



School Days! Today's campuses would appear massive to the students who attended these earlier versions. The photo of the Bronte Public School (bottom) was taken in 1898. The Robert Lee photo (top) was taken in 1900.

School Days! Bronte students pose in front of the school in 1912 before loading into the buses for the trip home.

Many Hardships Endured by Pioneer Women of the Area

[Editor's Note: The information for the following article appeared in the July 21, 1989, issue of The Observer/Enterprise, with credit given to Mrs. Jessie Yarbrough's "History of Coke County".]

(Mrs. Yarbrough's note: Mrs. Larking Hayley (Ethel Pearce Hayley) related the story of her birth. She was born in the isolated Pearce home near the line of Runnels and Coke Counties, not far from Old Fort Chadbourne which is a prominent spot in the History of Coke County, on March 2, 1880, just two weeks after Runnels County was organized and nine years before Coke County was organized. Mrs. Hayley lived most of her life in Coke County.)

Before daybreak on March 1, 1880, Mr. H.D. Pearce bid goodbye to his wife and three small children and started in his wagon for Coffees Store at Walthall (then called Picketville) for supplies and on to Paint Rock to bring back a mid-wife, for the Peaces were expecting a visit from the stork in a few weeks.

At sunup the wind began to blow, and soon a notorious sand storm of that day was raging. The wind and sand rocked and beat the little shack all day. Late in the afternoon a wild sow with her litter sought refuge in the human abode. The ten-year-old son shot into the bunch. The sow departed immediately leaving behind a dead pig.

The pioneer mother, ever on the alert for fresh meat for her family, skinned, salted, and put

away this meat. Soon the lean-to cook room blew away, scattering utensils as far as a half mile away. The living room, more substantially built, withstood the storm, but the ducking roof began to rip away. Mrs. Pearce, overturned a water barrel, clamed upon it to nail the roof. Just as she thought it nailed securely, a harder gust of wind ripped away all of the roof. Sand poured into the house. (This, by-the-way, was when there was no plowed ground.)

As the mother put her sleepy

children to bed, she realized that the stork had decided to hasten his visit; and realizing that she must depend upon herself for assistance, she made ready as best she could in the dark, for the kerosene lantern would not stay lighted in the storm. About midnight the storm ceased -in answer to her prayer no doubt. A great calm came upon the land. The stars came out in all their glory and lighted up every corner of the roofless room. About 3 am the first white child born in the new county made her arrival. She was myself, Ethal

Anna Pearce. Because of her bravery and experience in waiting on her sick neighbors in Paint Rock and Brownwood, my wonderful mother was able to care for herself at this time. She wrapped her new-born babe and rested until daybreak -then her 10 year-old son was awakened

and sent a mile away to where an old German and his son were camped, improving their land. He was told to take his wagon and bring some women from the nearest neighbors five miles distant. Upon his arrival there and telling of this errand, one of the women became hysterical,

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY
COKE COUNTY!**



*Vegetables & Flower Plants
Drought Tolerant Plants
Succulent Plants*

Hwy 277 North & Main Street • Bronte

Happy Birthday Coke County!

**This 'N That Shop opened
for business May 9, 2002, at
717 Austin and moved to
711 Austin in May 2004.**

**We are open
Thursday and Saturday,
10 am to 4 pm,
and by appointment.**

**We have antiques, collectibles,
furniture, jewelry, toys
and more.**

This 'N That Shop

**Owner - Leta Caston
(325) 277-2650**

**Cyndy Caston - (325) 277-4710
Store - (325) 453-4307**

