

IT'S COAHOMA

by Sue Tindol

Signal—that's what Coahoma was called on the old maps of this area. Signal Peak or Mountain, is a symmetrically shaped peak and the Indians used its flat top to build fires to signal by smoke as a method of communication. It is similar to other peaks in this area: 40 miles south in Sterling County, 40 miles north to Mushaway Peak in Borden County and 80 miles south in Tom Green County.

It is said that Coahoma is an Indian word meaning "signal." Signal Peak is six miles southwest of the town of Coahoma today. Some say the word "Coahoma" means "beautiful country." Other people say that Mrs. J.W. Shive named the town for her home county in Mississippi—Coahoma. Others say Mrs. Echols named this town. Also, Annie Phinney says that she was told that Coahoma was an Indian word for "Red Panther." (Could that have been a beginning for "Big Red?")

Well, however, whoever named this settlement Coahoma, is past history now and when we tell people we meet that we're from Coahoma, they say "Oklahoma! What part of the state?" Then we have to say, "No, Coahoma—out in West Texas."

This is interesting how the settlement began. The Shives had a little trading post just east of where Coahoma stands today. A few railroad workers stayed there to find work on the big ranches. Later this was moved to the west and Mr. J.W. Shive received permission to open a post office. Mail was thrown from the train and picked up as it moved through Coahoma unless it was necessary for it to stop for passengers.

Mr. Echols had a trading post about a mile south of Coahoma. Up until the thirties that little building was still standing. Annie Phinney says that her grandfather bought supplies from Mr. Echols.

The first school was built about 1 1/2 miles northeast of the present campus in 1891. It is recorded that before there was a town, the area was surveyed and a tax base established. This was possibly the Spears school. The town seemed to grow up around the school.

In 1892, Burton Lingo & Co., purchased a section of land from C.W. Saviers for \$178. Saviers sold 80 acres to W.B. Williams. Williams in turn sold it to O.B. Hoover.

Hoover marked off some of this land in streets, blocks, and alleys and in 1904 held a picnic and people came from far and near to attend. After dinner on the ground, the lots were to be sold. Arguments broke out as to who should be able to buy which blocks, so they drew numbers for the lots out of a hat. Everyone who wanted a lot bought it that day!

Coahoma has seen some tough times—and has enjoyed an eventful history. And pride is still found in the good things we have in Coahoma today.

