

Tillman County Chronicles

Tillman County Historical Society Column

by Joe Wynn

October 27, 2009



Rev. Sheldon and his wife, foreground, are pictured at the Frederick Depot with congregation from the Frederick Methodist Church. Photo is undated.

Frisco Depot Dates to Frederick's Earliest Days

The Frisco Depot is the most historic building in Frederick.

The depot stands today at North 8th and Floral in the Pioneer Townsite, but it was the decision in 1902 by the Blackwell, Enid and Southwestern Railroad (The BES Line, later the Frisco) to locate the depot at its original site that established the town of Frederick.

After the area was opened to settle-

ment by land lottery in August 1901, two potential towns battled for the townsite – Gosnell and Hazel. Gosnell was a site that was promoted by Rev. S.M. Gosnell.

Hazel, located one half mile south of Grand Avenue, was developed and promoted by John Mounts.

The town that secured the railroad

Continued Next Page



Frederick Frisco Depot workers in 1903.

depot would be the town that survived.

Gosnell secured the depot and the town site's future by making a deal with Charles Hunter, manager of the BES Line's townsite company, giving him half the lots in the original town of Gosnell for the agreement to establish a depot here. The depot was built in 1902. The town's lots were platted on September 30, 1902, and on January 1, 1903, the town's name was officially changed from Gosnell to Frederick in honor of Frederick Van Blarcom, the son of a railroad official.

The depot was built in 1902 at 400 West Grand Avenue, just west of the railroad tracks. All buildings constructed in Frederick at that time were wood frame and the depot was no exception. Brick buildings would come later.

The Frederick depot was never an ornate or pretentious building, but was

Frederick's Frisco Depot

built for service and efficiency. Throughout Frederick's early decades it was a hive of activity, with trains, people, freight coming and going every day.

When President Theodore Roosevelt visited Frederick in April 1905, he disembarked from his private rail car at the depot.

Eventually, as train shipping became less important to Frederick and passenger service was discontinued, the old depot was closed and fell into disrepair.

In 1987, though, the Frederick Historical Society moved the depot two blocks from its original site to its current location at the Pioneer Townsite Museum. It was not an easy move. To transport the large building, it was cut into three sections and

Continued Next Page



Pioneer Townsite Director Jimmy Espinosa (kneeling) and unidentified worker put finishing touches on the depot reproduction, October 19, 2009.

carefully relocated, one section at a time. At its new location, the historic building was restored and brick that surrounded the building at its original location was also relocated to the current site.

Today, the historic 107-year-old building has a new life. At the museum, the building provides educational insight into early transportation in the area and a time when most people and freight came to Frederick by rail.

The Frisco Depot is one of the most popular attractions at the Pioneer Townsite.

For that reason, it is appropriate that the depot is the subject of the Tillman County Historical Society's 2009 Christmas reproduction building raffle. Museum Director Jimmy Espinosa and

inmates from the Frederick Work Release Center at Weaver began work on the project several months ago. The result is an amazing scale reproduction of the Frisco Depot's main section, complete with deep-set eaves and bay windows. Twenty feet in length, the reproduction building is a reduced-scale version of the original depot.

The Christmas reproduction building is always important fundraising project for the historical society, but this year it is more important than ever because funding is much-needed to offset state budget cuts for operation of the local museum.

The building will be given away in a drawing that will be held on KYBE's "Town and Country" on December 23. Raffle

Continued Next Page

Continued From Previous Page



The scale reproduction depot will be given away on December 23.

tickets are \$5 each and may be purchased at the following locations: Banc-First, Frederick and Chattanooga; First State Bank, Grandfield and Chattanooga; First National Bank, Frederick; Frederick ACE Hardware; Tillco Supply; Box, Inc.;

and Southwest Rural Electric Cooperative, Tipton.

Tickets may also be purchased at the Pioneer Townsite, the Frederick Chamber office, or from any historical society board member.