



William. Braxton Barr.



Just 18 years old when the family first settled there, W.B. Barr is seen in this later portrait as a confident and prosperous businessman.

[PICB 00366] [enlarge image](#)



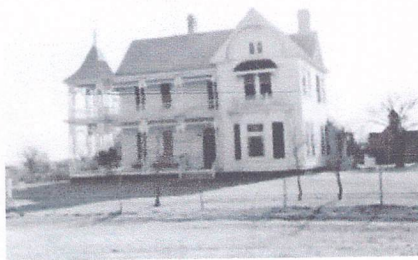
The area's economy was dependent primarily upon the cotton industry. W.B. Barr established several businesses to serve area farmers, including a blacksmith and wheelwright shop, a cotton gin, a com mill, and a general merchandise store. In this 1893 exterior view of the store, Barr is seen in a bowler hat standing to the right of the barn door next to his white-bearded grandfather, Captain Sprinkle.

[PICA 03646] [enlarge image](#)



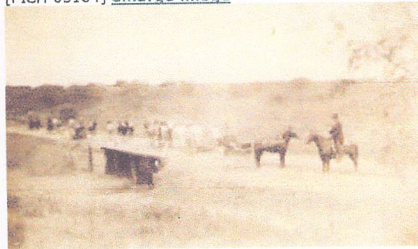
The store was a two-story structure with men's clothes located upstairs and dry goods and groceries downstairs. The Post Office was located in the back of the store until 1928. The receipt of a federal permit for the Post Office in 1885 is what gave the community of Sprinkle its official name. In this interior view of the store, Barr is seen on the far right.

[PICA 03645] [enlarge image](#)



W.B. Barr married Matilda Birdwell and built near the store this elegant Victorian house for his family in 1898. The family also owned 13 rental houses and either sold or leased property to other settlers. One of Barr's cousins, for example, opened a small merchandise store and dairy. The town also had a frame school building for a time that boasted of a fifty-dollar book library and doubled as a church, since the Sprinkles and Barrs were firmly religious. By 1900, one hundred families received their mail at the Sprinkle Post Office.

[PICH 03184] [enlarge image](#)



Ginned cotton from Sprinkle had to be hauled to Austin cotton yards on dirt roads made difficult by unpredictable weather and several creeks, so Barr worked for many years to get a rail line through Sprinkle. He donated land to the state for a depot and watched the work begin, but died at the age of 38--just nine months before the MKT railroad arrived in September 1903. Four trains per day passed through town and could be stopped to pick up cotton from its one-eighth mile long loading platform.

[PICA 03642] [enlarge image](#)

[previous](#)

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Austin History Center

The History of Sprinkle, Texas

Lulu Peal

12th grade

Stephen F. Austin High School

Entered in the 1962 Local Historical Essay Contest

Accompanied by five photographs, enclosed and identified.

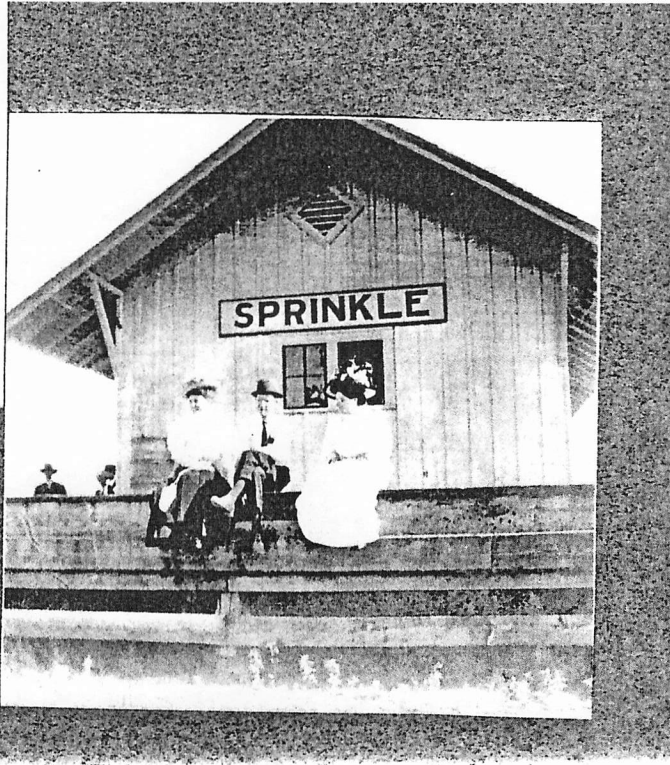
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TRAVIS COUNTY

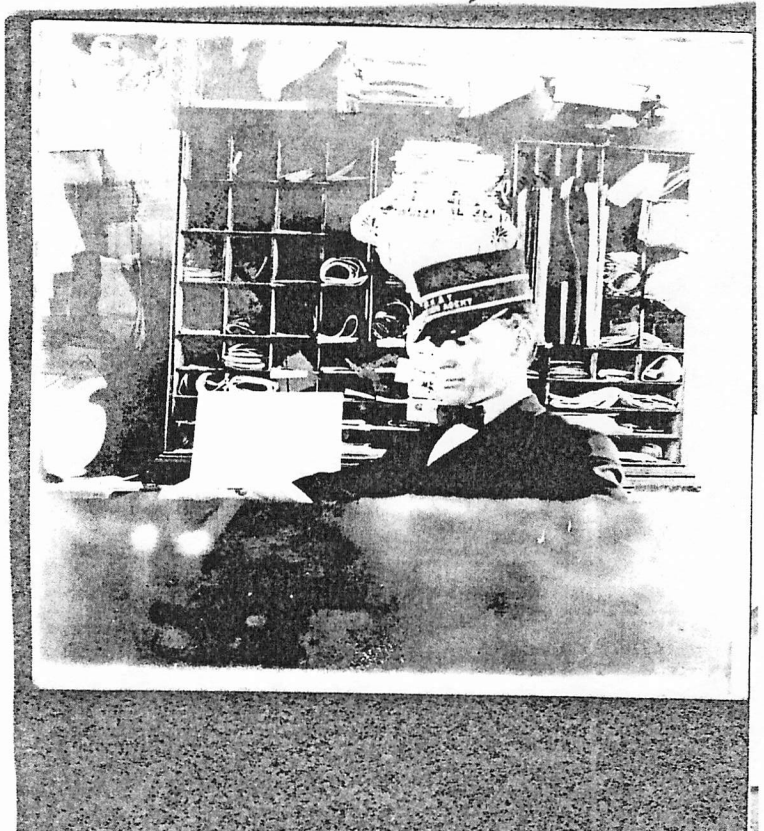
Peal, Lulu.

The History of Sprinkle, Texas.



SPRINKLE TRAIN
STATION DEPOT

429



428 MKT TOWN AGENT
SPRINKLE

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The History of Sprinkle, Texas

- I. Captain Sprinkle and his family move to Texas.
- II. The area that is to become Sprinkle, Texas, is settled and developed.
 - A. The township charter is approved by Washington, and Sprinkle and Barr develop the framework of the town.
 - B. Other settlers help establish Sprinkle
 - C. W. B. Barr sought to acquire a railroad through Sprinkle.
 1. W. B. Barr dies.
 2. The railroad was completed in 1903.
 - D. The yearly events were the "Possum Hunt" and religious revivals.
- III. The decline of Sprinkle started with the departure of the Barr Family.
 - A. Some of the town people evacuate.
 - B. The war and depression set back the remaining economy.
- IV. The Jamison family now occupies the Barr House
- V. Sprinkle is no longer a town.

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THE HISTORY OF SPRINKLE TEXAS

Sprinkle, a fascinating rural area three miles north of Austin at the intersection of Cameron Road and Sprinkle Road, was founded in 1881 by Captain Sprinkle. Captain Sprinkle, who owned and managed a harness and saddle shop in Rochelle, Virginia, migrated to Texas after hearing optimistic tales of Texas's wealth from one of his nephews, a cattle drover. Accompanying him on his journey were his daughter Cremora Sprinkle and four grandchildren, one of whom was William Braxton Barr, the benefactor of Sprinkle, Texas.

Sprinkle and his party settled in the locale which would soon become Sprinkle, Texas, after pausing for a time in Hornsby Bend, Texas. Shortly after their arrival W. B. Barr, Sprinkle's eighteen-year old grandson, purchased 223 acres from two established farmers, Mr. Jarmon and Mr. Weaver.* By the time these transactions took place, Captain Sprinkle had relinquished most of his business affairs to his ambitious grandson, William Braxton Barr, as he was past middle-age. After completing these transactions, W. B. Barr wrote Washington, D. C., seeking a township grant for the area and requesting permission to name the town Sprinkle, in honor of his grandfather, Captain Erasmus Frederick Sprinkle. While awaiting

* Mrs. F. A. Jamison, interview, Nov. 30. 1962

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a reply from Washington, he proceeded to establish an attractive estate by building an expansive mansion and cultivating 190 acres of his 223 acre farm.

After Barr's request for a grant was approved by Washington, Captain Sprinkle and his grandson established the framework of Sprinkle, Texas, which included a general merchandise store, a black smith shop, a cotton gin, and other buildings associated with Barr's cotton production.

Other settlers around the Sprinkle area began establishing businesses, including a small merchandise store and a dairy (owned by W. B. Barr's cousin). The Sprinkle Post Office was authorized by Washington at W. B. Barr's request. Burditt School, one and one-half miles outside of Sprinkle, and a Christian church were established about this time.

During this expansion period, 1882-1914, Barr was married to Matilda Birdwell, and they had three children, two boys and a girl. As the town prospered and Barr's cotton business grew, a need for an easier method of transporting goods arose. William B. Barr was particularly interested in the acquisition of a railroad for Sprinkle, as it would facilitate more convenient trade with large industrial centers such as St. Louis and Chicago. In order to obtain the railroad for Sprinkle, Barr donated to the Railroad Commission the land necessary for the depot.

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However, Barr did not live to see the establishment of the railroad, as he died on December 31, 1902, of pneumonia. In the short span of only 20 years, Barr had built Sprinkle from a single farm to a town of several hundred. This accomplishment was mainly attributed to his ambition for success and his willingness to work for this success. His death was a great loss to the community, and hundreds of friends mourned his passing. Even today their fitting epitath to him may be read on his tombstone:

"His words were kindness, his deeds were love his spirit humble. He rest above." *

In September 1903, nine months after Barr's death, the railroad through Sprinkle was completed, and soon a telegraph office was established in the depot. The railroad, a branch of the Missouri-Kansas- Texas line, was a great asset to the community, as it provided convenient transportation to Austin and other metropolitan areas.

The main yearly event in Sprinkle was the "Possum Hunt," held in the fall on Walnut Creek. This hunt attracted several hundred people and was eagerly awaited every year. Also, several religious revivals were held throughout the year.

After the death of Captain Sprinkle in 1906, the Barr family leased its various interests in and around Sprinkle and moved to Austin. Soon the family became dissmembered, drifting to different parts of the country.

*Sprinkle-Gregg Cemetery.

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With the departure of the family, the town people began to evacuate to metropolitan areas, including Austin, in search of better opportunities. Several years later Mrs. W. B. Barr returned to Sprinkle. Finding operation of the merchandise store too costly, she had it destroyed. During the following years Sprinkle continued to decline.

With the coming of the First World War, Sprinkle's remaining economy suffered a set back due to a sudden drop in the price of cotton, which was the main crop of the area. Then the depression which followed further abetted the decline of Sprinkle and saw the destruction of both the cotton gin and the barn by fire in 1936. Mrs. W. B. Barr died in 1951.

Shortly after Mrs. Barr's death, Mr. and Mrs. F. A. Jamison and their family came to Sprinkle to occupy the house. Mrs. F. A. Jamison, the daughter of Mrs. W. B. Barr, lives in the Barr House today with her daughter and grandchildren.

Sprinkle is no longer a town but a precinct. Voting is held annually in the Barr House. Today occupants in the area find Sprinkle, "merely a wide space in the road".

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4. Mrs. Marvin Kreuger, Dessau Rd., Nov. 18, 1962
5. Mr. W. B. Rogers, 5507 Delwood Drive, Austin, Texas, Nov.5, 1962