

**Bronte Incorporated in 1907**

Bronte was incorporated in 1907; G.S. Arnold was first mayor, and the first recorded session of the City Council was held on July 17, 1907. Members participating in that meeting were J.B. Reilly, W.A. Good, W.H. Maxwell, T.C. Price, and T.R. Butler. E.G. Walton was secretary and H.L. Mobley was treasurer. This much is known.

Just exactly when the town began to be called Bronte is not known. The post office department said several years ago that an application was made for a post office in 1888. "Bronco" was suggested as a name but rejected by the Postal Department, as there was already a post office by that name. "Bronte" was finally decided upon, named after Miss Charlotte Bronte, famed English novelist. According to the Postal Department, the Bronte application was made and approved April 19, 1890, but according to old timers here who remember those days, it was in the fall of 1890 before post office facilities became available. The Post office department says the first post master here was George S. Kelly.

Mr. R.E. Cumby remembers that the first store in Bronte, was a grocery store, built by Dr. W. F. Key in 1890. He said that they had to go to Hayrick for their mail until about Nov. 1 of that year when the first post office was established in the Harris residence near our present ball park. The late E.B. Fletcher corroborated the statement by saying in 1947 "Dr. W.F. Key started this town." The late M. Lasswell, who came here from Bosque County, said in 1956 that when they came here in 1885 there was nothing but ranches and his father filed claim on vacant land.

So it is generally agreed that "old Bronte" as a town came into being shortly after the county as organized in 1889.

Old Bronte was located some

half mile southwest of its present location, a little west of the present cool buildings and was built there because of the availability of water from the West Kickapoo Creek.

When it was learned soon after 1900 that the Orient railroad was planning to come through this section, talk began of moving the town to the railroad. The move began in 1906.

The late Frank and Charlie Keeney used to like to tell of moving the town. They said the stores were moved by means of old wooden rollers.

"They'd put the houses on these wooden rollers," Frank said, "tie one end of a rope around a stake, and pull it forward 50 feet, then repeat the process until they got through.

"Bronte at that time was only farm land, and when we moved we sold goods right along up from the old location to the new one".

**Ordinances to Govern City**

Shortly after incorporation in 1907 the new town council adopted ordinances to Vern the new city. Twelve were adopted at their second meeting on July 22, 1907.

The substance of one was that "all male inhabitants between the ages of 21-45, except ministers of the Gospel, shall be held liable to work on the public streets and allies not to exceed five days a year; or if unable to work, to provide a substitute or a sum of money not to exceed one dollar for each day's work." Failure to work or "provide good services while working" was a fine of \$25. However, another ordinance adopted the same pay provided that all men who paid \$3.00 to the city within 30 days of the ordinance would be exempt for one year.

In another ordinance a "\$100 fine was set for persons who shall leave any horse, mule or team of any kind hitched to any wagon, buggy or vehicle of any kind in any street or alley without first fastening or tying said animals or team so as to prevent their running away and endangering the lives and



**Sunday Best!** The William Joseph Henry Rogers family has donned their Sunday best for this photo taken in Bronte.

property of others."

The first sanitary ordinance was passed in May, 1908, providing a fine for persons "who failed to clean or have cleaned all closets under their control once a month."

Sept. 8, 1908, a called meeting of the council provided "that a calaboose be built, size 10x12 feet" and J.B. Reilly, T.C. Price were the committee in charge of the building. They later reported that the lumber would cost \$75, and the calaboose was erected on Lot 2, Block 42.

In November, 1908, Dr. A.J. Turner, Dr. J.D. Leonard and I.M. Howard were appointed as a health board to investigate "rumors of some cases of diphtheria." They were the forerunners of the first health officer, T.P. Pippin, who was appointed in April, 1910.

The beginnings of the Bronte water system were discussed in 1909 when it was proposed that water be pumped from the Keeney well to the intersection of State and Main streets. A committee was appointed to

take a subscription for assisting in the project, which included the well, tank, windmill and labor. The city tax rate in 1909 was 20 cents per \$100 valuation.

J.L. Brown in 1910 is the first fire chief on record.

In November, 1909, the Bronte Power and Light Company was instructed to install two 200 candle power tungsten lamps, one at the intersection of Main & State and the other at Main & Washington.

The first ordinance dealing

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