

BEDIAS, TEXAS

Bedias is at the intersection of State Highway 90 and Farm roads 1696 and 2620, twenty-nine miles northeast of Navasota in northeast Grimes County

The word Bedias (first spelled Bidai) means “brushwood” in the Caddo dialect. When white men came to this area in the early 1800’s, the native inhabitants were the Bedia tribe of Indians. They were of the Atakapan stock and spoke the Caddo dialect. They claimed all the land from Montgomery County to present Leon County, north and south, and east and west from the Trinity River to the Brazos River. They were a peaceable tribe – the men farmed and hunted, the women made baskets and did bead work. They would sell or trade their wares as far away as Nacogdoches. They were more intelligent than the average Indian.

On land given to Charles Harrison by the state of Texas after the Civil War, which is now Mr. Fox Dowden’s land was excavated a large piece of sandstone about one foot by three feet and about three inches thick. It had straight lines on the surface from one corner to the other and across to either side. This stone was evaluated at A&M University. Their theory was that it was a Signal Rock. It would be placed on a small mound and when a hunting party came by they would break a limb from a tree with green leaves, stick the limb into one of the holes, and hunt only in this direction. As the leaves wilted, they would know how long since this place had been hunted, thus never over-hunting or taking a chance of shooting someone.

In 1776, a Spanish priest – DeMizieres – wrote that a number of these people died from drinking poisoned water. According to the census of 1860, only six Indians were listed as living in this area in Grimes County. Jesse Grimes (for whom this county was named) was a friend to these Indians and often sat in council with their chiefs. In 1835, Pliny Plaster settled in this community. He cleared land for a plantation about five miles west of the present town of Bedias. This settlement later became Pankey. Isaac and Henry Midkiff, I. Sims, John Corner (sometimes spelled Conner), and James Pankey were other early settlers. Pankey was a thriving community and other towns sprang up near Bedias such as Cotton, Red Top, Phlox, and Macedonia. Macedonia had an ex-slave for a mail carrier. P. H. Wilkinson was Bedias’ first postmaster, starting on Sept. 24, 1867. He served two years without pay, and then the Post Office Department set a salary at \$10.00 a year. Wilkinson was in the big money then, holding a government job.

In 1890, the White Man’s Union sprang up. Then came the Regulators and Moderators. Things got pretty rough around old Bedias. When walking on the streets, the Regulators would walk on one side and the Moderators would walk on the other. Almost every man wore a gun on his hip or had a rifle or shotgun in his wagon.

In 1903, the I & GN Railroad came through Bedias. This gave the old town a new shot in the arm. Near-by communities started to move to Bedias, things started to boom, and the town was growing fast. But, in 1904, the railroad officials decided to change the name from Bedias to Trice, the name of one of

the railroad officials. This is where all Hades broke loose. They had already taken down the name, "Bedias," and put up "Trice, Texas," on the depot. A special train was to come in bringing all the railroad officials to make the dedication. By this time, everyone in Bedias was hot in the collar, so they armed themselves with pitchforks, guns and clubs and met the train. So, the train was mounted by members of the mob and one of the officials was taken off. He was given a ladder and hammer and advised to go up, take down his sign, and put the sign "Bedias" back where it belonged.

By 1907, Bedias had tripled in population and had five general merchandise stores, two banks, two hotels, two blacksmith shops, two gins, and a number of other businesses. But in 1912, four stores were destroyed by fire. Then in 1914, another store burned, and in 1924, three more burned, and in 1927, the whole business section burned to the ground. They came back and rebuilt, but it never came back to its pre-fire size. Most of the young people left to seek jobs in the large cities.

Bedias has started to grow again. They have about 22 brick homes that have been built in recent years. A new modern post office, a nice bank, and several more places of businesses have been built. Now oil has been discovered in Bedias, and there are great hopes for a full recovery. There is also a very nice Civic Club. The people of Bedias are proud of their heritage.