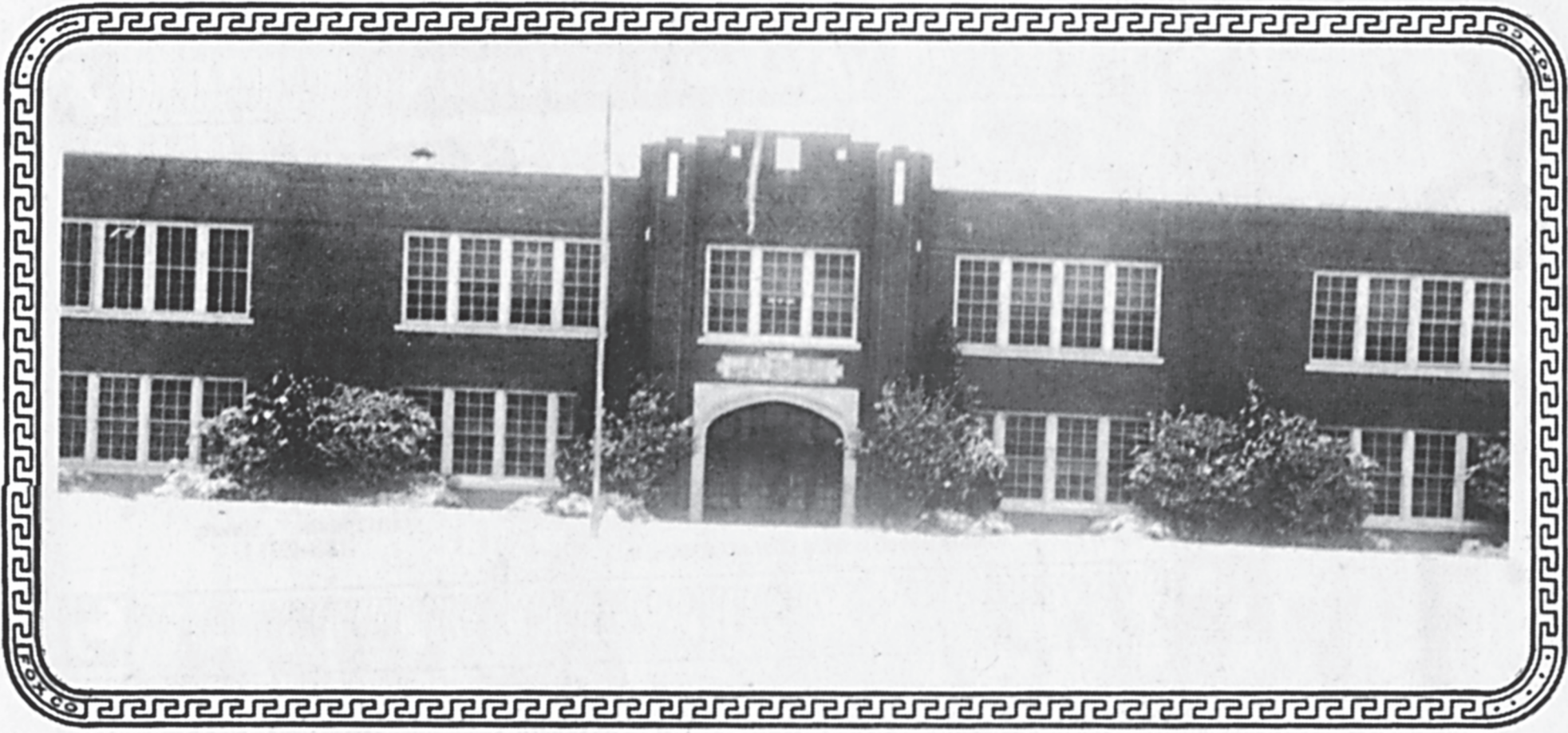


HISTORY & FOLKLORE



From Liberty Gazette, Thursday, April 7, 1977 –
This picture is of the Batson schoolhouse surrounded by a blanket of snow in 1939. These cold days remind us that we may see snowy days again, but not around Batson school. The school was destroyed and the students now attend West Hardin School between Batson and Saratoga.

From Texas Illustrated, November 1988 –

Batson Folklore

by Elizabeth Wood

Batson has her murder mysteries, tales of robberies, and love stories, which are quite as interesting as those of any other locality.

Before oil was discovered in Batson, stock raising and agriculture were the occupations of the settlers. This was a locality of thieves and hustlers; no man's property or stock was safe. Some persons fleeing from the law in Louisiana came to Texas and many of them came to Batson.

One of the favorite tales of the old settlers was about one of these men who fled from Louisiana, Vailmo Raibee. Little was known of his character, but one day two stockmen caught him with a stolen cow, which he had begun to butcher. Wishing to stop the rustling and to teach other thieves a lesson, the two men cut the cow open and extracted her insides, tied

Raibee's hands behind him and tied his feet together then put him in the cow and sewed him up. There are two versions of the outcome of this episode. Some say that the man was left there and died; others say that he was found a few days later by cowboys who released him. This tale is based on the fact, though how much of it true we do not know.

There were three bandit brothers who stole horses and cattle and were much pursued by the honest stockmen who had formed a sort of law and called themselves the "Night Riders." One time the oldest of the brothers was about to be caught. He was cornered and he knew it. The stockmen were drawing near when the bandit's horse dashed from the hiding place and on it was a rider, who was dressed as the bandit was. The stockmen

began shooting. The horse was killed and the stockmen supposed that the horseman shared a like fate. The stockmen rushed up to the dead bodies and much to their surprise, the rider was a dummy dressed in the bandit's clothes, which had been torn to bits by their shots. Meanwhile, the bandit had gotten away.

This incident happened when Batson was a prairie and the houses were miles apart. Then came the discovery of oil and more trouble. The "boom" brought more of the "scum" of the country to Batson and honest people had trouble taking care of themselves.

One of the well-known shooting scrapes that took place during the boom was the Pearl Breeding fracas. The trouble started when there came a warning that lawbreakers would have to pay \$5

a week for jail sentences or work on the road. A man by the name of Lawson was arrested and he refused to work or pay the \$5. Daniels, a strong arm of the law, found Lawson in a saloon one day and attempted to collect the money. Lawson became angry and wanted to fight Daniels. At this point, a Mr. Breeding took up the fight and overpowered Lawson who went to the hotel for his gun. The gun was locked up in a trunk and his brother, who worked in the field, had the key.

When his brother came home from work, he got the gun and started for town. He met Breeding on the sidewalk. When he drew near him, he jerked out his gun and shot Breeding, who fell against a post and steadied himself while he reached for his gun. The hammer of his gun became entangled in his sus-

penders. Lawson shot him four times while he was trying to loose the gun from his suspenders. (If any of you gentlemen plan to shoot someone, we would advise you to leave your suspenders at home and wear a belt instead.)

Now here's one that happened about 25 years ago.

It seems that one of the local young men of Batson was smitten by the charms of a daughter of the owner of a sawmill, which was up in the thicket north of Batson. The young man courted the lady home each night, though he was a very nervous sort of person, who didn't relish going through the thicket even when taking his girl home.

One night, the two were walking home from church and he was probably whispering sweet nothings in the girl's ear when there was a rustling in some bushes. Probably hav-

ing visions of a huge bear, the boy, in his distress, ran off and left the girl alone in the middle of the thicket.

Later that night, an oilfield worker saw Dimp, which was the boy's nickname, sitting by a boiler. Dimp had the habit of talking to himself and he was bemeaning himself with, "Dimp, you durn fool! You idiot! You numbskull! Don't you know better than to leave your girl like that?"

The next day, the young lady coolly informed Dimp that she had seen a calf in the bushes the night before. Incidentally, Dimp and the young lady did not wed.

These are a few of the tales connected with the history of Batson. Some are true and some have been recounted and embroidered by so many different tellers of tales that we seriously doubt if any of them are true.



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From Illustrated Press of Liberty County, Thursday, October 24, 1963 –

Modern Floors is a new business in the Hayes Building next to Williamson Plumbing in Liberty. Shown here are the owners, (l-r) Charles and Mary Taylor and Joyce and Richard Scott. They hold their grand opening sale today.

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