



**CENTRAL :**

**THE  
SCHOOL  
THE  
TOWNS  
BUILT**

Sponsored by: The Angelina County  
Historical Commission

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# CENTRAL: THE SCHOOL THE TOWNS BUILT



Mr. Howard Walker was the Angelina County School Superintendent in 1930. One night he and the representatives of several local schools met and formed the Central Consolidated School. The story goes that apples were used to locate the small schools with one large apple representing the new large school. This is the story of Central from the beginning.



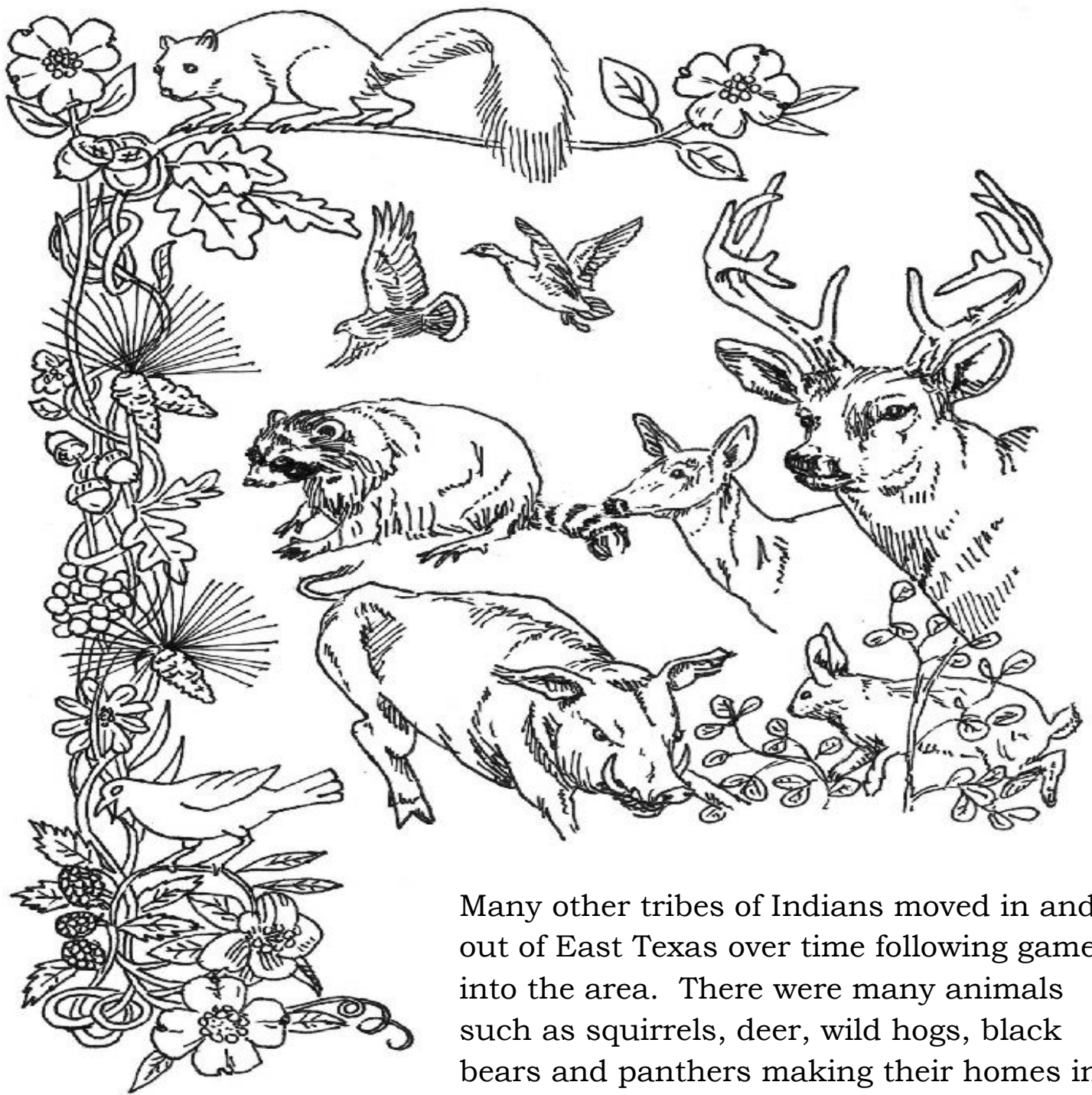
The first people who lived in the area were Indians. These Indians were probably mound builders. Little is known about these very old or “**archaic** people” except for the things that are found buried in their mounds. **Archeologists** still find and study **artifacts** or things left by these Indians in Nacogdoches, Alto and East Texas.





By the late 1600's several tribes known as the Hasinai Confederation of Caddos lived in the East Texas area. Because the tribes were friendly, they called each other "taysha" which meant "*friends or allies.*" The Spaniards who lived in the area probably used the word "tejas" in the same way.

The Spanish and French were the first **European** people to **explore** Texas. When they came into this area, they met a young Hasinai Indian girl named Angelina. They wrote about her in their diaries. She was described as gentle and likable. Even her name meant "*little angel.*" Of the 254 counties in the state of Texas, only Angelina County has a woman's name.



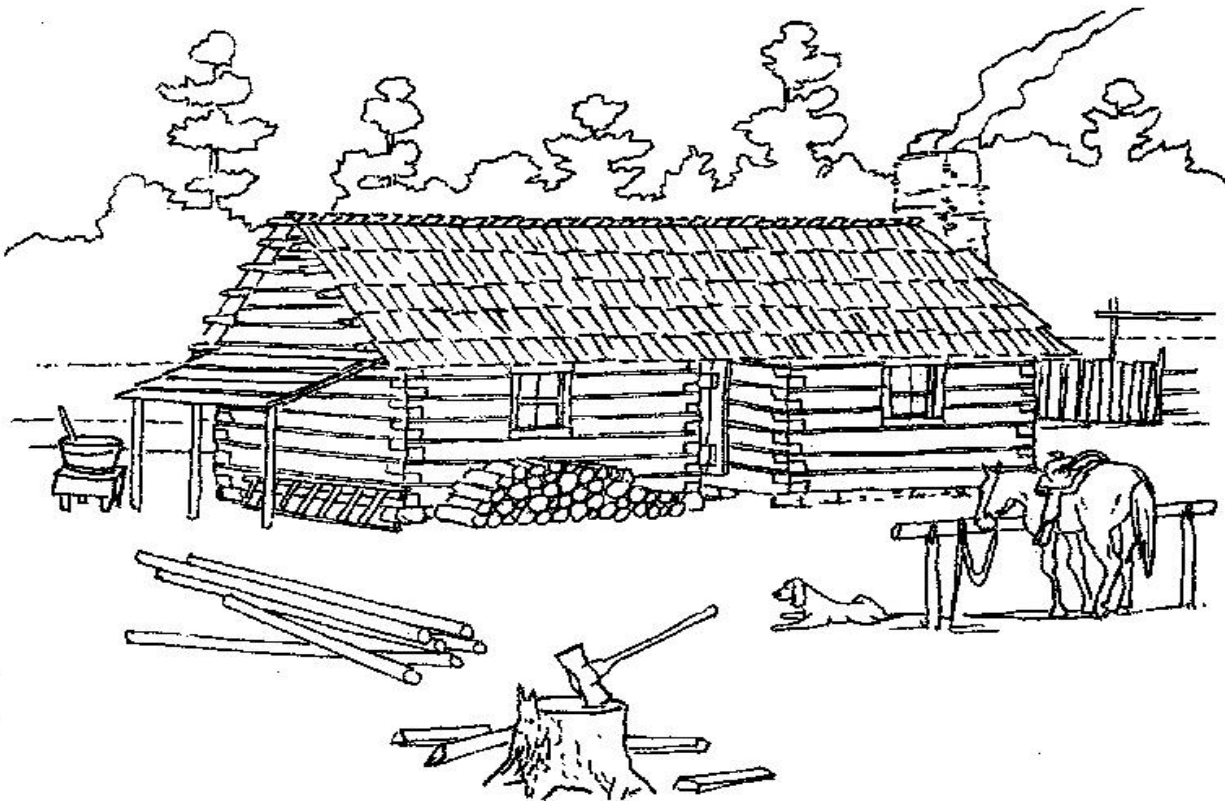
Many other tribes of Indians moved in and out of East Texas over time following game into the area. There were many animals such as squirrels, deer, wild hogs, black bears and panthers making their homes in the forest.

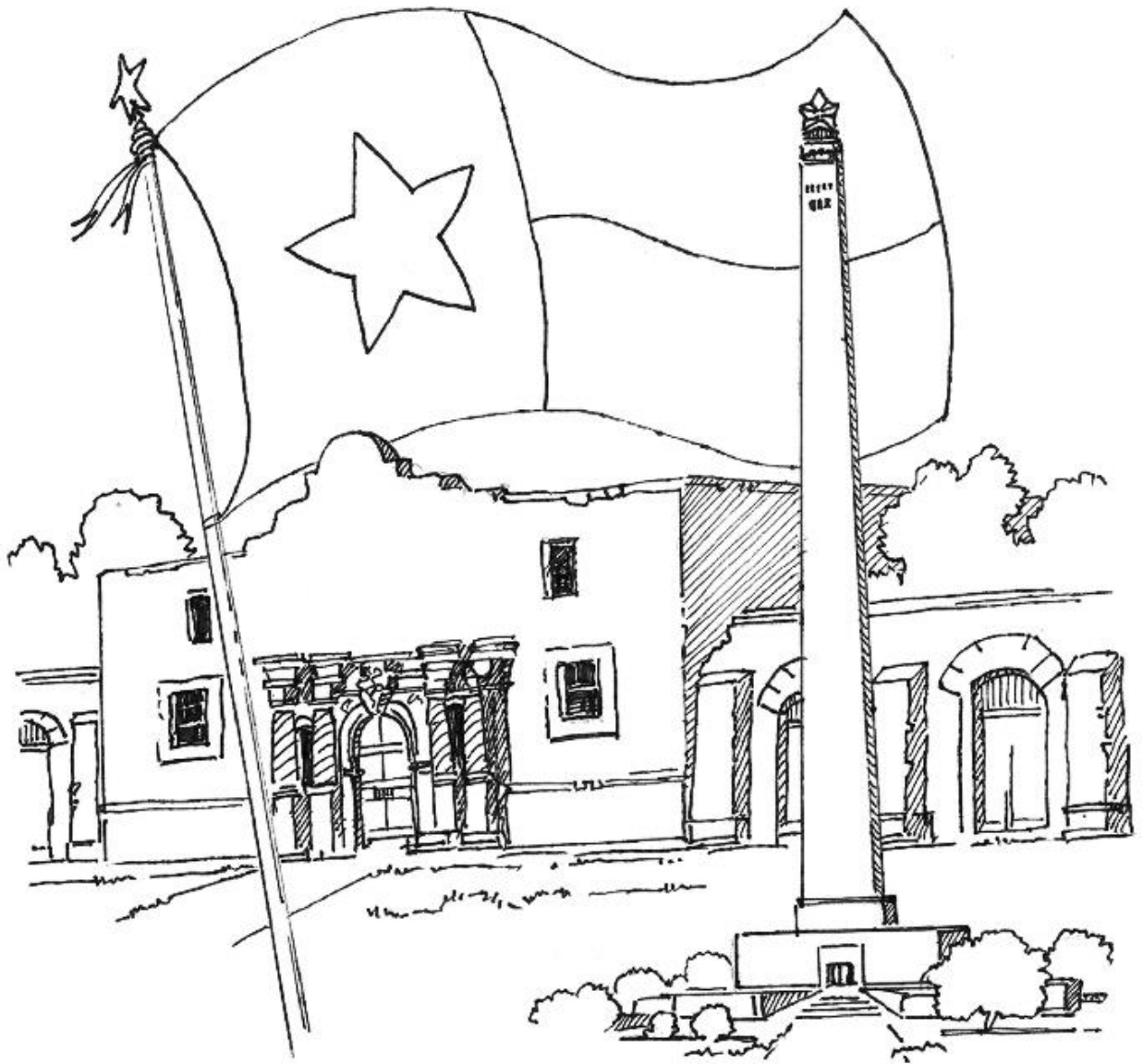
The Alabama and Coushatta tribes especially liked the area of East Texas along the Angelina and Neches Rivers. **Abundant** food was available for hunting or gathering in the woods between the rivers. By 1841, all of the Indian tribes were driven out of the land that is Angelina County.

The earliest settlers came to Angelina County in 1834 and 1835. These people found many trees, so their first homes were log cabins. They tried to build their cabins near a spring or creek so they would have water nearby.

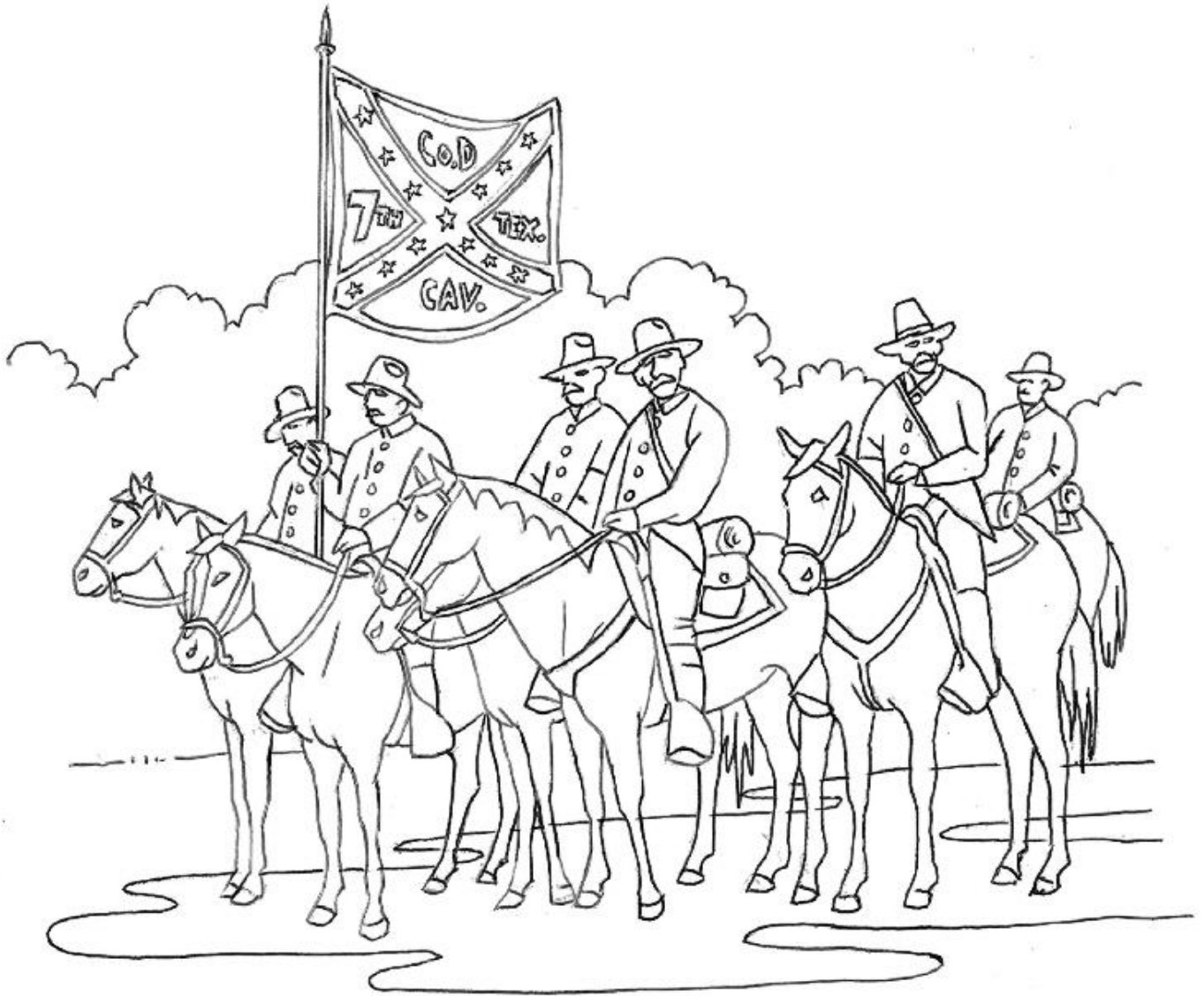
The **pioneers** would pick out very tall trees to use in building their cabins. The spaces between the logs had to be filled with clay or mud. This was called "**chinking**". A single cabin could be built in about eight days. The chimney for the fireplace was made of mud mixed with gray moss known as "**mud cats**". These mud cats were then placed around sticks to form the "**stick and daub**" chimney. If the chimney caught fire, someone would climb up on the roof and push the whole chimney down to save the rest of the house.

For a larger house, two cabins were built close together and connected with a covered porch called a "dog run" or a "dog trot."



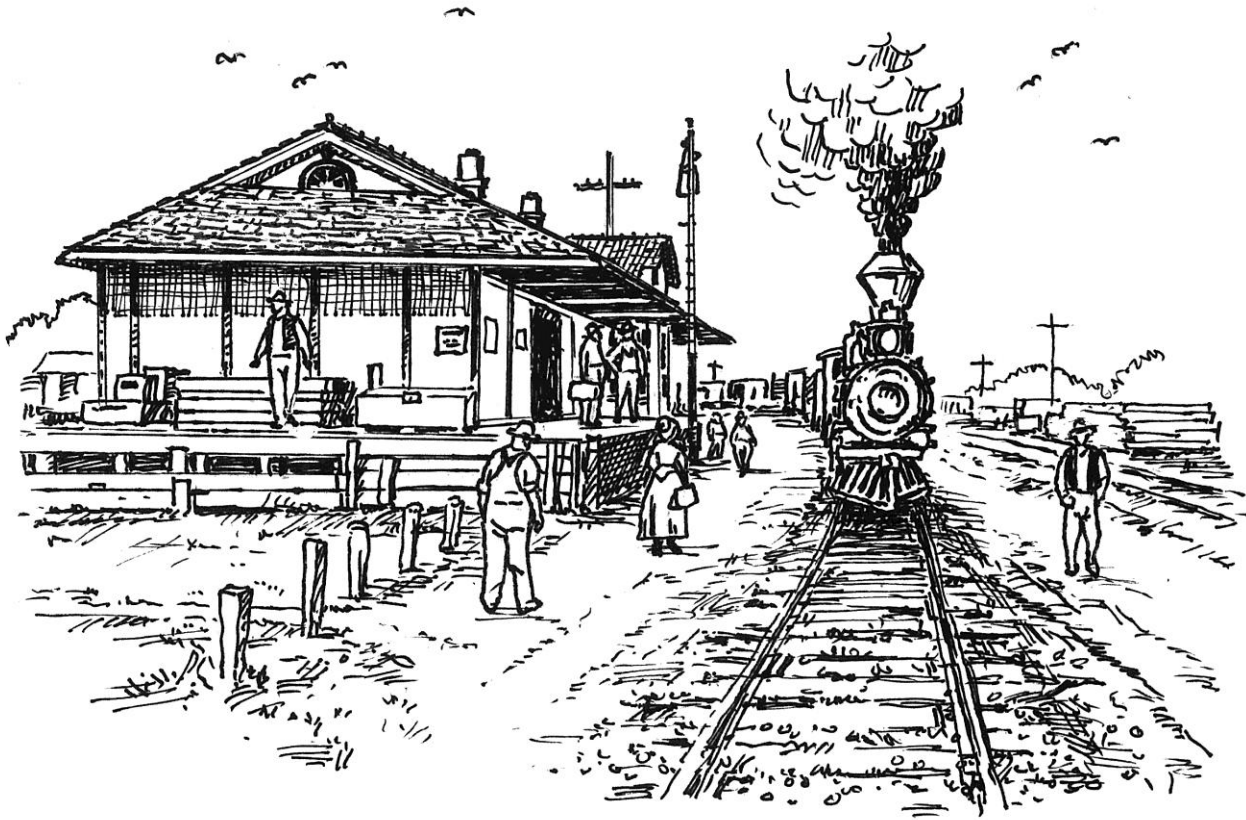


People living in Texas, soon wanted freedom from Mexico. In 1836, a war for independence was fought. After several battles, such as the Alamo, the **Texicans** won their independence at the Battle of San Jacinto and became an independent country. Texas is the only state that was ever an independent country. In 1845, Texas became part of the United States.



Remember that in 1850 there was no Central yet. The entire population of Angelina County was only 1,165.

In 1861, the United States went to war to settle the question of whether the South would be a separate nation. Angelina County voted to remain with the United States. However, when Texas did **secede** from the Union, the people in Angelina County supported the Confederacy with soldiers, cotton and food. The South lost the war and Texas stayed part of the United States and the slaves in Angelina County were freed.



Kansas City and Gulf Short Line railroad ran through the communities of Pollok and Clawson in the 1880's. The railroad made them a good shipping center for lumber and farm **products** going to **market**.

Each small community needed a railroad line to ship and receive goods. The railroad also would carry passengers.



Early Pollok School

Pollok was built on the Cotton Belt Railroad by prisoners. The town got its name from the doctor who was hired to treat and take care of these **convicts**.

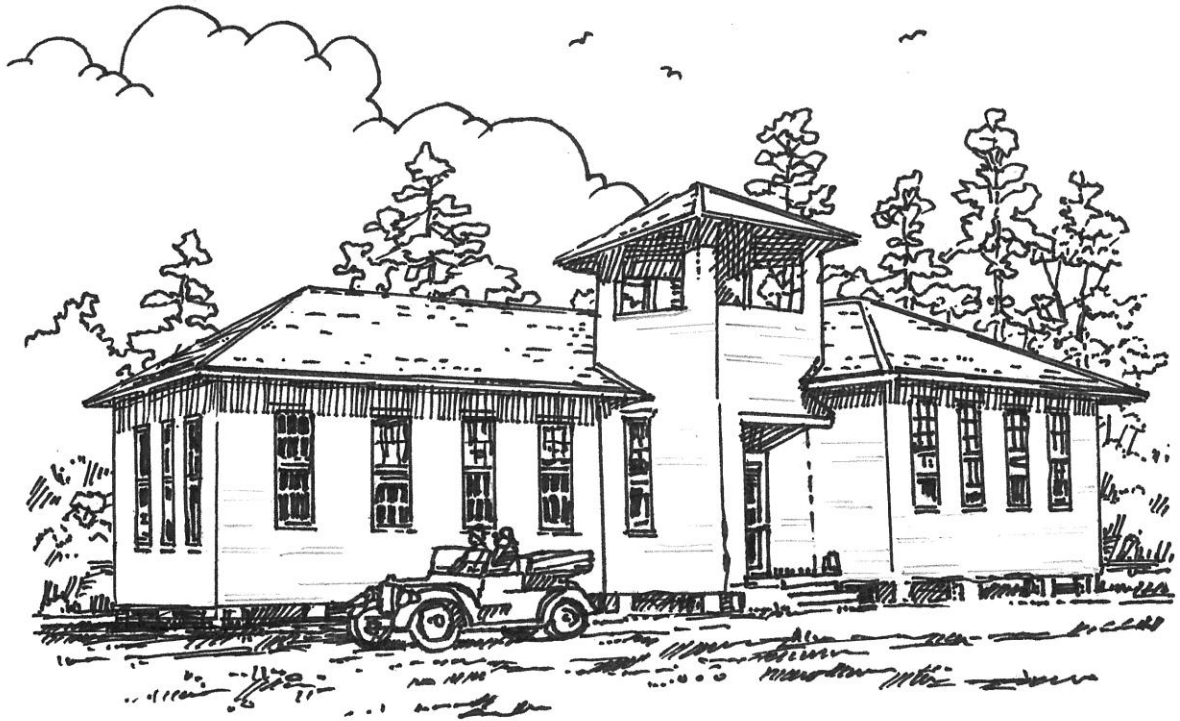
A large sawmill operated in Pollok. The town was large enough to have company houses built for the workers with families. There were churches, stores, a cotton gin, post office and doctor's offices. There was also a boarding house for the single men who worked at the sawmill. The men would earn \$1.15 to \$1.35 for a 10 hour day.



At a boarding house, the men could rent a private room, but they shared a bathroom, living room, and dining room. They all ate their meals together at a long table. The people living here were like a large family. A boarding house was usually run by a woman and her children. They would do all the cleaning and would provide breakfast, a lunch the men would take to work, and a large evening meal.





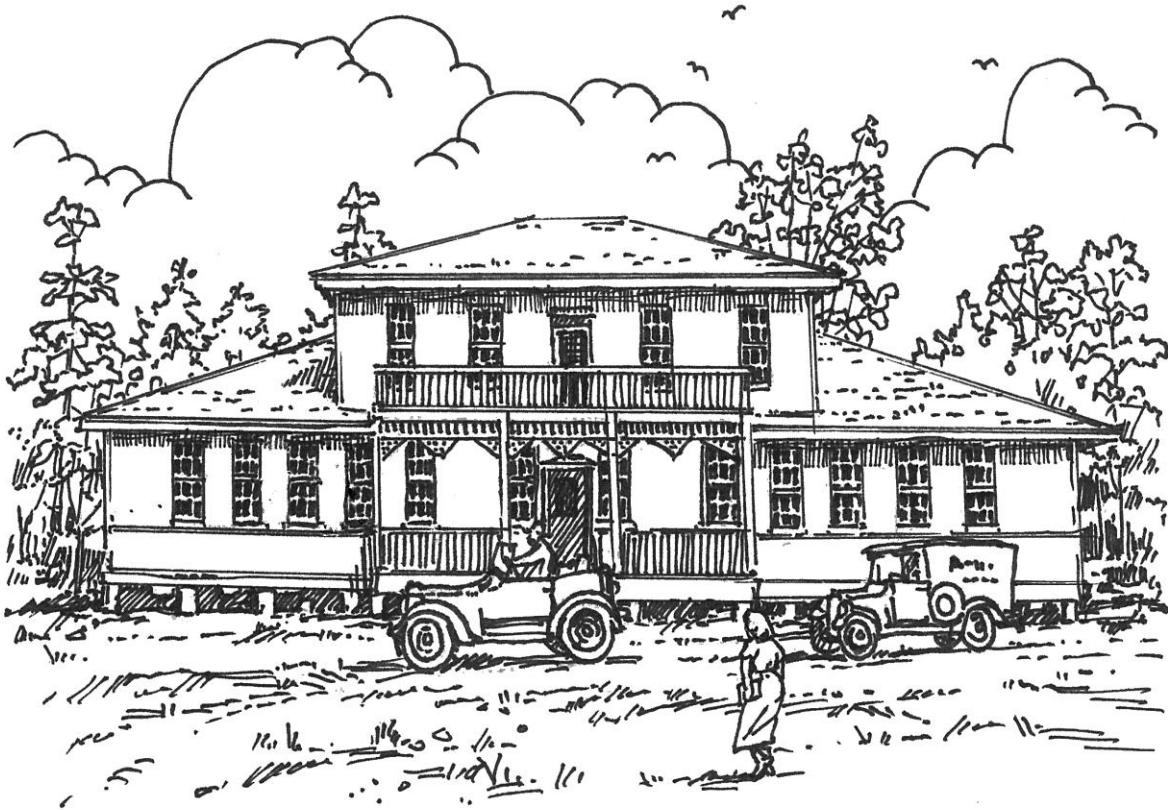


Early Clawson School

Clawson, known at one time as “Bonnersville,” was established as a sawmill center about 1885 and became a shipping point on the Kansas and Gulf Short Line Railroad. The town’s first sawmill was a large steam mill owned by T. R. Bonner and managed by T. W. Clawson, for whom the town was named.

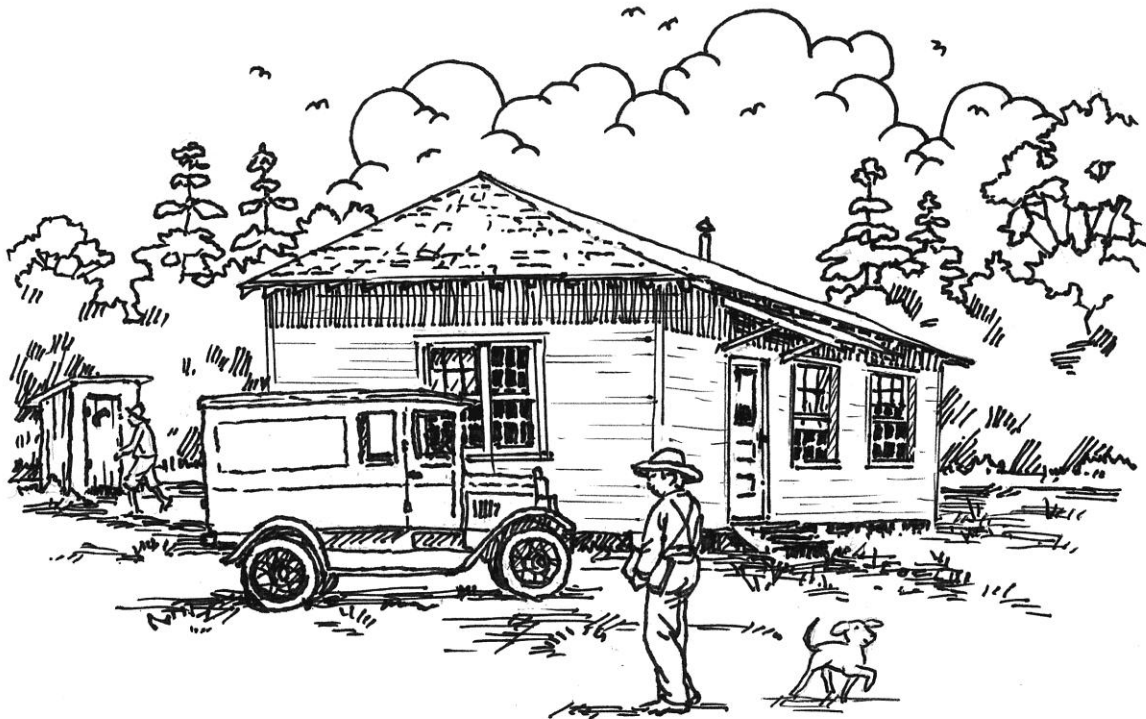
By 1890, the area contained a school, church, and a company commissary. A post office was opened in 1900 and was maintained for twenty-five years.

Several local sawmills went **bankrupt**. By 1911 there were no more sawmills in Clawson. As the mills closed the population of Clawson declined when people moved to other places for work. The number of people who live here has been mostly unchanged since the 1930’s.



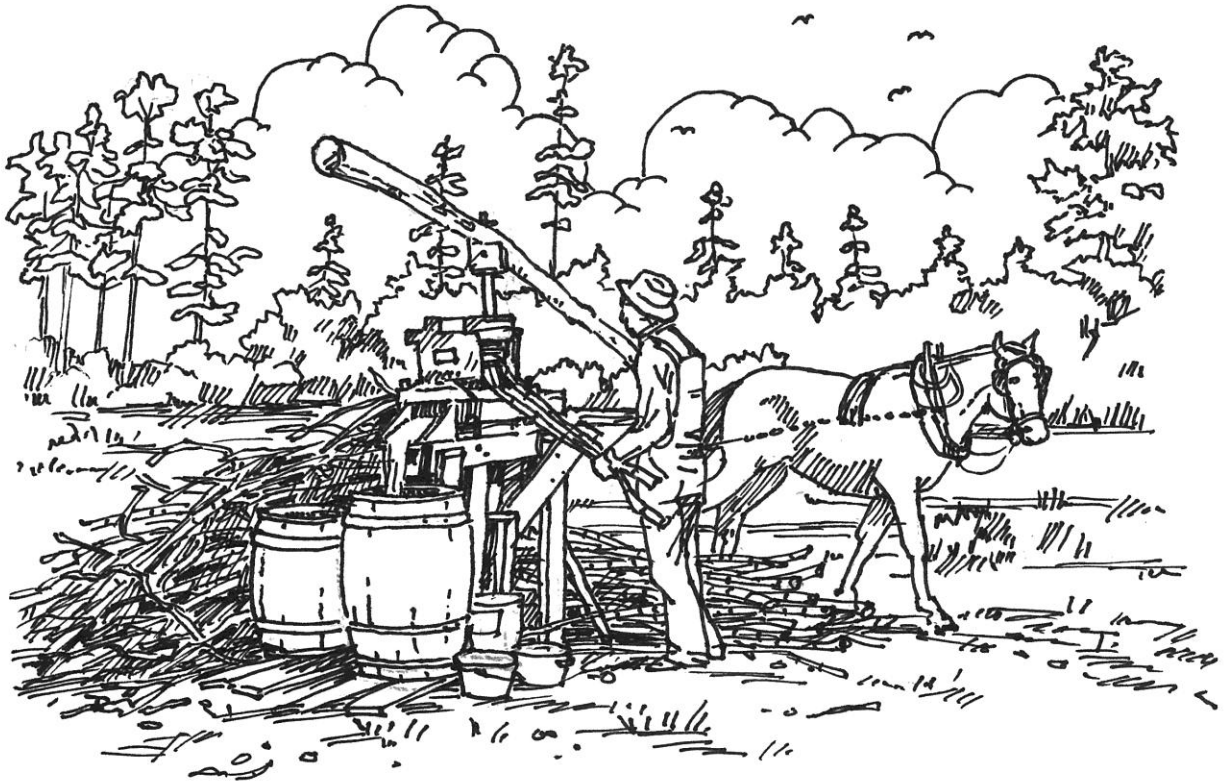
Early Durant School

Durant was located between Pollok and Clawson. The Durant Lumber Company operated a sawmill there and gave the town its name. The Cotton Belt Railroad ran through the community and lumber was shipped to market on the train. There was also a post office in town for a short time.

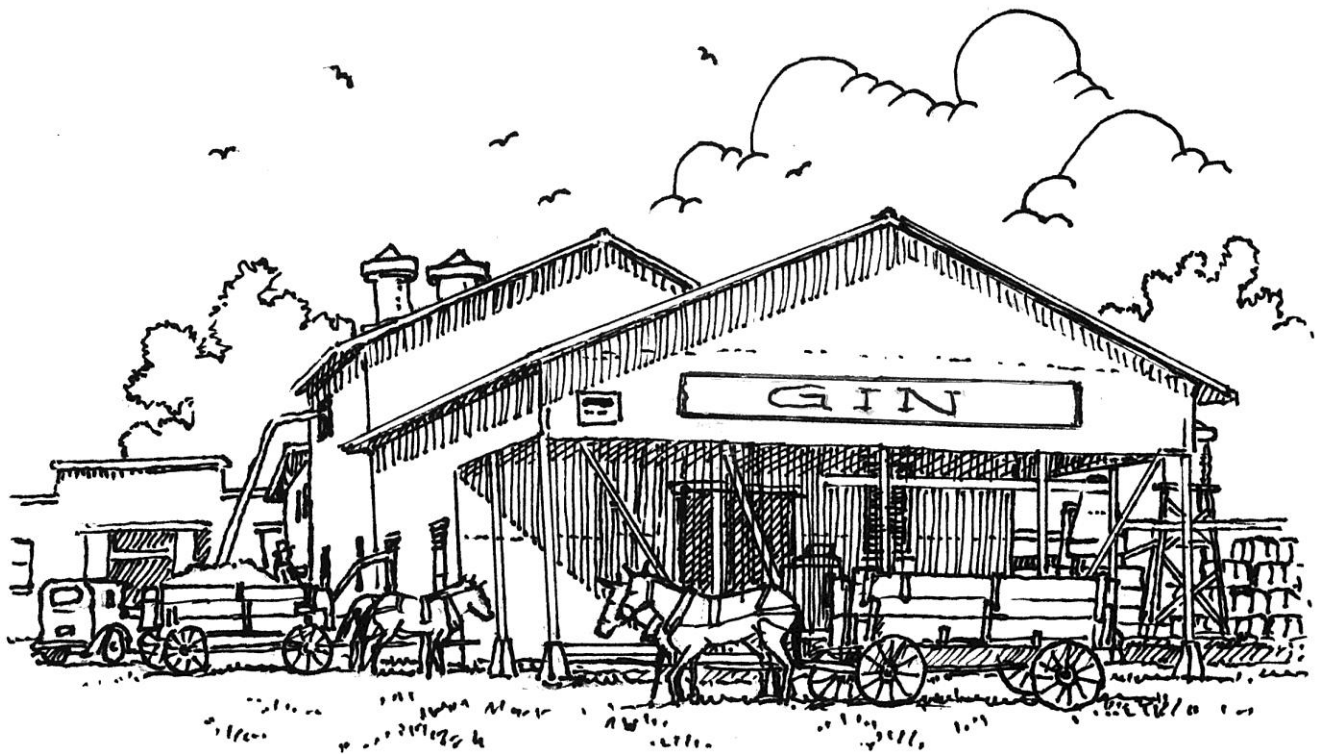


Redtown School

The Redd family settled in northwest Angelina County at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The family farmed and harvested timber. The settlement grew into the Redtown community. All that remains is a cemetery and the one hundred year old building that was used as a church and school. It still stands today and is used for some community functions.



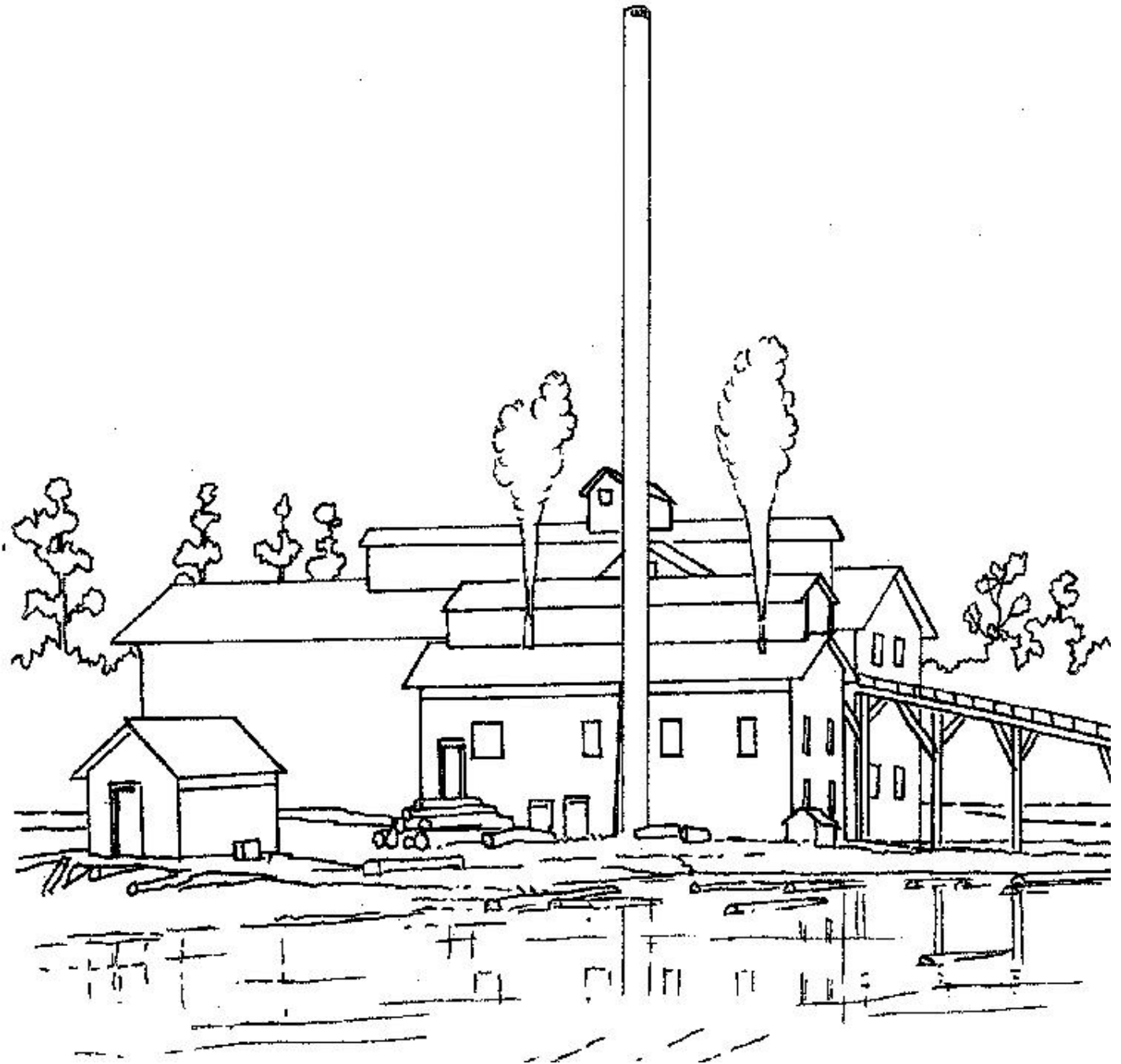
The Allen family was one of the first families to move to Angelina County. In 1850, John Allen and his family began farming in the area that became Allentown. Through the years, the Allen family has farmed and run sawmills, grocery stores, and a cotton gin. They also made syrup on their farm. This was done by growing and harvesting sugar cane. The cane was squeezed and the juice was boiled until it formed thick, sweet syrup.



One time there was a cotton gin on Allen Gin Road which was built by Uncle Bud Allen in 1919 and operated for 8 years. Farmers from the surrounding area brought their cotton by wagons to the gin. There the cotton was ginned to remove the seeds and trash and pressed into bales. During cotton harvesting, Mr. Allen's gin worked day and night to produce cotton bales that were shipped by rail to larger markets. There also was a gin located across from where the Central school is now. Gins closed as people quit farming cotton.

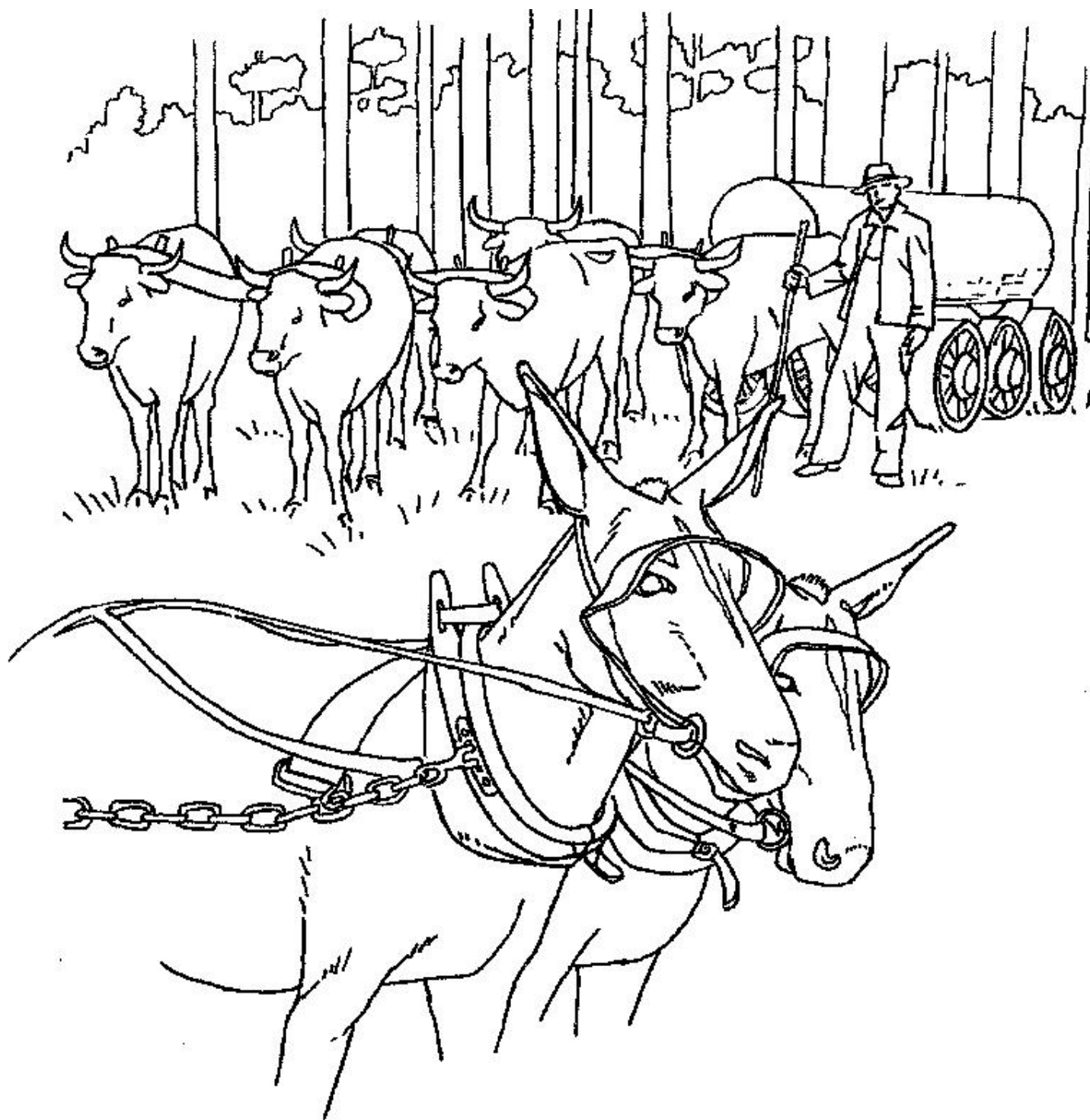


Each of the communities had a sawmill, some larger than others. A large mill would have many workers to make the lumber. First logs were dumped into the mill pond beside the sawmill. Water kept the logs from drying out and made them easier to saw into lumber. After the lumber was dried, it was **planed** or smoothed and sent to the finishing shed. Finally, a train carried the finished lumber to market. The mill pond was also a favorite place for the boys in town to swim or might be used by churches to baptize their members.





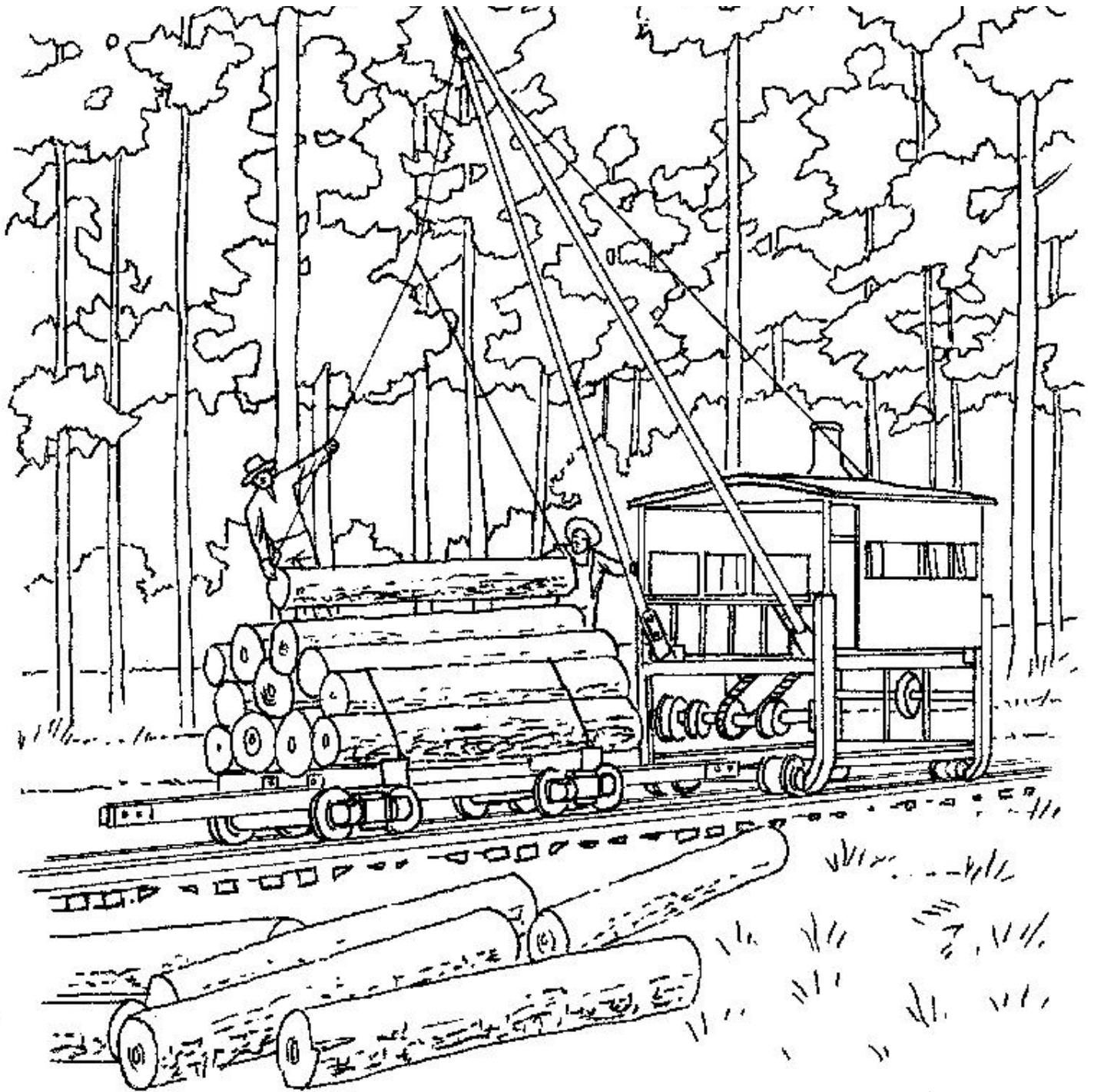
Men used **crosscut saws** to cut the large trees. Each crosscut saw required two men to **operate**. A man took a handle at each end of the saw and pulled back and forth until the tree fell. Notice that the trees were much larger than trees are today.

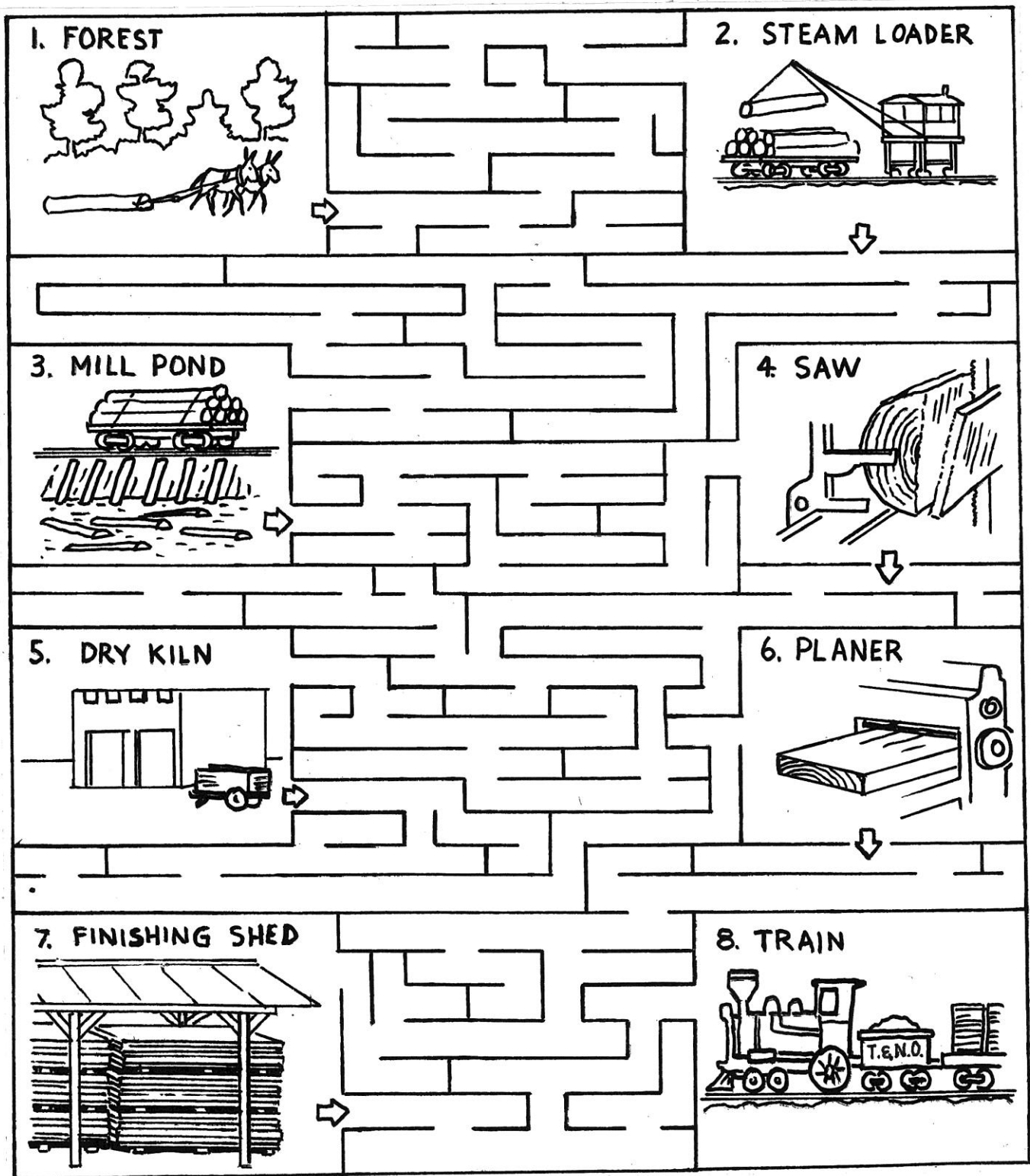


After the trees were cut down, mules and oxen were used to haul the logs to a train or a wagon. The oxen had such names as “Rough” and “Rowdy,” while the mules were given names like “Molly” and “Dolly.”



Logs were put onto railroad cars with the swing booms of steam log loaders. These logs were taken to the mills over **tram** roads. In addition to the logs, the trains often carried **passengers** and **freight**.





See how long it takes you to send a log through the sawmill. Guide your log through the steps it takes to become a building product.



There was usually a **mercantile** or **commissary** in each community. You could buy groceries, clothes, shoes, caskets, tools, or anything else you can imagine in these stores. The sawmill company owned the commissary. A mercantile was owned by a family or individual and both sold the same type of merchandise. Pollok and Clawson had a commissary.



Area residents have always been involved in **agriculture**. Most of the farms raised cotton to sell at market. They raised vegetables, chickens, horses and cows for their own use. Corn was raised to eat and to feed the animals on the farm. Even fruit was grown here. Grapes were grown in a vineyard in the rich land east and west of Pollok.

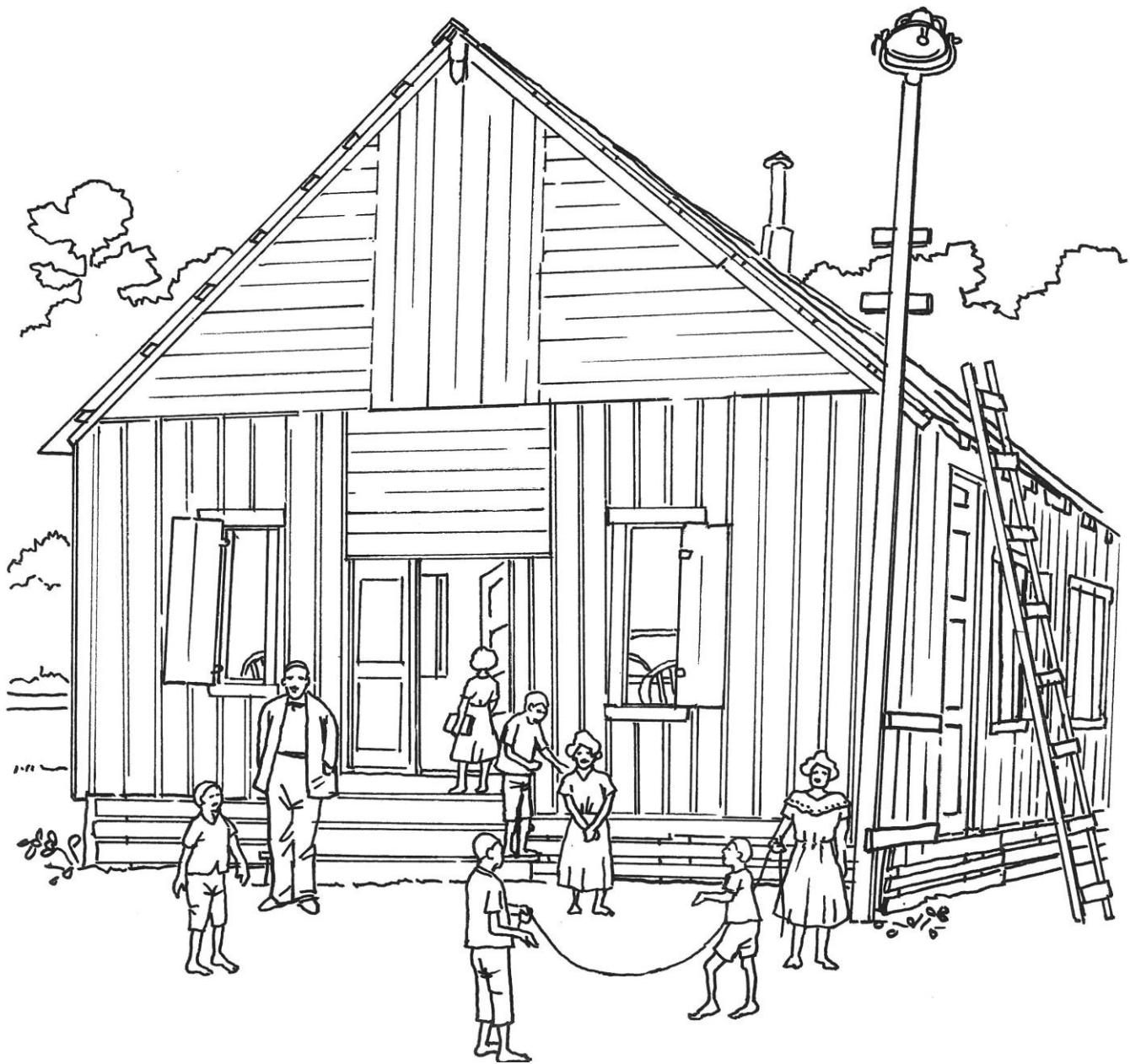
The most important animals raised were hogs. Hog meat was used to make bacon, hams, hog head cheese, cracklings from the skin, and pickled pig's feet. The meat was packed in salt, smoked, or canned. The coldest day of the year was hog killing day because there was no refrigeration. A family could process a hog in November or December and eat the meat for most of the year.

In 1899 a wealthy French lawyer named Retailiau (Reh Tay o) came to Texas to make his fortune growing tobacco. He cleared fifty acres of land and built tobacco sheds, processing buildings, and a two story mansion. The tobacco grown here was not as good as that grown in the states of Kentucky and Virginia, so it did not sell. After three years, Retailiau abandoned his farm. The land was later used to grow cotton, but eventually was reclaimed by the pine forest. Today if you live in the Idlewood Subdivision, your house is located on the “Old Tobacco Farm”.





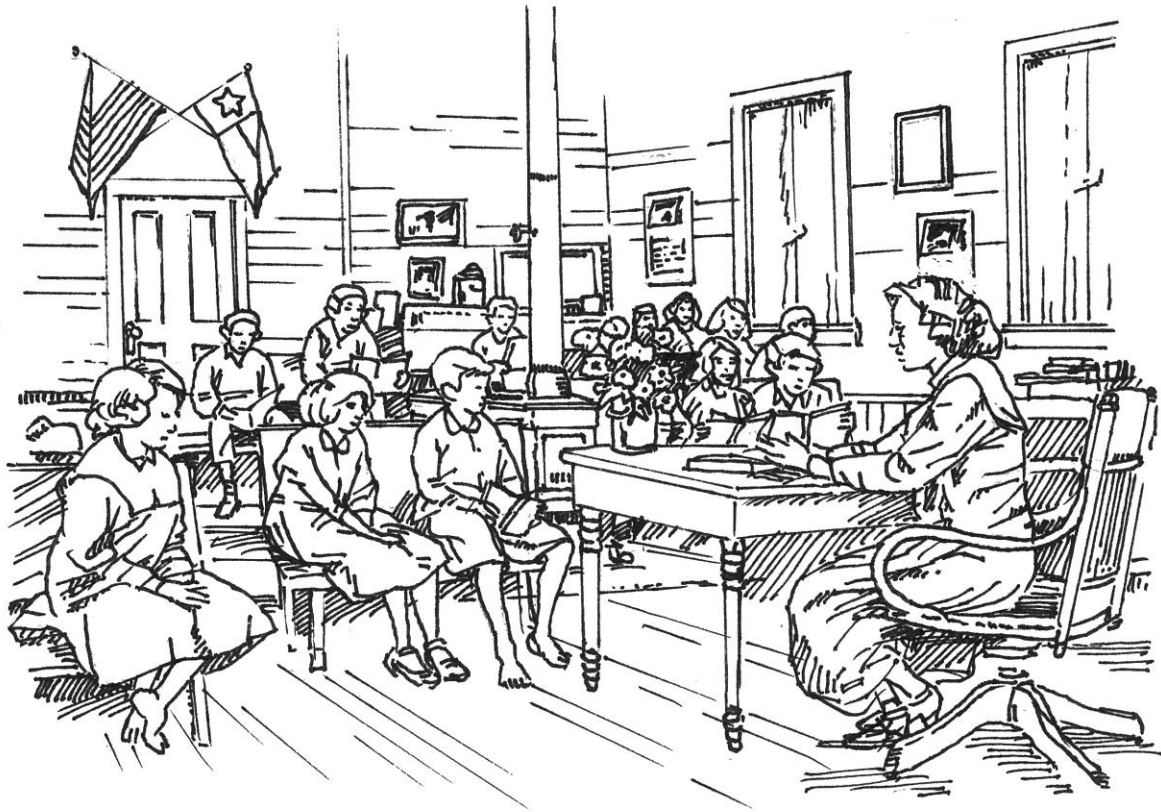
Electricity came to the Central area bringing many changes to everyday life. Draw lines connecting the new technology to the old.



Soon there were enough children in each of the communities for the families to form a school.

In these early schools, each teacher taught thirty to forty students in different grades in one room. Older students were used to help tutor the younger ones. Supplies were limited, so **slates** and chalk were used instead of pens and paper. Students had to memorize most of their lessons because there were few books.

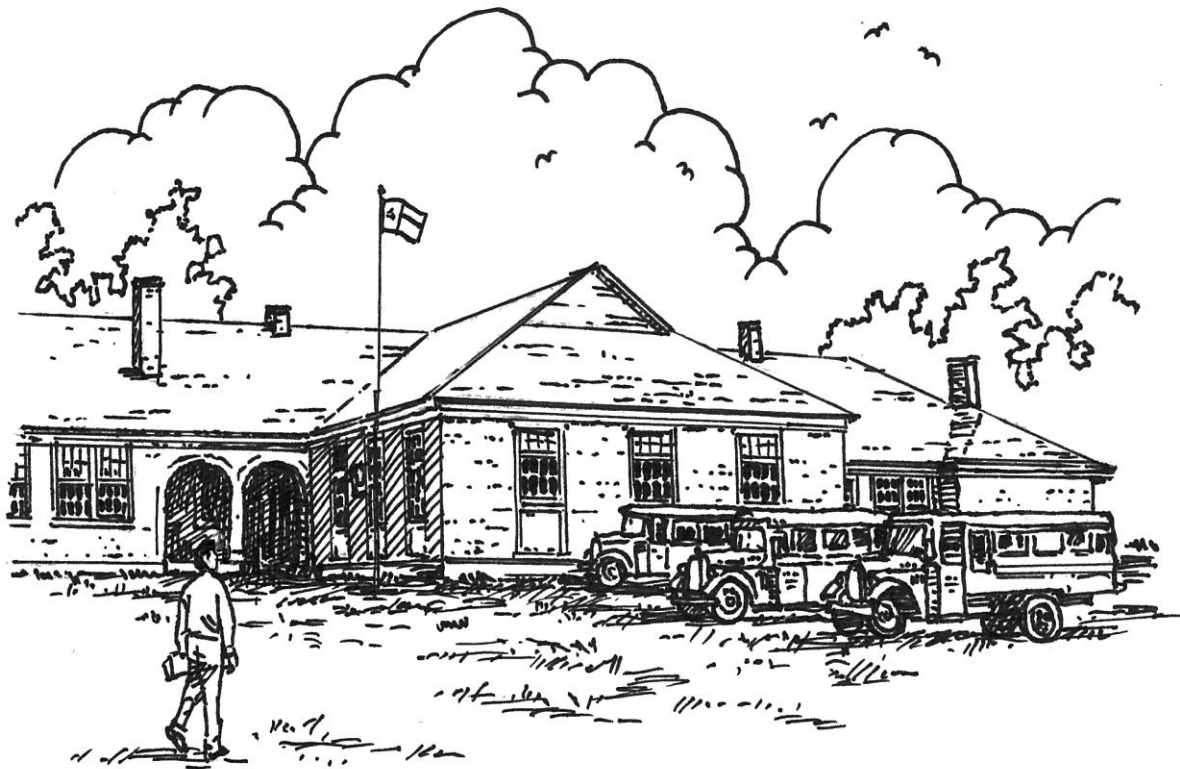




A long time ago, children of different races did not attend the same school. Each community had a separate school for white and black students.

These early schools were very different from our schools today. They were heated with a wood burning stove. The parents and teachers would provide the wood. The bathrooms were separate **outhouses**. Students would drink water from a dipper hanging from a water bucket and bring their lunch from home in a syrup bucket. The students and teachers were also responsible for cleaning the classroom and **stoking** the fire in the heater.

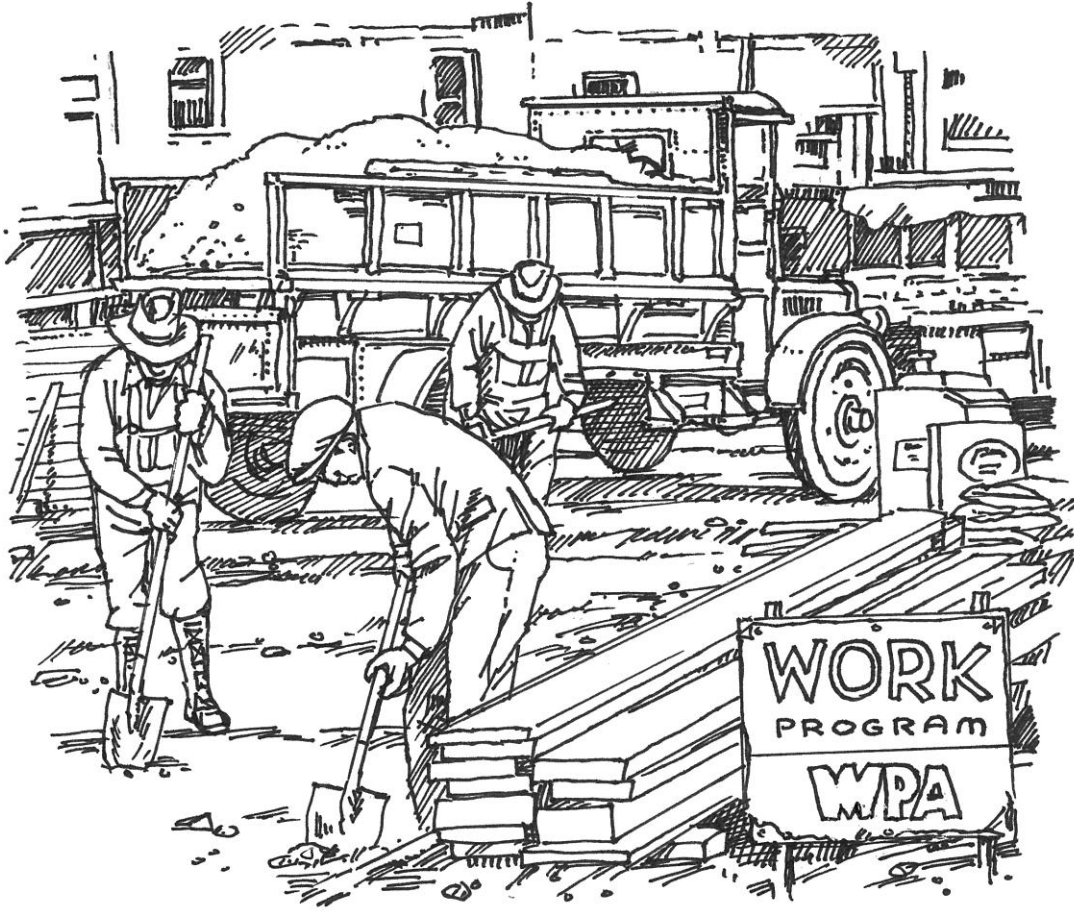




Early Central School

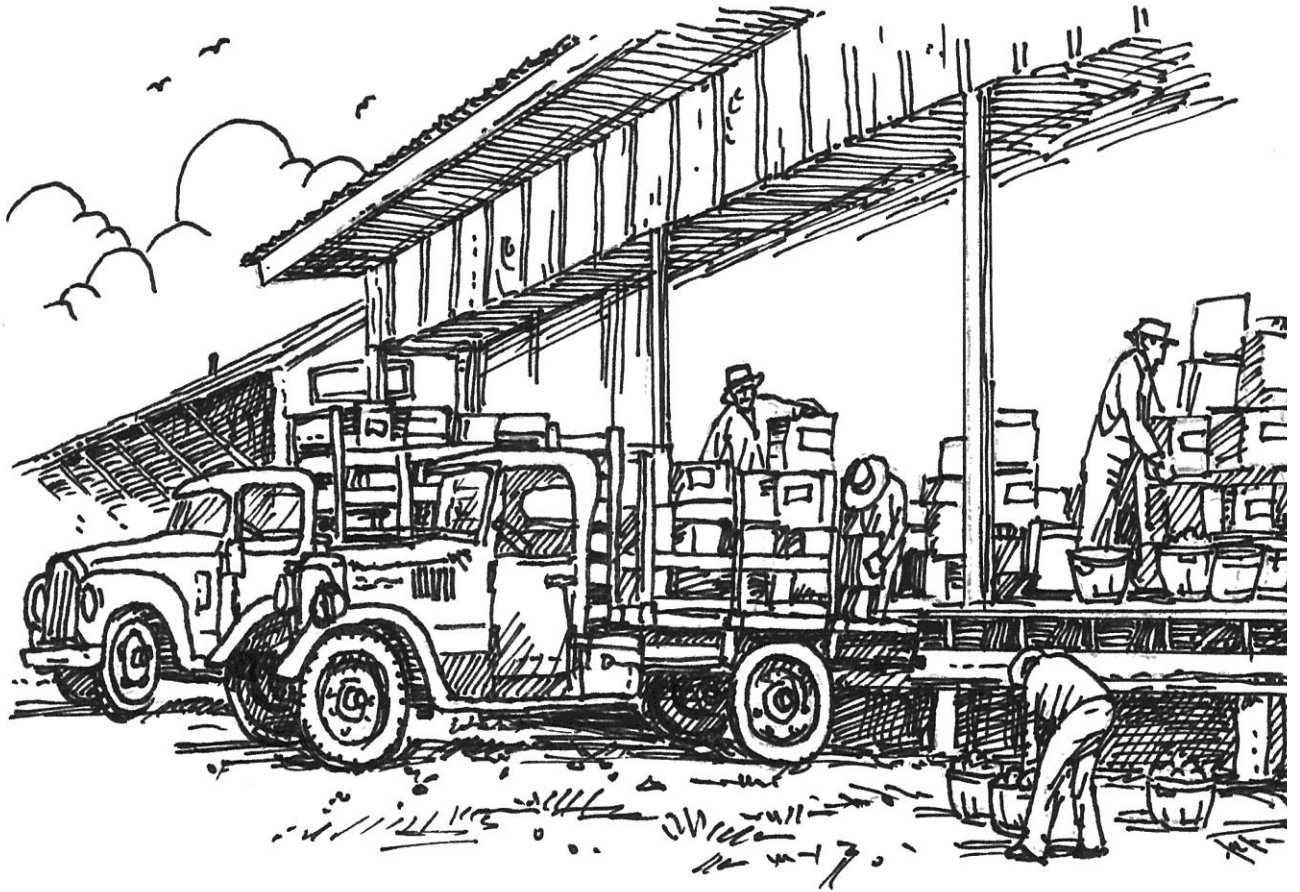
As sawmills closed, burned or went bankrupt, the number of students in the community schools declined. In an effort to provide opportunities for students, schools were **consolidated**. In 1930, four schools, Clawson, Durant, Old Union (Allentown) and Pollok were joined together to form the Central School District. Central School began with one building which had classrooms and a combined auditorium, basketball court, and lunch room. The first seniors graduated the next year.

The community of Central formed around the school.

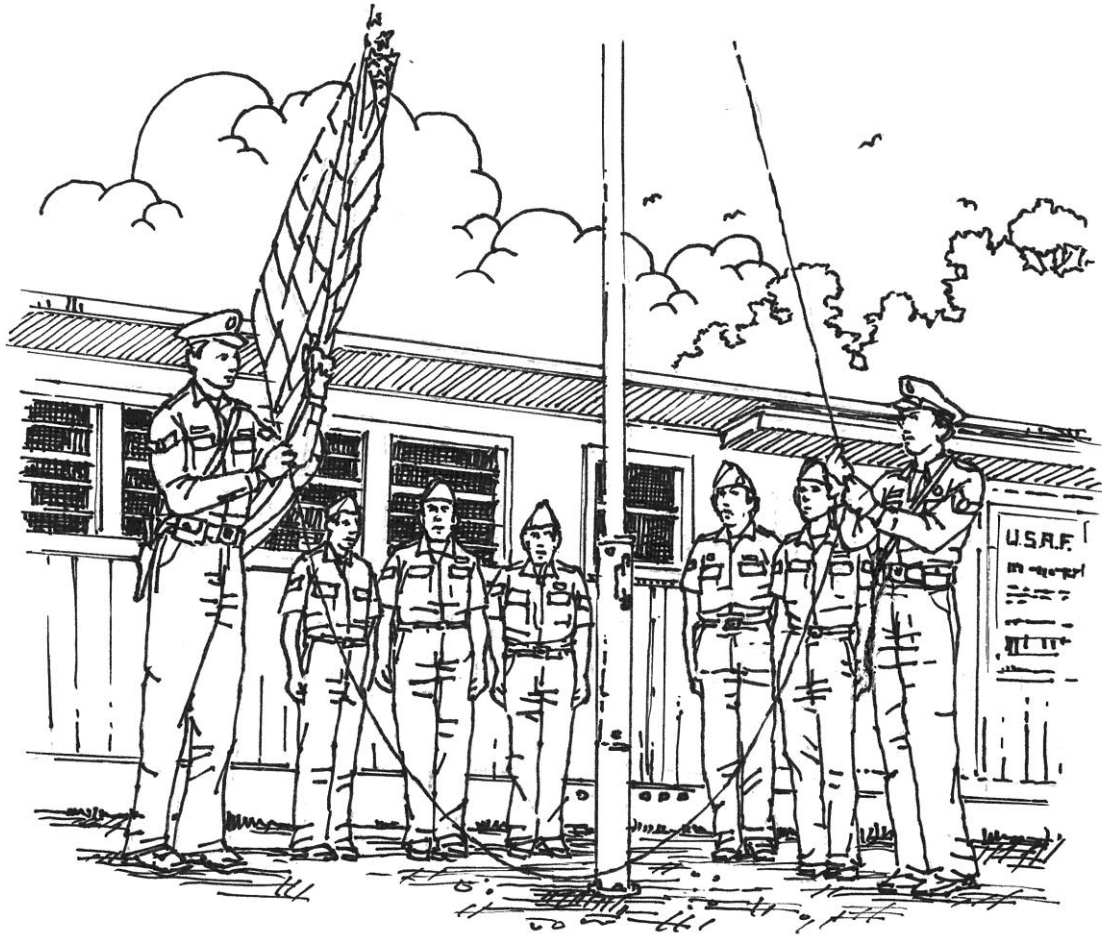


In the 1930's **The Great Depression** gripped America. The entire nation suffered an economic crises and money and jobs were scarce. The Central area also suffered during this time with the closing of several businesses.

The **WPA** was a government program designed to give people jobs and build needed facilities. The WPA built a log cabin for the Homemaking and Agriculture programs for the school. When it burned along with the gym, they built a new gym adding a homemaking department, science labs and classrooms. Later a rock high school was also built by the WPA.

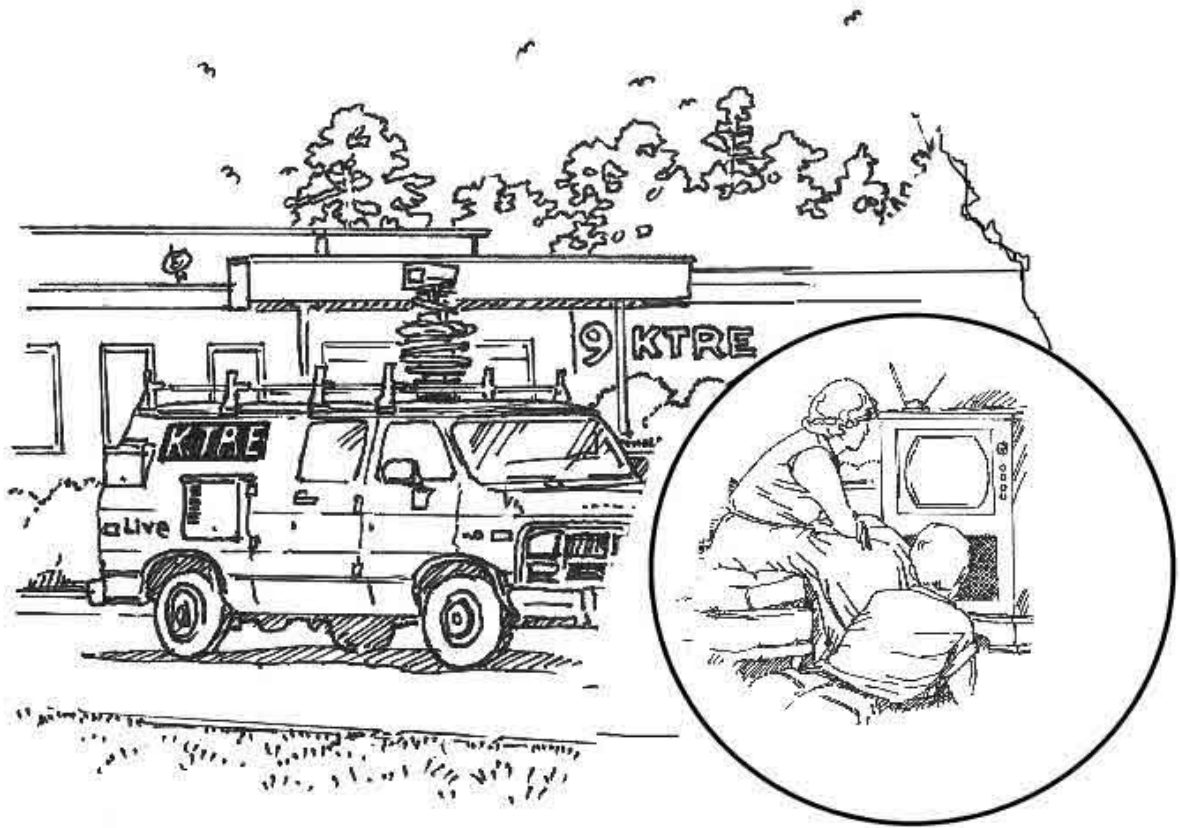


During the Depression, a tomato co-operative was formed between Clawson, Pollok and Wells. Tomatoes were grown on the farms and taken to the railroad for shipment. As the job market improved, the residents of the Central communities began to work in Lufkin. Family cars made this possible. Farming began to decline in the area.



In 1958 an Air Defense Radar Warning Station was built. It was part of a system of radar stations linked together across America used to watch for enemy airplanes. One hundred seventy airmen of the 815<sup>th</sup> AC&W squadron were stationed here. The station was closed two years later because new technology made such stations **obsolete**.

The property was given to the State of Texas and is now the Lufkin State Supported Living Center.



KTRE-TV signed on the air on August 30, 1955. Murphy Martin was the first news announcer. He later moved to Dallas and worked in radio and television. He became famous working as a newscaster for ABC News. KTRE now covers an area with a population of 400,000 people. It televises local news, weather and ABC programming.

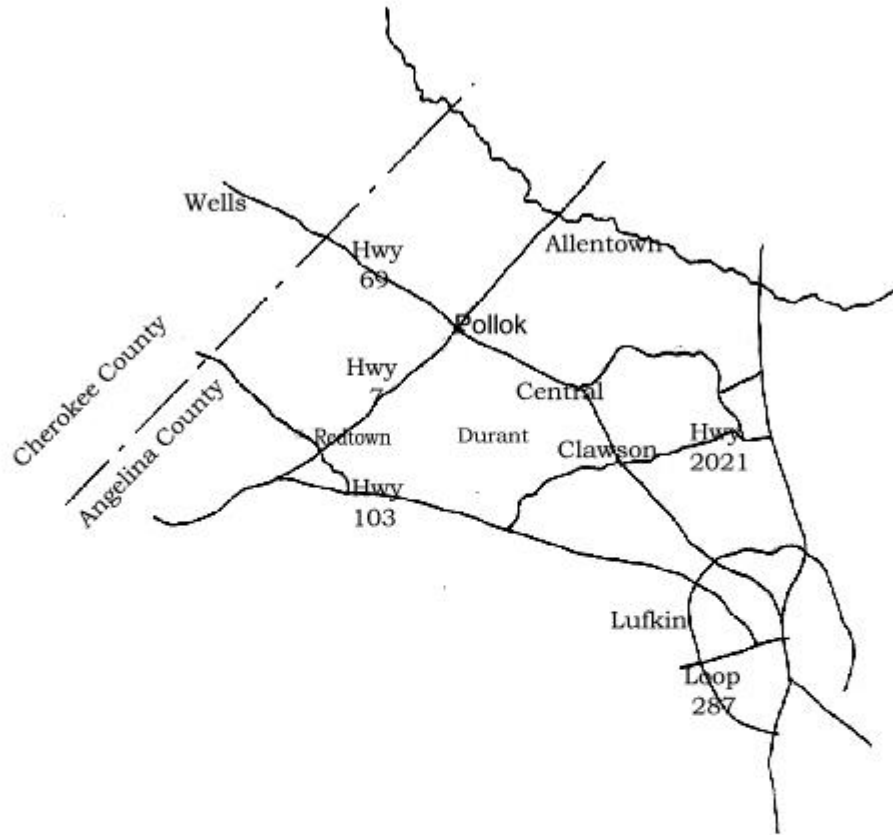


The Central bulldogs have excelled in sports and academics. They participate in basketball, volleyball, softball, baseball, tennis, cross country, weight lifting, and track and field.

Central has an outstanding record in athletics. The Bulldogs have been very successful in winning state championships: 1956 boys basketball; 1959 and 1984 girls basketball; 1983 boys baseball; 1997 girls softball, as well as an individual state champion in girls golf.

The 1988 Bulldog Yearbook won the top UIL state award.

A new baseball and softball complex was built in 2007 and a new weight room in 2010.



1. Circle the Central School in red.
2. Circle Clawson in blue.
3. Draw a square around Pollok in yellow.
4. Draw a rectangle around Allentown in green.
5. Draw a rectangle around Redtown in pink.
6. Draw a line from each small community to the Central School.
7. Find the city that is in Cherokee County.

## Glossary

**abundant** – plenty of something or a great quantity.

**agriculture** - the growing of food crops to use or to sell

**archeologists** - people who find out about the past by digging up things left by people of long ago.

**archaic** – very old.

**artifacts** – things that are left by people of long ago.

**bankrupt** - lose all your money

**chinking** – the process of filling the cracks between the logs of a log cabin with clay or mud.

**commissary** – a general store operated by a company for their workers.

**consolidated** – bring together, combined.

**convicts** – a person who has committed a crime and is held as a prisoner

**crosscut saw** - a saw with a handle at both ends and a blade in the middle which is used by two people.

**European** – a person from the continent of Europe.

**explore** – to travel in a new land to find out everything about it.

**freight** – things being moved from one place to another, usually on a truck, airplane, or train.

**Great Depression** - a period of time in the 1930's when Americans were without jobs and money. Often people were hungry and had nowhere to live.



**market** – a place where things are sold.

**mercantile** – a general store that sold many different things.

**mud cats** – Spanish moss mixed with clay and used to make chimneys a long time ago.

**obsolete** – out of date, no good anymore

**operate** – to make work

**outhouse** - a bathroom outside with no running water or flushing toilet.

**passengers** – people who ride on trains, cars, buses, and so forth.

**pioneers** – the first people who go into an area or place to live.

**planed** - a rough sawn board from a sawmill is made smooth in a place called a planer mill.

**secede** – to withdraw from.

**slates** - individual chalk boards used by students a long time ago instead of paper.

**stoke** - to put wood into a heater to keep the fire going.

**stick and daub** – a type of chimney made of mud and sticks.

**Texican** – what a person was called who lived in Texas when it was a part of Mexico.

**tram** – short railroad lines leading to the main railroad going to a lumber mill.

**WPA** - a government agency, the Work Project Administration, helped people with jobs during the Great Depression.