

Story from Qxbows and Calico by Twyla Wright:

P.V. Rhea and his young boys cleared land on the west bank of The Brazos at Rough Creek, and planted the approximately 250 acres in cotton, corn and a patch of tobacco. He also set up a forge and his blacksmith tools. Settlers came to him for metal work, and his reputation as a good "smith" spread.

Often the wilds called him and he went hunting beneath the huge oak, pecan, and cottonwood trees. About the time that the town square of Granbury was being laid out in 1866, it was reported that, "Squire P.V. Rhea was known to kill, hang to a post oak limb, and dress his deer on the public square.

After the Civil War P. V. could buy fat cows for \$7 a head, and sell yearlings for \$3. He enjoyed the buying and selling, and the visits with the men. No one needed to pressure him into joining the Action Masonic Lodge, No. 285. A few years later he became a Master Mason. With interest he had watched the laying up of a fine two story stone building by the Masons, which had walls almost two feet wide, near a trading post four miles east of what became the town of Granbury. Perhaps he was present on August 13, 1868 when the lodge laid the building's cornerstone.

The 1870 census listed P.V. as a farmer owning \$700 in real property and \$400 in personal property.

Mary Rhea was a hard worker and keep her log house clean and without luxuries. She and her girls washed their knuckles raw on rub boards, and baked in the summer sun as they planted and harvested in the fields. Patience was not one of her virtues, and she was a firm disciplinarian, trying to keep peace in her household of roudy "younglings."

On September 19, 1874 P.V. bought lot #1 in block 4 in The pioneer town of Granbury, purchasing all its improvements for \$300 in gold, cash in hand, from C. Lee Landers.

It was a choice lot, being the northeast corner of the town square (The Present corner of Bridge & Crockett Streets). He set up his shop there, and was known far and wide as the village blacksmith, A log house jail stood next the shop, toward the north.

Each day P.V. either walked or rode horseback from his farm two miles away. Indians still roamed the area beneath Comanche Peak, which was ancient sacred ground to the Comanche, and the meeting place of other tribes: Tonkawa, Creeks, and Cherokees. At times they stole horses or threatened lives.

One night on his way home from the shop, P. V. heard some rustling in the bushes. Checking into its source, he discovered a bunch of Indians huddled around a baby, trying to keep it warm on a cold night. P. V. talked with them, being friendly, and build them a fire. After that they never bothered him or any of his animals. ( This story reported from family sources by Sally Moss of Amarillo, Texas)

On March 7, 1877 P. V. sold to J. D. Foster 1/4 interest in his town lot, being 25 foot off its east end, for \$100. (DBK B. p513) He taught his son Tom his blacksmithing trade, and they shared the shop and one another's companionship. In 1885 they watched a new stone jail being erected where the log one had stood next to them.

In the early 1880's Mary waved good bye to another son as he headed farther west. Charley had always loved to hunt, and he had often brought home hog and bear meat. But he wanted to try his luck at ranching. So he got a job on the famous Goodnight Ranch in West Texas, staying there for six years. Each year he assisted in the Chisholm Trail drive north to Kansas City. Col. Goodnight commissioned him to enclose a pasture and stock it with buffalo calves in an effort to save them from extinction. Charlie started the herd with seven calves. (Later Goodnight cross-bred Angus cattle with the buffalo and called them "Catt aloes"). (Corpus Christi Caller-Times, April 9, 1951.

In the fall of 1885 P.V. sold two acres of his land to the Hood County judge, H.T. Berry, for \$10. It was for the public school purposes. (DBK 1 p500)

The Rhea children grew up and formed families of their own. When P.V. grew too old to "Smith" anymore, he turned his shop over to his blacksmith son, Tom. The old man often sat under the tree outside and enjoyed visiting passersby, It was a severe blow to him when Tom died in 1893.

By 1900 their grown son Owen, and his wife Mary and their four children, lived at home with P.V. and Mary. The grandchildren had to mind Mary or she would "box them around." A grandson described her as a "crusty old gal." Because she dipped snuff, the children weren't very ready to give her a kiss. In the later years, when she couldn't walk easily due to severely swollen legs, she kept a small quirt in the chair with her. If a child got near, she would tease it by giving a swat with the quirt and then laugh, never realizing how much it stung.

As Pleasant and Mary grew more feeble, they went to live with their son James and his family near Granbury, where they were well cared for.

Pleasant Vincent Uriah Jackson Harris Gen Rhea died at 10 A.M. on a bitterly cold January 22, 1901, just months before his 80th birthday. He was "laid out", and then his coffin was taken by wagon up the winding trail to the crest of a hill, where Rough Creek cemetery lay. Action Lodge of A.F. & A. Masons met that day in memory of him, and gave him the Masonic burial rites. A tall white marble tombstone with pointed top marked his grave, the Masonic symbol clearly carved into it.

Mary Rhea continued to live with Jim's family, but made visits to stay with her other children for periods of time, even traveling to west Texas. It was at Jim's house that she became critically ill. Dr. Lancaster came out to see her on March 6, 1910, and again on the 7th. At about 10:30 that night Mary's labored breathing stopped. She died of heart failure, with "indigestion" contributing to her death at the age of 83.

The next day she was buried, with undertaker W.S. Harris in attendance, in Rough Creek Cemetery. Her monument shape was almost identical to her husband's. Inscribed on hers, besides her name and dates:

"Rest Mother rest  
in quiet sleep  
while friends in  
sorry o'er Thee weep"

The craggy cemetery with the wild Texas wind sweeping thought juniper trees seemed a fitting resting place for two sturdy pioneers.

Word of the death was sent out the Mary's children who lived far away.

Notes from Hood County History, early section by T.T. Ewell. page 9, 93

P. V. Rhea, a yet living octogenarian specimen of the hardy frontiersman, endowed with robust constitution and doubly fortified by an active out door life, and the occupation which he followed: First attuned his hammer and anvil to the song of industry, west of the Brazos, a few miles below his present site, at the mouth of Rough Creek, about the same date. (1855) He has always been a sturdy, upright citizen: has reared a large family, one of his ones has long been an influential citizen of Stephens count: another, Tom Rhea, assuming the father's calling and profiting by his instructions and experience, became one of the best of blacksmiths and a most worthy citizen of Granbury, where he died a few years ago deeply lamented by family and neighbors.