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CANDID COLUMNS: LIFE AS REVEALED IN ANTEBELLUM NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING IN NORTHEAST TEXAS

by Roger W. Rodgers

Advertisements in the northeast Texas *antebellum* newspapers reveal a culture unlike our own. The institutions were different: slavery was well established; and there was no public school system, no banks, and the transportation systems could inflict an arduous ordeal on travelers. If we regard the area as rural today, it was more so then and the countryside posed special challenges. In 1852 the Marshall *Texas Republican* related that Geiger and Company needed to add to their inventory: "Skins wanted. 1,000 panther skins, 500 bear skins; for which the highest market price will be paid at Shreveport."¹ While there were few such mentions of wildlife, a general reading of advertisements provides a plain, straight-forward medium to view the culture, attitudes, and peculiarities of that time and place. The costs and methods of transportation, the nature of public notices and meetings, and the availability and costs of education are all easily accessible. *Antebellum* advertisements contained references to most of the important aspects of life. Even pieces of weather information appeared since the amount of rainfall directly affected river navigation and agriculture.²

The geographic area under consideration constituted approximately a twenty-county area in the northeast corner of the state during the decade prior to the Civil War. The major towns were Tyler, Henderson, Marshall, Jefferson, and Clarksville, with Shreveport, Louisiana, functioning as a crucial link to commercial markets. In today's highway distances, Tyler to Shreveport is approximately ninety miles on Interstate I-20. Marshall is on the same route and only forty miles from Shreveport. Clarksville is in Red River County, twenty miles from the Oklahoma border and sixty miles from Texarkana. From Clarksville, down Highway 37 and 69, it is approximately 100 miles to Tyler. In 1850 Harrison County was the most populous county in the state with over 11,000 residents, fifty-two percent of whom were black. Marshall, the county seat, with a population of 1,189, was the fifth largest town in the state.³ Though the population was sparse, some residents felt crowded. A man living nine miles west of Marshall wrote "that his home was on a road so 'publick' that anything he had to spare could be sold at his front door."⁴

The most striking thing about the newspapers of *antebellum* Texas was that there were so many. The first printer and press came to Texas in 1813 and by the time of the Civil War over 400 others had appeared.⁵ The life span of any particular newspaper was likely to be short. Publishers often founded newspapers for a particular purpose, most often political, and when that mission had been fulfilled they discontinued the press, sold out, or moved. A recurring theme in reviewing papers of the period was the shortage of cash. The problem of selling subscriptions and advertising was surpassed only by the challenge of collecting for them. Since Texas was literally a frontier state, the uncertain and erratic supply of newsprint compounded the editors' woes.

One of the most successful newspapers in northeast Texas was the Clarksville *Northern Standard*, shortened to the *Standard* after October 1852. The editor, Charles DeMorse, was a lawyer whose travels on legal matters

provided him an opportunity to conduct newspaper business. He published his first issue in 1842, and with a brief Civil War interruption, continued the paper as an ardent supporter of the Democratic Party until his death in 1887.⁶ Robert Loughery, a staunch Calhoun Democrat, also made the *Marshall Texas Republican* one of the area's more widely read newspapers, especially during the 1850s.⁷

This was a raucous decade, and the papers were seldom subtle. The *Marshall Meridian and Pacific Railroad Advocate* declared boldly on its masthead that it was "Devoted to the Railroad, Agricultural, Commercial, Social and Moral Improvement of our Country."⁸ Its preferences were no doubt listed in priority order. The prospectus of the *Upshur Democrat* stated that "it is our intention to publish a paper undisguisedly Democratic in politics."⁹ When Sam Warner, editor of the *Tyler Reporter*, happily noted the beginning of its fourth volume, he also promised that it would be "the untiring opponent of Know Nothingism."¹⁰ Even the advertisers playfully entered the fray. A Mr. Smith ran a notice in the *Texas Republican* in 1850 that allegedly announced a new business enterprise:

Notice. The undersigned is about to establish a foundary in Marshall for making Brass Collars for those who have sworn allegiance to Houston and Rusk. It is expected to commence operations shortly, when the one specifically intended for the Northern Standard will be finished without delay. The inscription on them will be, as recommended by a public meeting recently held in Gilmer: "Born a slave to Houston and Rusk." Orders from a distance will be attended to.¹¹

Subscription and advertising rates remained consistent throughout the period. The Clarksville *Standard* charged \$2.50 for a year, if paid in advance, or \$3.50 at the end of the year. Single issues cost ten cents.¹² Advertising sold by the "square," eight or ten lines in a column. The first ad ran for \$1.00 per square and fifty cents thereafter.¹³ Public speaking engagements then were both more important and more common, and the advertisement section listed and promoted these engagements. When John H. Reagan ran for Congress, his full itinerary appeared in local papers; he spoke at thirty-seven engagements within two summer months throughout northeast Texas.¹⁴

Perhaps no issued affected business affairs so much as money—not the abstract concept of wealth and power, but the actual circulating medium itself. There was never enough gold and silver coin to serve the economy's needs, and to compound the problem the Texas State Constitutional Convention in 1845 prohibited banks. The constitution specified that "no corporate body shall hereafter be created, renewed or extended with banking or discounting privileges."¹⁵ No bills or promissory notes could be issued to circulate as money. Out of necessity, several mercantile and commission houses provided banking services such as advancing payment for commodities, but notes issued could not serve as legal tender. The prejudice against banks resulted from the flood of worthless notes of other state banks that had plagued Texas since the 1830s. Notes from out-of-state banks, however, circulated throughout the 1850s.¹⁶

While helping to facilitate trade, the bank notes also provided merchants with a special problem: counterfeiting. A New York publisher advertised in the Rusk *Cherokee Sentinel* his weekly publication *Detecting Counterfeit Bank*

Notes, which described, he said, counterfeits and “every genuine bill in existence.”¹⁷ At only \$1.00 per year, the weekly may have been a sound investment. Because of the number of state banks and their largely unregulated issue of bank notes, anyone accepting such a note had three critical questions to consider: “1.) Was the note genuine? 2.) Was the issuing bank still in operation? 3.) At what discount was the note acceptable?”¹⁸ Thus, bank note detecting services and publications flourished from 1840 to 1865. One scholar estimated that “five-sixths of all American bank notes issued had been counterfeited.”¹⁹ As a consequence, the wise merchant was ever cautious, even with notes on reputable banks.

The term “cash” implied immediate payment, not actual currency. The Tutt and Ramsour lumber mill near Tyler announced in 1852 that although it previously had sold on credit, it would no longer do so. “Do not deceive yourselves and send for lumber without the CASH; for we do assure you that we will sell to no one for anything else.”²⁰ In reality the medium of exchange could be virtually anything. The Adkins and Taylor mill, located two miles west of Marshall, promised “cheap lumber” and also allowed that for payment “anything raised or produced on a plantation will be taken in exchange from a hen egg to an ox to his hide and tallow.”²¹

Those who offered credit did so with palpable risk. Lewis Atherton in *The Southern Country Store* suggested that credit was a major factor in the high cost of merchandise: “Stores counted on an average annual loss of about 20 percent of credit sales.”²² Numerous advertisements reflected the same desperation of B.F. Dial in the *Marshall Star State Patriot*: “All those indebted to me by note or account . . . are positively assured that if payment is not made by the first of March, they will be sued, be they friends or foe. The money must come.”²³ In Tyler, Felton and Wiggins, wholesale and retail dealers in drugs, oils, and stationery, experienced an even more frustrating fate. When a fire destroyed all their credit records; they requested their creditors “to come forward promptly and pay what their memories and consciences tell them they owe.”²⁴

In *The Dixie Frontier*, Everett Dick stated that among the various mediums of trading exchange were warehouse receipts for fur traders, certificates of service for militiamen, and cotton ginners’ receipts. To make change for silver dollars, people frequently chopped the dollars into “bits” (pieces of eight) and two bits would equal a quarter.²⁵ Rather than giving a specific merchandise quote, a merchant frequently asked what kind of money was being offered. Foreign coins were common currency. There were so many different nations’ coins in use that the *Tyler Telegraph* published a lengthy list of the current value of gold and silver coins being traded. Some coins were easily recognizable. The American Gold Eagle was worth \$10 and the Spanish doubloon \$16. Spanish and Mexican silver dollars each traded at \$1.00. Many other coins, however, required more discernment. For instance, the Turkish gold Xeriff was worth \$2.30, the Italian Pistolo \$3.25, and the Russian Zervonitz \$2.00.²⁶

For large transactions such as land sales, slaves often served as a means of payment. In exchange for 430 acres located east of Marshall, John Williams would accept “money, Negroes or good cash notes.”²⁷ James Johnston wanted to sell three tracts of land on the Red River near Jonesboro Prairie. He would accept “one third cash or negroes at fair valuation” and the balance on credit. If he was unable to sell these tracts, he proposed “to enter into a partnership,

for one or more years, with any person who would furnish a sufficient number of negroes to cultivate...the land. I would also sell land, and take the hire of negroes in payment."²⁸ W.R.D. Ward in Marshall offered land for sale for "cash, negroes, notes or railroad stock."²⁹ Among the most misguided options was that set forth in August 1861 by firms such as Boren and Douglas in Tyler: "We will take Confederate Bonds in payment of debts due us."³⁰ These, of course, would soon become the most worthless of all financial commodities.

Personal "I.O.U.'s" frequently circulated as currency. Throughout the period every paper carried advisories which cautioned prospective traders that certain personal notes or credits would not be honored. Whether we side with the note holder or note writer, we can admire the civic responsibility of publicly advising the community not to accept these notes. Robert Montgomery of Henderson warned against trading for two notes he had given to A.K. Sardlin for \$500 each. "The consideration of said notes having entirely failed, I shall resist the payment of them no matter into what hands they may fall. I learn that said notes are in the possession of W.D. Kincaid."³¹ Montgomery obviously was bitterly dissatisfied with the results of his trade with Sardlin. Kincaid, who apparently now held the notes, also looked to be precariously situated for redemption of the notes in his own dealings with Sardlin.

Some personal notes were issued with the apparent expectation that they would be traded. When Thomas Knight paid Alexander Hill \$500 in December 1856, rather than issuing one single note he gave six notes each payable for \$83.33 $\frac{1}{3}$ and due in December 1857. His warning in the *Tyler Reporter* likewise stated that "the consideration for which they were given has failed," and he had no intent to honor the notes. Whoever possessed the notes may have shown nervousness already since the ad ran in February 1859, fourteen months after the notes were due for redemption.³² The personal notes might be payable in either currency or commodities. The Sheek family had given notes, which they now refused to pay, for "cows and calves" and "cows and calves and beef cattle."³³ Some advertisements revealed far more than mere refusal to pay. Joel K. Fuller forewarned "all persons from harboring or trading with my wife Elizabeth Fuller, as she left my bed and board ... and refuses to live with me. I will not pay any of her contracts."³⁴

As in all ages, the prospect of sudden wealth was alluring. There was no Texas state lottery, but several newspapers advertised for lotteries outside the state. A company in Augusta, Georgia, proclaimed a "capital prize" of \$50,000 and numerous smaller prizes. A "whole ticket" cost \$10, with half and quarter tickets also available. Players wary of sending money through the mails could use the Adams Express Company for sums of \$10 or more "at our risk and expense."³⁵

For many Southerners, slaves constituted a major portion of their capital worth, and a good slave might be worth the equivalent of 200 acres of land. Slaves represented value both as workers and as "currency," and like other forms of money they were sometimes hard to retain. Advertisements offering rewards for the return of runaway slaves appeared frequently in every paper. Owners preferred that the apprehended slave be returned home; however, it was always suitable if the runaway was lodged in jail. The jail served as a kind of marshaling yard to re-direct runaway traffic to its legal servitude. Slaves on the loose were jailed pending further dispensation. A Clarksville advertisement, for instance, declared there were two runaways in the local jail, and the

owner was requested "to come forward, prove property, pay charges and take them away."³⁶ Those unclaimed would be auctioned at the courthouse on regular slave trading days.

Rewards for slaves varied from \$15 to \$50. The higher bounties often were contingent upon delivery to the owner, with perhaps half the amount offered if the delivery was to a jail. A particularly handsome reward of \$100 appeared in the *Tyler Reporter* for delivery of a runaway from Houston. The man described was a "fine billiard player" and this may have been a skill of considerable value to the owner.³⁷ If the advertisements were a reliable indicator, over ninety percent of the runaways were men between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five. Sometimes the approximate age would be given indicating the owner was not certain. The terms "man" and "boy" often were used interchangeably in the same advertisement for the same individual. A "liberal reward" was offered for "a large and likely negro man named Mack ... Said boy rode off on a black mare."³⁸

Rewards were offered not only for slaves but also for any person thought to have aided in their escape, and the bounty for the despised accomplice often exceeded that for the slave. A Marshall advertisement offered \$50 for a runaway named Reuben who "was supposed to have been decoyed off by some white person." The profit trebled for a package deal: "One hundred dollars will be given for the apprehension of the white man, with proof sufficient to convict him."³⁹ Randolph B. Campbell notes in *An Empire for Slavery: The Peculiar Institution in Texas 1821-1865*, that in 1856 and 1857 the Texas State Penitentiary had eighteen inmates serving sentences for "Negro Stealing" or "Enticing Away Negroes," and that "state supreme court reports indicate that others escaped prison only through technicalities."⁴⁰

Besides the aforementioned billiard player, slaves possessed other skills. John Coleman lost both a blacksmith and a carpenter, "both with a good supply of clothes when they left."⁴¹ The leasing or hiring out of slaves also revealed a variety of skills and occupations. Fairly common were ads such as "Wanted: a Negro girl 12-15 years old to wait upon children. Anyone having such a girl for hire please apply at this office." Sam Richardson, who operated a saw mill in Marshall, wanted "ten stout, active hands (negroes) for the ensuing year, for which a liberal price will be given." A.D. Burress, who also ran a local mill, must have had trouble keeping his hirelings in line. "Warning. I hereby forewarn all persons from trading in any manner with any of my negroes, or any negroes under my control, unless authorized by a written order from me. Any person interfering in this manner will be prosecuted to the extent of the law."⁴² Whatever Isaiah Lawson had expected of "a certain woman negro slave" when he purchased her, he had learned within eight months that she did "not comport with the bill of sale." He gave public warning not to trade for his notes, as he would not pay "unless by legal compulsion."⁴³

More than any other distinguishing description given for runaways was the presence of scars. Although a scar could be the only thing memorable enough for a description of runaways, the owner often could not remember the scar's location. The Clarksville *Standard* carried descriptions such as "white spot on the front part of his head caused by a blow." Another said a slave had "the forefinger of his right hand taken off, more specific description not now

remembered." A Hunt County owner knew that his slave had a scar on his cheek which "looks like from a burn" but he could not remember which cheek.⁴⁴ Our Houston billiard player had a small scar on one side of his forehead - which side was not recalled. He also had "upper front teeth a little decayed," another common characteristic.⁴⁵ Reuben had "a scar on his face somewhere; place not recollected." The owner was certain that Reuben had worked as a carpenter and had taken along some of his tools.⁴⁶ J.H. Thomason of Franklin Parrish, Louisiana, advertised in Marshall that two of his slaves had escaped. One had a "scar on the lip ... the other has a few shot in the side above the hip."⁴⁷ Other slaves were described as "lame," "slightly ruptured," and one with a tetterworm [a kind of skin disease, apparently] on his head and as a result was "considerably scarred."⁴⁸ In the absence of these marks, slaves could sometimes be recognized, said the advertisements, by their "downcast look when closely questioned" or stammering "if alarmed."⁴⁹

Whether slaves were technically people or property, they were viewed as inferior beings. In 1858, the Singer Sewing Machine Company boasted that over 13,000 of its machines were in use and had no equal. The stitches were excellent, the maintenance low, and they were simple to operate. In fact, "Negroes can be safely trusted with the entire care of the machine, without the least apprehension that they will get out of order."⁵⁰ Retailers advertised "Negro goods" as a separate item. Blankets, for instance, were Makinaw, bed blankets, or Negro blankets. "Negro shoes" could be had at bargain prices.⁵¹ A notice in the Marshall *Texas Republican* in 1849 claimed that a certain individual had found a cure for cholera. The medicine had allegedly proven a great success and great care had gone into its development. It had been "used on a Negro first."⁵²

If we believe the claims of some advertisers, illnesses could be conquered readily. Whether it was the purveyors of patent medicines, pharmacists, doctors, or dentists, all promised near miraculous results from their wares or their services. Radway's ready relief constituted "the most useful and important medicine in the world." Radway's prevented as well as cured. "The moment you experience pain or uneasiness in any portion of the body, a dose of Radway's ready relief taken internally or applied externally, as the nature of the pain may require, will restore the patient to ease and comfort in from one to fifteen minutes ... many lives have been saved by a twenty-five cent bottle."⁵³

Few medicines could attain to Radway's universal application, but Reeve's Southern Family Medicines offered a \$100 reward if the grave could be shown of any person "who had died of pneumonia in the state of Texas after having properly used by directions" the Stimulating Expectorant. So far Reeves had sold 5,000 bottles - each of which could treat three cases of pneumonia. Dr. McLane's Vermifuge worked on man or beast. It was effective for "expelling worms from the human system [and] has also been administered with the most satisfactory results to various animals subject to worms."⁵⁴ "Jew David's Hebrew Plaster" was a great remedy for rheumatism and gout. No wonder. "Where this plaster is applied, pain cannot exist." The retailer in Marshall, however, warned that several dealers in New Orleans marketed counterfeit plasters.⁵⁵ If any manner of discomfort remained, one could resort to Argyle Bitters, "a sure Remedy for Dyspepsia, Cholera, Diarrhea, Dysentery, Sick Headache, Night Sweats, General Debility, and its attendant ills." These bitters were likewise a certain preventative. "Persons visiting

districts harassed annually with Fever and ague, or any Fever of a bilious nature, will find that by the timely use of one or two bottles, they will not in one instance take the disease."⁵⁶

The liver, and sometimes the kidneys, served as the focal point to attack numerous maladies. An advertisement in the Marshall *Harrison Flag* proclaimed a lady customer's satisfaction with Dr. McLane's celebrated liver pills. She had suffered with "the liver complaint" for six years without relief until McLane's pills "completely cured me; I do hereby recommend them to all persons with a diseased liver."⁵⁷ Reeve's medicines offered a vegetable anti-bilious pill (fifty cents per box) especially effective in the treatment of typhoid fever or liver and kidney ailments. Reeve, proud Southerner that he was, did not promise a "cure for all diseases as is the custom with Northern Vendors generally."⁵⁸

Who could underestimate the restorative powers of Dr. Larzette's Acoustic Oil for the cure of deafness? "Persons who have been deaf for twenty years, and were subject to use ear trumpets, have after using only one bottle, been made well."⁵⁹ The family grocers in Marshall sold wines, liquors, and brandy "for medicinal purposes only,"⁶⁰ since Harrison County was technically a "dry" county at the time.⁶¹ Perhaps as a last resort, all reputable druggists offered morphine and opium. The uses were not specified, but the firm of Armstrong and Francis in Rusk advertised opium simply as "a good article."⁶² For those fortunate enough not to experience the more serious and debilitating disorders, Preston and Merrill's Infallible Yeast Powder also assured readers that there was no longer any "excuse for bad breath."⁶³

The advertisements provided no record to substantiate the actual success of various drugs. It may be safe to conclude that the medicines were as remedial as the patient's physical resilience. Many of these advertisements seem humorous today until we remember that in most cases this was all that was available. In lieu of penicillin or smallpox vaccinations, there was Radway's ready relief.

The main economic activity of northeast Texas was farming. In reviewing advertisements, the most prominent aspect of marketing the crops was the dependence on New Orleans as a market for cotton and as the primary source for consumer commodities. New Orleans businesses regularly took up at least a half page of the advertising in any East Texas paper. Although the Sabine River could be navigated from the Gulf to the vicinity of Tyler, the Red River and Shreveport led more directly to New Orleans. Since the cotton factors, agents, and shippers headquartered in New Orleans, once the harvest left East Texas any other processing or marketing profit would be made outside the state.⁶⁴ With the area relying so heavily on agriculture, this situation amounted to a significant loss of capital for the local economy.

The rivers offered the cheapest routes for shipping. For northeast Texas, a primary shipping point was Port Caddo, located twenty miles northeast of Marshall on Big Cypress Bayou. Depending on the water level, by 1845 steamboats could operate from the Red River by way of Big Cypress and Caddo Lake as far as Jefferson. The river traffic suffered from numerous obstructions, fallen trees, and other debris, which over time grew into small floating islands called "rafts." The *Texas Republican* noted in 1849 that William Perry of Jefferson had contracted to remove the navigation

obstructions on Caddo Lake for a fee of \$3500. The lake obstructions, however, were never permanently or satisfactorily cleared.⁶⁵

Numerous steamers which carried freight and passengers operated between Shreveport and New Orleans during "season." They advertised that they would continue to operate "so long as the water will permit."⁶⁶ The steamers constructed for the Red River traffic necessarily featured a light draught to be able to negotiate the low water levels. The steamer *Era* carried "700 bales of cotton on three feet of water."⁶⁷

The advertisements invariably mentioned comfort, speed, accommodations, and convenience. Unmentioned was the issue of safety. J.H. Van Hook, a manufacturer of tinware in Marshall, gave notice in the *Harrison Flag* that he had "sustained a severe loss by the sinking of the steamer *Holden*."⁶⁸ He needed funds promptly and advised his debtors that he intended to sue if they did not soon pay up. There was a steady supply of news stories that confirmed the riverboat sinkings. The *Texas Republican* noted the sinking of the *George Washington* when its boilers burst near Grand Gulf in January 1852. The explosion instantly killed thirty men and badly scalded eight or ten more. Two barges in tow with about 1800 tons of freight were lost also.⁶⁹ Steamboat sinkings usually were the result of explosions, but also resulted from snags or bad weather. There was also the fate of the *Emma Brown* which was carrying a load of hogs down the Ohio. It seems "they rooted a hole through the bottom of the boat and sunk her."⁷⁰ For those who wished to relive these precarious moments, the J.T. Lloyd printing company advertised in the *Henderson Democrat* that for \$1.00, its new Steamboat Directory was available. It listed all the steamboats in operation and contained "a list and description of all the steamboat disasters that have occurred on the Western and Southern waters, beautifully illustrated, with a list of all those who have perished by their burning, sinking, and exploding."⁷¹

For the passenger traffic, the stagecoach offered less dangerous, and less comfortable, accommodations. In 1850 the first stagecoach line began operations from Shreveport to Marshall. While rain in East Texas was auspicious for river transportation, it could make such roads as existed impassable. A Marshall newspaper attempted to drum up support for a "plank road not less than 16 feet wide" that would assist travel on the Shreveport to Marshall line. The toll for a coach would be twelve cents per mile. Apparently, subscription cost for the construction was too expensive, and the planks were never laid.⁷²

Coach travel was slow and rather expensive. The Clarksville and Washington, Arkansas Line charged \$18 for the run between Clarksville and Shreveport. Even today there is no direct easy access between these cities. A possible route would be from Clarksville down to Mount Pleasant to Jefferson and then into Louisiana. The distance is about 140 miles, and a driver careful to obey all the small town speed limits might require three hours. By stage, the trip required four days. The traveler would further incur additional lodging and food expenses.⁷³ The trip from Marshall to Austin took four days.⁷⁴ Numerous stage lines operated in the area, and representative fares included: Marshall to San Augustine, \$10; Tyler to Shreveport, \$12.50; Tyler to Marshall, \$7.50; and Tyler to Waco, \$14.50.⁷⁵ The best deal was on the Henderson and Waco U.S. Mail Line, a private, not a government concern, which carried passengers between Tyler and Henderson for fifty cents.⁷⁶ Late in the 1850s, the railroads

began to lay tracks in the area, and the Forest Mail Stage Line advertised that a person could now travel by rail and stage from Shreveport to Mount Pleasant in one day "without loss of sleep."⁷⁷ As the railroads expanded after the Civil War, stagecoach traffic gradually ceased; but a few operators continued business into the 1870s.⁷⁸

Stage lines were also the primary carriers of the mail. "Mail Arrangements" could be found in each newspaper. Mail funneled into Marshall arrived from one of four sources, a western, eastern, northern, or southern route. Routes from Nacogdoches, Mansfield, Louisiana, San Augustine, or Daingerfield brought mail on Thursdays, with Daingerfield deliveries on both Thursdays and Sundays.⁷⁹ There was obviously no such thing as daily delivery, nor a household delivery. Mail could be picked up at the local post office. Each office had its own, arbitrarily independent, schedule. The Jefferson postmaster gave notice in 1857 that the post office would be open only from 8-10 A.M. on Sundays.⁸⁰ An individual might therefore have mail sitting at the post office for some time before it could be claimed. There also must have been a general public transience in operation to account for the lists of unclaimed letters posted by each office. The Henderson office allowed three months before mail was sent to the dead letter office in Washington, D.C. Each newspaper carried these lists and they were often lengthy. Jefferson, a rather small town, had a list of 130 names in the *Eastern Texas Gazette* in November 1857.⁸¹

The Star Hotel in Henderson took note of this mobility: "transient persons or regular boarders desiring private rooms . . . can be accommodated at all times."⁸² The phrasing implies that some hotels preferred not to serve transients. In Marshall, both the Planter's Hotel and the Marshall Hotel spoke directly to this issue. Their posted "Rules" were identical, and the rates were similar. Room and board for one day was \$1.50 at each hotel. Among the dictates of the house were: "Guests without baggage will be required to pay in advance; Transient boarders by the week will be expected to pay weekly in advance; Monthly boarders will be expected to make satisfactory arrangements that the money will be paid at the end of the month."⁸³ In 1859 room and board was \$18 a month at the Planter's Hotel and \$20 at the Marshall Hotel. Costs had risen over the decade at the Marshall Hotel. Since 1852, a month's room and board had increased from \$15 to \$20, in percentage terms a rise of 33 percent.⁸⁴

While rates and rules were important, public image was crucial. D.D. Jones' Commercial House was a "finely refurbished" hotel reopening in Shreveport. It was conveniently situated for steamboat passengers and located "in the most healthy part of the city."⁸⁵ The proprietor of the Donoho House in Clarksville wished to squelch a rumor that a traveler with smallpox had passed through "and contaminated" the hotel. The notice specified that the traveler had not stopped, there was no smallpox in the town, and other travelers should not be deterred from coming to the town or to the hotel.⁸⁶

Saloons were often a special feature of the hotels, and B.F. McDonough advertised in the Henderson *Democrat* that he had moved his "splendid Drinking Saloon to the East room of the Brick Hotel." His notice was headed "Ice! Ice! Ice!" and he was pleased to offer iced lemonades, cocktails, and Mint-Juleps.⁸⁷ In 1854 the Texas legislature prohibited the sale of alcohol in quantities of less than one quart unless county residents specifically approved the licensing of such sales. Harrison County was "dry" from 1854 to 1858, but

by 1859 the saloons had returned.⁸⁸ A frequent advertiser in the *Marshall Harrison Flag* was the Hole in the Wall saloon in the basement of the Adkins House hotel. It supplied the choicest liquors and cigars and a nearby Shooting Gallery where "all can be accommodated who wish to try their skill in the use of firearms. Superior Duelling Pistols kept in apple pie order."⁸⁹

Refining the appropriate skills of the younger population was an expensive and erratic process. Today's students would rejoice over one item: the school year was generally advertised as five months long. Before the Civil War, there were no public schools in Texas in the sense that we know them today. After 1854, the state provided some money for local schools from a permanent school fund. But the share for each child was only sixty-two cents in 1854 and \$1.50 in 1855. Students could draw on the funds whether the school was secular or parochial. Dividing the state into school districts apparently proved administratively too difficult, and therefore any group or community could organize a school and apply for state funds.⁹⁰ The larger towns had private academies that sought to address educational needs for profit. The terms "college" and "university" were appropriated without regard or promise as to the level of education offered. The academies catered to any age or quality of paying student.

In 1856, the Male Department of Tyler University announced courses in what it called the primary, preparatory, and collegiate levels. The course of study began in January and ran five months. The primary course cost \$8, and the collegiate was \$20. Advertised discipline was "mild but strict." The Tyler English and Classical Male School asserted that "implicit obedience to every regulation will be exacted," and those who could not comply would be dismissed.⁹¹ The Masonic Male Academy opened in March 1860. Its five-month curriculum ranged from \$10 for "first class" to \$25 for "fifth class." Sectional pride was apparent as the academy pointedly proclaimed that its two instructors "were both Southerners."⁹²

In May 1859, the *Marshall Harrison Flag* carried advertisements for four different academies: the Murray Institute (Male and Female), the Marshall Masonic Female Institute, the Marshall Collegiate Institute, and the Marshall Grove Academy. All courses were for five months. The Marshall Collegiate Institute charged \$20 for its "Junior Class" and \$30 for its "Senior Class." The Marshall Grove Academy taught spelling, reading, and writing in its "First Class" for \$15, and this progressed to ancient languages and higher mathematics in its "Third Class" for \$25.⁹³ Randolph Campbell shows that this means of education was expensive: "When it is remembered that the best land in the country sold for less than ten dollars an acre, and that a bale of cotton grossed less than fifty dollars, the relatively high costs of schooling become apparent."⁹⁴

The Texas Military Institute in Rutersville, near LaGrange in central Texas, advertised in Henderson that its curriculum consisted of two sessions at \$50 per session for a total of forty weeks. Board was \$12 a month "including fuel and washing," but cattle, horses, and sheep could be the medium of payment. Boys could enter who were at least twelve years of age and who could pass entrance exams in reading, writing, and arithmetic.⁹⁵

The female institutes had special rules. The Tyler Collegiate Institute promised that "young ladies placed under the care of the principal and boarding in the Institution, will not be permitted to attend parties, receive the

company of gentlemen, or contract debts in town."⁹⁶ The San Augustine Masonic Female Institute advised in the Marshall Harrison Flag that "extravagance in dress is decidedly objectionable and subjects a young lady to forfeiture of honors." Parties were prohibited. "Attending parties at any time during the session is considered a serious evil inasmuch as it deranges the studies, weakens the mental discipline, and often unsettles those who stay away, as well as those who go, and consequently is strictly forbidden."⁹⁷ Business was good in 1858 with enrollment at eighty-seven.

Those in Marshall who were fortunate enough to be able to read could acquire magazines such as *Harper's Monthly* at the Marshall Literary Depot. I.G. Stearns also operated a lending library there. Books could be checked out for one week at a time for ten cents each plus a deposit for the value of the book.⁹⁸

As would be expected from advertisements, the most common theme of the period was money and a concern for costs, payments, and deliveries. That is the normal way of life. Where barter was so common, even for school tuition, any asset had a utilitarian value beyond what we would normally think. In this light, moral issues aside, slaves served functionally both as a capital good and as currency. Demanding emancipation for a slave would be the same as asking a man to give away 200 acres of land. The slave, on the other hand, lived an existence where the world was a prison: he faced bondage at home and jail if he left. Moreover, to be scarred by the experiences of slavery was more than a metaphorical allusion.

By present standards a common theme was inconvenience. Mail was delivered one or two days a week, and it took four days to travel 140 miles. The area existed almost as an island, depending on everything from ordering newsprint to selling farm production to move through distant New Orleans. Patience was not only virtuous, but requisite.

Of course, from a perspective of a century and a half, we cannot be sure of the subtleties of language. When the maker of tombstones expressed "pleasure in filling all orders" we are not sure if he was being cute or conscientious. But as the decade closed, the resolve of some was starkly apparent. J.C. Short, a gunsmith in Tyler, made Kentucky rifles and his advertisements over the years had proclaimed their long-range accuracy for game hunters. He continued to make quality weapons, but in August 1861, his notice changed. His rifles now were "warranted to kill an abolitionist at 400 yards."⁹⁹ The period was rushing to its bloody conclusion.

NOTES

¹Marshall *Texas Republican*, November 27, 1852.

²At times, the beliefs, habits, or customs of an age so far removed from our own appear not only quaint but ridiculous. Though there may be humorous moments here, I am also hopeful that the material is conveyed with obvious respect. If a druggist, for instance, seemed to make extravagant claims for a new hair-restorer, we should keep in mind the likelihood that he felt a certain amount of community pride in providing (and advertising) this product. Those with the economic wherewithal to afford advertising were often the more prominent and respected citizens of the area.

³Avery Carlson, *A Monetary and Banking History of Texas, 1821-1929* (Fort Worth, 1930), p. 5. The larger communities were Galveston, San Antonio, Houston, and New Braunfels.

⁴Quoted in Randolph B. Campbell, *A Southern Community in Crisis: Harrison County, Texas 1850-1880* (Austin, 1983), p. 21.

⁵Marilyn McAdams Sibley, *Lone Stars and State Gazettes: Texas Newspapers Before the Civil War*, (College Station, 1983), p. 3.

⁶*Lone Stars and State Gazettes*, p. 143.

⁷*Lone Stars and State Gazettes*, p. 351.

⁸*Marshall Meridian and Pacific Railroad Advocate*, January 28, 1854.

⁹Quoted in *Jefferson Eastern Texas Gazette*, March 14, 1857.

¹⁰*Tyler Reporter*, February 9, 1859.

¹¹*Texas Republican*, October 26, 1850.

¹²*Standard*, January 12, 1856.

¹³*Marshall Texas Republican*, May 26, 1849. "Liberal" discounts were promised for yearly advertisements.

¹⁴*Henderson Democrat*, June 27, 1857.

¹⁵Carlson, *A Monetary and Banking History*, p. 6.

¹⁶*A Monetary and Banking History*, p. 8. Carlson relates that in the 1850s a wildcat bank in Holly Springs, Mississippi, had a huge amount of its paper currency in circulation but was widely regarded as worthless and rejected everywhere. The firm of R.&D.G. Mills in Galveston collected these notes, endorsed them with its own backing and put them into circulation in Galveston as evidence of indebtedness. The notes became known as "Mills Money," and due to the financial strength of the Mills company, it became recognized as currency and considered the equivalent of gold. In 1859, the Texas Supreme Court upheld the practice, ruling that Mills' re-issuance of existing notes was not a violation of state law. Estimates of the amount of currency involved vary widely from \$40,000 to \$300,000.

¹⁷*Rusk Cherokee Sentinel*, August 1, 1857.

¹⁸Arthur A. Smith, "Bank Note Detecting in the Era of State Banks." *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 29 (December, 1942), p. 372.

¹⁹"Bank Note Detecting," p. 377.

²⁰*Tyler Telegraph*, March 27, 1852.

²¹*Marshall Harrison Flag*, December 17, 1858.

²²Lewis Atherton, *The Southern Country Store, 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge, 1949), p. 122.

²³*Marshall Star State Patriot*, February 28, 1852.

²⁴*Tyler Reporter*, April 25, 1860.

²⁵Everett Dick, *The Dixie Frontier* (New York, 1948), p. 116.

²⁶*Tyler Telegraph*, May 31, 1851.

²⁷*Marshall Star State Patriot*, January 10, 1852.

²⁸Clarksville *Northern Standard*, October 29, 1842. The term "negro" was seldom capitalized. Throughout the paper I have used the original spelling and punctuation.

²⁹*Marshall Harrison Flag*, October 21, 1859.

³⁰*Tyler Reporter*, August 1, 1861.

³¹*Henderson Flag of the Union*, February 2, 1854.

³²*Tyler Reporter*, February 9, 1859.

³³*Marshall Texas Republican*, September 14, 1850. There were three other ads in this issue for refusal to pay because the "considerations" had proven unsatisfactory. Judging by the frequency of such ads, private trading was a risky venture.

³⁴*Texas Republican*, September 20, 1849.

³⁵*Henderson Southern Beacon*, May 21, 1859.

³⁶Clarksville *Northern Standard*, October 8, 1842.

³⁷*Tyler Reporter*, October 30, 1862. See ads also in the *Tyler Reporter*, April 25, 1860, *Clarksville Standard* December 19, 1857, and *Marshall Texas Republican* May 26, 1849, and August 16, 1851.

³⁸*Marshall Texas Republican*, October 11, 1849.

³⁹*Texas Republican*, June 18, 1853.

⁴⁰Randolph B. Campbell, *An Empire for Slavery: The Peculiar Institution in Texas 1821-1865* (Baton Rouge, 1989), p. 102.

⁴¹*Marshall Star State Patriot*, June 7, 1851.

⁴²*Marshall Texas Republican*, August 30, 1849, January 11, 1851, and March 31, 1855.

⁴³*Clarksville Northern Standard* October 8, 1842.

⁴⁴*Clarksville Standard* March 1, 1856, October 4, 1856, and October 11, 1856.

⁴⁵*Tyler Reporter* October 30, 1862. See also the *Marshall Harrison Flag* July 30, 1858 where a runaway had some teeth out in front and was "nearly white." What color is "nearly white"? This owner also felt the slave may have been enticed away and was offering \$125 for the apprehension and prosecution of the white man.

⁴⁶*Marshall Texas Republican*, June 18, 1853.

⁴⁷*Marshall Harrison Flag*, September 30, 1859.

⁴⁸*Harrison Flag*, August 20, 1858, *Texas Republican* August 14, 1852, and March 18, 1854.

⁴⁹*Marshall Texas Republican*, October 11, 1851 and March 31, 1855.

⁵⁰*Marshall Harrison Flag*, October 1, 1858.

⁵¹*Harrison Flag*, October 14, 1859.

⁵²*Marshall Texas Republican*, June 8, 1849.

⁵³*Tyler Reporter*, April 25, 1860.

⁵⁴*Rusk Cherokee Sentinel*, May 10, 1856.

⁵⁵*Marshall Star State Patriot*, June 7, 1851.

⁵⁶*Marshall Harrison Flag*, July 20, 1859.

⁵⁷*Harrison Flag*, August 27, 1858.

⁵⁸*Tyler Reporter*, November 17, 1855.

⁵⁹*Rusk Cherokee Sentinel*, May 10, 1856.

⁶⁰*Marshall Harrison Flag*, August 27, 1858. Those who desired larger quantities of medicine could contact Stanley and Nummo, furniture dealers in Jefferson. They sold brandy in one-eighth or one-quarter cask containers "for medicinal purposes." *Jefferson Eastern Texas Gazette*, March 14, 1857.

⁶¹Campbell, *A Southern Community in Crisis*, p. 105.

⁶²*Rusk Cherokee Sentinel*, August 1, 1857.

⁶³*Tyler Reporter*, November 17, 1855.

⁶⁴Virtually any newspaper of the period will demonstrate the New Orleans prominence. See, for example, *Marshall Star State Patriot*, January 10, 1852.

⁶⁵*Marshall Texas Republican*, June 15, 1849. Caddo Lake was called Soda Lake at that time. Max S. Lale notes in "Stagecoach Roads to Marshall," *East Texas Historical Journal* (Number 2, 1979), p. 31, that the lake obstructions were never satisfactorily cleared. Further, after the Civil War the removal of the Great Raft in the Red River (approximately 160 miles long) "reduced the level of water in the lake to a point that river traffic became impossible. Port Caddo disappeared."

⁶⁶*Marshall Harrison Flag*, October 8, 1858. There are several ads in this issue.

⁶⁷*Clarksville Standard*, January 3, 1857.

⁶⁸*Marshall Harrison Flag*, May 13, 1859.

⁶⁹*Marshall Texas Republican* January 1, 1852.

⁶⁰Clarksville *Standard*, February 21, 1857.

⁶¹Henderson *Democrat*, November 29, 1856. The *Tyler Reporter* noted on August 1, 1861 that Captain Good of Greer's Regiment lost 2500 pounds of gunpowder in attempting to cross the Red River on the way to Fort Smith.

⁶²Lale, "Stagecoach Roads to Marshall," p. 22.

⁶³Clarksville *Standard*, January 12, 1856.

⁶⁴Lale, "Stagecoach Roads to Marshall," p. 24.

⁶⁵Marshall *Harrison Flag*, December 2, 1859 and *Tyler Reporter*, April 25, 1860.

⁶⁶Henderson *Southern Beacon*, May 21, 1859.

⁶⁷Jefferson *Eastern Texas Gazette*, March 14, 1857.

⁶⁸Lale, "Stagecoach Roads to Marshall," p. 29.

⁶⁹Marshall *Texas Republican*, September 2, 1849. I did not see any references to the contract values for the stagelines that hauled the mail. The Clarksville *Standard* noted in 1856 that a contract had been let by the U.S. government for carrying the daily mail from Cairo, Illinois, to New Orleans by steamer at \$329,000 for the year. Clarksville *Standard*, January 12, 1856.

⁷⁰Jefferson *Eastern Texas Gazette*, March 14, 1857.

⁷¹Marshall *Texas Republican*, June 13, 1850; Clarksville *Northern Standard*, October 29, 1842; Henderson *Flag of the Union*, February 2, 1854; Jefferson *Eastern Texas Gazette*, November 7, 1857.

⁷²Rusk *Cherokee Sentinel*, May 10, 1856.

⁷³Marshall *Harrison Flag*, April 30, 1859.

⁷⁴*Tyler Telegraph*, November 6, 1852.

⁷⁵Marshall *Texas Republican*, October 18, 1849. Today this might refer to the crime rate rather than disease.

⁷⁶Clarksville *Standard*, February 28, 1857.

⁷⁷Henderson *Democrat*, November 29, 1856.

⁷⁸Campbell, *A Southern Community in Crisis*, p. 105.

⁷⁹Marshall *Harrison Flag*, September 1 and October 13, 1860.

⁸⁰Rupert Richardson, Adrian Anderson, and Ernest Wallacc, *Texas: The Lone Star State*, 7th edition, (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1997), p. 185.

⁸¹*Tyler Reporter*, April 25, 1860.

⁸²*Tyler Reporter*, April 25, 1860. Clement Eaton discusses Southern sectional pride in *Freedom of Thought in the Old South* (New York, 1940, reprinted 1951). See especially his chapter "Academic Freedom Below the Potomac," where he quotes the Raleigh *Standard*, September 17, 1856: "The expression of Black Republican opinions in our midst is incompatible with our honor and safety as a people . . . Let our schools and seminaries of learning be scrutinized, and if Black Republicans be found in them, let them be driven out (p. 203)."

⁸³Marshall *Harrison Flag*, May 27, 1859.

⁸⁴Campbell, *A Southern Community in Crisis*, p. 111.

⁸⁵Henderson *Southern Beacon*, May 21, 1859.

⁸⁶*Tyler Telegraph*, November 6, 1852.

⁸⁷Marshall *Harrison Flag*, July 30, 1858.

⁸⁸Marshall *Texas Republican*, July 27, 1849.

⁸⁹*Tyler Reporter*, August 1, 1861.