



Milam County and it was never as big as the one in Comanche County. By the 1940's nothing was left of the Milam County Sipe Springs.

The first settlers arrived in 1870 and in 1873 the town was organized. It was also in 1873 that the schoolhouse was built. The congregation of the United Brethren Sunday School used the schoolhouse for their weekly meetings. A short time later, the Methodist and Baptist built churches. The post office opened in 1883 and M.W. Hall became the first postmaster. After the post office was built, several men took turns delivering the mail from Comanche once a week. The first official mail carrier was 10-year-old Nim Childress riding a mule name Jude. Sipe Springs had become a town with 130 inhabitants, five general stores, two hotels, and two gin-gristmills by 1884. A company of "Minute Men" was organized to protect the town against Indians. Bob Leslie, a settler in the town, was killed during the last recorded Indian raid in 1874.

In 1873, Pratt Scarlett died and John C. Smith gave five acres of land for a cemetery, but for some reason the title was not clear. It was many years later

that Nels and Sarah Crain acquired a clear title to the land the cemetery was built on. Their heirs gave it to the Sipe Springs Cemetery Association and the cemetery is still in use today. There are about 1150 gravesites in the cemetery including veterans from the Civil War, Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam Conflict.

For anyone interested a list of the Confederate Veterans buried in the Sipe Springs Cemetery may be obtained online at www.texas-sev.org/graves2/comanche/cm040.htm

By 1890, the town had a newspaper, the *Cyclone*, which was published weekly. Not long after that they had telephone service and the Texas Central Railroad was being built from De Leon to Cross Plains and the right-of-way ran just north of Sipe Springs. After the beginning of the railroad, Sipe Springs began to build toward the railroad line. In 1918, the oil boom hit Sipe Springs. The town that had started with 130 people now increased to 10,000 in less than a year after oil was discovered. Some reports state that Sipe Springs became a tent city within a year of the discovery of oil. Hotels and

rooming houses were built. Drugstores, barbershops, cafes, two banks, a cotton gin, movie theater, and a dance hall were just a few of the things that the oil boom brought to Sipe Springs, along with an opera house and a professional baseball team.

According to Mr. Gayle Leonard all of the ball games were played on the same field. Mr. Leonard played on the town team, both softball and baseball. The games were always played on Sunday. Gayle Leonard was born and raised in Sipe Springs, he along with many others from this area fought in World War II and together they received a total of 54 honors. Gayle Leonard was in the Army Air Force, flying 25 missions mainly in England, Holland, and Germany.

The Stewart House was originally built for drovers to stay in when they came to town. It was close to the bank, the railroad depot, and Main Street. Due to its convenience, it became the center of entertainment for people coming into town. Today, the front of the house is still original, kept this way by Robert A. Vernon, who passed away two years ago. It also has the original water cistern in the front yard.