

Any resident of Cypress, Texas, who has been a resident for more than three months, knows the history of the area. The versions they have heard may be factual, fanciful, or more likely than not a combination of both, but everyone can agree that the story of Cypress and the land grant that became Enchanted Valley are quintessential Texas.

So it is entirely appropriate to start with information provided by the Texas Historical Commission as well as interviews with members of the Cypress Historical Society as to the beginnings of our area, when it was just a fork in the road going from Washington-on-the-Brazos to Harrisburg. According to the Historical Marker in Telge Park, Matthew Burnett was 35 years old and his wife, Sarah, was 33 years old when they came to Texas as part of Stephen F. Austin's second colonization. They settled just south of present day Cypress Creek. In the beginning it was referred to as Cypress Bayou. Their home was near the Harrisburg Road which stretched northwest to a crossroads at the home of their closest neighbor, Abram Roberts and southeast to Harrisburg (see hand drawn map).

True to legend, the Texas Army, 1100 men strong under the command of Sam Houston, stopped at the Burnett settlement about dusk on April 16, 1836, after turning southeast at the Roberts' crossroads earlier in the day. During their overnight stay they consumed most of the Burnett's livestock and grains and burned fence rails for fuel. The next morning the Army departed for Harrisburg where on April 21, 1836, they engaged the Mexican Army at the Battle of San Jacinto, winning Texas' Independence from Mexico.

What most people don't realize is that the Burnetts were not in residence at the time the Texas Army stopped by, having fled the area during the Run-Away Scrape. They returned after learning of Sam Houston's victory over the Mexican Army. By the late 1830s and into the 1840s their home site became a prominent landmark and well-known tavern on the much traveled road to Houston.

The years the Burnetts and their neighbors spent settling the land around Cypress Creek and raising their families are brought to life by memoirs and stories of how Cypress grew from a fork in the road to the thriving community it is today. Perhaps what makes these stories special to those of us who live in Enchanted Valley are our intimate familiarity with the names of the settlers: Telge, Knigge, Hoffmeister, and how their everyday lives impacted us these many years later in the places that are so familiar to us, as though we are a part of this ongoing history.

Perhaps we will have a chance to share more Cypress stories in later articles. I hope so. These stories truly prove the phrase, "fact is stranger than fiction."

(courtesy of Creekside Memories)