

Choate, Gabriel
(Texas Ranger)

Gabriel Choate

Texas Rangers

Company C, Flournoy's 16th Texas Rangers

The reconstruction period after the Civil War brought from Llano County several families including that of Gabriel Choate, who settled on Wallace Creek in the South Central part of the County. As a Confederate soldier in that conflict he had witnessed the havoc of artillery engagements upon many Communities. Thus it was that with the assistance of his new son-in-law, James Sharp, a stone mason from Scotland, he built for his family home, rock walls two feet in thickness; a man reaching through the window would find one side of the wall against his armpit and the other side at the palm of his hand. The inside with typical living facilities was about 20 feet square and had an upper loft known as "the boys' room."

Gabriel had served three years in the War with Mexico as a member of Captain Gillett's Texas Mounted Volunteers and continued to serve on call from time to time with the Texas Rangers, somewhat as a "Minute Man" of the latter part of the 1880's. Probably from these experiences and rejoicing at the rescue of two small survivors on the Mose Jackson massacre that he further specified for his rock home windows high enough above the ground level and sufficiently narrow to prohibit unwanted entry.

The site for the family home was probably dictated by the availability of purchase money or the offer of the previous owner of the land. However, its remoteness probably proved to be a blessing for the family since having to cross Wallace Creek in seven places before reaching the main road no doubt limited the distraction of detrimental influences which may have otherwise passed through the area.

Gabriel was the eldest of ten children of Ephraim and Keziah (Dawson) Choate, who had come to Fannin County in the late 1840's. Gabriel was born August 14, 1826 in Tennessee and was married to Mary Rainbolt, daughter of William Rainbolt, who also had settled as neighbors to the Ephraim Choate family in Fannin County. Gabriel and Mary were married November 16, 1848 and moved to Williamson County, where the first children were born. The children of Gabriel and Mary Rainbolt were: Adeline, Dan, Jasper, George, Austin, John, Gabriel, Andrew Jackson, David, and Ephraim. Of these, it appears that only the youngest, Ephraim, was born in the rock home on Wallace Creek, being January 3, 1874.

The home served the family of Austin and Mary Elizabeth (Simmons) from 1889 until 1907, before the birth of the youngest, Noel, who was born after the family relocated to the McMillan community.

Gabriel was a beekeeper, an activity he maintained well into his advanced age. He would use rags and scraps of building material to house and service his hives; the present mail order availability of a myriad of devices and gadgetry was probably beyond his wildest imagination. Nevertheless, the honey probably was just as good. His children and even to some of his great grandchildren continued in this activity.

Mary died in Pontotoc in Mason County in 1915 and Gabriel later relocated to Llano County at Field Creek to be near his nieces, who cared for him in his last months. They recall his possessions were simple a carpenter's kit, rifle, and a few personal effects, that he continued to maintain his bees, and that he would spend much time walking with his hands clasped behind his back, stopping every few steps to

look around as he had done many years, before when hostilities were a part of living. His diet was simple, consisting mostly of corn. He was a religious man. His reactions to the military type activities in which he was engaged showed he took no delight in killing but rather delighted in protecting and preserving the innocent and giving God the credit for any success he might have had. He was a member of the Church of Christ and at his death on July 14, 1923 his funeral services were conducted by Reverend R. T. Howell of Field Creek.

Submitted by: Wm. W. Choate

Choate, Gabriel
(Texas Ranger)

**Texas Ranger Memorial
Service**



Honoring

**Hermann Rudolph Baumann
James Spears Bourland
Gabriel Choate
Benjamin Franklin Porter**

**April 24, 2004
2:00 pm**

**Choate, Gabriel
(Texas Ranger)**