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ERATH, GEORGE BERNHARD -- Born January 1, 1813 in Vienna, Austria, now Germany. On July 25, 1835 he received title to one-fourth of a league of land in Robertson's Colony, situated in the present County of Burleson. In Headright Certificate No. 24 issued to him in 1838 for one-twelfth of a league of land by the Board of Land Commissioners for Milam County it is stated that he came to Texas in 1833.

The following facts concerning the early life of Major Erath were extracted from his memoirs published in the Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Vol. 26: "My father was German, from the Black Forrest district in Wurtemberg; my mother was of Greek origin, though a native of Vienna, which is a conglomerate of many races. My father's people had been tanners for generations; a kind of class system prevailed there - the sons being brought up to the vocation of their father. I do not know how long my own family had been tanners, but my father's brother carried on the ancestral business in their native place of Rottenburg on the Neckar River, an ancient town of perhaps five thousand inhabitants, twenty miles from Stuttgart and seventy-five miles from Strassburg. My father having gone to Vienna, there owned his own tan-yard. He may or may not have intended me for a tanner; he took particular pains with my education, beginning it with private tutors in the home before I was six years old. At six I was sent to school, and at nine I entered Santa Anna College, where I gained a little knowledge of Latin preparatory to entering a university. I studied diligently all foreign languages particularly English and

and Spanish, as I thought they would be of service to me in the new country of America, toward which even that early my thoughts were turned."

Mr. Erath was sent to Polytechnic Institute at the age of twelve and had been there about two years when his father died. He then returned home to work and help take care of his mother and the younger children. At the age of nineteen he left For America, arriving at New Orleans June 22, 1832. After touring several states he settled in Cincinnati where he found employment in a tan yard. He remained there but a short time, however, moving to Florence, Alabama where he was again employed in a tan yard. On March 23, 1833 he left for Texas, sailing down the Tennessee and Mississippi to New Orleans. There he boarded the Sabine, commanded by Captain Brown, He arrived at Brazoria April 30, 1833. On board the boat he made the acquaintance of Alexander Somervell and David Ayers. After remaining in Brazoria for a short time he went to Velasco where he worked as a salt maker. In August, 1834 he went to Tenoxtitlan, the site of which is now in Burleson County, where he was engaged by Alexander Thomson, a surveyor, as a chain carrier. After a short time Mr. Erath, himself, became a surveyor. While living at Tenoxtitlan he surveyed the one-fourth of a league in what is now Burleson County, granted him July 25, 1835.

In 1835 Mr. Erath joined about one hundred volunteers under Colonel John H. Moore of La Grange on an expedition against Indians on the upper Colorado and Trinity Rivers. At Gonzales March 1, 1836, he joined the army and was assigned to Captain Jesse Billingsley's

Company. On December 10, 1839 he received Donation Certificate No. 973 for 640 acres of land for having participated in the battle of San Jacinto. He was issued Bounty Certificate No. 3259 for 320 acres of land, May 8, 1838 for having served in the army from March to June 1, 1836. On June 20, 1838 he received Bounty Certificate No. 1980 for 1280 acres for his services from October 3, 1836 to October 3, 1837. After receiving his discharge Mr. Erath enlisted in Captain Sterling C. Robertson's Company, and in July was transferred to Captain W. W. Hill's Company which operated between the Brazos and Colorado. On October 1 he enrolled as a lieutenant in Captain Thomas H. Barron's company in a corps of rangers under Colonel Robert M. Coleman and was stationed at Viesca at the falls of the Brazos in what is now Falls County. In the early part of November, 1836 Lieutenant Erath was placed in command of twenty men and two sergeants, Lee R. Savis and William McLaughlin, from Captain Barron's Company, and sent to establish a fort on Little River, about a mile from what is known as the "Three Forks", near the banks of the Leon. "Colonel Coleman with a few men went with us", wrote Mr. Erath, "to the point designated, and after we had traveled, marked, cut out, and measured a road from the Falls to the spot, he left me, continuing on measuring a road to his fort on Walnut Creek about six miles east of where Austin now stands, and six or eight miles above Hornsby's---." On January 5, 1837 Mr. Erath left the fort with thirteen men in pursuit of what he had been informed were ten or twelve Indians, but were in fact about one hundred. At day break of the 6th a battle was fought on Elm Creek

about eight miles from where Cameron now stands. The Texans were compelled to retreat after two of their men, David Clark and Frank Childers, had been mortally wounded.

In February, 1839 President Lamar issued an order for every county in the republic to raise a company of troops. On March 8th the Milam County Company was organized with Mr. Erath being elected Captain. On March 8, 1841 at the organization of another company in Milam County he was again elected captain. In the summer of 1841 the Milam, Robertson and part of the Travis County Companies went on an expedition up the Brazos against Indians. In an encounter the celebrated Chief Jose Maria was wounded and one of his men was killed.

Captain Erath enlisted as a private in Captain John G. W. Pierson's Company for the Somervell Expedition in 1842 and later joined the Mier Expedition. He had the misfortune, or good fortune, to stick a prickly pear thorn in one of his knees that caused him pain when he walked. As a result he was left at camp on the Texas side of the Rio Grande and thus escaped capture and possibly death. In 1843 he was elected a member of the senate of the eighth congress of the Republic, and was re-elected to the ninth congress. He was a member of the house of Representatives of the first legislature, which convened in Austin February 16, 1846.

After returning home from the legislature in May, 1846 Captain Erath laid off the town of Cameron for James Howlett who had the contract to survey it. In 1840 he had surveyed the town of Caldwell. At about this time he formed a partnership with George Green, a San

Jacinto veteran, and they became deputy surveyors for the Milam County Land District. In March, 1849 Captain Erath began laying out the town of Waco for Jacob De Cordova, who owned one-third of the land. John McLennan, sheriff of Milam County, assisted Captain Erath in the surveying. Waco was at that time in Milam County. In 1854 Captain Erath and Neil McLennan Jr. surveyed the town of Meridian. Captain Erath and John M. Stephens surveyed the town of Stephenville, Erath County, completing their work July 4, 1855.

In 1861 Captain Erath was again elected a member of the state senate. Altho feeble in health he resigned his seat to enter the Confederate army. He raised a company of infantry which became a part of the Fifteenth Texas Regiment, commanded by Colonel J. W. Speight. His health growing worse he was compelled to resign. In January, 1864, however, the Governor appointed him major of a battalion of one of three groups of minute men raised to protect the frontier counties, Major Erath's headquarters being established at Gatesville. In 1873 he was again elected to the senate of the State Legislature.

On December 28, 1845 Major Erath was married to Lucinda Chalmers daughter of John Chalmers. Major Erath died May 13, 1891, while a member of the Texas Veterans Association. Mrs. Erath died October 8, 1819. Both are buried in marked graves in Oakwood Cemetery, Waco. Erath County was named in honor of Major George B. Erath.

Children of Major and Mrs. Erath were (1) Edwin Porter, (2) Walter, (3) May (4) Lucy and (5) Lelia Erath.

(1) Edwin Porter Erath died at the age of eighteen in Louisiana while serving in the Confederate army.

(2) Walter M. Erath was married to Mary F. Parks, daughter of Philix and Margaret (Hogue) Parks. Their children were (a) Margaret, (b) Lucy, (c) George B., (d) Foster and Bessie Erath.

(3) May Erath was married to John D. Kendrick.

(4) Miss Lucy Erath and (5) Miss Lelia Erath reside at 1304 North Thirteenth Street, Waco.