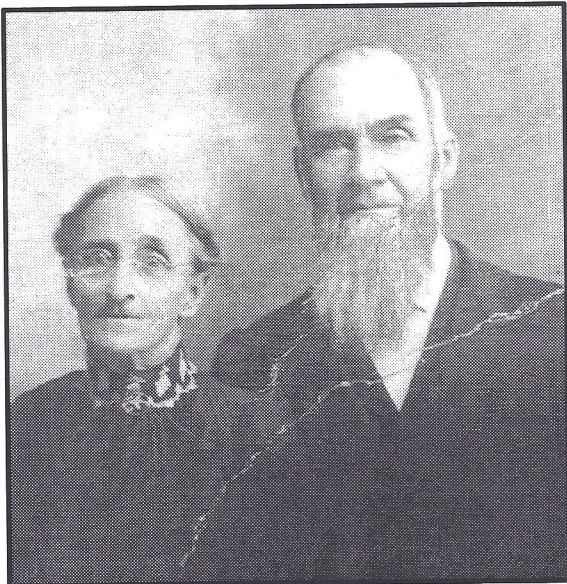


Figure 1. Phebe Breed and the Rev. Henry Breed, founder of Arcadia Methodist Church

The Arcadia Methodist Church was formed by **the Rev. Henry J. Breed**, a Union Civil War veteran who had pastored churches in Missouri and Kansas. The church building was destroyed in the 1900 Storm, and was rebuilt under Mr. Breed's leadership. A stray tornado destroyed it again in 1911, and once more Mr. Breed led in the reconstruction. He remained with the Arcadia Methodist community until his death in December 1911, which probably accounted for the Methodist numerical superiority over the Christian Church congregation, which had a

succession of ministers. Mr. Breed built his home strategically located a block from the church, on the southeast corner of 6th and Peck. At any rate, as time passed, the Methodists seemed to assume a proprietary attitude regarding the church property. Vivian Locke Miller told of her aunt, Nettie Meek (of the Christian Church), arriving for Sunday School ahead of Mr. Breed, who had the only key to the building. A shower commencing, she had a couple of young boys who were standing around boost her through a window to gain entrance. In 1910, the Christian Church built its own building at the northeast corner of Peck and 5th, leaving the former field to the Methodists.



Figure 2. Will Bard and Ethyl Dyer on their wedding day, about 1915, posing in the vegetable garden at his mother's home, where the Bill Jones Family lived in later years.

From at least 1915 the building housing the Arcadia Methodist Church was of a stock design once seen in hundreds of small-towns across the United States: a white wooden L-shaped structure with the entrance placed in a

Two formal efforts to unite the Arcadia and Alta Loma churches (besides Mr. Body's forcible union) had failed, but by the late 1950's partisan ill-feeling between the two towns was fading, as children were schooled together after the closing of the separate elementary schools in 1954. Finally, in 1960 a union proposal was approved by both congregations. Aldersgate (after the location of John Wesley's "heartwarming experience" that led to the founding of Methodism) was the name chosen for the new church, which met for a year in the Santa Fe Elementary cafeteria (one of the wooden school buildings acquired by the school in 1948), until a permanent site was acquired and a building erected. During this time the Arcadia church buildings were used as the business and pastor's offices for the new church.

The location chosen for the new Aldersgate Church was an acreage site on the new FM 1764, not far west from its intersection with the Alta Loma Dickinson Road (FM 646). Gradually a cohesive congregation was developed. The Arcadia Methodist Church and the Camp Wallace building were demolished, and the parsonage sold for a private residence. On the corner where the church stood is a neat brick home, whose entrance approximates the location of the onetime church door, looking across Jackson Avenue to the sycamore tree in the yard where the Jones house once stood. To the south of the church site, the two-block tract vacant from the founding of the town is now being developed with trim little brick houses. Only a few people who ever worshipped in the Arcadia Methodist Church remain in the community.

In 1893, the same year in which the Arcadia Methodist Church was organized, the Arcadia Christian Church was formed. Its surviving records are nearly as scanty as those of the Methodist Church, storms, fires, and negligence having taken their toll. In a Church Directory prepared by **Thomas St. John** in 1928, 16 lines are devoted to a history of the congregation. **T. Patterson** is listed as founding minister, **Cave Johnson Meek**, first elected

Deacon, and **P. P. Slack**, first elected Elder. The congregation seems to have drawn its members from families coming from Southern and Midwestern states, and Central and North Texas.

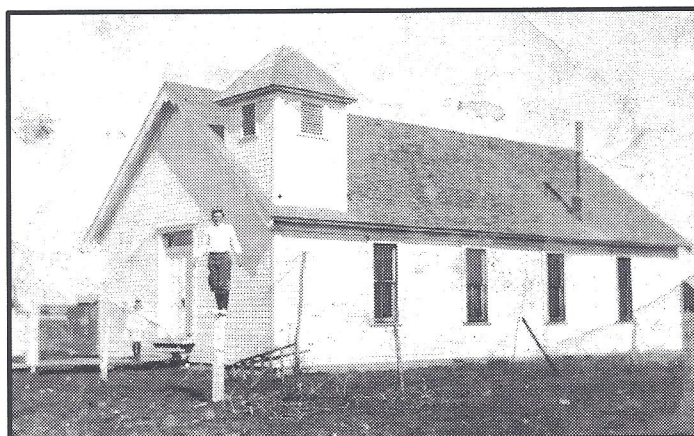


Figure 6. Arcadia Christian Church, about 1915, Virginia and Roy Shannon

In 1910 the Christian Church constructed its own building on the northeast corner of 5th and Peck, a no-nonsense white frame rectangle, with a fairly steep gabled roof, the entrance centered in the west end, with a small square tower with a pyramidal roof on the southwest corner. This tower soon disappeared, probably during the 1915 Storm. There was a small room to each side of the entrance doors, with the rest of the space devoted to one room, with a raised platform across the east end. A low wainscot of beaded wood, stained dark, ran around the perimeter of

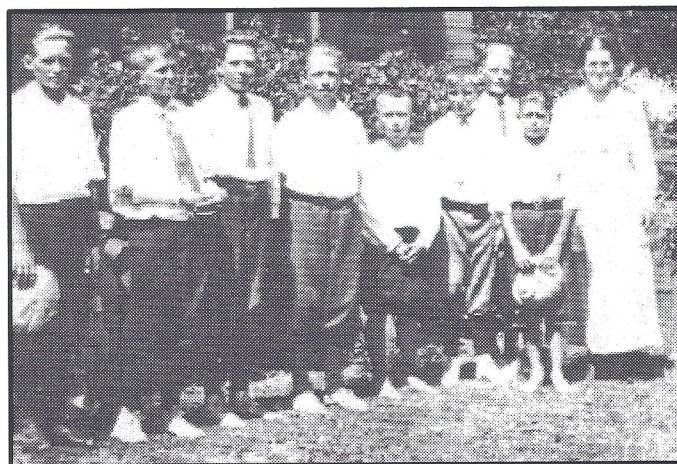


Figure 7. Boys' Sunday School class, 1919. Lawrence Pearson, John Polinard, Roy Sturm, Curtis and Lee Meek, Grover Polinard, George Jensen, Richard Travis, Emma Travis (teacher)



Figure 10. Sunday School Class, early 1920's

Row 1. Bessie Stavely, Mariam French

Row 2. Alpha Locke, Margaret French, Miss Lue Smith (teacher), Virginia Shannon, Lois Meek

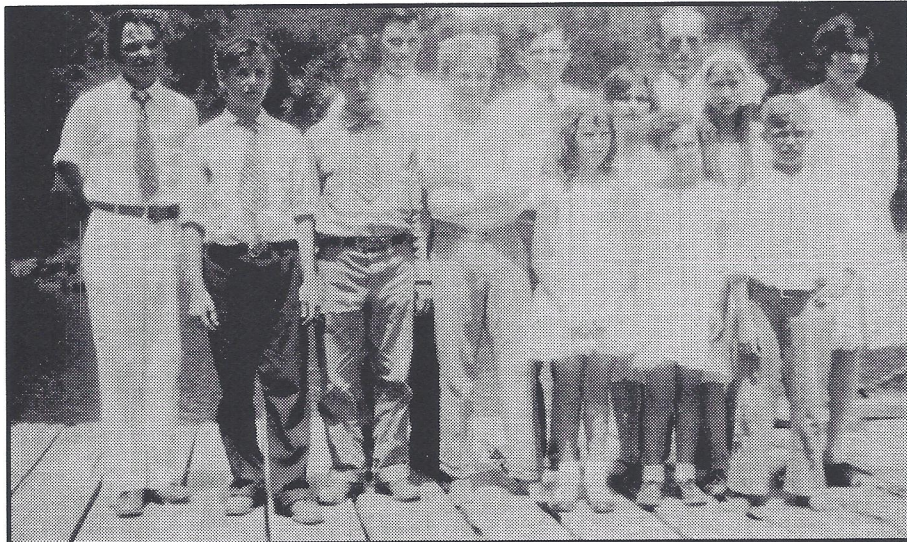


Figure 11. Awaiting Baptism at Chocolate Bayou, 1927

Bill Roberston, Guy Moore, Ben Moore, Gay Beaver, Grover Cannon, George Eastman (minister),
 Verva Moore. Jane Moore. Agnes Robertson. Ruth Moore. Ed Powers. George Locke. Lois Pourchot



Figure 14. Board Members, 1948
B. D. Clark, Joe Gibson, James Coats, Gaylord Kline,
Allen Tully, Gay Beaver

the sayings and doings of his supposed Arkansas relatives. He was also a talented chalk-artist, his impromptu renderings of the scenes of hymns being used as attendance rewards at the many evangelistic meetings he continued to hold at Arcadia in the years after his removal to Houston in 1938. He also returned many times to conduct local funerals, never failing to quote Browning's "Crossing the Bar" ("Sunset and evening star, and one clear call for me") and William Cullen Bryant's "Thanatopsis" (So live that when thy summons comes to join the innumerable caravan that moves to that mysterious realm . . .")

In 1938 a wooden Fellowship Hall was built by volunteer labor just to the north of the church, and a year later a kitchen was added on its north end, complete with a sink (although there wouldn't be running water in it until after the War. The exposed wood plank walls of both rooms were scorched with a blowtorch, darkening the resin in a zebra-like effect very popular in the roadhouses of the era.

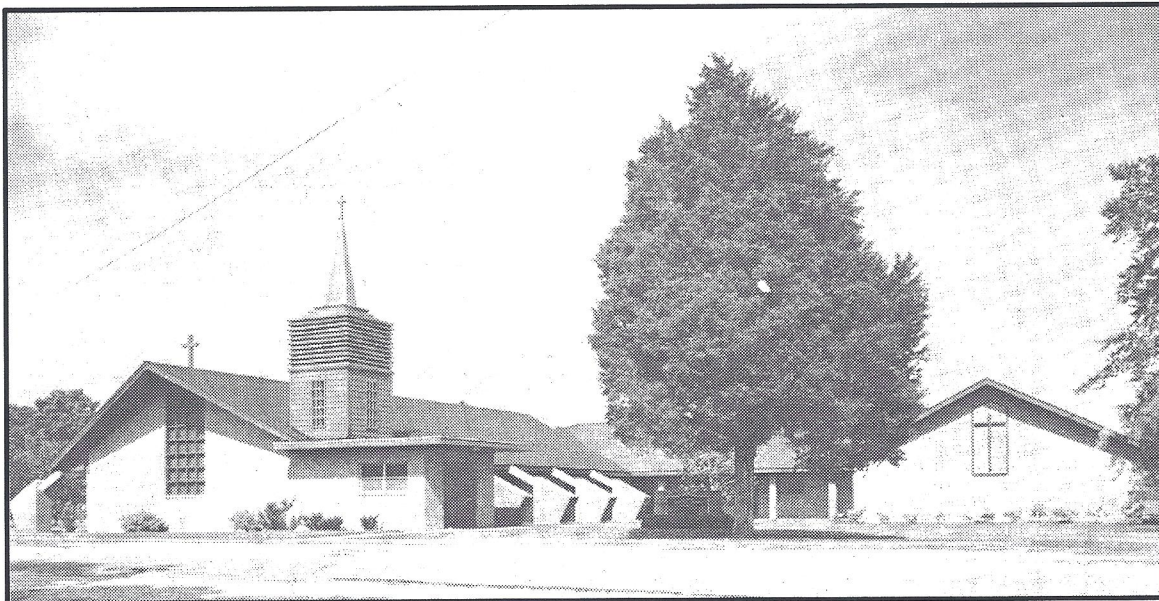


Figure 15. The First Brick Church along the Santa Fe, pictured about 1970

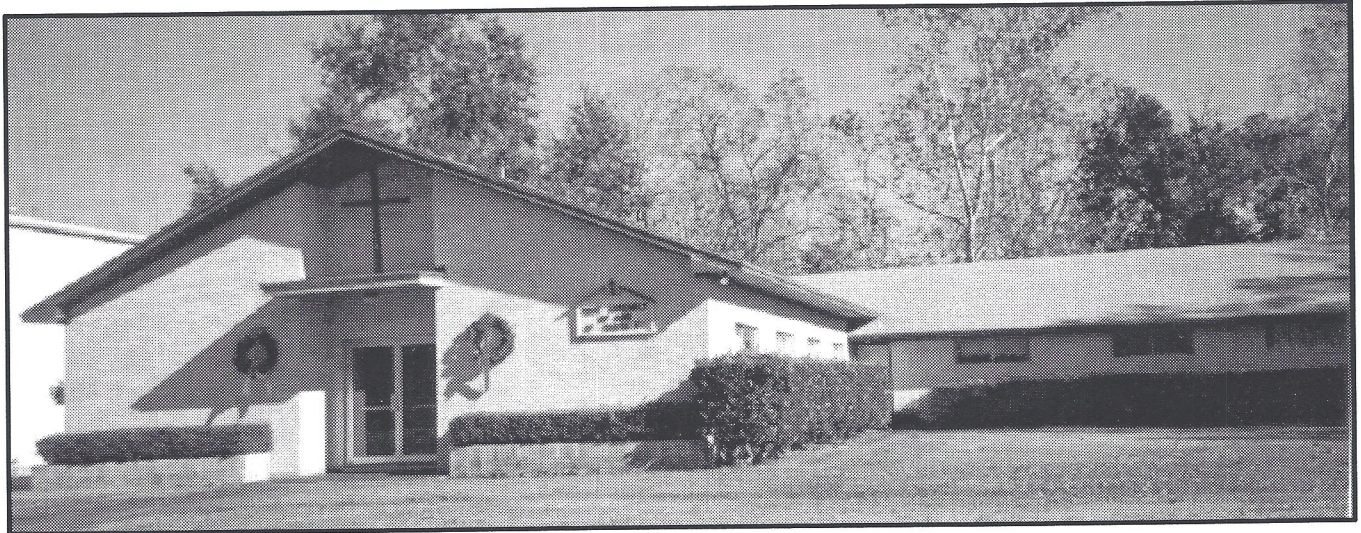


Figure 18. Into the New Millennium

mighty fine church for a bunch of poor people to put up.” Within a short time her own church was housed in a much larger brick building, but that was different.

With the gradual population increase of the community, the church underwent a commensurate numerical growth. Sunday School and Nursery rooms, and a new Fellowship Hall were added to the pink-brick complex. In 1974, a second fulltime ministerial position was created, filled by **Ed Skidmore**. In 1983, a completely new worship center was dedicated on the same block with the existing facilities, with seating capacity in excess of 500. Gradually the church acquired the entire city block on which it stood (including the Belch homestead, where Mrs. Belch once prepared the Communion service with a little crystal pitcher), plus portions of adjacent blocks to the east and south. In 1993 the church celebrated the centennial of its founding with the dedication of a Texas State Historical Marker. By this time Arcadia was no more, and the church and the community had enlarged the scope of their activities in ways that could not have been imagined by their founders a century before.

A hundred years ago ethnicity and political history were major determinants of church affiliation: North Europeans were likely to be Lutheran; Irish, Central and South Europeans and Hispanics, Roman Catholic; Scots,

Presbyterian; English, Episcopalian or Methodist (New England Congregationalists were not major players in coastal Texas); Christian and Baptist churches drew on frontier stock from the Midwest and upper South.

For almost a half-century, the two original

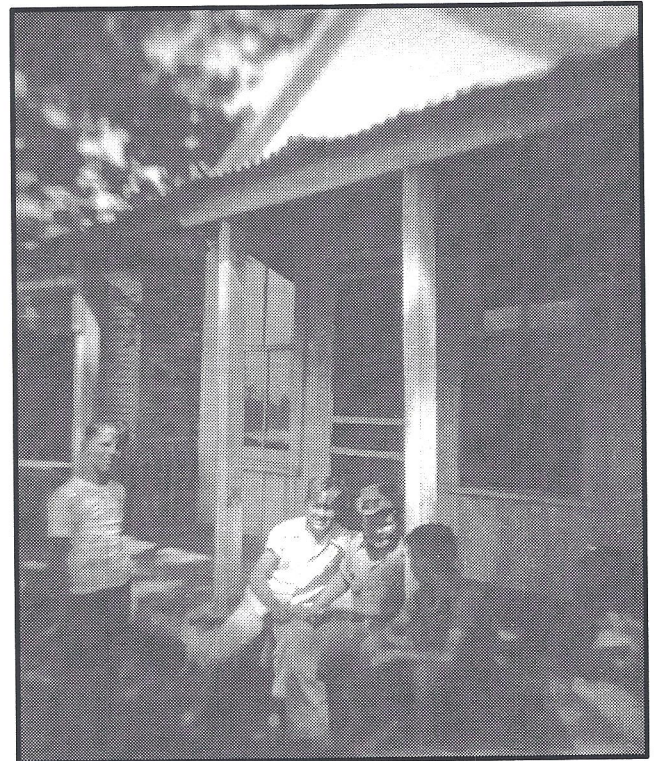


Figure 19. Neighborhood boys play on the porch of the former barber shop where the Arcadia First Baptist Church was born.

During the seventeen-year ministry of **the Rev. B. A. Reeves**, the handsome L-shaped, white-brick present home of the church was opened, in 1968. Mr. Reeves was as dignified in his public demeanor as Episcopalians used to be. A more balanced congregation was developed as families were taken into the congregation. A larger number of men became involved in the church. The old Murdoch/Meek house on the southeast corner of Fourth and Jackson was acquired, and a white-brick parsonage was built on the site, facing the church property across Fourth Street to the north.

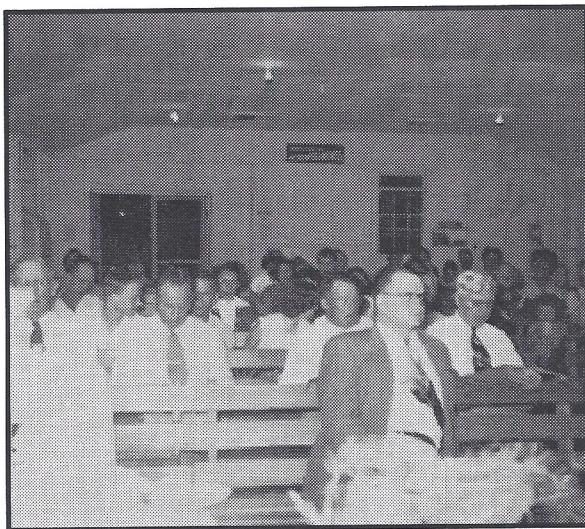


Figure 22. Interior of the wooden Baptist church on Jackson, with the famous torture benches revealed.

After the incorporation of the City of Santa Fe in 1978, the church changed its name to First Assembly of God of Santa Fe, and its further history belongs to that of the larger community.

Baptists swam against the current of consolidation of loyalties and organizations into fewer, area-wide associations. With the end of the War in the summer of 1945, and with it the end of gasoline rationing, it would have been easy for Alta Loma Baptists to seek to integrate Arcadia Baptists into the Alta Loma church. Instead, they sought to plant a new church in Arcadia. In October 1945, **C. R. Platzer** led a group in the formation of a Sunday afternoon Sunday School at Arcadia. The Lloyd Morgan family made available the Murdoch Row, a little

frame frontier-style building right against the street; in the middle of the east side of the block of Jackson north of the highway. The rooms opened onto a wooden porch-sidewalk all along the front, with the barber shop in the north end and an apartment in the south end. Within three years this effort was to result in the formation of the First Baptist Church of Arcadia. Its charter members were **Mrs. Fannie Kline, Mrs. J. F. Clark, Mrs. F. E. Terrell and Eugene and Carol, Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Gardenhire, Mr. and Mrs. P. E. Paschal, Mrs. James Coats, Miss Maude Kinchen, Mrs. Flossie Travis, Mr. and Mrs. W. L. Hester, Mrs. Fannie Brown, Mr and Mrs. W. S. Earles and Larry, Beverly and William, and W. B. Jones.** (Detailed information concerning leaders and activities of the church until 1985 are contained in Jean Hurt's *Settlements on the Prairie.*)

In October 1947 a wood-frame building secured from the Hitchcock Naval Air Station was moved onto the lots just south of the barbershop location, the Morgan home being moved to its present location at First and Peck. This, with several additions, would be the home of the church for 14 years. It brought with it a set of benches from a military chapel. Anyone who thought the New England Puritans were extinct would have known otherwise after sitting on one of those benches, their shape not conforming to any human body ever seen, their wooden slats with hard, sharp edges and spaces between that tortured the sinner more than any fire-and-brimstone sermon could have done.

After one-year pastorates by **Charles Baty** and **J. W. C. Huff**, **Edward May** came to the young church in December of 1950, beginning a six-year ministry. During these years the church became a stable operation. Edward May is still remembered affectionately by many in the community after half a century, for the homely anecdote he loved to tell at community events – Easter Sunrise Services at Runge Park, Thanksgiving, occasions when he visited in later years – illustrating the redeeming self-sacrifice of Christ with the story of a little boy, with its

that saw the incorporation of the City of Santa Fe, and the disappearance of the town of Arcadia. As the First Baptist Church of Arcadia entered this new era it preserved not only the name of the town of its origin, but also possibly a part of the spirit that had marked that pioneer community.

At the beginning of the new century and the new millennium, the church constructed a beautifully configured new worship center which tied together the cluster of buildings from its formative years into a unified architectural whole that symbolized its readiness to take its mission forward.

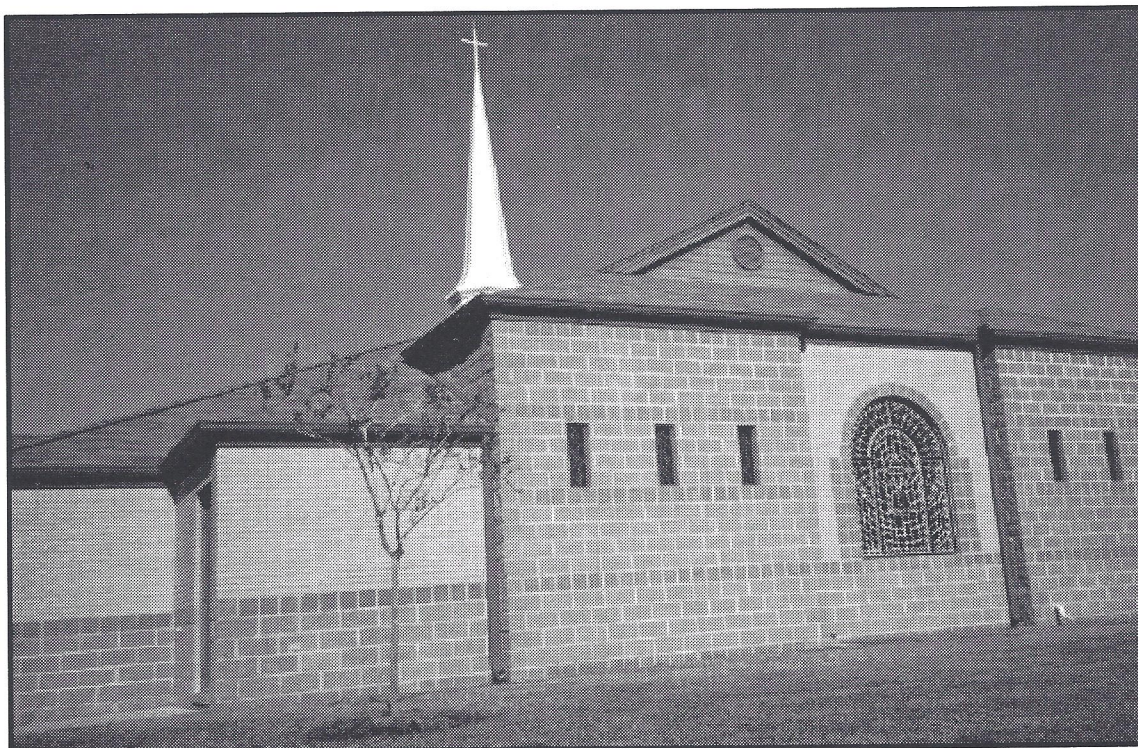


Figure 25. Arcadia First Baptist Church, 2001
The crown jewel of the church facilities on Highway 6.

Et in Arcadia ego:* Arcadia Evergreen Cemetery

*The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea.
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.*

*Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;*

*Beneath those rugged elms, that yew tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a moldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell forever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.*

Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"



Figure 1. Chelsea examines the gravestone of her great-great-grandmother's grandmother

- J. L. Polinard, S. A. Franks, and R. H. Romine - had a child already buried in the cemetery. The two-acre plot of ground was deeded to the Association on January 18, 1907, by the First National Bank of Galveston. Henry Runge's name appears in the opening sentence of the deed, but is lined through. (Arcadia Cemetery Association Papers) His land holdings, including the entire Mary Austin League, besides the townsite and Addition to Arcadia, are so complicated that they can never be unraveled. Evidently title to at least this part of the Mary Austin League had been placed in the hands of the bank (of which he had served as president) before Mr. Runge formalized his gift of the burial ground.

Originally Cemetery Road went straight north to the bank of Dickinson bayou, took a sharp turn to the right, then back to the left after a couple of hundred feet, at the bridge. At this point a path led through the woods to the cemetery, whose western boundary is the west boundary of the Mary Austin League, about 300 feet east of Cemetery Road. The cemetery tract is 330 feet east and west, and 264 feet north and south. The northwest corner is several hundred feet south of Dickinson Bayou, but the bayou turns south as it flows past, so that the northeast corner of the cemetery is in the woods, less than a hundred feet from the water.

As the first two decades of the twentieth century passed, infants, young mothers, and the aged were carried to the cemetery on the bayou. Approximately straight rows of markers sprouted, all facing east in anticipation of the Day of Resurrection. A few families had enough deaths to stake out a semblance of a family plot. The isolated site and lack of a shelled road made burials particularly awkward in the winter. One grandmother pleaded, "Oh, please don't put me down there in that mudhole!"

Scattered references in the *Galveston Daily News* obituaries trace the progress:

June 8, 1904. "Arcadia. W. O'Neill, an

old and respected citizen of this place, died at 9:00 A. M. He leaves a wife and host of friends."

March 2, 1909. "Arcadia. J. H. Grider of Arcadia, formerly employed by M. Palmo, committed suicide at 6 p.m. today here by taking carbolic acid."

March 3, 1909. "Houston. The death of John H. Grider, well known here, was announced today by a telegram. He is supposed to have met his death at his country home in Arcadia. Mr. Grider was in Houston yesterday and for many days before in search of employment. He was a bookkeeper and left much discouraged for his home yesterday afternoon. The deceased was a man of family with a wife living at Arcadia and several children by another marriage at Waco."

January 7, 1911. "J. N.. Cheek and wife suffered the loss of their little child."

January 8, 1911. "Judge J. B. Kitchel was called to Arcadia on the 4th to hold an inquest on the body of the child of J. N. Cheek, who died suddenly."

June 12, 1911. "J. W. Shults, a resident of Arcadia, was run over and killed last night while walking on the track of the Gulf, Colorado & Santa Fe Railroad. The body was discovered this morning by the section gang within a half mile of Arcadia. He left Alta Loma last night to walk to Arcadia. He leaves two children."

January 2, 1912. "Two funerals at the same hour is an unusual sight here, but that is what occurred New Year's Day. Mr. Newton Franks, an old and respected resident, was buried from his late residence, and Rev. Henry G. Breed from the new Methodist Church. The processions joined on the way to the cemetery. At Rev. Breed's funeral there were five ministers above the age of 60 years and two that were above 70. Owing to the bad roads people could not get out in large numbers, so it was decided to hold a memorial service later on."

As the little cemetery on the bayou fell into disuse it was seldom visited, temporary markers disappeared, all records were lost, and it was close to abandonment. In the 1950's a community group, under the leadership of the Arcadia Chamber of Commerce, made attempts to clear the brush and weeds from the plot. The cemetery association's charter had expired in 1956, and all the incorporators were dead. New trustees were selected and a new 50-year charter was issued in 1958.

During the restless times of the 1960's, the cemetery almost disappeared. Vandals carried away most of the gravestones, even uprooting stone bases from the ground. Rumors abounded: that the land was going to be seized by real estate developers; that gravestones were seen being hauled away in a truck; that a walkway to a cabin in the woods utilized grave stones as paving; that stones had been thrown into Dickinson Bayou. Old tires, junk, and debris from building projects were dumped among the graves. The woods were a site for clandestine drunken parties.

In 1972-73 the Algoa-Arcadia Historical Survey Committee provided the impetus for efforts that succeeded in erecting a chain-link fence around nearly the whole perimeter of the cemetery. The cost of this fence was largely borne by the descendants of R. H. and Elizabeth Romine. Their continued concern through the years is perhaps more easily understood after reading a passage from Mrs. Romine's deathbed letter addressed to her husband and her children as she lay dying in 1911: "Keep our graves clean and nice, with flowers on all four of them. Put tombs to them as soon as you can." Today all seven of the Romine stones are gone, and only three stone bases remain, including that of Elizabeth Romine, bearing the words, "As a wife, devoted; As a mother, affectionate; As a friend, ever kind."

With a fence provided, brush cleared, junk removed, and a lessening of anti-social behavior, the cemetery seemed more secure until in the early 1980's, when a neighbor thought he was doing a civic service by pasturing a horse within

the cemetery fence. This became serious enough for threatening letters to be exchanged by lawyers retained on both sides, and the horse was pastured elsewhere. But efforts to "do something" about the cemetery waned again, after the trauma of Hurricane Alicia in August 1983, and the arrival of the fireants.

In the early 1990's the cemetery trustees and the Santa Fe Area Historical Foundation led efforts once more to clean and maintain the cemetery grounds, to identify as many gravesites as possible, and to assemble a list of names of those buried at Evergreen. Several years were devoted to interviewing longtime residents, contacting funeral homes, studying newspaper personals columns and obituary listings. These attempts to reconstruct the family tree of a pioneer community had their lighter moments. Several people could remember the last person buried at Evergreen: how she used to come out from Galveston on the bus to visit Lillian Powers. One thought her name was Little. She used to stop for a drink of water while walking out to the Powers place. One thought her name was Stout. Finally, when the inside man at the Court House found her death record, it was discovered that, although she may have been both little and stout, her name was Mrs. Short. The man buried between two wives was never identified. Teenagers from the 1940's could remember snickering at the three stones all in a row, but none could remember the names. It took almost a Sherlock Holmes-level of sleuthing to untangle Alice Elizabeth, widow of Newton Franks, and later second wife of Walter Day, a brother to Emma, the wife of Simeon Franks.

Eventually a list of 62 names of persons buried at Evergreen Cemetery, with their birth and death dates (when they could be determined), was assembled. The grounds were put into a better order, some filling of low spots being done. Remaining stones and bases were straightened and leveled. A few bases of stones found just below the surface of the ground verified grave locations. A circle of lilies springing up after clearing and mowing indicated an unsuspected row of burial sites. Three stones were recovered

- **Simeon A. Franks**, 1848-1914, husband of Emma Jane Day
- **Eva Mae Romine**, 1909-1914, child of R. H. and Elizabeth Romine
- **Alex Lewis**, 1914-1915, child of Alex and Ethel Lewis
- **James Robert Meek**, 1857-1916, father of John Curtis Meek
- **Anna Lassen**, 1852-1918, wife of Herman Lassen
- **Clifford Robertson**, 1886-1920, first husband of Maude Powers (Locke)
- **Mary Jane Hendrick**, 1920-1921, child of Henry and Kitty Powers Hendrick
- **Doris Elizabeth Minson**, 1919-1921, grandchild of Herman Lassen
- **Herman E. Lassen**, 1841-1922, husband of Anna Lassen
- **Robert Louis Colston**, 1922-1923, child of R. H. Romine's daughter Ruby
- **Leafy H. Auck**, 1892-1923, wife of Albert Auck
- **Christiana Baty**, 1922-1923, child of John and T. Baty
- **George H. Tully**, 1924, child of Claude and Martha Tully
- **Claude S. Tully**, 1924, child of Claude and Martha Tully
- **Nancy Cooper Romine**, 1845-1925, mother of R. H. Romine
- **Lee Chiles Infant**, child of Lee and Margaret Cox Chiles
- **Sevno Espinoza**, 1928, child of Augustine and Felicitas Espinoza
- **Charles Walker Infant**, c. 1929, child of Charles and Grace Skillman Walker
- **Arthur Franks**, 1887-c. 1930, son of B. Monroe and Hattie Franks
- **Franks Infant Son**, 1930, child of Jim and Teena Smith Franks (twin to Melvin)
- **Alice E. Day**, 1869-c. 1931, widow of H. N. Franks, wife of Walter T. Day
- **Charlie E. Day**, 1859-1932, brother of Emma Day Franks
- **Walter T. Day**, 1866-1933, brother of Emma Day Franks
- **Hattie Franks**, 1853-c. 1933, wife of B. Monroe Franks
- **Gus Oleson**, 1860-1935, father of Lillian Harvey Powers
- **Venalu Hendrick**, 1929-1936, child of Henry and Kitty Powers Hendrick
- **Chris Hillerman**, 1882-c.1947
- **Ambrose Miller**, -c 1949
- **Josephine Short**, 1880-1958

Since 1993, only one confirmed name has been added to the burial list:

Della May Benson, 1907-1914, b. Sac City, Iowa; buried from Christian Church

The trustees and volunteers continue to maintain Arcadia Evergreen Cemetery. The site probably holds nearly 200 graves, but in all likelihood, few more of them will be identified. Here lie unknown pioneers, who as at Arlington, remain "known but to God."

*No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode
(There they alike in trembling hope repose),
The bosom of his Father and his God.*

Gray, "Elegy"

La Belle Epoque

After a hard year or two, the community recovered from the storm of 1900. The coming of widespread fig cultivation brought about the creation of commercial nurseries to supply stock. **Robert W. Holbert** was operating a large nursery at the north end of Elm Road before 1900, and was joined by his brother, **Charles**, who continued to operate the nursery into the 1950's. His descendants still are operating a nursery and subscription farm on the site, growing organically-produced vegetables. **F. M. Alleshouse** Nurseries operated in Mary Austin, "2 ½ miles northwest of Alta Loma, 2 ¼ miles northeast of Arcadia, near Alta Loma-Dickinson Shell Road." In the *Mainland Messenger* for February 25, 1914, he was listing Magnolia Fig trees, Dugat orange trees, and Satsumas. Hard to imagine today, the area on both sides of Warpath north of the highway (except the site of the original Santa Fe High School) including the site of Winston Heights, was a nursery into the 1960's, last operated by **John Botter**. This accounts for the large number of trees now maturing around the four schools that occupy the area today.

Hundreds of acres of figs were planted.

No local processing plants were set up; the crops were taken to Alvin, Friendswood, League City and San Leon. Gradually the realization dawned that the unlimited planting and the limited available marketing devices would make for a permanently depressed state for the producers. There were threats of court action against certain processors for their predatory pricing.

Gradually social life revived in the community. *The Texas Coast Promoter* noted (November 3, 1905): "The young people of Arcadia were pleasantly entertained at the home of Mr. and Mrs. C. N. Franks on Halloween night. They indulged in playing games, fortune telling and music until a late hour and all departed for home pronouncing Mr. And Mrs. Franks royal entertainers and wishing Halloween night came twice a year. Those present were Mr. and Mrs. Frank Sturm, Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Moore, Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Meek, Mr. and Mrs. Otis Smith, Mrs Gaskins, Mrs Dyer, Misses Annie and Landia Creighton, Alice Dean, Emma Franks, Nellie Barton, Isobel Hill, Edna Hunter, Messrs. Byron Smith, Geo. Pourchot, James Franks, Cleve Franks, Tom French, Toony Schlinsky, Charley Powers, Jno. Polinard."

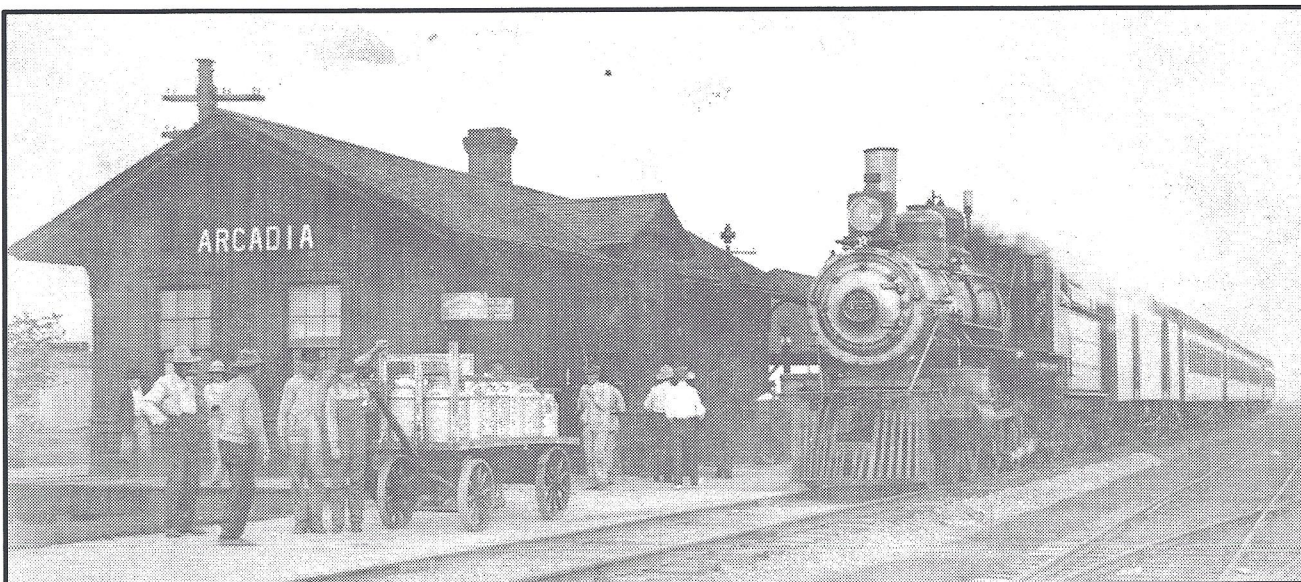


Figure 1. Loading milk for shipment to Galveston

Noted in *The Mainland Messenger*, April 8, 1914: "The Arcadia young people have organized a dramatic society and are busy rehearsing "The Miller's Daughter." They hope to put it on the boards in a few weeks." In February 1914, "The Mary Austin Club met at Mrs. Green's, with 80 members present." (MM)

Dairying was always an attraction to farmers, as cattle could be grazed on the open grasslands without investment. In 1906 The Arcadia Creamery Company was organized, with **J. A. Owens** as president, **H. C. Hervey**, secretary, and **E. Q. Rogers**, treasurer. A creamery for the production of butter was erected at the northeast corner of Fifth and Terry. According to information in *The Bulletin* (June 6, 1976), the creamery consisted of four rooms: Engine Room, Working Room, and two Cold Storage rooms. Its butter worker had a 5,000 pound-capacity, which would produce 500 pounds of butter. The creamery was powered by a 3-ton ammonia compressor and coils and a 22-horsepower gasoline engine. A list of Recorded Shareholders of Record, October 19, 1908 (Santa Fe Area Historical Foundation Papers), contains 156 names. Many still-identifiable names are of local farmers, and perhaps half are of business interests from Alvin and, particularly, Galveston. A third of the investors held only one share each. Only a dozen held ten or more shares, the largest number held by a single shareholder being 48 shares. The Arcadia Creamery was wrecked by the 1915 Storm, and did not resume operation. Several dairymen set up cream separators of their own and produced butter for sale. But marketing remained a chronic problem.

Cattle were not the only kind of livestock raised in early Arcadia. On Aug 9, 1911, *The News* reported that "James Pollard sold three of his Syrian sheep at \$12 per head to Dick Sellman of Russell, Tex."

The cutting, baling, storing and shipping of prairie hay was an important part of the area's economy, as hay was not only used locally, but

shipped by rail in carload lots every summer. *The News* noted on August 26, 1911, "Those in the hay fields say that the hay is fine and prices good, but the weather is bad. For truck the ground is very dry."

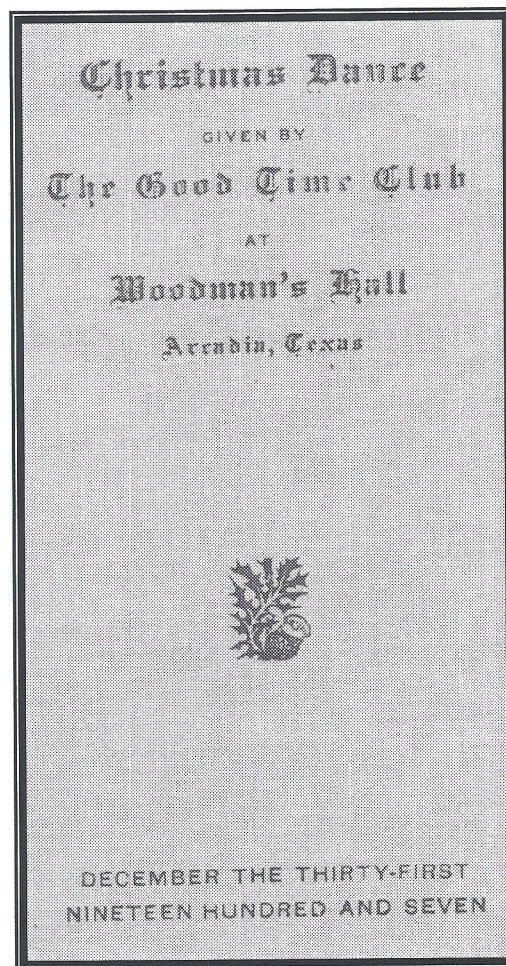


Figure 4.

After figs, Citrus was the next boom to develop. Once more many thousands of plants were set out and put into production. Two factors led to an end of these hopes. After the building of the St. Louis, Brownsville & Mexico Railway from the Santa Fe tracks at Algoa to the south in 1906, and the consequent development of other rail lines opening up the Lower Rio Grande Valley, the use of irrigated fields there led to serious competition for vegetable and fruit markets, as Valley crops could come to maturity a little earlier than those of the Upper Coast. Then there was the climate.

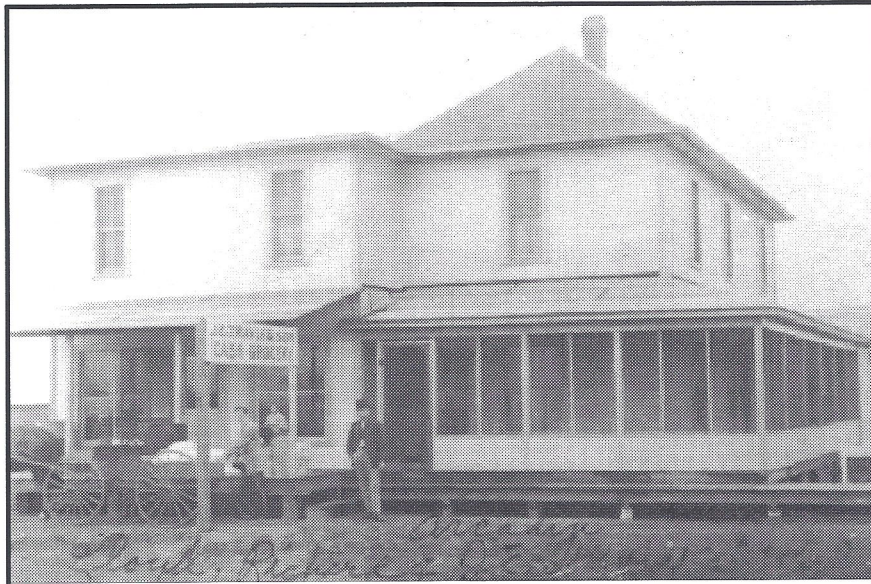


Figure 8. J. E. Travis Cash Grocery, Jackson at Beriton

Not all the promotion of Arcadia was by the investing sponsors of the community. The *Galveston Daily News* of September 21, 1908, announced one of the land speculation schemes that bankrupted unsuspecting farmers in many places: "A land transaction in which 2,000 acres of Galveston county land near the town of

Arcadia are involved will probably be consummated. Friday . . . to capitalists from Sheboygan, Mich., and Clinton, Iowa, who visited Galveston and Arcadia last week. The land will be developed at once. To make it attractive the syndicate will spend just \$5 per acre in draining it and building graded roads. At least one shelled road will be constructed through the middle of the property. Into this there will be graded roads built which will lead from every portion of the tract of land. Every acre will be drained, the tract cut up into small farms of ten, fifteen and twenty acres and placed on the market at a price which will insure a reasonable return on the money to be invested. . . . Homeseekers will be able to acquire a piece of the fertile south Texas land, with roads and drainage already provided, for a small payment down and the balance in installments. Those who know say that with these advantages any piece of land can be made to pay good money the first year if planted in fruit and truck."



Figure 9. Holloway Farm sweet potato patch, c. 1913
Unknown man left; Carrie and William Holloway; child, Durley Holloway

Alvin, September 23, 1908 (*GDN*). "The largest land deal that has been made in this locality was consummated here today by the real estate firm of W. R. Stockwell. The deal consisted of 2,400 acres of land out of the A. G. Reynolds league, located a few miles southeast of Alvin, in Brazoria and Galveston counties, the consideration being \$36,900. The land was



Figure 12. J. E. Gilbert Farm, c. 1910
Lydia in wagon with 3 daughters; J. E. Gilbert at right

The U. S. Census of 1910 showed an Arcadia population of about 450, in about 100 households. On July 3, 1911, *The Mainland Messenger* reported: "People who bought real estate out on the Highland Farms are fast taking possession of it." And on August 24, 1911, *The Galveston Daily News* noted, "In the last nine months the Highland farmers have made substantial advancement. P. Wall has 40 acres under cultivation and has started both fig and orange orchards. He has 100 fig trees and 50 orange trees. Mr. Garlow has 10 acres, 150 fig trees and 100 orange trees. Mr. Weedle has 10 acres under cultivation and will set out oranges and figs this fall. Mr. C. C. Hibbs has 20 acres and 500 orange trees. Mr. Traverse has 10 acres. Mr. Oats has 20 acres and E. J. Smith & Co. have 40 acres. Mr. Louis Perkins has 20 acres, 900 fig trees and 600 orange trees." Only one of these names appears on the 1920 Census.



Figure 13. John C. and Irene Franks Meek,
Curtis and Flora Belle, c. 1908



Figure 14. Alam Orem, holding Helen and Arthur,
c. 1907

fencing. **J. L. Belch's** blacksmith business was for some years in a shed at the west end of Hoshal's lumber yard.

Since Mr. Hoshal listed a phone (No. 15), the Arcadia Telephone company was in operation also by 1914, operated by **D. G. Hubler**. The telephone office was in a building on the north east corner of Jackson and Fourth, where the Assembly of God now stands. Many residences had phones until the depression era, when the



Figure 17. Belch/Smith, Sturm Families

- Row 1. Miss Lue Smith
- Row 2. Nettie and Clifton Smith
- Row 3. J. L. and Ella Smith Belch, Delia Smith Sturm and Frank Sturm

company failed. From that time until after World War II, the only telephones were along the highway and in a few homes within a couple of blocks. The telephone office was moved by Lloyd Morgan to the center of the block between Fourth and Hwy 6 about 1940, and became the core of his home, which still stands today, on the southwest corner of First and Peck.

D. G. Hubler also operated during the World War I era a wholesale fruit and vegetable

shipping business. (SFAHF Papers) This was not to survive as long as the better financed houses at Hitchcock. Hubler had been preceded by Oscar Acton, listed in the 1910 Census as "produce merchant."

The earliest reference found to a medical doctor is a mention (GDN, Nov 28, 1897) that "**Dr. J. M. Stephens** has completed his residence." Again, November 3, 1897: "Dr. J. M. Stevens is building an addition to his cottage near the business part of town." The 1910 Census lists **H. E. Downs**, 39, as a physician, but it is not certain that he practiced in Arcadia, rather than in Galveston. The *Mainland Messenger* of April 29, 1914 reported, "**Dr. McCully** went to San Antonio on a business trip."



Figure 18. Theodore (Bud) Pourchot and Cora Lee Meek Pourchot, c. 1900

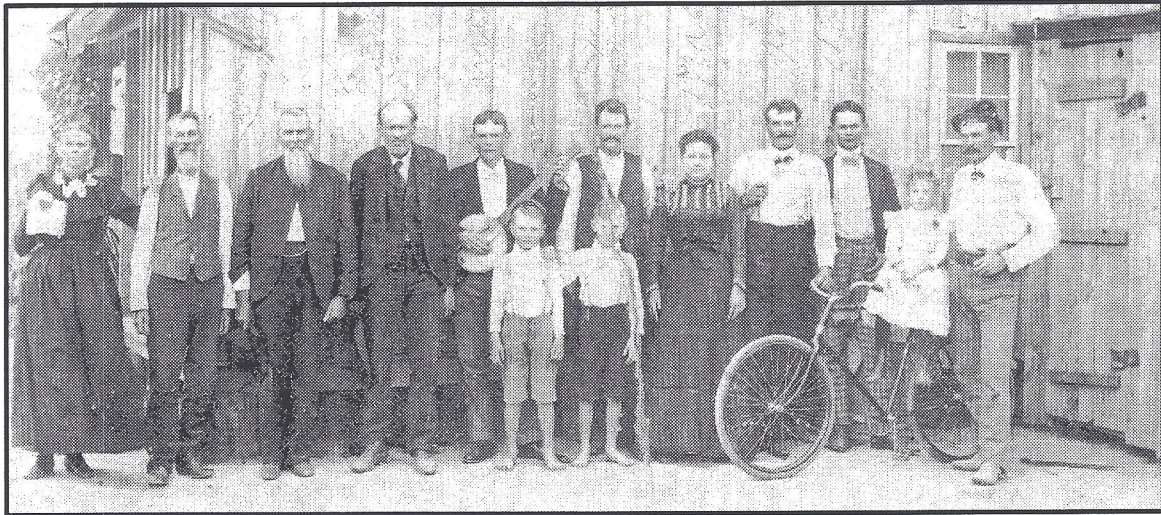


Figure 21. Related Newlin, Shannon, Fry family members, early 1900's
Margaret Shannon Newlin, Henry Newlin, Unknown, John Wesley Shannon, Monroe Shannon, Henry Fry, Martha Shannon Frv. Johnnv Shannon. Tommv Shannon. Frv and Shannon children

embarking for New Orleans. They came to Galveston by train, and Dr. Saunders prepared to check on some land purchased in 1910 "on a palm-lined boulevard in Arcadia." Apparently this was in the ill-fated Highland Farms, isolated and useless.



Figure 22. Fred Creppon with grandchildren
Sonny, Mary Belle, Faye, Dorothy

On his way to Arcadia, Dr. Saunders fell in with one of the Palmo sons, and the Saunders family began a four-year residence at Mrs. Palmo's. Professional ethics would not allow Dr. Saunders to try to compete for Dr. S. E. McCully's patients, but he was invited to share in the medical duties of the far western reaches of the County, and before long Dr. McCully moved away and Dr. Saunders assumed the practice,

including the all-night sessions at isolated childbirths, and the other hardships of the country doctor in that time, including the uncollectable debts for service.

The Saunders family took up residence in the house on the northwest corner of Jackson and Ida Bee, where the doctor had a dim little clinic-office-dispensary in the rear wing, entered from the vine-covered side porch. The four children (Jack having been born at Arcadia) were a part of the casual social life of the town's young people, but their mother, Luisa, never went out of the house except when escorted by her husband or one of her two sons.

According to a memoir contributed to the Texas Bicentennial observance by the Saunderses' daughter Margarita, the couple always longed to return to Mexico, but of course that was never possible. Both died in St. Mary's Infirmary, he in 1935, and she lingering with cancer for two years longer.

David Hill's store was destroyed in the 1900 Storm and was replaced the following year by the **Spencer & Owens** store on the same site, the northeast corner of Jackson and Ida Bee. This was the most pretentious structure to be built in Arcadia (aside from the White Horse Inn and the



Figure 25. All the Powers Children except Hazel, c. 1908

Row 1. George, Chester, Murl, Kitty, Edgar
 Row 2. Warren, Maude, Emma, Charlie

restaurant and meat market.” **Oscar Link** advertised a café at about this same time, before he became chef for The White Horse Inn.

Blacksmithing was a necessary trade in places depending so greatly on horses for transportation and plowing. *The News* reported on July 31, 1911, “We are informed that **John Anderson**, a scientific blacksmith and horseshoer, is about to start a shop in Arcadia.” Since **John Belch** had come to Arcadia as a blacksmith the previous year, and remained there for many years, Mr. Anderson may have moved on sooner than he had expected to.

The News, on January 31, 1911, noted,

“**Mrs. Hodges** has started a home-made bread establishment.”

(*GDN*, July 15, 1911). “The Santa Fe Railroad is moving the stock yards and packing shed farther north to make room to unload cars.”

The 1910 Census lists Mike Palmo as “general merchant.” His business operated out of a two-story building just north of Spencer and Owens’. There must have been considerable competition from time to time: (*GDN*, July 11, 1911) “The **Arcadia Cash Dry Goods Company** expects to open for business in **Newton Franks’s** building about July 2. It is believed that this store will fill a long felt want.” July 15, 1911: “The

Storm and War in the Teens



Figure 1. The Storm of 1915, East Side of the White Horse Inn

On Sunday night, August 15, 1915, the congregation of Arcadia Christian Church was assembled for evening worship when a messenger from the depot two blocks away strode down the aisle and spoke quietly to the minister, **B. D. Clark**. Word had come that a great storm, possibly as bad as that of 1900, was in the Gulf, apparently heading for the Upper Texas Coast. After a hasty benediction, families loaded their wagons or began their walk home. On Tuesday night their worst fears became reality.

The center of the storm passed west of the city of Galveston, crossed West Bay, and presented its most forceful winds in the Arcadia area. Many houses went off their blocks, some skidding across the bare ground, their hapless occupants scrambling to avoid being smashed by toppling furniture. Some families, fearing collapse of their houses, went outside and were exposed to the wind and stinging rain all night. Afterward, the following appeal appeared in the *Galveston Daily News*:



Figure 4. The Great War. Orien Shannon



Figure 6. The Great War. Felix Creppon



Figure 5. At the War's End, John Neshyba packed his bugle and came to Arcadia.