



Even before Texas became part of the United States, some of its citizens celebrated the Fourth of July. In her reminiscences of life in 1830s Texas, Mrs. Dilue Rose Harris remembers the celebration of July 4, 1834.

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*"The Fourth of July was a fine day. The barbecue was near Mr. Dyer's house, and the quilting and ball were at the house. The ladies spent the day in conversation and work, the young people dancing in the yard, the children playing under the trees, and the men talking politics. There was no political speaking, as the Mexicans were present. The politicians and lawyers from San Felipe and Harrisburg were there, but they had little to say. The people were very anxious about Stephen F. Austin, as he was in Mexico, a prisoner. Three of the Mexicans ate dinner and were very sociable. One of them danced a Virginia reel, but the others could not dance anything but waltzes, and our young ladies did not waltz.*

*Well, it was a grand affair for the times. The young people thought it magnificent. The music was two fiddles, played turn about by three negro men. One negro man got an iron pin and clevis, used at the end of a cart tongue or plough beam, and beat time with the fiddles. Another man beat a tin pan. Well, the young people danced to that music from three o'clock in the evening till next morning.*

*Mother went home with her family before day. Everybody else stayed all night. We ate barbecued meat, all sorts of vegetables, coffee, fowls, potatoes, honey and corn bread, but no cakes, as there was no flour in the country. The whiskey gave out early in the evening, and there was no fuss or quarreling. Everybody went home in a good humor, none more so than the negro musicians, as they were paid for playing the fiddles and beating the clevis and tin pan.*

*This was the second time we attended a Fourth of July celebration in Texas. The first time was in Harrisburg. I remembered the Fourth of July celebrations in St. Louis. I had seen the militia parade, drums beating, flags flying, cannon firing, but the glory was not to be compared with that of the Fourth of July in the year 1834, near Stafford's Point on the Brazos, about fifteen miles from Harrisburg.*

Source: Dilue Harris, "The Reminiscences of Mrs. Dilue Harris I," *The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association* Vol. 4, No. 2 (Oct., 1990), pp. 110 - 111.