

REAST FARM

Six miles north of Whitesboro on State Hwy. 377.

DATES OF OWNERSHIP	NAMES		
1871-1911	Francis Reast	1954-1975	Howard O. and Etta Mae Reast
1911-1951	James W. and Alma G. Reast	1975-1987	Mozelle Reast Cluster Bell
1951-1954	Mozella Reast Cluster	1975-1996	Jimmy and Willene Reast Weir J. E. and Alma Reast Moore

FRANCIS REAST was born in Lincolnshire, England on June 21, 1829. After an elementary education, he was apprenticed to a tailor. Not wishing to follow this line of work, he came to America about 1850. After working in New York City for a time, he came to Texas for economic possibilities. Along with his extensive ranch lands on the Rio Grande River, he also owned and operated a general store. His store was raided by Mexican bandits under the leadership of Juan Cortinas, who took provisions and cattle. Fortunately, Francis was in England settling his mother's estate and was not harmed. During the War Between the States, he engaged in exporting Texas cotton through Mexican ports for sale abroad. After the war, the Reast family left the lower Rio Grande Valley, feeling that the area was dangerous. In 1869, the family moved in wagons, carts and a buggy to North Texas. A small infant died and was buried en route. On September 4, 1871, Francis paid \$8,600 to Mr. and Mrs. W.D. Ligon for a 189-acre tract of land. Later, larger holdings were purchased six miles north of Whitesboro and this became the family's permanent home. A large, frame two story home was constructed with lumber freighted from Jefferson, Marion County, in East Texas. Francis was instrumental in helping charter the city of Whitesboro in the 1870s. He also helped to secure the post office for Sandusky. He and his wife hired a

private teacher to hold school in their home so that the children of the family and the various tenant families on the farm could receive an elementary education. Francis and his wife, Mary Ann Primm, had six children - Alpha Cecilia, Francis William, James Wilberforce, Herbert Colfax, Laura Hester and Sidney Thorne. All but Alpha Cecilia and Sidney remained in the Whitesboro area. Francis died in 1914 and is buried in the Whitesboro Cemetery. Mary Ann died in 1921.

James Wilberforce and his wife, Alma, acquired 141.54 acres of the family land in 1903. They raised oats, corn, cotton, cows, horses, hogs, chickens and turkeys. The Great Depression meant that they had to increase truck farming and orchards in order to produce everything they ate. During World War I, two sons served in the armed forces. Farm machinery was mechanized, and the automobile, electricity and the radio became available to the family. They supported fundraisers for the local church and school. These activities were called Pie Suppers or Box Suppers. They also allowed the State of Texas to survey out 7.527 acres of the heritage acreage and 12 additional acres out of other adjacent land to build FM 901, which was later became State Highway 377. Alma and James had three sons, Frank, Sam and Howard Oscar, and a daughter, Berniece.

The next owner of the land was Mozelle Reast Cluster, granddaughter

of the previous owner. She and her husband, A.B. Cluster raised oats, corn, cotton and cows. She acquired a television but not for entertainment, it was for weather and farm reports. Mozelle was born and reared on the farm. She taught school in several communities in the area. After retirement, she moved to Sherman where she was a volunteer at the Wilson N. Jones Hospital. The deed next passed to Howard O. and Etta Mae Reast, parents of Mozelle. They also raised corn, cotton and cows, but added wheat, hogs, sheep, horses, mules, chicken and turkeys. Oil was discovered on the Reast Farm, allowing money for farm improvements, drilling of water wells and new farm equipment. State Highway 377 was built and the new highway divided the farm, which meant that new fences had to be built and more attention was given to soil conservation because of added drainage problems. The original home of Francis Reast burned and Howard and Etta Mae built a new house near the original home site. Etta served for many years as church pianist and song director. Howard and Etta Mae had five children - Howard Kenneth, James L., Mary Mozelle, Martha Willene and Alma. Howard O. died in 1973, leaving his estate, which included the heritage acreage to his widow. Etta Mea continued to live on the farm. Alma Reast and her husband J.E. Moore actively farmed and managed the acreage for her. In 1975,

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Etta Mae deeded the farm to her three daughters. In 1980 and 1987, Mozelle Reast Cluster Bell transferred her part of the heritage acreage to Alma and J.E.

J.E. and Alma built a large storage barn on the farm, which includes a shop for large farm equipment repairs. J.E.'s expertise in tractor repair provides

local service for area farmers. He was selected as outstanding conservationist in Zone V for 1995. J.E. actively farms the acreage, which he and Alma own and also farms the acreage owned by Willene Reast Weir. J.E. and Alma live in Sherman, but have a mobile home on the farm for use during the busy harvest season.

ACRES IN ORIGINAL PARCEL: 189
ACRES HELD TODAY: 141.54

Crops or livestock raised: 1871 - Corn, cotton, oats, horses and cows; 1996 - Peanuts, soybeans and improved Coastal Bermuda grass.