

Larrisons Make Early Mark on Madison County

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9 Jan 2019

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Editor's note: This is the first of two columns detailing the history of the Larrison family.

Daniel Larrison was one of Madison County's earlier settlers.

He was born in Pennsylvania in 1786. He married Sarah Eammaus "Emma" Greenwood, who was born in Virginia in 1797. By some accounts, they married in 1815 in Madison County, Illinois, but elsewhere it is printed that they married before moving to Illinois. After Illinois, they moved to Tennessee, and then came to Texas by way of Red River County.

Later they ran a ferry on the Neches River, and then they moved to and lived in Houston County for a while. In 1828, they passed through Madison County on their way to Gonzales County. Arriving in the latter, they found that Indians were too hostile, so they returned to Madison County.

The Larrisons were about the third family to settle here, though in those days this area was part of Montgomery County. There was a trail traveling east to west which later became Highway 21, and they settled on a creek that crossed that trail.

In 1829 the creek was named for Mr. Larrison, and it still bears that name, as you can see on signs.

Also in 1829, Larrison built a log cabin near that creek. He lived there the rest of his life, except for a short period when hostile Indians forced them to move to Grimes County where settlers had banded together against Indians.

In 1833, the Mexican government granted D. Larrison a league and a labor of land, which in current terminology is 4,605 acres.

The family lived by raising cattle and hogs and farming corn and cotton. They also fished, hunted, and trapped. Once or twice a year they obtained supplies via ox wagon to Louisiana.

Larrison was known for his hunting ability. After his death, his obituary stated, "He was a celebrated marksman. His gun always took meat. He was a great hunter, and killed many bear, panther, and deer."

Years later, one of his grandsons told that one morning Daniel killed seven panthers within 300 yards of his home, and another time he killed a 400-pound bear. The couple had 10 children. I figure those responsibilities somewhat influenced his hunting. He couldn't go to Wal-Mart or Brookshires for groceries or shoes for the youngsters.

One son, Joel Greenwood Larrison, was born in 1821 in Red River, before the family made Madison County their home. His Larrison DNA was passed through a few generations down to Joe Larrison and a nephew, Jerry, in Huntsville; my good friend, Bill Larrison, Joe's son, just a few miles north of the county line in Leon County; and younger generations too.

Daughter Mariah Jane Larrison was born in 1825 in the community of Mustang Prairie, Houston County. She married Willis Parker, and both Willis and Mariah Jane are buried in Larrison Cemetery. They had 8 children but from what I can tell, none remained in this area.

Daughter Sarah Larrison was born in 1837. She first married Steven Barrett and had two sons, but he died in the Civil War. She then married Caleb Fraley and they had three sons. The Larrison DNA and Fraley name survives here today, in James Fraley, his descendants, and those of his late brother, Joel Fraley.

Daniel's and Emma's other children were Louisa, born in 1817 and who married Bill Moffett, Tom, born in 1819, John (we know no more), in 1833 twins Emmaline and Caroline (the latter married Canahan Squier first and Bill Reagan second), twins Frank and Sarah, born 1837, and Nancy (no birthdate) who married Freeland Henson.

There is some discrepancy in records, some say there were 10 children and some say 10 that lived to adulthood. There is some mention of an Elizabeth.