

## COLONISTS

The first white settlers to the Coupland area were homesteaders from the southeast United States. They took up residence on land they got from colonist Stephen F. Austin. The Spanish government had granted Austin a huge area of central Texas land and royal permission to settle families in Texas to create a buffer zone between the Spanish settlements and the Indians. These colonists were given a square league (4,428 acres) of land per family at a price of  $12\frac{1}{2}\text{¢}$  per acre, an attractive deal compared to the public lands in the United States selling for one to two dollars per acre. During just a few years of this rapid march of history, the settlers

became citizens first of Spain, then of independent Mexico, then of independent Texas and finally back again as they had started as citizens of the United States.

From the time of the original Austin Grant, the land in the area was repeatedly subdivided and changed ownership frequently through the years. Jesse Barker settled on land just north of Brushy that he thought was his Austin grant. But, about 20 years later some surveyors came through the country and informed him that he had got his creeks mixed up and had actually settled on someone else's grant. By that time he had already established his roots here so he arranged to buy the land from its legal owner, and he and his offspring have remained in the area ever since. After the war for Independence some of the land was given by the Republic of Texas to soldiers as war bounty. Most of these soldiers in turn sold the land to speculators like Morgan C. Hamilton, who bought the land in the Coupland area. We will tell more about both Hamilton and Coupland later.