

RECONSTRUCTION

Meanwhile, back in Texas, Coupland's uncle, A. J. (Jack) Hamilton, with whom he had served in the Union Army, was appointed provisional Governor of the State of Texas. President Andrew Johnson made the appointment hoping that Hamilton would be able to

bring Texas back peacefully into the Union and heal the wounds in Texas society inflicted by the war. To fulfill that purpose Governor Hamilton declared a general, complete, and unconditional amnesty for Confederates and all other Texans whose offenses against the United States were in any way connected with the war.

The President's and the Governor's generous spirit of reconciliation was not shared though by many others in positions of political power. They wanted to punish the South and all who had served the cause of the Confederacy. In fact the Governor's own brother, Morgan C. Hamilton, was a member of this radical faction of the Republican party made up of a host of new arrivals from the North--such as Freedman's Bureau officials, army officers and the like. Citizens of Texas gave the whole group the descriptive title, "Carpetbaggers". Their main impact on Texas was repression, dissension and suppression of human rights. While they were in power they passed bills establishing a gestapo-like state militia; they gave windfall grants of millions of acres of land to the railroads; and they extended their own terms of office.

Though he was a leading figure in this reconstruction party, Morgan C. Hamilton finally began to express opposition to these policies. He was appointed the first U. S. Senator from Texas after the Civil War and from that vantage point in Washington he began to attack the police state tendency of his cohorts back home. They reacted to his criticism by declaring his election to the Senate invalid on a fabricated technicality. The man they sent to Washington to take his place was neither a Texas citizen nor a legal resident of the state, so the Senate Judiciary Committee refused to seat him ruling that Hamilton was entitled to finish out his term.

The part that Senator Hamilton played in the Story of Coupland was that he owned the land on which the village of Coupland would eventually be built. In fact, he had accumulated large blocks of land all along Brushy Creek from Shiloh to Rices Crossing and far north on the prairie. He had purchased this particular parcel on which Coupland stands in 1858 and 1859 as part of the Joseph Jordon and Jacob Sappington surveys. It is identified in the court records as the south bank of Brushy Creek, and it was also known as Brushy Farm and Battleground Pasture.

After serving his term in Congress, Senator Hamilton moved from Texas to New York where in 1883 he died. He left his estate, including this land, to the five children of his deceased sister, Karen Hamilton Coupland. One of her sons was Theodore Van Buren Coupland whose story, you will recall, we have already traced to New Orleans after the Civil War. His inheritance of land and cattle on Brushy Creek in Central Texas motivated Major Coupland to move back to Texas with his wife and one son, Frank Hamilton Coupland. He set up temporary

living quarters in a small frame house on the south bank of Brushy Creek

on land that is now owned by Ernest Rohlack--about a mile from Coupland.