

Taylor-- Cattle and Railroading History

Does a plot of land for only \$20 to \$350 sound enticing? This is exactly what the Texas Land Company was hoping for when they laid out the plots, city streets, parks, and town square for Taylorsville in anticipation of the railroad coming to present day Taylor, TX. Once open cattle country, now booming with industries in addition to cattle, the Taylor area is known for the opportunities that were brought to the town by the railroad.

The rolling seas of Texas grasses provided ideal real estate for raising large herds of cattle. The only problem was that the markets to sell cattle were located in the densely populated north. During the 1800's, numerous cattle trails were developed, such as the Chisholm and Great Western Cattle Trails, to move great herds of cattle in Texas north where they could be sold for large sums of money. From 1866 to 1886, over 20 million head of cattle were driven to railroad stations in Kansas to be shipped and then sold to stockyards in Chicago and other cities in the north.

In late June of 1876 the International and Great Northern Railroad reached the small Taylorville Station located in the heart of the open ranges of Cattle Country. The Taylorville train station was strategically located near these cattle trails, and within only two months of opening, over 146 cars of cattle had already been shipped. The location in the heart of Cattle Country made the Taylorville Station an important hub for ranchers to swiftly ship their cattle north. With the railroad came a vast array of people searching for the opportunities that could be found in this open range.

Farmers came to Taylorsville to take advantage of the cheap land that was ideal for growing cotton, which brought added industry to the developing region and helped the town to grow. With the town's early growth came violence, and for a period of time the settlement was known as a 'bloody place' of shoot-outs and lawlessness. Over time the growing population and town development alleviated these issues.

The addition of more railroads soon created a full connection to the east and west right in the heart of Taylorsville, and with the railroads far reach came people from a wide range of backgrounds. To accommodate the diverse populace there were both German and Czech daily papers and 34 local churches that represented 15 denominations. Just 12 years after the railroad came to the Taylorsville Station the settlement was incorporated and officially became the City of Taylor.

The formerly open Cattle Country is now filled with a variety of industries that have enabled the City of Taylor to become a diverse manufacturing and agriculturally based community. Though the town is often considered to be part of Austin's growing urban sprawl, it still retains its rural background and preserves its unique cultural identity.

Source(s):

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