

Ms. Bea Rost, resides in the area of La Grange. Her messages to the group are something I look forward to because she has such broad-brush knowledge. In request to my inquiry, Ms. Rost posted the following information:

“In 1867, the "Yellow Fever Scourge" befell the small town of La Grange - from August through November the epidemic ran its course and left 204 dead, nearly one fifth the population of the town. Many deaths went unreported; bodies rudely prepared for burial stood in piles within the cemetery fence. Mass burials took place, with six or seven bodies to a grave;” and,

“In the midst of corrupt political conditions, (following the Civil War),in the midst of the general destitution of the country when everything fell short of the least hope, other great calamities struck the people. In 1867 a yellow fever epidemic broke out in La Grange. The same was said to be brought here by a peddler. Another version is that the yellow fever germs were imported into Fayette County in a box of books that was sent from New Orleans to Markmann and Richers, then living near La Grange. These were the first ones to die in this epidemic. Fearful were the losses of life, some families were entirely destroyed; people who could fled from town and lived in tents in the country. Those prisoners who were at that time in the county jail were either removed or discharged. The Commissioners' or rather the Police court held no session from July 1867 to January 1868. The town looked like a grand funeral place; the empty houses stood as grand monuments of wrecked business and fortunes. The town was not cleaned of weeds, they emitted a fearful stench; infected bed cloths were scattered over town. Funerals were not conducted any more with decency; the supply of coffins in the town had given out, and corpses were placed for burial in hastily made, rough, wooden boxes. The names of the physicians who attended the people during their sickness were Drs. Blackmore, McGowell, and White. Nevertheless, the mail went regularly to and from La Grange during this time; it was carried by Charles Helmcamp.”

Posted by Les Walker in German Texan History at:

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