

The Saloons

Gary B. Davis 12-07-2023

Like most towns of the pioneer days, Livingston had its share of saloons. The tired working men of the timber, railroad and farming occupations were prone to gather at these places of respite. As soon the workers received their paychecks, they would come into town for entertainment, often spending it all at the local establishments. The old stories were told that the town was so rowdy that women and children were not to be seen downtown on a Saturday.

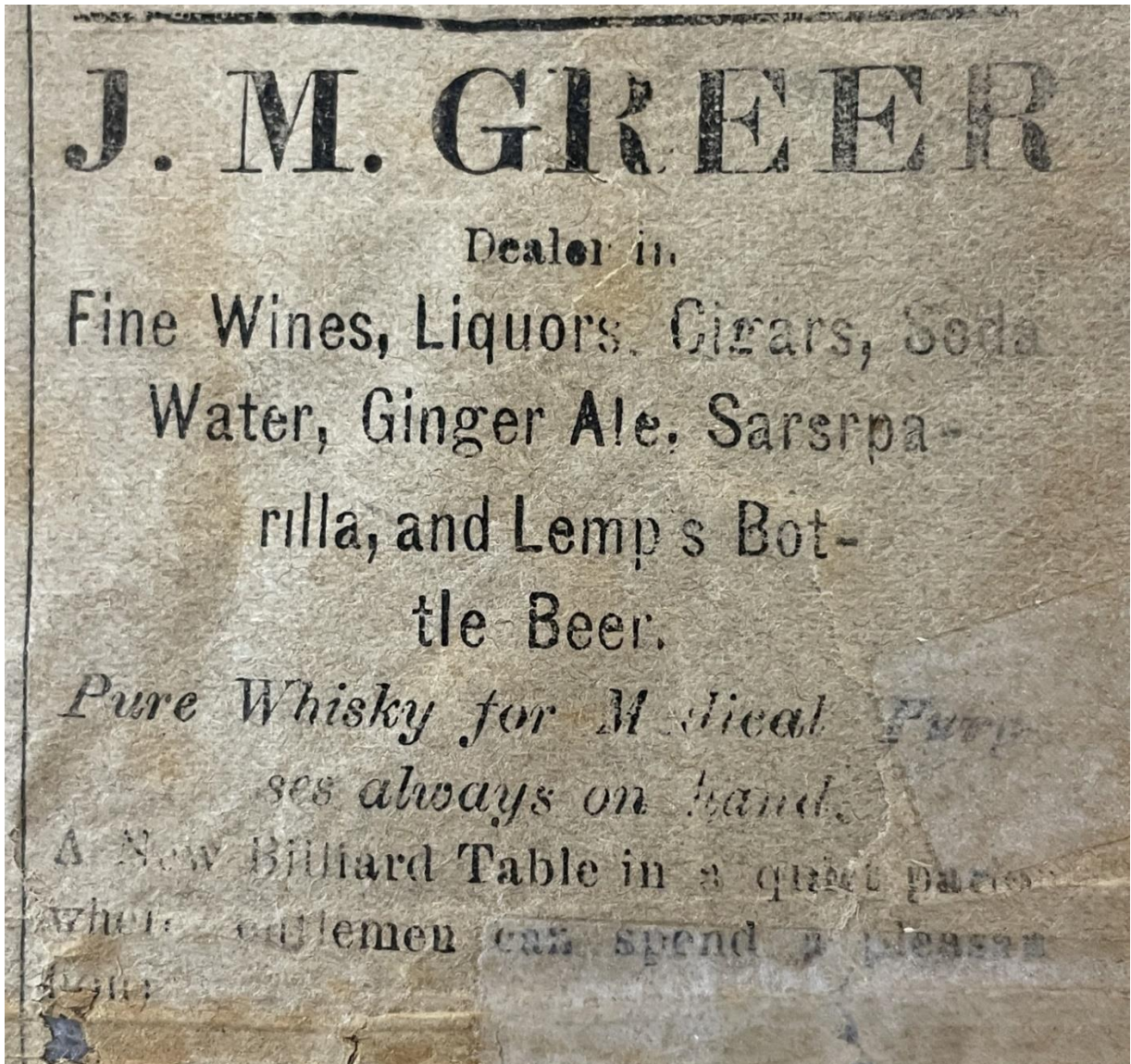
There is no written history about the saloons of Livingston, in fact, their history was nothing to boast about, and the good citizens tried hard to keep the town's reputation as clean as possible. The writer thinks that enough time has passed to bring these remarkable stories out of hiding.

The lore holds that the town was full of saloons but there has been no evidence found of this. Five different saloons have been discovered and fortunately photos exist of three of them. And thanks to syndicated newspapers, even in the 1800s, information is available about shootouts that occurred in two of them.

The families of many of these parties still reside in Polk County and it is the hope of the writer that no new family feuds will occur as a result of these revelations.

The Greer Saloon

The first known written account of a Livingston saloon is that of the J.M. Greer Saloon. A newspaper ad, found in the January 26, 1888, issue of the East Texas Pinery advertised "Fine Wines, Liquors, Cigars, Soda Water, Ginger Ale, Sarsaparilla (sic) and Lemp's Bottle Beer. Pure Whisky, for medicinal purposes, always on hand. A new billiard table in a quiet place where gentlemen can spend a pleasant time."



But this was no quiet nor pleasant place on November 28, 1885, the day that W.H. "Dick" Muckleroy entered the Greer Saloon in downtown Livingston. He was lying dead soon afterward.

The shootout had to be one of the most publicized events ever in Livingston up to that point. The incident made the news in Detroit, Chicago, Pittsburg, Fort Worth and Galveston, and the syndicated articles reported the shootout as follows:

The Fort Worth Gazette: A Justifiable Killing

Livingston, Tex., Nov 29 "W.H. Muckleroy of this place was shot and killed at 11 o'clock last night in the saloon of J.M. Greer of this place. The ruling before the coroner's jury was that Muckleroy shot at Walter Green (sic) and at J.M. Greer, when they returned fire, killing him. Sixteen shots were fired, five striking Muckleroy, three proving fatal. The coroner's jury ruled the killing to be in self-defense. Muckleroy leaves a wife and one child. His body will be sent to his father in Colorado County for interment."

The Detroit Free Press:

At Livingston, Tex., "Saturday night, during a saloon row, W.H. Muckleroy was shot and killed by J.M. and W.M. (sic) Greer. Muckleroy fired first, but his marksmanship was not up to the Texas standard and five bullets were promptly lodged into his body."

The Pittsburg Post-Gazette:

Livingston, Tex., Nov.29 "Late last night during a fight in Greer's Saloon W.H. Muckleroy was shot and killed by J.M. and W.M. Greer. Sixteen shots were fired and five balls penetrated

Muckleroy's body. The evidence at the inquest today showed that Muckleroy fired the first shot."

The Chicago Tribune: He Fired the First Shot

Livingston, Tex., Nov. 29 "Late last night, during a fight in Greer's saloon, W.H. Muckleroy was shot and instantly killed by J.M. and M.W. [sic] Greer. Sixteen shots were fired, and five balls penetrated Muckleroy's body. The evidence at the inquest today showed the Muckleroy fired the first shot."

The Galveston Daily News: Shot in a Saloon

Livingston, November 29 "Last night, at 10 o'clock, W.H. Muckleroy was killed by J.M and W.M. Greer, in Greer's Saloon. There were about sixteen shots fired. Five balls entered Muckleroy's body, three of which would have proved fatal."

The Colorado (County) Citizen, a newspaper from Muckleroy's hometown of Columbus, Texas reported it a bit differently, and in more detail:

W.H. Muckleroy Killed in Livingston November 29, 1885

"The sad news was received here last Saturday night that Mr. W.H. Muckleroy, formerly of Colorado County, now of Polk County, was killed in the Greer Saloon at 10 o'clock Saturday night by J. M. and W. M. Greer, also at one time of Colorado county, at the town of Livingston, Polk County. News of the particulars were anxiously inquired for by many friends of the deceased in this city. Monday it was learned that the fracas was caused by one of the Greer boys refusing to drink with Mr. Muckleroy, whereupon he drew his pistol and fired upon him and both the Greers fired at him, sixteen shots being discharged, five by Muckleroy. His body

was struck five times, three of which were mortal wounds. The coroner's jury returned a verdict that deceased came to his death from pistol shot wounds, inflicted in self-defense, by J. M. and W. M. Greer. To his aged and respected parents living in this county and to Mrs. Campbell and her daughter, of this city--to all of whom "Dick," as he was familiarly called, was gentleness and kindness personified--the sad news came with crushing sorrow. He was naturally a genial, kind-hearted young man, esteemed by many friends. His body passed through Columbus last Tuesday to be interred at the old family residence in Frelsburg, Texas."

(The Greer brothers were James Marshall and William Walter. W.W.'s name was misprinted in each of the articles above. It was written as W.M., M.W. and even Walter Green. There was a third brother, A.V., who was not mentioned in the articles.)

Muckleroy and the Greer brothers had known one another from Colorado County, Texas, where Muckleroy's family had lived since the 1840's. The Greer's, who had been planters in Mississippi, immigrated to Colorado County after the war in the 1860's and subsequently moved to Polk County around 1883¹.

Muckleroy also moved to Polk County around 1883, when he bought twenty-five acres from Livingston cotton ginner and merchant E.V. Doyle. Three days later Muckleroy bought 125 acres from J.A. McCardell. These tracts were in the Swartwout community. On October 1, 1885, Muckleroy sold the 125-acre tract to the three Greer Brothers, J.M., W.W. and A.V. and retained a note against the property.

¹ Affidavit filed in Volume 64, Page 498 Polk County Deed Records

Less than two months later the shooting occurred. The final bit of irony is that Muckleroy left a 193 page will, dated April 15, 1884, and the executor of the will was.....J.M. Greer.

The mystery of the Muckleroy shooting is further deepened by the inability to determine the location of the saloon. It is the quest of the writer to one day find a clue that will reveal this.

The Greer brothers later became very integral figures in the development of our community. They purchased large farms in the William Pace and Thomas Bradley surveys, now the Baker and Laurent Ranches and the Augustine Viesca seven league survey, now the Simon Peter Bend Ranch. They were planters, farmers, lumbermen, ginners, postmasters, politicians, developers, and merchants in the towns of Goodrich and Livingston.

W.W. Greer, the grandfather of Ola Bergman, was a merchant and the postmaster in Goodrich from 1898 to 1906. He moved to Livingston in 1910 and served as Livingston mayor pro-tem from 1913 to 1914. He was a board member of the Guaranty State Bank (predecessor of the First State Bank) and built many buildings in town, one that still stands, located at 415 N. Washington, built in 1914. He and his wife, Florida, were very much a part of the social fabric of Livingston. Mrs. Greer was responsible for the very first street signs in Livingston at their home on the corner of Sherman and Washington.

On May 5, 1919, W.W. Greer was shot in the back while riding his horse from his farm. Unfortunately, all that is known about the exact location is that it was four miles from Livingston, which places it near Swartwout. The shooter, a local farmer from a pioneer family, A.G. "Man" Stevens, used a shotgun with buckshot. When Greer fell from his horse, he remounted and was

shot twice more. After falling a second time, Greer asked him not to shoot him again.

There had been an ongoing dispute over a drainage ditch which lay on their common property line. Greer had dammed it to prevent erosion and Stevens was upset that water was backing into his property. A second gun, a pistol, was alleged to have been thrown by Stevens to make it look like self-defense. Greer lived long enough for Dr. R.B. Love, his son-in-law, to summon a special train to Houston where he died the following day, May 6, 1919.

A trial was held in Houston the following month and many from Livingston attended and were called to the witness stand. Among them was Ben M. Lewis, a Livingston jeweler, photographer and gunsmith and former owner of The Emerald Ice Cream Parlor. Lewis testified that the pistol that was presented as evidence belonged to Stevens as he had previously worked on it. The trial lasted through the month of June and after deliberating all night, the jury acquitted Stevens at 10 am on Sunday June 30.

J.M., referred to as Captain Greer, had a sawmill and gin in Goodrich and served as postmaster there after his brother, from 1906 to 1911. Greer was a Master Mason and upon his death received a "resolution of respect" from his Masonic brethren that was signed by former mayor J.E. Hill, Jr., and Judges J.C. Feagin and J.L. Manry. He served as county commissioner from 1890 to 1894 and tax collector from 1900 to 1904. Captain Greer served as Livingston's mayor from 1911 to 1913. He was a director of both the First National Bank and the Livingston Telephone Company and was a founding member of the Chamber of Commerce. He was the founder of The Greer Mercantile Company, and his building stands today as a part of the Polk

County Judicial Center. In a bit of irony, in March 1911, J.M. Greer was elected as the county chair for the local prohibition cause.

J.M. Greer was married to Beulah Hines, he had no children and died on December 8, 1926, at his farm west of Goodrich.

The W.E. Fitze Bon Ton Saloon

Another infamous Livingston establishment of days gone by was the Bon Ton Saloon, owned by W.E. "Willie" Fitze. Fitze purchased his property, the east twenty-five feet of lot 4 of block 21, for fifty dollars, on February 17, 1881, from John P. Kale and T.F. Meece. This property later came to be owned by J.W. Cochran & Co. and is now the rear portion of the Courthouse Whistle Stop Café.



W.E. Fitze store and Bon Ton Saloon in center of photo, taken by Ben "Lewis the Jeweler" Lewis around 1900



W.E. (William "Willie" Elmore) Fitze was born in Richmond, Texas on November 29, 1855. His father, Charles Gustav Fitze, from Prussia, had immigrated into Galveston in 1848 and came to Polk County in the 1870's as a merchant at Mariana, also known

as Drew's Landing. C.G. Fitze served as postmaster of Mariana in 1872. When the HE&WT railway was being constructed in the 1870's, Fitze was their right of way agent and when completed in the 1880's he became their general freight and ticketing agent. Fitze was also a music professor and wrote many musical pieces.

His son, Willie Fitze, according to the 1880 Polk County census, was a dry goods merchant in Livingston. A Fitze ad in the February 28, 1878, issue of the Polk County Banner advertised that he was a "dealer in dry goods, notions, family groceries, tobacco, cigars, snuff, oysters, sardines, and all kinds of canned fruits. Also, a full supply of wood and willow ware. Will buy cotton, hides and beeswax." The August 2, 1894, issue of The East Texas Pinery advertised that he carried items such as clothing, notions, hats, shoes, saddlery, furniture, groceries and liquors. Fitze also was a buyer of produce and Spanish moss blankets that were made by the local Indian tribe, used primarily as saddle blankets.

Fitze's store also had a side room to the east of the store that was called the Bon Ton Saloon. About sixteen by twenty-two feet, the saloon was connected to the store by an eight-foot gallery (porch) that ran across the front along Church Street. The porch also served as a covered sidewalk. There was a five-foot doorway into the saloon. The bar faced north, about sixteen feet from the front door.

Fitze advertised in The East Texas Pinery, which was located just around the corner (N pt. lot two, blk 21, 304 N. Washington), "Remember the best liquors and the coldest beer is at The Bon Ton Saloon".

On October 6, 1890, a gunfight broke out and once again blood spilled into the streets of Livingston.

A week prior there had been a political speaking four miles south of Livingston at Providence Church. Talvus A. Wilson, (his son, Talvus D. Wilson was the originator of the Livingston Drug Company and was Livingston postmaster in 1906) addressed the crowd. Wilson had previously served in the 20th legislature as a Democrat from 1886 to 1889. According to the Galveston Daily News, Wilson was then running as an independent candidate. Democrat T.S. (Travis Spraggin) Cochran of Colita, father of J.W. Cochran, held the seat from 1889 to 1891 so the conclusion is drawn that Wilson was running against Cochran.

There was a disagreement between the attendees and some were charged with disturbing the peace. The justice court was held on Monday, October 6, 1890. Jim Parker and Alex Lowe (who were brothers-in-law) came into town that morning as witnesses against friends of Demmit Jones and Uriah M. Freeman. "This, added to whisky, is supposed to have caused the tragedy which is greatly deplored."²

The political wrangle, in which three men were senselessly killed, was widely covered by newspapers around the country, including The Los Angeles Herald, The Salem Oregon Statesman Journal, The Houston Post, The Brenham Weekly Banner, The Galveston Daily News and the Dallas Morning News.

The Houston Post of October 7, 1890, read, "A Little Texas Affair in which The Disputants Were Evenly Divided and Each Got in His Work with His Revolver-The Trouble Had its Origins in Politics".

² Dallas Morning News October 8, 1890

An October 8, 1890, article in the Dallas Morning News stated that Lowe was killed outright, Parker was shot in the stomach, Jones in the head and breast and Freeman in the left arm. The Salem, Oregon Statesman Journal of October 7, 1890, stated that "Lowe was dead, Parker is shot in the stomach and cannot live, Freeman is shot in the left arm and breast and doctors say he will die. The quadruple tragedy had its origins in politics."

The St. Joseph Missouri News Press Gazette of October 11, 1890, opined that "political argument in Texas is still fraught with some trivial disadvantages, as those late lamented debaters of Livingston, Texas found out to the sorrow of their relatives."

The Precinct #1 Justice of Peace at the time was J.F. (Joseph Franklin) Peters. In the days after the incident, he interviewed several men who had witnessed the event.

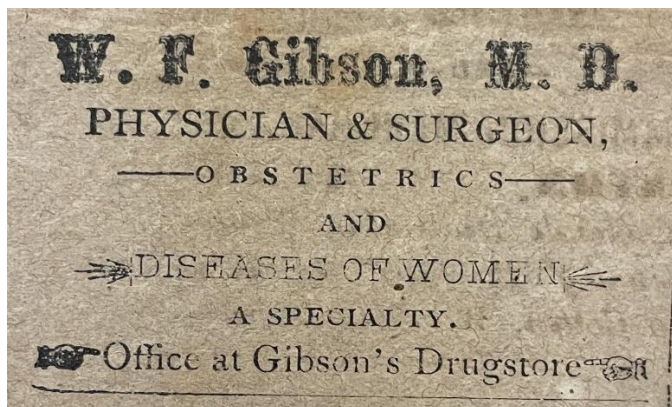
According to the written testimony of W.D. Green, "Jim Parker, the deceased, said in the town of Livingston on the day that the killing occurred, that he had a good pistol and the best grit in town to back it."

Sheriff J.W. Hammond, who served from 1888 to 1890, testified that he was at the Meece Hotel (NW corner blk 10) at 7:30 p.m. when he was informed of the disturbance by Miss Mattie Meece, daughter of the owner T.F. Meece. Hammond at once went down into town where he met J.P. Snow, who told him of the trouble at Fitze's Saloon. Hammond testified that upon arriving at the saloon, he found Alex Lowe lying dead on the gallery about four feet from the door. He noticed a bruise on the left side of his chin and a gunshot wound in the upper part of

Lowe's chest. Hammond found Demmit Jones lying on a billiard table and he was gravely wounded.

Hammond further testified that he left the saloon and went to Dr. W.F. Gibson's home about four hundred yards from the saloon (block 30, the location of the City Library). Dr. Gibson had James Parker brought to this home so that he could attend to his stomach wound. Parker died on October 7th around noon.

Dr. Gibson hosted a leap year ball at this elegant mansion in 1881, as reported by the East Texas Pinery. This home was later purchased, in 1908, by Sheriff R.P. Foreman. His son, Percy, was aged six at the time and lived there until he left for fame and fortune as a teenager.



Dr. W.F. Gibson



This iconic photo of the Jackson & Chandler mercantile building was taken between 1886 and 1894. The building, located on Block 21, lot 2, 304 N. Washington, also housed the East Texas Pinery and Dr. W. F. Gibson's office. It is unclear why Parker was taken to Dr. Gibson's home rather than his office. The men are identified from L-R on ground as Tobe Pounds, A.D. Sprott, John Bishop, Sam Smith, John Green, Jack Jackson, Bob Green, Constable F.D. Bishop, unknown, D.S. Chandler-building owner, unknown, unknown and Jack Smith. On top L-R were Clint Stockton- Pinery editor, Argalus Rice, and Charles Sprott.

According to the testimony of Dr. W.K. McCardell, he was having supper at J.H. Shotwell's home (McCardell was married to his daughter Nancy Shotwell McCardell) and immediately went to Fitze's Saloon to attend to Demmit Jones. McCardell advised that "he laid Jones on a billiard table in the saloon and examined his wounds. Jones had been shot four times. Dr. McCardell attended to Jones for five days and his mind was perfectly clear and he seemed to entertain hope of recovery. On Saturday October 11th, his mind seemed to be wandering and he died around 2:00 PM". Jones made no statement other than that someone shot him in the back.

Constable F.D. Bishop testified that he had been with Lowe and Parker but left only 15-20 minutes before the ruckus to go to the Peebles Saloon. The Peebles Saloon is most likely the business that became the Bishop & Tew Saloon at 306 N. Washington Ave. In a political poll taken on March 3, 1892, by The Galveston Daily News, A. Peebles was interviewed, as was W.L. Harding, and their occupations were noted simply as "Saloon". Deed records reflect that later Harding sold the saloon to Bishop & Tew in 1895. There is no record of Peebles owning land on this block so the Peebles Saloon location cannot be pinpointed.

Bishop testified that he heard words between the four men that indicated there could be a difficulty. At the time of the shooting, he was behind the bar at the Peebles Saloon, talking to J.P. Snow when the shots were fired. He went to the scene of the shooting as soon as he could get there and found Lowe lying dead. He found next to Mr. Lowe a Smith & Wesson 38 caliber five shooter. Mr. Jones was wounded and begging for help. His clothes had powder burns which indicated that he had been shot

at close range. He found next to Mr. Jones a Colt 41 caliber six shooter pistol. He testified that Justice of Peace J.F. Peters picked up a pair of brass knuckles and a pocketknife. He did not know those to whom they belonged. It is speculated that Lowe was hit with them and this resulted in the bruise that was found on his chin.

W.L. "Willie" Willis testified that he was in the store of C.H. Davison (the Galveston newspaper political poll stated that Mr. Willis was a bookkeeper for Mr. Davison) and that he saw the flash of a pistol and that a man on the gallery of the Fitze Saloon fell to the floor. Frank J. Manning was a clerk for Mr. Fitze and according to his testimony, had a bedroom in the building. Willis found Freeman, wounded and in the bed of Mr. Manning. He told Willis that the damn rascals shot him in the back, that he was a little slow but that he thought that he got him (the man that shot him in the back).

Mr. Fitze testified that the parties, Lowe, Parker, Jones, and Freeman, came into his saloon about 7 or 7:30 on the evening of the 6th of October. They came in cursing and quarreling about being refused credit at the other saloon (most likely the aforementioned Peebles Saloon). Lowe was the party who seemed to be doing most of the quarreling and cursing. Fitze continued with his testimony by stating that Mr. Jones called for the drinks and treated the crowd. It was after they finished their drinks that the fray occurred, and Fitze stated that he tried to stop the boys from hurting one another. About the time that he thought that he had settled things, the guns began to blaze and he did not see exactly who fired first. Both Lowe and Jones were lying on the gallery and Freeman and Parker were shot inside the saloon.

In summary, Lowe was killed instantly, Jones died the next day and Parker lived until Saturday, October 11, 1890. Freeman survived and was charged with murder on December 5, 1890, by W.D. Willis, District Clerk. He was promptly arrested by the new Sheriff T.J. Epperson. On December 21, 1890, Freeman testified "that there exists so great a prejudice against him that he cannot obtain a fair and impartial trial. That here is a dangerous combination instigated against him by influential persons." He was granted a change of venue and his trial was held in Houston on February 20, 1893, according to the Galveston Daily News of February 21st. The paper stated "the attention of the criminal court was practically engaged all day with the case of the state against U.M. Freeman. A jury was chosen early this forenoon and without much trouble."

Polk County Sheriff Epperson delivered the prisoner, Uriah H. Freeman, and thirty witnesses, on the train from Livingston to Houston. The witness list, men from the downtown business district, was a who's who of Livingston at the time. Among them were W.E. Fitze, Sam Smith, Jonce Henry, Dr. W.K. McCardell, Dr. W.F. Gibson, F. Campbell, D.M. Bean, D.S. Chandler, Joe Holshousen, F.E. Andress, Frank Manning, Dr. B.C. Marsh, Will Peebles, W.T. Epperson, J.W. Hammond, C.J. Gerlach, J.M. Drew, C.R. Miller, W.L. Willis, A.D. Gibson, Sheriff T.J. Epperson, F.D. Bishop, Ed Shotwell, J.S. Copeland, Abe Peebles, W.D. Green, James H. Meece, William Emanuel, Tom Lindsey, James Barfield, Henry Adams, E.G. Purvis, T.L. Epperson, Will Galloway, Jim Burch, Jim DeWalt, J.C. Adams, Ed Galloway, J.P. Snow and Mid Purvis.

The examination was started into by the attorneys on both sides and pushed with commendable dispatch. It was finished

during the afternoon and the attorneys made able and lengthy speeches to the jury. They retired and in about five minutes they returned a verdict of not guilty.

Willie Fitze continued his business until it was lost in the great fire that occurred on August 29, 1902. According to the many newspaper articles about the event, his building and stock were valued at \$7,000 and he carried \$3500 of insurance.

Fitze afterwards moved to Center, Texas where ironically, his business was involved in another massive downtown fire, on March 4, 1911, in which six citizens perished. (In another bit of irony, the Mistrot Brothers also lost buildings in both fires).

William Elmore Fitze lived until 1940 when he died of exhaustion due to insanity at the Rusk State Hospital. He was buried in the Old City Cemetery next to his first wife Emma Alexander who predeceased him in 1894.



W.E. "Willie" Fitze

The Capitol Saloon and The Lone Star Saloon

Another saloon keeper from Livingston in the 1800's was W.L. Harding. Harding, who was married to Dr. W.F. Gibson's daughter, Bertie, owned two saloons in Livingston. One, The Capitol Saloon, was located at 306 South Washington on the north twenty-six feet of lot 2, block 21, and from the verbiage in the deed recorded in volume 4, page 404, this saloon had been established by C.R. Miller, although the date is unclear. Walter L. Harding purchased the lot, for \$1,000, on January 11, 1894, from Cleveland & Company, from Harris County, who recovered the property when previous owner, the D.S. Chandler Company went bankrupt. The location of the saloon is on the same lot on which the Gene Bush law office now stands at 306 N. Washington.

Harding's advertisement in the East Texas Pinery of September 15, 1892, offered "The Capitol Saloon is just opposite the courthouse, where tired and thirsty mortals may find rest and refreshments. Whisky, beer, and cigars the best in town."

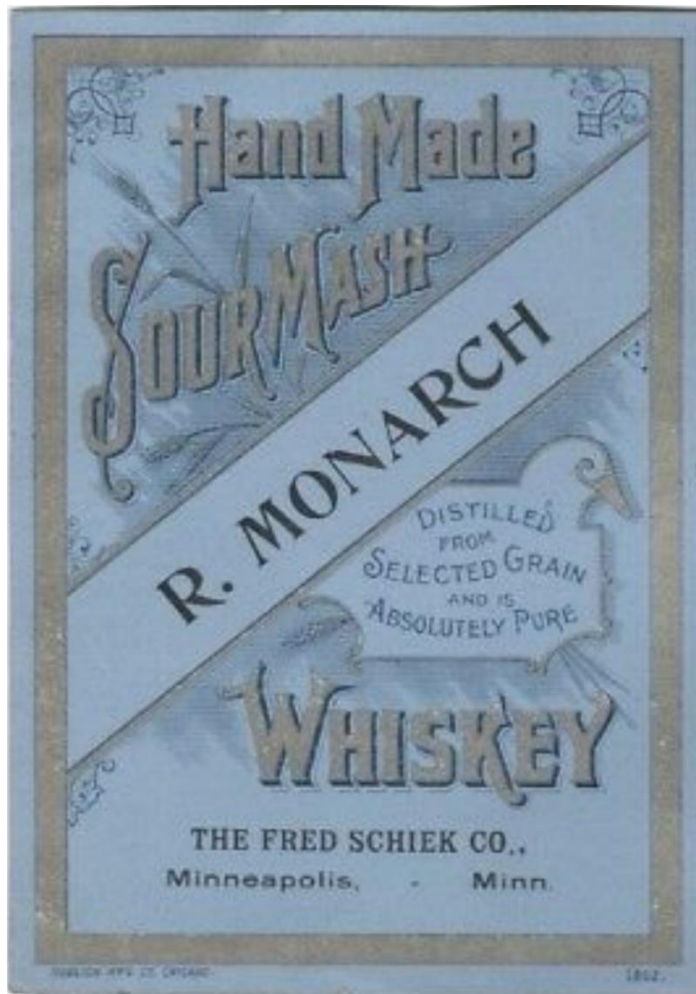
Harding, at the same time, also operated the Lone Star Saloon opposite the H.E.&W.T. Ry. and fifty-three feet north from the southwest corner of block 10. Harding purchased this lot in a deed dated January 5, 1892, from Max London of Corsicana, who recovered the property when the D.S. Chandler Company, as stated above, lost the property due to bankruptcy. The purchase

price was \$333.35 down with one payment of \$166.65 due in twelve months.

Harding advertised in the East Texas Pinery of September 15, 1892, a "new saloon, a dealer in Wines, Liquors, etc., located at the railroad depot near the Alliance Store (SW corner blk 10) where the country and travelling public will find the best beer, wines and whiskies with polite attention and fair dealing." Another ad that stated, "The Lone Star Saloon is just opposite the depot, where the tired passengers may get a cold glass of beer, a drink of the best whisky in town, or a splendid cigar."



Lone Star Saloon on the right in front of the Meece Hotel. The HE&WT depot is on the left. The photo was taken from Yell Street which later became Feagin Street, the only street from the original townsite from 1847 to have a different name.



In the East Texas Pinery of August 2, 1894, Harding advertised "buy the pure R. Monarch whiskey kept by W.L. Harding. He keeps nothing but the best brands."

Although the fate of the Lone Star Saloon is unknown, the Capitol Saloon was sold on December 26, 1895, to the firm of F.D. Bishop and M.S. Tew. One known photo exists that captures the image of the business, then called the Bishop & Tew Saloon. It was taken by Ben Lewis in approximately 1900.



The building behind the cross-arm is the Bishop & Tew Saloon. This photo was taken in 1900 while facing east on Church St. at Jackson Ave.

The Bishop & Tew Saloon placed a nice ad in the September 24, 1896, issue of the East Texas Pinery and boasted that their whiskies, Echo Springs, Monarch, Old Cabinet Rye, and the justly famous Hoffman House Whiskies had "not a HEADACHE in a barrel of either of the brands." In the September 24, 1896, issue was the request to "Go to the Capital Saloon for good whiskey, cold beer, fine cigars and good treatment."

FREE SILVER
or any other kind o. money
is all that is necessary to get

"Echo Springs," "Monarch," "Old Cabinet
Rye" and the Justly Famous

"Hoffman House" Whiskies

"There is not a HEADACHE in "
"a barrel of either of the brands."

Bishop & Tew

Ferdinand D. Bishop, Jr. (1854-1918) came to Livingston as a child from Mississippi with his father F.D. Bishop, Sr. (1816-1887). Senior was a merchant in Livingston as per the 1860 census and in the 1870 and 1880 census records, Bishop, Sr.'s occupation was

hotel keeper. It is noteworthy that a lodger in his hotel in 1880 was 26-year-old C.J. Gerlach whose occupation was listed as grocer. Of course, Mr. Gerlach became one of the leading merchants and citizens of Livingston afterward. The F.D. Bishop Hotel was sold in 1913 to Dr. H.S. Denham. This location was on South Washington at the corner of Denham Street, just south of Choate's Creek.

As per the 1900 census, F.D. Bishop, Jr. was a saloon keeper and was a partner with M.S. Tew, who was also listed as a saloon keeper. M.S. Tew (1874-1934) was married to Roxie Feagin (1881-1950), daughter of Judge J.C. Feagin (1855-1927).

The Capitol Saloon went up in flames in the 1902 fire. The Shiner Gazette of September 5, 1902, reported that Bishop and Tew had lost their house, valued at \$1750 and that there was no insurance.

On the same location where they had the saloon, Tew rebuilt and opened The City Meat Market with Jett Brock. They operated until 1914 when they sold to Collis Manning and Parson Clifford. Tew & Brock then concentrated on the livestock business and according to the Polk County Enterprise of May 28, 1914, they shipped 850 cattle by rail and received \$22 per head. Tew became the justice of peace and in 1922 became the first city manager of Livingston. Tew retained both jobs until his death in 1934.



Tew & Brock's City Meat Market circa 1906 on the same lot as the Tew & Bishop Saloon

The Fire

In the early morning hours on August 29, 1902, a great fire occurred in downtown Livingston. The fire, which was started by unknown anti-prohibitionists, began at the Gerlach warehouse (Block 21, lot 5) east of Fitze's Bon Ton Saloon. At issue was a difference in opinion over a scheduled election to prohibit the sale of liquor in town. The Houston Post reported on August 13, 1902, that a local option election was to be held on August 30th. The Gerlach brothers, C.J and L.F., originally from Bayou Sara, Louisiana, were active campaigners for prohibition. In a case of extreme irony, the Post of the 14th advised, "the campaign is rather warm."



B.M. Lewis photo from 1900, Gerlach warehouse on left, the Bon Ton hidden behind it. The Polk County Bank is on the far right and the Davison Hall and store is beyond it. The tree is at the intersection of Washington and Church. This was ground zero for the fire.

The conflagration wiped out three complete blocks, 15, 21 and 22 and a portion of 14. There was a second fire in December that did not cause much damage to property but there was loss of life. This is a story for another day.

On Saturday, August 30th, with nothing left but smoke and ashes, the election was held as planned. The results were 406 for prohibition and 107 against. Subsequently, the town remained dry for more than one hundred years.