Volume 50 November 2014

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The Texas Gulf Historical and Biographical Record

The Journal of the
Texas Gulf Historical Society
and
Lamar University History Department
50th Anniversary Edition

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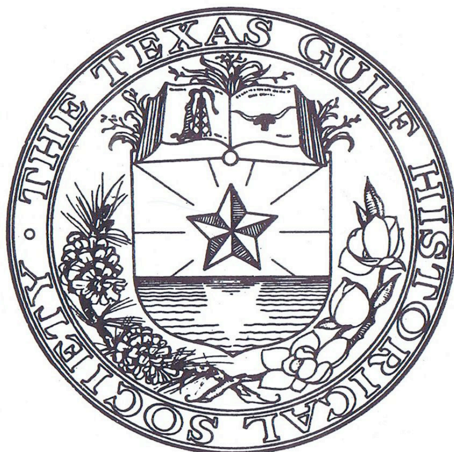

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THE JOURNAL OF
THE TEXAS GULF HISTORICAL SOCIETY
AND
THE LAMAR UNIVERSITY HISTORY DEPARTMENT

// Texas Gulf Historical and Biographical Record

A JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE HISTORY OF SOUTHEAST TEXAS AND THE GULF COAST

VOLUME 50

November 2014

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The Texas Gulf Historical and Biographical Record

Volume 50 November 2014

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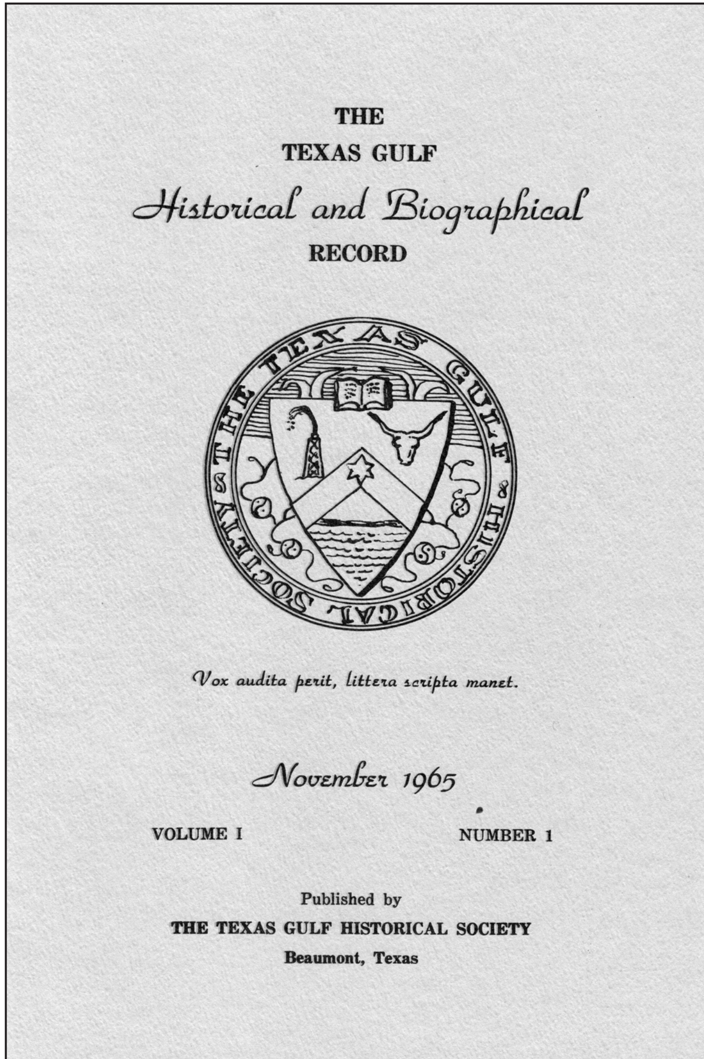

THE

TEXAS GULF

Historical and Biographical

RECORD

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November 1965

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Published by

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Beaumont, Texas

The first issue of *The Texas Gulf Historical and Biographical Record*, November 1965.
Courtesy of the Texas Gulf Historical Society, Beaumont, TX.

Editor's Note

Jimmy L. Bryan Jr.

Welcome to the 50th anniversary volume of the *Texas Gulf Historical and Biographical Record*. In November 1965, the Texas Gulf Historical Society published the inaugural issue of its journal with articles by Dr. Ralph Wooster, Edward Clark, and Marvin Ashmore. The Society and the Lamar University History Department wish to celebrate this occasion with a special expanded edition, bringing together 18 articles that showcase the quality and diversity of scholarship published in the *Record*.

Robert Robertson and Judith Linsley joined with me to select the work that best represents the tradition of historical inquiry established by the past contributors to, and editors of, the journal. The authors include national recognized scholars, emerging professionals, students, and veteran local historians whose works provide the foundation for regional journals like the *Record*. They write about the social, industrial, economic, ethnic, and military history of Southeast Texas and the Gulf Coast, covering major periods from the Texas Revolution to the late Civil Rights Era. In making these selections, however, we inevitably left out many examples of first-rate scholarship, and we invite our readers to consult Dr. Wooster's essays that accompany the two general indices published by the Society, covering the *Record* through volume 46 (2010).

Appropriately, volume 50 opens with an article by Judith Linsley and Ellen Rienstra. Anyone familiar with the history of Southeast Texas is familiar with their prolific body of work. Here, in keeping with the *Record*'s strength on biography, they examine the life of Henry Millard, early settler of Beaumont, veteran of the Texas Revolution, and Republic of Texas official. In the second essay, Patricia Clegg provides a synthesis of the scholarship that examines the role of

free blacks in early Texas. Her article exemplifies the strong tradition of African American studies in the *Record*, as substantiated by the selections in this issue.

Dr. Wooster's essay originally appeared in the first volume of the *Record*. He provides an overview of the military and social history of the war along the Gulf Coast. In an article that later appeared in his book, *Grass-Roots Reconstruction in Texas, 1865-1880* (1998), Dr. Randolph Campbell argues that, contrary to popular belief, "Reconstruction did not revolutionize Jefferson County" and that the few benefits that freed people enjoyed after the Civil War lasted only for a generation.

With her work on recruiting Italians to Louisiana and Texas, Cassandre Durso leads a group of articles that illustrate how well the *Record* has covered the Gilded Age, an era of industrialization, immigration, and ethnic transitions. Durso shows how the Italian experience in the agrarian South differed from the more familiar studies of the industrial North. The late W. T. Block, "the dean of Southeast Texas history," charted the evolution of the rice industry, which would become a significant component of the region's economy. In an exhaustively researched essay, Jonathan K. Gerland demonstrates how lumber companies had industrialized Beaumont before the 1901 oil discovery at Spindletop.

In addition to representing the history MA program at Lamar University, Thomas Reid, Terry Rioux, and Dr. Amilcar Shabazz tackle social issues in their research. Mr. Reid examines the trial and execution of Archie Washington in Orange, Texas, while Ms. Rioux explains how religious and social concerns informed George W. Carroll's business and political career. Dr. Shabazz, currently a professor in the W. E. B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, documents the long struggle of Beaumont's black community for equality in public education.

Moving into the twentieth century, Dr. Steven A. Reich explores the world of Southeast Texas sawmill towns and finds that the divisions between black and white workers were not as stark as scholars have previously argued. Fred McKinley charts the history of the Yount-Lee Oil Company, the firm responsible for ushering in the second oil boom in Beaumont. Remembered as "Second Spindletop," the prosperity that the strike created and the influence of the company indelibly shaped the city and the history of the oil and gas industry. Dr. John Storey, longtime chair of the history department at Lamar University, demonstrates how congregational discord led to the creation of Central Baptist Church in Port Arthur, while Ara Ryherd Roden reveals the story of the construction of Beaumont's iconic Jefferson Theatre.

Dr. Paul Isaac, a long-serving member of the Lamar history department and who passed away in 2014, surveyed the news coverage of Beaumont during the Great Depression. Although the region did not suffer as much as other sections of the country, he found that local programs could not solve the problems created by the worldwide crisis. Charlotte Holliman documents how Beaumont women responded to national calls to work in war industry during World War II. At the Pennsylvania Shipyard and other facilities, they performed traditionally male jobs and contributed to the U.S. war effort. Dr. John Tisdale examines the 1950 Texaco strike in Port Arthur. In contrast to typical issues of labor versus management, he explores how participants and local observers expressed community and personal concerns about labor strife, and establishes how the *Port Arthur News* served as both forum and mediator.

In closing the anthology, Robert Robertson reveals the under-appreciated role that Congressman Jack Brooks played in the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the struggle for desegregation in Southeast Texas. The selection of this work as the final article is fitting—not only in recognition of Robertson's ardent support of the Society and the *Record*, but also that he writes about events that conclude in 1964, the founding year of the Texas Gulf Historical Society.

The articles reprinted in this anthology do not incoporate new research or revised interpretations. They are, in some ways, documents of the times in which they were published. As editor in collaboration with the contributors, I made some revisions to the text for consistency of style. Also, I have reorganized and updated the notes. Readers should consult the "Key to Notes" following this introduction for abbreviations used throughout the anthology. With help from a number of others, I worked to secure as many of the original illustrations as possible, and when unable to do so, I relied upon alternatives. In some cases, I added new images.

As much as we are celebrating the past, we are also marking a new beginning. Members of the Society will note the fresh look of the *Record*'s cover, but more than cosmetics, the publication of this volume represents a new partnership between the Society and Lamar University Press. With the cooperation and guidance of Dr. Jerry Craven, director of the Press, we will enjoy access to exciting technologies that provide greater flexibility and lesser expense than traditional print resources. In addition, we will benefit from Dr. Craven's long experience in academic publishing. We owe Michael Sanchez a debt for the handsome cover design.

I want to offer my heartfelt thanks to Ron Avery of R & A Supply, Beaumont, Texas. Since 1991, he has provided attentive service and quality production

as the printer for the *Record*. During my brief tenure as editor, I have learned much about the process of publishing, and the virtue of patience, from Mr. Avery.

I am pleased to announce that with the generous support of Dr. Andrew J. Johnson and Betty H. Johnson, the Society will sponsor the Editor's Prize that will recognize a Lamar University history major for the best research article on Beaumont, Southeast Texas, or the Gulf Coast. The winning student will recieve a $500 scholarship and publication in the *Record*. For more information, please see the announcement (page 11).

The 50th anniversary volume represents the hard work of many in our small community of historians, students, and enthusiasts. First, I must extend my gratitude to all of the contributors who personify the warm spirit of collaboration. I want to thank Nancy Isaac, widow of Dr. Paul Isaac, for her kind encouragement and generous donation. The family of W. T. Block expressed their enthusiastic support for the project. Robert Robertson and Judith Linsley not only participated in the selection process but also provided crucial logistical and moral support. Along with Penny Clark, they also assisted in contacting the authors and their families. Ms. Linsley and Ellen Rienstra were tireless in their willingness to proofread, and they saved me from numerous embarrassments. For those mistakes yet discovered, I alone am responsible. In the search for illustrations, I am grateful to Ms. Clark and Charlotte Holliman of the Lamar University Archives and Special Collections, William Grace and Darwin Morris of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Halley Grogan of the Texas State Library and Archives, Elizabeth Hilkin of the Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas School of Law, and Elton Gish of Lumberton, Texas. The history department at Lamar provided graduate assistants Colin Rohrbaugh and Kevin Broussard, and they proved an invaluable resource. I would also like to thank colleagues and students, including Patty Renfro, Dr. Jeff Forret, Valerie Domingue, Robert Barton, Sabrina Odom, and Dr. Mary Scheer, chair of the department.

Finally, publication of the *Record* and this special issue would not be possible without the leadership and dedication of the Texas Gulf Historical Society. I am grateful for the support of our Dr. John Nelson, president; Gilbert Adams, past-president; Joe Fisher, treasurer; Ann Creswell, recording secretary; Suzanne Stafford, corresponding secretary, and I thank you all.

KEY TO NOTES

BCAH	Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.
BE	*Beaumont Enterprise*.
BEN	W. T. Block, comp., *Emerald of the Neches: The Chronicles of Beaumont, Texas, from Reconstruction to Spindeltop*. Nederland, TX: privately published, 1980.
BJ	*Beaumont Journal*.
BS	*Baptist Standard* (Dallas, TX).
CBCA	Central Baptist Church Archives, Port Arthur, TX.
CBCM	Central Baptist Church Minutes, CBCA.
CQI	Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, Inc.
ETHJ	*East Texas Historical Journal*.
GDN	*Galveston Daily News*.
GPO	Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.
GWN	*Galveston Weekly News*.
JACR	Jefferson Amusement Company Records, THL.
JBC	Jack Brooks Collection, BCAH.
JCDR	Deed Records, Jefferson County Clerk, Beaumont, TX.
KLC-HPL	Kirby Lumber Company Records, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.
KLC-SFA	Kirby Lumber Company Records, Forest History Collections, East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University.
LSB	Lamar Scrapbook, Lamar University Archives and Special Collections, Beaumont, TX.
NHT	Ron Tyler, ed., *The New Handbook of Texas*. 6 vols. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1996. See also, Handbook of Texas Online (tshaonline.org/handbook).
PAH	Port Arthur *Herald*.
PAN	Port Arthur *News*; also *Evening News*.
PSL	*Pennship Log* (Beaumont, TX).

SHQ	*Southwestern Historical Quarterly*.
SHRL	Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center, Liberty, TX.
TGHBR	*Texas Gulf Historical and Biographical Record*.
THL	Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.
TXSL	Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin, TX.
TXSS	Texas Secretary of State, Austin, TX.
USNA	U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

Census

Citations for census given as Year, Schedule, and County.
For example: 1860 Population Schedule, Jefferson County.

Population Schedule of the Fifth Census of the United States 1830 (microfilm publication, M19), USNA.

Population and Slave Schedules of the Seventh Census of the United States 1850 (microfilm publication, M432), USNA.

Population and Slave Schedules of the Eighth Census of the United States 1860 (microfilm publication M653), USNA.

Population Schedule of the Ninth Census of the United States 1870 (microfilm publication M593), USNA.

Population Schedule of the Tenth Census of the United States 1880 (microfilm publication T9), USNA.

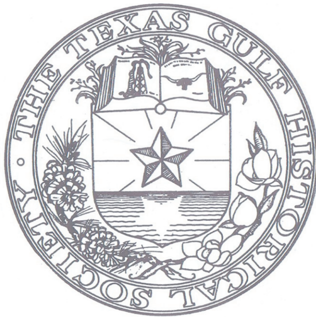
Population Schedule of the Eleventh Census of the United States 1900 (microfilm publication T623), USNA.

Population Schedule of the Twelfth Census of the United States 1910 (microfilm publication T624), USNA.

Nonpopulation Census Schedules for Texas, 1850-1880 (microfilm publication T1134), USNA (includes Agricultural, Mechanical, and Mortality Schedules).

Announces:

The Dr. Andrew J. and Betty H. Johnson Editor's Prize



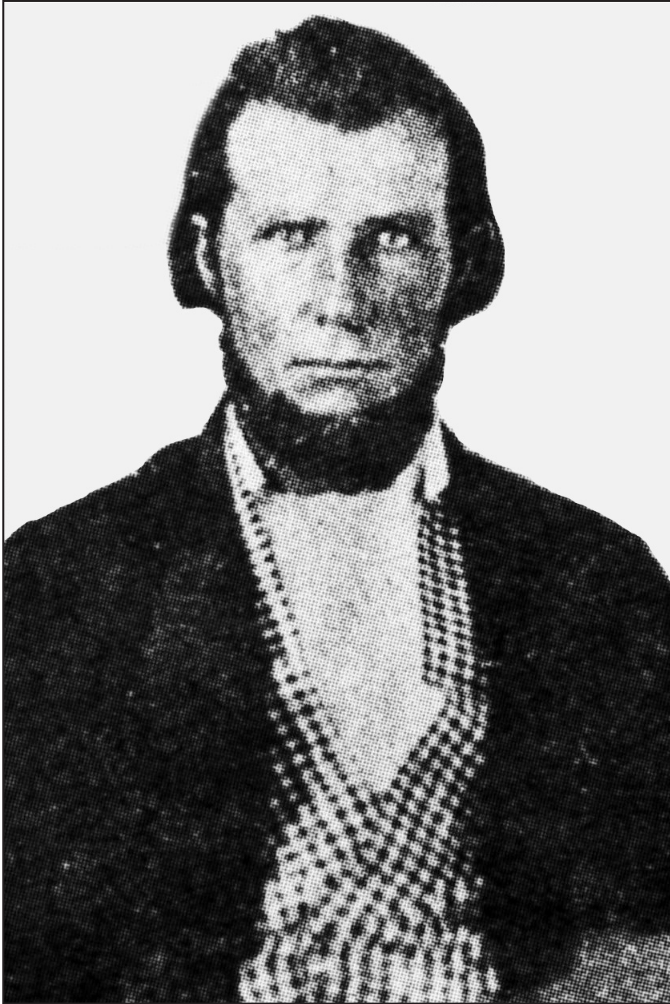
Vox audita perdit, littera scripta manet.

Through the generosity and support of Dr. Andrew J. and Betty H. Johnson, the Texas Gulf Historical Society announces the establishment of the Editor's Prize, awarded to a Lamar University graduate or undergraduate history major for writing the best research article on Beaumont, Southeast Texas, or the Texas Gulf Coast. The recipient will receive a $500 scholarship and publication in the *Texas Gulf Historical and Biographical Record*.

To apply, students should submit a completed article as a Microsoft Word attachment to the email address below. The editor will assess each entry based on originality of research, thematic and historiographic significance, as well as clarity and style of writing. The editor may not make a selection if no article meets these criteria within the awarding year. For more information, contact the editor.

Submit by August 1, 2015

To: Jimmy L. Bryan Jr., Editor
jlbryan@lamar.edu



Henry Millard, c. 1800-1845 (detail, digitally retouched, n.d.). *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

Henry Millard, Forgotten Texian

Judith Walker Linsley & Ellen Walker Rienstra

Originally Published in Volume 21 (1985)

No name is more familiar to students of the history of Southeast Texas, particularly of Jefferson County and its county seat, Beaumont, than that of Henry Millard. It is regularly recited by school children as the name of a founder of the town, along with the names of Thomas Huling and Joseph Pulsifer. It appears countless times, by way of his bold, decisive signature, on old deeds, commissioners' court minutes, municipal proceedings, and many other early records. It is well documented in contemporary accounts of the Consultation Convention and of the battle of San Jacinto. Yet Henry Millard the man fails to emerge. Apart from short biographical sketches, which often contain recycled errors, strangely little is known about him. A thorough search and a painstaking examination of facts, however, reveal the dimensions of an energetic, impetuous personality. Millard was a prototypical Anglo-Texan, a fractious, independent idealist with a strong opportunistic streak and little patience with inefficiency or stupidity. This lack of patience kept him on the move for most of his adult life, but he left his indelible mark in every place he lived. Cast in the mold of his friend Samuel Houston, yet lacking Houston's

---

Judith Walker Linsley and Ellen Walker Rienstra are longtime members of the Texas Gulf Historical Society and frequent contributors to the *Record*. Together they have published numerous articles and books, including *Music in Texas: Frontier to 1900* (1980), *Beaumont: A Chronicle of Promise* (1982), *Historic Beaumont: An Illustrated History* (2002), and with Jo Ann Stiles, *Giant under the Hill: A History of the Spindletop Oil Discovery at Beaumont, Texas, in 1901* (2002). Linsley also co-authored *The McFaddin-Ward House* (1992) with Jessica H. Foy. She is currently Curator of Interpretation and Education at the MacFaddin-Ward House Museum and an adjunct instructor of history at Lamar University. Rienstra co-wrote *A Pride of Kin* (1985) with Callie Coe Wilson and currently has a book manuscript under review, "The Long Shadow: Southeast Texas' Lutcher-Stark Lumber Dynasty," which she co-authored with Jo Ann Stiles.

breadth of vision, Millard was a man of his time, but in the end, time itself short-changed him, robbing him of the opportunity to make good his potential and gratify his ambitions.

Millard, the son of Josiah and Nancy Millard of Saratoga County, New York, was probably born there several years before the turn of the nineteenth century.[1] Sometime before 1807, the Millard family moved to the Missouri Territory, and in the spring of 1811, a certificate for settler's rights was issued to "Josiah Millard, of Bois Bruile, Ste. Genevieve District." They were still in Ste. Genevieve as late as 1821, when Josiah Millard pledged $20.00 worth of his own labor to establish an "academy for the instruction of youth." The family valued education, as Henry Millard's later actions would attest.[2]

Millard entered the world of business in 1820 in Ste. Genevieve but sometime in 1822 moved to Natchez, Mississippi, where his elder brother Alfred was more than likely already in residence. In that city, on April 14, 1825, Alfred married Louisa Beaumont Breeden, a young widow and daughter of a prosperous Natchez merchant family. At some point, young Henry formed a lasting friendship with her brothers, Franklin and Jefferson Beaumont, and another, more intimate relationship with her younger sister, Mary Dewburleigh Barlace Warren Beaumont. He married Mary Beaumont on August 24, 1826. Her brother Franklin signed a surety for his friend's $200 marriage bond. The young Millards set up housekeeping in Natchez.[3]

On the first of April, 1827, the ambitious Millard entered into the drug, medicine, book, and stationery business with his new brother-in-law under the name of "F. Beaumont and Co." He also joined the fraternal order of Freemasonry at Harmony Lodge No. 1 in Natchez, thus beginning a lifelong association. The Millards' eldest son, Frederick Sipe Millard, was born in that eventful year and

1. The year 1807 is commonly used as the date of his birth, but if that were the case, he would have been only 13 years old at the time of his first known business transactions. A note in his memorandum book indicates that in the 1820s in Natchez, he was acting in place of a parent to his brother Sidney Hosmore Millard, born in 1805, who would have been the older brother if Millard had been born in 1807. The New York census for 1800 lists in the household of Josiah Millard four male children under the ages of 10 years, one of whom was undoubtedly Henry's elder brother Alfred, born in 1793, and one was probably Henry himself. Henry Millard, Memorandum Book, Probate Packet No. 73, Jefferson County Clerk, Beaumont, TX.

2. Ronald Vern Jackson, *Early American Series: Early Missouri, 1789-1819* (Bountiful, UT: Accelerated Index Systems, Inc., 1980), [n.p.]. Land commissioners issued Certificate No. 1007 in favor of Josiah Millard, in April, May, or June of 1811. "1342 Land Claims—Missouri Territory, 1808-1812," *Missouri Pioneers*, 1 (1967): 37; *Missouri Miscellany*, 2 (Sept. 1976): [n.p.].

3. Millard, Memorandum Book; Irene S. Gillis and Norman E. Gillis, *Adams County, Mississippi Marriages 1802-1859*, ([no vol., n.p.]: 1976), 3: 146, 5:19.

baptized into his mother's church, the First Presbyterian Church in Natchez. There is some indication that later they also had a daughter, possibly named Matilda. Millard's younger brother, Sidney Hosmore Millard, also moved to Natchez, and in 1830 was living with a group of young single men in a house outside the city. By this time, Alfred had moved to Thibodaux, Louisiana, and had opened a store there.[4]

In the course of his business affairs in Natchez, Henry Millard met a young Pennsylvanian named Thomas Byers Huling, who was in the steamboat business on the Mississippi River. The two men struck an acquaintance that was to endure for many years, serving them both well. In 1831, Huling, following the current dictum of expanding western horizons, left Natchez and immigrated to Mexican Texas. He settled on the east bank of the Angelina River and built a store in the little settlement of Old Zavala.[5]

In 1831, Mary Millard bore her husband another son, whom they named Henry Beaumont Millard. On the last day of that year, the ambitious, restless Millard sold his interest in F. Beaumont & Co. to his partner Franklin Beaumont for $6,000. Sometime in the spring of 1832, Millard, presumably in search of new business opportunities, moved his young family to New Orleans, and in partnership with a young man from Massachusetts named Samuel Mason, established a wholesale and retail drug business on the corner of Tchoupitoulas and Common Streets, just west of the old French Quarter. The firm, called Mil-

4. *The Ariel* (Natchez, MS), March 15, 1827; Deed Records, T: 110, Adams County Chancery Clerk, Natchez, MS; Records of the Grand Lodge of Mississippi, Meridian, MS. No record exists of Millards ever having joined that or any other church. Records of First Presbyterian Church, Natchez, MS; 1830 Population Schedule, Adams County, MS. The census lists for Henry Millard's household a male child under 10 years of age (Frederick Sipe Millard) and a female child under 10 years of age. (The only other known child, Henry Beaumont Millard, was born in New Orleans in 1831.) There is no further mention of this female child in any of Millard's records, indicating that, if she were his child, she must have died very young. He himself declared for official purposes that he had two surviving sons, and after his death, only they were listed as inheritors of his estate. In Millard's memorandum book, in writing that resembles his wife Mary's, there is listed under the heading of "Washing" a column titled "For Matilda," under which are enumerated 14 frocks, six aprons, and five diapers. Mary Beaumont Millard had a sister, Matilda Beaumont Greenleaf (Mrs. Daniel), who died on August 4, 1827, about a year after Henry and Mary Millard were married; probably this child, if indeed she did exist, was named for her. From Beaumont family genealogical records, [n.p.]; William Littlejohn Martin, *Records and Recollections of Thibodaux, Louisiana* (Thibodaux, LA: The Woman's Club, c. 1972), [n.p.].

5. Madeline Martin, *More Early Southeast Texas Families* (Quanah: Nortex Press, 1978), 124-128.

lard and Mason, stocked "a full assortment of Drugs, Medicines, Paints, Oils, Dye Stuffs, Surgical Instruments, &c."[6]

The business prospered, so much so that in May of 1833, Sam Mason wrote a friend back in Massachusetts, an apothecary named Joseph Perkins Pulsifer, and offered him the management of a branch store. Pulsifer accepted. He arrived in New Orleans the following November, only to find that Sam Mason had died of yellow fever two months before. Fortunately for both of them, as it turned out, Millard honored Mason's agreement with Pulsifer, employing him in his reorganized business, Henry Millard & Co., for $25 a month. Pulsifer's sister Lucy, back in Massachusetts, wrote ecstatically to him, "I could have hugged Mr. Millard for hiring you."[7]

Millard took a full-page ad in the 1834 New Orleans City Directory and established a retail branch store under Pulsifer's management. For himself and his family, he also rented a spacious three-story combination house and store on the corner of Tchapitoulas and Market Streets, for $100 a month. Perhaps he meant to move his store to the buildings underneath his living quarters. Besides, he needed room for his slaves. Among several that he bought during his sojourn in New Orleans were a woman named Letitia Inge and a young man named Philip Evans.[8]

Millard's optimism proved to be ill-founded. In the autumn of 1833 Mason's heirs demanded cash payment for his undivided share in the firm of Millard and Mason, which came to nearly $7,000.[9] Money was scarce, and Millard was

---

6. John H. Walker and Gwendolyn Wingate, *Beaumont: A Pictorial History* (Norfolk: Donning Publishing Company, 1983), 35; Deed Records, T: 110, Adams County Chancery Clerk; *Natchez* (Newspaper), June 22, 1832; Samuel Mason to Joseph P. Pulsifer, May 30, 1833, Joseph P. Pulsifer Papers (private collection); *New Orleans City Directory, 1834* [n.p.]. For the history of the Pulsifer collection and an edited version of the 1836 letter, see Linsley and Rienstra, eds., "Letter from Joseph P. Pulsifer, Beaumont, Texas, to His Sister, Lucy Pulsifer Granger (1836)," TGHBR, 19 (Nov. 1983): 51-78.

7. Mason to Pulsifer, May 30, 1833; Death Certificates, 5:21, Recorder of Births, Marriages and Deaths, New Orleans Health Department; Lucy Pulsifer Granger to Pulsifer, March 18, 1834, Pulsifer Papers.

8. The sale of Inge and Evans by Millard to his brother Alfred was notarized in New Orleans in 1834, but was filed in Galveston in 1846 by Alfred, Evans's legal owner, because Evans was living in Galveston at that time. Records of Branch W. Miller, Nov. 9, 1833, and L. T. Caire, Notary Public, Sept. 1833, Notarial Archives, City Hall, New Orleans, LA; Deed Records, F: 87, Galveston County Clerk, Galveston, TX.

9. Inventory of the Estate of Samuel Mason, Old Inventories, volume M, Court of Probates (Orleans Parish), New Orleans.

unable to pay. The heirs filed suit, and the dispute, which grew more acrimonious as time went on, would last the better part of three years.

In the meantime, Millard was to suffer a far more personal blow. On May 30, 1834, Mary Beaumont Millard died, probably in New Orleans, possibly in Natchez, although there is absolutely no record of her death in either city. It is possible that at this time something also happened to the "phantom daughter," if indeed she really existed; in October of 1834, George Granger, Pulsifer's brother-in-law, wrote of his "sympathizing feelings toward your Mr. Millard; he has been most severely afflicted, and might say with Job . . . . 'The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away.'"[10] Granger's Biblical reference implies not just one, but a whole series of disasters. Pulsifer's original letter to Granger, which obviously explained the whole, is missing.

Millard continued to do business in New Orleans for a time, but by the spring of 1835 he must have seen that his financial situation was hopeless. He was still under siege in the courts over Samuel Mason's estate; moreover, his business was not prospering as expected. At some point during this troubled time he reencountered his old friend from Natchez, Thomas Huling. That spring, Millard, Huling, and Pulsifer formed a new partnership, their object being to enter the mercantile business in Texas. On July 10, 1835, they set out for the new land. At least, Millard sent Huling, Pulsifer, and a boatload of goods to Texas; "Mr. Millard," as Pulsifer said in a letter to his sister, "could not get ready to come."[11]

The reason "Mr. Millard" could not get ready to come was that he was busy preparing a petition for his attorney to present to the First Judicial District Court of New Orleans, on behalf of "Henry Millard and of Henry Millard & Co., . . . insolvent debtors." It read, in part:

> Owing to some losses . . . and the increased difficulty they have experienced in collecting the sums due to said Firm, he finds it impossible to discharge the obligations he has contracted . . . . he prays that this Honourable Court may direct that a meeting of all his creditors may be called . . . so that he may submit to their investigation, a full statement of his affairs, and surrender to them all his property.[12]

On Millard's behalf, the attorney asked that Millard be released from all debts, both individual or as co-partner of Millard & Co. The opposing attorney agreed

10. George T. Granger to Pulsifer, Oct. 13, 1834, Pulsifer Papers.

11. Pulsifer to Lucy Pulsifer Granger, May 21, 1836, Pulsifer Papers.

12. Records of Charles DeArmas, Sept. 2, 1835, Notarial Archives.

to the terms of the petition, but granted no discharge. A list of Millard's assets was attached to the notarial document; they were very few. He had divested himself of as many as he could. In May of 1834 he had sold the slaves Letitia Inge and Philip Evans to his brother Alfred, who had already taken them to Thibodaux. He had also sent the store inventory to Texas with Huling and Pulsifer. The last item on the list was a note from Thomas Huling to Millard, listed as "Thos. B. Huling and Co., Texas note for H. Millard: $2,000." Millard had managed to salvage some of his capital, after all, by placing it out of reach of his creditors, and in the hands of his new partner in Mexican Texas.[13]

Because of the failure of H. Millard and Company, the New Orleans court eventually ordered the Register of Wills to sell for cash the remaining property of Samuel Mason.[14] Obviously no criminal, Millard was, like so many men of his place and time, a victim of bad luck and unstable economic conditions, and like so many of them, he turned his eyes westward, hung a "Gone to Texas" sign on his door, and sailed down the Mississippi and across the Gulf of Mexico to make a new life for himself.

Two of the three members of the new Joseph P. Pulsifer and Company had no prior experience to prepare them for the alien conditions awaiting them in the Mexican state of Coahuila y Texas, where loneliness, physical danger, and an encroaching wilderness were a part of daily existence. Even more foreign was the political climate; as Mexican citizens, Texan immigrants lived under the rule of a country whose laws, culture and ethnic origins were in sharp contrast to their own Anglo norms. To compound the problem, at the time of Millard's migration in the summer of 1835, Mexico, nominally bound to a federal constitution enacted in 1824, was actually under the thumb of would-be dictator Gen. Antonio López de Santa Anna. The situation was explosive.

At this time, very few Anglo-Texans wished total independence. Their allegiance remained with the Mexican Constitution of 1824, but they objected to the dictatorship of Santa Anna. Events of that summer, however, had begun to point inexorably toward war, particularly when Texans heard that the Mexican Army, under Santa Anna's brother-in-law, Gen. Martín Perfecto de Cos, had crossed the Rio Grande and was marching to Bexar (San Antonio). A general call went out for the Consultation Convention to be held the following October, to discuss peace under the constitution or to prepare for war.

13. Deed Records, F: 87, Galveston County; Records of DeArmas, Sept. 2, 1835, Notarial Archives.

14. Record of the Court of Probate, New Orleans, Louisiana, March 21, 1836.

Meanwhile, for their new enterprise, the three partners, Millard, Pulsifer, and Huling, had chosen a spot on the Neches River at the crossing of the Atascosito, or Opelousas, Trail, where two tiny settlements had grown up on the high ground: Tevis Bluff, named for the first family to settle the area, and Santa Anna, a short distance downriver, named for the dictator before he deserted the Mexican Constitution.

A few days after his and Pulsifer's arrival in late July, Huling left for his store in Zavalla. Pulsifer settled into their store at Santa Anna to await Millard, who arrived in August. Within days of his arrival, both men were embroiled in local politics and preparations for hostilities. On September 2, able-bodied men of Santa Anna and Tevis Bluff formed a military company, naming themselves the Neches Guards and adopting the motto, "Try Us." Millard, elected chairman, addressed them with inspiring words and led them in drills.

In spite of the excitement, Millard, who had come to Texas to make money, plunged immediately into land speculation. On September 4, a mere two or three weeks after he had arrived, he bought from Noah Tevis, the area's first settler, 50 choice acres on the high bluff overlooking the river. A few weeks later, the following item appeared in the San Felipe de Austin *Telegraph and Texas Register*:

> We have been informed that a town has lately been laid out on the tidewater of the river Neches, at a place known as Tevis Bluff, 30 miles from Sabine Bay. Its situation is said to be one of the most delightful in Texas and it has already commenced improving at a rapid rate. It is spoken of as a town which promises to be one of considerable importance. It has received the name of Beaumont, which, from the description of the place, strikes our fancy as very appropriate.[15]

Millard, still grieving for his young wife, had given the town her maiden name.

On October 10, men of the Municipality of Liberty, where the new town was located, chose delegates to the Consultation Convention. Millard was chosen one of the delegates. He traveled to San Felipe but found that most of the other delegates had already adjourned to San Antonio. They preferred fighting to consulting. More than willing to oblige, he took his Neches Boys to Bexar, but the delegate from Nacogdoches, Sam Houston, believing that a government was more important than an army, rode to San Antonio and brought the delegates

15. *Telegraph and Texas Register* (San Felipe de Austin), Oct. 26, 1835.

back to San Felipe. There Millard was appointed to the so-called Permanent Council, which served briefly as a governing body until the Consultation met.[16]

Thanks to Houston, the Consultation finally acquired a quorum and convened formally on November 3. Millard's dominant personality soon asserted itself; in rapid succession, he was appointed to various committees: one to secure foreign aid, one to obtain finances, one to declare the causes of the revolution, one to design a provisional government, and one, the General Council, to run the government after the convention adjourned.[17] He was in his element—right in the middle of the action.

On November 13, 1835, the Provisional Government carved from the old Liberty District the new Municipality of Jefferson, which extended from the east bank of the Neches to the west bank of the Sabine—the identical dimensions of present-day Orange County. According to family tradition, Millard named the area after his Natchez brother-in-law, Jefferson Beaumont; however, there is insufficient evidence to prove this story. At its inception, the Municipality of Jefferson did not include the town of Beaumont. Although Millard certainly cast his vote for the creation of the municipality, Claiborne West, a resident of Cow Bayou (near present day Orange) and Millard's fellow delegate, actually conceived and carried out the project. In a heretofore unpublished letter to Joseph Pulsifer written from San Felipe on November 24, 1835, immediately after the fact, Millard remarked that "Judge West has had all that part of the Municipality of Liberty laid off into a separate municipality lying East of the River Neches by the name of Jefferson—and remains here as their representative."[18] Millard may have played no more than the role of a supportive bystander.

Sometime in December Millard was appointed lieutenant colonel of infantry in the regular Texan army by the Provisional Government, then was sent by his new friend Sam Houston, the commander-in-chief, to Nacogdoches to establish recruiting offices. On December 23, he requested permission to resign from the Committee of Finance, presumably to begin serving his new commission. The Council voted its thanks to him "for his attention and devotion to the interests of his country, while a member of this house." Millard moved to Nacogdoches to begin his duties. William Fairfax Gray, a traveler from Virginia, rode with him into the old Spanish settlement on Sunday, January 31, 1836. Gray wrote, "Col. Millard had been a merchant in Natchez, then in New Orleans,

16. Henry Millard to Pulsifer, Oct. 18, 1835, Pulsifer Papers; M. K. Wisehart, *Sam Houston, American Giant,* (Washington: Robert B. Luce, Inc., 1962), 129-132.

17. Ralph W. Steen, "An Analysis of the Work of the General Council, Provisional Government of Texas," SHQ, 40 (April 1937): 310; *Telegraph and Texas Register,* Nov. 7, 1835.

18. Millard to Pulsifer, Nov. 24, 1835, Pulsifer Papers.

and now in Texas . . . . Has operated in lands. Was a member of the Convention in November 1835, and also of the Provisional Council . . . . Thinks the new Convention must declare for independence; if they do not the army will. He is now superintending the recruit service."[19]

About this time, Millard, not one to neglect his business opportunities under any circumstances, formed another land partnership with Thomas Huling and a transplanted Kentuckian named George W. Glasscock. This partnership he named "Thomas B. Huling & Co." Perhaps, remembering his monetary problems back in the United States, he was wary of using his own name on a partnership, because he never used it on any he formed after he moved to Texas. On February 18, Millard received urgent orders to forward his recruits to Washington "as soon as practicable" from Houston, who although he was having his problems with the recalcitrant General Council, was still making his plans for the defense of Texas. Millard wrote to Huling from Nacogdoches, "I understand Genl. H. has made one recruit and commenced a regular drill (hurrah for the army)."[20]

In the meantime, Millard served with Houston as commissioner to treat with the Cherokee Indians, a potential threat to the Texan cause. They met with Chief Bowles of the Cherokees and on February 23 negotiated a successful treaty. Millard wrote Huling afterwards: "I have just returned from the Indian Treaty which was arranged with them satisfactorily—they only wanted their rights guaranteed to them which was done and they will enter firmly into the cause of Texas."[21] Unfortunately, the government later refused to ratify the treaty.

Millard and a regular battalion of infantry joined the main body of Houston's army sometime in late March, while it was camped on the Brazos. In early April, Millard wrote to Huling from "Camp West of the Brazos" and directed him to "attend to the Land business and buy all you can at low price—now is the favorable time when the country is in such a panic about the war." He mitigated this opportunistic advice in the next sentence by a blatant, if slightly misplaced, vote of confidence in the Texan cause. "Tell Glasscock to pursue his purchases and fear not for the fate of Texas we shall certainly prevent the Enemy from crossing

19. H. P. N. Gammel, comp., *The Laws of Texas, 1822-1897* (10 vols., Austin: Gammel Book Company, 1898), 1: 626; William Fairfax Gray, *From Virginia to Texas, 1835: Diary of Col. William F. Gray* (Houston: Gray, Dillaye & Company, Printers [Fletcher Young Publishing Co.], 1965), 89.

20. Amelia W. Williams and Eugene C. Barker, eds., *The Writings of Sam Houston* (8 vols., Austin: University of Texas Press, 1943), 4:17; Millard to Thomas B. Huling, Feb. 28, 1836, Thomas Byers Huling Papers, BCAH.

21. Millard to Huling, Feb. 28, 1836, Huling Papers.

the Brasos [*sic*] although their advance Guard are now in St. Felipe . . . . how soon we may have an engagement I know not probably in a day or two when we shall give a good account of them."[22]

The Texans gave a good account of themselves indeed. It was actually two weeks, not two days, later, and it was on the banks of the San Jacinto, not the Brazos, that Sam Houston scored a decisive 18-minute victory over General Santa Anna and the Mexican Army. During the engagement, Henry Millard acquitted himself well. Situated on the right of the Texan line between the four-piece band and Mirabeau Lamar's 61 cavalrymen, he led two companies of regular infantry and a battalion of volunteers into battle, stood ready to cover the retreat of the cavalry if necessary (it was not), sustained the artillery on his left, and captured the enemy's breastwork.[23]

A strange misunderstanding arose over one incident during the battle. After the Mexicans were on the run, Millard, acting upon orders from Houston, gave a command to halt his troops. About that time, Col. John A. Wharton rode up from the rear and urged them on again. After a brief, sharp exchange between himself and Wharton, Millard sent Capt. Amasa Turner's company to guard the Mexican camp. He then allowed the other troops to pursue the fleeing Mexicans. After the battle, Houston's enemies accused him of having called a premature halt because of his own confusion and cowardice. According to eyewitnesses, however, Houston did so only for the purpose of preventing the looting of the Mexican camp.[24]

The battle of San Jacinto, and Millard's finest hour, were over. Never again would he hold the position—or command the prestige—he enjoyed in the Texan army in its battle for independence. As mementos of his day of glory, he received from his grateful commander-in-chief a matched pair of dueling pistols taken from General Santa Anna. In turn, Millard himself presented a captured lance and a stand of colors to fellow Natchez resident John A. Quitman for aiding the Texan cause.[25]

Yet many problems remained unsolved, the most pressing of which was that the Mexican army was still at large in Texas. While Houston recovered from wounds

22. H. M. Henderson, "A Critical Analysis of the San Jacinto Campaign," SHQ, 59 (Jan. 1956): 347; Millard to Huling, April 7, 1836, Huling Papers.

23. Rupert Norval Richardson, Ernest Wallace, and Adrian N. Anderson, *Texas: The Lone Star State* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1981), 119.

24. Eugene C. Barker, "The San Jacinto Campaign," SHQ, 4 (April 1901): 341-343.

25. *The Uvalde Leader-News* (TX), April 16, 1981; James H. McClendon, "John A. Quitman in the Texas Revolution," SHQ, 52 (Oct. 1948): 178.

he had received at San Jacinto, Gen. Thomas J. Rusk reluctantly took command of the ragged, hardheaded mob of men who made up the Texan army. They wanted Santa Anna hanged, and as the summer wore on, their mood worsened.

Millard shared their sentiments. In June, he wrote Pulsifer from the army camp near Victoria that the army had suffered because of the "bad policy pursued by the commander-in-chief in the first place, and the want of honesty and good conduct of the governing powers. Both the corrupt councils of last spring & the proceedings of the present cabinet."[26] The "corrupt councils" probably referred to the sessions in which, on May 14, *ad interim* president David G.Burnet and the Texas government had negotiated treaties with Santa Anna for his release—also a sore spot with the troops. Millard's anger at Houston proved to be temporary; his hatred of Burnet did not.

In an effort to placate the army, Burnet sent Mirabeau B. Lamar to relieve General Rusk. He arrived at Velasco in July and was met by Millard, a Rusk supporter, and another officer, who told him politely but firmly that the army refused to accept him as commander. Rusk retained command, but only after a plot by some of the army officers to arrest him and bring him to trial failed.[27]

On August 2, from "Head quarters Colletta [Coleta]," Millard wrote Huling, "I have just returned from Velasco where I have been in company with Col. [E. L. R.] Wheelock on a mission from the army to the Government—whom found Imbecile Inactive and Incapable of performing the high duties assigned to them . . . . I left them fully employed in devising ways and means of perpetuating their power," he remarked in disgust, "that and speculation being their only employment for the last 2 months."[28]

Millard failed to mention to Huling that, true to his precipitate nature, he had been guilty of much more at Velasco than mere complaint. Supposedly acting by authority of the army, he had tried to have Burnet arrested. Burnet, informed in advance of the attempt by one of Millard's captains at San Jacinto, Amasa Turner, immediately confronted Millard, who, realizing that the plot had failed and that his person was now in some danger, left the area immediately.[29]

Burnet, pardonably enraged by the incident, wrote angrily to Rusk, demanding Millard's dismissal from the army. He denounced Millard as an "officer of small

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26. Millard to Joseph Pulsifer, June 12, 1836, Pulsifer Papers.

27. A. K. Christian, "Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar," SHQ, 23 (Jan. 1920): 164.

28. Millard to Huling, Aug. 2, 1836, Huling Papers.

29. John H. Jenkins, ed., "Amasa Turner's Account of the Texas Revolution," *Texana*, 1 (Spring 1963): 78-83.

rank and less intelligence." Rusk, a friend of Millard's who had been accused by some of acquiescing in the plot, replied politely but evasively that the matter was outside his jurisdiction. The controversy, however, subsided after Millard's suspension from the army.[30]

Before his departure "for a short sojourn among his acquaintances," Millard was given a "complimentary communication" by his fellow army officers. They assured him "how much they respected his virtues as a man, [his] courtesy as a gentleman—how much they admired his conduct as an officer—the commingling of mildness, strictness and precision." Prophetically, they added that he could "at least fall back where your presence is always agreeable—where the pulse of each of your soldier friends will beat gratefully while there is blood and breath [*sic*] to sustain it," and concluded with the hope that they could shortly welcome him back to camp. This remarkable testimonial was signed by, among others, Albert Sidney Johnston, Henry W. Karnes, James Collinsworth, Felix Huston, and, ironically, by the former Capt. Amasa Turner, now holding Millard's old position of lieutenant colonel of the First Infantry.[31]

In the meantime, however, Burnet and his cabinet, plagued by further discontent and insubordination, had moved forward the proposed December election to the first Monday in September. Millard, who had supported Henry Smith for the presidency of the republic, was probably delighted to learn that, just 11 days before the election, Sam Houston declared his candidacy. He won by a huge majority. Millard's connection with Houston undoubtedly worked to his advantage; his suspension from the army must have been rescinded, because he was not formally discharged until December 16, 1836.

Unfortunately, Millard still seemed to be a little short-fused. In Columbia on business that November, he collided head-on in a personal dispute of an unknown nature with 30-year-old James Collinsworth, a hero of San Jacinto, chief justice of the republic, and one of the men who had signed his testimonial letter. The volatile Millard wrote to Collinsworth: "Sir: Your remarks last evening in relation to my conduct were unprovoked and inexplicable—I request of you an explanation." Collinsworth's explanation was apparently unsatisfactory. The next day Millard replied, "From the tenor of your note received this morning, I am forced to the last resort of a gentleman to obtain satisfaction for a premedi-

30. David G. Burnet to Thomas J. Rusk, July 31, Aug. 5, 7, 26, and Sept. 2, 1836, and Burnet to John A. Wharton, Sept. 13, 1836, in Jenkins, ed., *Papers of the Texas Revolution, 1835-1836* (10 vols., Austin: Presidial Press, 1973), 8: 75-76, 127-128, 147-148, 319-320, 374, 468.

31. [No document cited], Christine Moor Sanders Papers (private collection).

tated insult, which I now demand. My friend Col. [Edwin] Morehouse is fully authorized by me to make the preliminary arrangements for a meeting."[32]

From Brazoria, Mirabeau Lamar, Houston's vice-president, appealed to both Millard and Collinsworth to settle their differences. "Believe me gentlemen," Lamar wrote, "there are no sufficient grounds for the extremity to which you are about to push your resentments. The provocations of which you severally complain, are universally believed to have arisen out of the malicious interference of others, and not from any settled purpose on the part of either of you to do injustice to the other."[33]

When both principals agreed to submit the matter to arbitration, the duel between Millard and Collinsworth was finally averted, as were two more between Collinsworth on the one hand and Dr. Anson Jones and Gen. Thomas Jefferson Green on the other. This indicates that the problem might have resided in Collinsworth. Perhaps his belligerence was indicative of a mental malaise. In July of 1838, just as the Houston party was considering running him for president, he jumped from a boat in Galveston Bay and drowned himself. [34]

After the incident, Millard's friends possibly thought he should disappear for a while, because on November 12, President Houston appointed him to treat with the Indians. He was instructed to continue Houston's policy of fair treatment, and to tell them that the "Old Chief" wanted to see them "when the grass rises." The mission was successful, and Millard was paid $1,065 for his services. A bid he made in May 1837 for the position of major general of the Texas militia was not. Disappointed by the discontinuance of his military career, he returned in June of that year to his home on the Neches to set about putting down roots.[35]

Once settled in Beaumont, Millard entered into local affairs with his customary vigor. On November 7, 1837, Sam Houston nominated him for Chief Justice of the new Jefferson County, the boundaries of which soon after extended westward across the Neches to include the town of Beaumont. Millard undoubtedly used his influence to have it named as county seat. At the January 1838 term,

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32. Millard to James Collinsworth, Nov. 10 and 11, 1836, in Charles A. Gulick, ed., *Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar* (6 vols., 1920-1927 rept., Austin: Pemberton Press, 1968), 1: 488.

33. Mirabeau B. Lamar to Millard and Collinsworth, Nov. 19, 1836, in Gulick, ed., *Papers of . . . Lamar*, 1: 502-503.

34. William Ransom Hogan, "Rampant Individualism in the Republic of Texas," SHQ, 44, (April 1941): 475.

35. Anna Muckleroy, "The Indian Policy of the Republic of Texas," SHQ, 26 (July 1922): 17; Williams and Barker, eds., *Writings of Sam Houston*, 1: 495; *Telegraph and Texas Register* (Houston), May 9, 1837.

I, the undersigned Secretary of State of the
Republic of Texas hereby certify that Col. H. Millard
was appointed Commissioner to treat with the Indians
Nov: 12th 1836.

Done at the City of Houston this
7th day of Nov. 1837

R. A. Irion

Secretary of State Robert A. Irion certified Henry Millard as "commissioner to treat with the Indians." November 7, 1837. *Courtesy of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin, TX.*

the court convened at Beaumont, and the "Hon. Henry Millard . . . presented his commission as Chief Justice, which was read by the clerk."[36]

Millard also turned his energies once again to the enlargement of his town. On July 12, 1837, J. P. Pulsifer & Co., "owners of a certain tract or parcel of land on the Neches River containing 100 acres and now known by the name and title of the town of Beaumont" (the 50 acres Millard had bought from Noah Tevis in the autumn of 1835, plus 50 acres the company had bought from Samuel Rogers in 1836 for $1,500), entered into an agreement with Joseph Grigsby and Nancy Tevis, each of whom contributed 50 acres, "for the enlargement and more perfect formation of the town aforesaid."[37] The company laid out the total acreage into blocks and lot numbers in preparation for selling them. On the first day of October, 1837, Millard wrote to Huling:

36. Minutes, A: 5 (pages out of order), Jefferson County Commissioners' Court, Beaumont, TX.

37. JCDR, C: 364.

> Dear Sir we have at last finished our survey of the Town after a Siege of nearly one month of the most Horrible weather that could be conceived continual rains almost every day . . . [M. J.]. Brake [William] Irion and [Nancy] Tevis are determined to contend in law for their rights . . . . I have made an arrangement with both [Brake and Irion] and obtained their rights so far as our interest is concerned but with Mrs. Tevis and old [Joseph] Grigsby I can make none as they were determined to stop all proceedings until they could gain it by law but they have agreed to divide the Town by squares and tomorrow we shall proceed to do so and then we can sell off our part to purchasers with a certainty of their having a good title.[38]

By March of 1838, the dispute was settled. M. J. Brake gave up all claim to the land where the townsite was located. William Irion did the same, provided that Nancy Tevis and the other proprietors of the town deeded some of the undivided lots to him. Exactly a year later, Irion deeded to Joseph Pulsifer, as trustee for Millard's slave Philip Evans, for "the natural love and affection which he [Irion] has unto the said Philip Evans," a town lot in Beaumont. Perhaps this was an unwritten adjunct to Pulsifer & Co.'s settlement with Irion. It was almost certainly Henry Millard's way of providing for Evans, to whom he apparently felt a familial obligation.[39]

Millard's land holdings began to build. In December 1837, he received a Bounty Warrant for 1,280 acres of land for serving in the Texan army, and in May of 1838 a donation certificate for 640 acres of land for having participated in the battle of San Jacinto. Sometime in the winter or early spring of that year, he gave his loyalty oath to claim from the Republic of Texas his headright of land (one league and one labor), stating that he had been a citizen of Texas and head of a family from the time of the Declaration of Independence. Claiborne West objected, saying that Millard's family was not in the country with him, but two of Millard's friends testified that he had two sons in the United States, whom he planned to bring to Texas as soon as he could find the means to educate them properly. Also, they argued, Millard's servants in Beaumont (Letitia Inge and Philip Evans) constituted a part of his family. On March 29, 1838, Millard was

38. Millard to Huling, Oct. 1, 1837, Huling Papers.

39. Philip and Letitia Inge had by this time joined Millard in Texas, although they still legally belonged to his brother Alfred. Inventory of J. P. Pulsifer & Co., Probate Packet No. 1173, and JCDR, A: 105, C: 266.

finally issued a certificate for one league and one labor of land. On paper, he prospered.[40]

Millard did not neglect his Masonic affiliations. In 1837 he was invited to become a charter member of the Grand Lodge of the Republic of Texas, along with his friends Sam Houston, Anson Jones, and Thomas J. Rusk—a prestigious group. In 1840 "the Right Worthy Brother Henry Millard" was elected Grand Secretary of the Lodge, serving through part of 1841.[41]

In the meantime, Millard was joined in Beaumont by several members of his family. His brother Hosmore came in 1839, accompanied by their mother, Nancy, and their younger sister, also named Nancy. (Their father, Josiah, is presumed to have died by this time.) Both young Millards soon put down roots; on June 2, 1840, in the house of her older brother, "Henry Millard Esq.," Nancy married an Irishman named George Bryan (later changed back to the original "O'Brien" by his son, George W. O' Brien), and on March 18, 1841, Hosmore married Mary Bryan, a daughter (by a much earlier marriage) of that same George Bryan. Another brother, Darcourt Josiah Otho Millard, came to Beaumont as a married man and served as one of Beaumont's first physicians.[42]

Henry Millard, the senior member of the clan in Beaumont (Alfred, the oldest brother, still lived in Louisiana), continued to take an active role in the little community. In July of 1840, he was elected to the Board of Aldermen of the town of Beaumont and even served a time as Justice of the Peace, performing several marriages during his term of office. In spite of these roots, however, his restless ambition began to prod him. In the autumn of 1839, desiring to return to army life, he had run again for major general of the Texas militia but had withdrawn from the race before the election, leaving the victory to his fellow Natchez resident, Felix Huston.[43]

In August of 1840, Millard tried again. He wrote to Pres. Mirabeau B. Lamar, asking to be appointed as commissary of subsistence to the Texas army. It was an appropriate choice; as a storekeeper, he was accustomed to dealing in goods and supplies. In the letter, he admitted to his reasons for applying, stating frankly

40. Thomas Lloyd Miler, *Bounty and Donation Land Grants of Texas, 1835-1838* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), 469; Gifford White, *First Settlers of Jefferson County, Texas* (St. Louis, Missouri: Ingmire Publications, 1984), 9.

41. Records of the Grand Lodge of Texas, Waco, TX.

42. Laura Millard interview, BE, May 25, 1919.

43. Frederick Eugene Willcox, "Records of the Hon. the Board of Aldermen of the Town of Beaumont, Begun August 8, 1840," TGHBR, 8 (Nov. 1972): 62-65. *Some Texas Records: Liberty, Polk, Jefferson County* [n.p., n.p.]; W. N. Bate, *General Sidney Sherman: Texas Soldier, Statesman and Builder* (Waco: Texian Press, 1974), 158.

that "the only motive that induces me to apply to your Excellency for the above appointment is a belief that I could make myself more useful in a military than in a civil capacity[,] Military Service being more congenial to my disposition and feelings, than any other occupation in life."[44] Millard did not receive the appointment. The "Poet President" probably wanted no Houston partisan in any high position.

Millard's ambitions were being frustrated in another area, too. Far from getting rich quickly, as he and so many others like him had dreamed, he was experiencing a recurring cash shortage. Land sales were slow, and the simple fact of the matter was that although his possessions were substantial, Millard was actually land-poor. "Times are cursed hard," he complained to Huling in May 1840, "and I know not what we shall do to make them Better—if you can turn over Land Claims to satisfy our debts I am perfectly willing to make any Sacrifice you may think proper to liquidate them."[45]

By the fall of that year, Millard had had enough of life in the quiet little town on the Neches. He resigned his position as Chief Justice of the Jefferson County Commissioners' Court, being succeeded in office by his brother, D. J. Otho Millard. He then deeded his undivided one-third interest in the town of Beaumont to Joseph Pulsifer, but according to the deed, no money changed hands—doubtless a precaution against seizure by creditors. He also sold his little sloop, *The Lady of the Lake,* to Pulsifer for $200.70. A move was in the making.[46]

By this time, Millard had become skilled in protecting his property from creditors. In February of 1840, Alfred Millard, her lawful owner in Louisiana, had sold Letitia Inge to Joseph Pulsifer, who in turn resold her to Millard's oldest son, 13-year-old Frederick Sipe Millard. According to the deed, she was to have "free use of her own time to labor or follow any honest employment to support herself that she chose," as long as she paid Frederick Millard $12 yearly.[47] Henry Millard's name was never mentioned, and in the meantime, he had seen to the welfare of his dependents.

Millard nearly got his longed-for military action in the spring of 1841, when in keeping with his expansionist policy, President Lamar decided to send an expedition to Santa Fe, New Mexico. It was a fiasco, ill-conceived and ill-planned from the beginning, but the Grand Lodge of Texas saw it as an opportunity to charter a new Masonic Lodge in Santa Fe. Millard, at the time serving as secre-

44. Millard to Lamar, Aug. 28, 1840, *Papers of Mirabeau B. Lamar,* 3: 439-440.

45. Millard to Huling, [n.d.], Huling Papers.

46. Minutes, A: 44-45, Jefferson County Commissioners' Court; JCDR, D: 138-139.

47. JCDR, D: 125-126.

tary of the Grand Lodge, was listed as a member of the expedition, and would certainly have been a logical choice to convey the charter to Santa Fe.[48]

When the expedition left from Austin on June 21, however, Millard was not with it. Doubtless he planned to go, but in all probability, his well documented impatience with inefficiency caused him to abandon the whole project in disgust. When the expedition was captured that November, the Mexican authorities sought in vain "the foreigner Enrique Millard . . . , whom the Supreme Government has especially recommended," probably because he had wanted to hang Santa Anna at San Jacinto. A letter from Millard to Huling, dated Beaumont, December 15, 1841, firmly establishes his presence in Southeast Texas during the time the survivors of the expedition were languishing in captivity.[49]

By the spring of 1841, Texans' attention had turned once again to politics, where Houston and David Burnet were preparing to square off in the upcoming election. Millard's friendship with Houston, as well as his hatred of Burnet, made his enthusiastic espousal of Houston's campaign a foregone conclusion. From Austin, he wrote Huling that support for Houston "appears to be the order of the day . . . . Burnet," he concluded gleefully, "is completely done[;] he could not now in the western counties be elected fidler Genl, to the big chief."[50]

In fact, restless as he was, Millard himself was bitten by the political bug. The *Telegraph and Texas Register* reported on June 2, 1841, that "Col. Henry Millard, having consented to serve as Senator in Congress for the Senatorial District composed of the Counties of Jasper & Jefferson, will be supported at the ensuing election by many Citizens." Millard wrote Huling:

> There were a large number of the citizens of Jefferson County and some from Jasper that solicited me to run for Senator to Represent this Senatorial district at the Ensuing election . . . . it was rumored that you would probably be a candidate but not having announced yourself here *I* presumed you intended running for the House of Representatives. But if you are a candidate for the Senate boom ahead we will try our strength by fair sailing.

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48. James David Carter, *Masonry in Texas: Background, History, and Influence to 1846* (Waco: Committee on Masonic Education and Service for the Grand Lodge of Texas A.F. & A.M., 1955), [n.p.].

49. Herbert E. Bolton, Transcripts of documents concerning the Santa Fe Expedition, trans. H. Bailey Carroll, 2: 58, 80, BCAH; Noel M. Loomis, *The Texan-Santa Fe Pioneers* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), 268.

50. Millard to Huling, March 16, 1841, Huling Papers.

Shortly thereafter, he continued:

> I understand you are a candidate for the House of Representatives & wish you success, I expect to be there about the first of August and will take a turn among the people. So far my prospects for the Senate appear very flattering. I have not heard as yet whether they will raise any opposition to me in your county—I shall try the poll at all events. [51]

In spite of his involvement with his own race, Millard missed no chance to tout Sam Houston for President. In August 1841, he wrote the *Austin City Gazette,* "Notwithstanding what the *Telegraph* may say, this district will give a large majority for Old Sam." The following day, there appeared in the short editorial comments of the *Texas Sentinel,* another Austin newspaper, the decidedly impertinent reply: "Is Colonel H. Millard, the letter writer of the *Gazette,* the same who run [*sic*] for Congress in Jefferson County, and received two votes, and one of them his own? If so, he is a sagacious observer of public sentiment!" The *Gazette* sprang hotly to Millard's defense:

> As the Editorial writer of the *Sentinel* sneeringly enquires who Col. H. Millard is, we will tell him. He is a man who stood up for Texas in the hour of danger—he was delegate from Liberty county jointly with Judge Burnet, to the Consultation, and the General Council; he attended at his post advocating the cause of his country, while his colleague, pleading sickness, was absent. He is the same Col. H. Millard, who commanded a regiment of regular infantry, the only one Texas had, through the revolutionary war,—the same man who at the battle of San Jacinto, headed the attack on the left wing of the Mexican army, and captured the colors of the Guerero [*sic*] Battalion. As a man of veracity, we can aver from personal acquaintance with him, Col. Henry Millard is second to none in Texas.[52]

The *Sentinel* placated:

> The *Gazette* of yesterday has made a most unnecessary waste of words about our friend Col. H. Millard. Now we will inform the Editor, that we are as well acquainted with Col. M., as he can possibly be, and estimate his public services and character as highly; and what we said, could not be construed into any reflection upon

51. Millard to Huling, May 26, 1841, Huling Papers.

52. *Austin City Gazette,* Aug. 4 and 11, 1841.

> either. We only thought that the Col. might be mistaken in his estimate of the Jefferson County vote, as he had once been in his own strength in said county.[53]

In the election the following September, Houston and Huling were successful; Millard was not. One Thomas McFarland of Jasper County handily defeated him, outstripping him almost three to one in his home county of Jefferson.[54] There is evidence that some thought Millard was too ambitious. Writing to Huling before the election, an acquaintance of both men had remarked, "Col. Millard you may be sure cannot get the vote of this county for any office—let alone the one that his ambition would had [*sic*] him aspire to—I am no enemy of Millard's but notwithstanding I cannot vote for him."[55]

Discouraged, frustrated at every turn, in debt, Millard went ahead with his plans to leave the town he had founded. In mid-December 1841, he wrote Huling that he had been "very much engaged arranging [his] business to get off." Part of the arrangements he made to leave Beaumont included providing for his slaves. Before departing for Galveston, Millard bought a mulatto slave girl named Phillis, aged about 11 years, and deeded her to his son Frederick, in exchange for the sum of $650, paid to him by Letitia Inge. In other words, Letitia Inge bought herself a slave girl through Millard as agent. Millard also, "for the interest and benefit of said Frederick S. Millard and Letitia Inge, a colored woman," sold to one James Drake a town house and lot occupied by Letitia, presumably in trust for her. Sometime in January of 1842, he moved to Galveston, taking Philip Evans with him.[56]

After he had settled himself in Galveston, Millard made several characteristic moves. He entered immediately into public service, becoming tax assessor for the city the very month he arrived.[57] He would have had no difficulty in obtaining the position; many of his old friends and comrades-in-arms held positions of leadership in Galveston government, including his San Jacinto subordinate John M. Allen, who was mayor at the time. In Galveston, Millard also reestablished his Masonic connections. Beginning on April 6, 1842, he visited them intermittently at the meetings of Harmony Lodge No. 6. Soon he began substituting pro tem for various officers.

53. *Texas Sentinel* (Austin), Aug. 5 and 12, 1841.

54. Election Returns for Jefferson County, 1841, TXSL.

55. William C. V. Dashiell to Huling, July 21, 1841, Huling Papers.

56. Millard owed his brother Alfred, for one, over $1,000. Millard to Huling, Sept. 15, 1841, Huling Papers; JCDR, D: 376, 378.

57. Tax Rolls, Galveston County, 1842, Rosenberg Library, Galveston, TX; Election Returns, Galveston County, 1842, TXSL.

Yielding to his lingering yen for military life, he at some point rejoined the Texas militia and became colonel of the Fourth Regiment, Second Brigade, stationed in Galveston. On April 21, 1842, he and Sam Houston's former aide, Col. George W. Hockley, staged a mock battle in Galveston in honor of San Jacinto. An admiring observer commented that Millard and Hockley "conceived a plan of celebration that at once aroused an enthusiastic interest in the event, and hastily enlisted every able-bodied man in Galveston." The event included a "sham battle," to be fought on the prairie between Saccarappa (an early settlement on the Island) and Galveston proper. Hockley and Millard were leaders of the battle, staged "under the eye of General Morehead [Edwin Morehouse]," Millard's commanding officer and old friend. The event, a huge success, marked the first celebration of San Jacinto Day in Galveston.[58]

Unfortunately, Millard's life in Galveston, meant to be a new beginning and indeed begun so auspiciously, became instead a twilight of dimmed hopes, straitened circumstances, and receding opportunities. Almost simultaneously with his move to Galveston came the onset of poor health, its nature unknown. Millard referred to it only as his "complaint," but its effect was devastating. To compound his troubles, the San Jacinto Day celebration apparently triggered a quarrel between himself and Hockley, because the following autumn Hockley filed certain "charges and specifications of charges" against Millard with the Texas Department of War and Marine. His fellow officers of the Fourth Regiment, Second Brigade, defended him hotly, writing that "in our opinion the charges . . . are, all things considered, groundless and unauthorized . . . . We hold Col. Millard in the highest estimation as a man and . . . we have the utmost . . . confidence in his integrity, ability and efficiency as a military officer . . . . We express . . . most deliberately & finally our disbelief in their truth and propriety." The charges were never named, and apparently nothing came of them, but the entire affair made a bitter aftermath to an otherwise successful event.[59]

Regardless of his problems, Millard continued to function as tax assessor for Galveston County and as commandant of the Second Brigade but at times was so ill he could not even answer his correspondence. Several times during that winter he almost died. He depended entirely for support upon his slave Philip Evans, who worked as a barber and hair-dresser in a little shop on the east side of

58. Manuscript Sources, Document No.70-0426, Rosenberg Library; Charles W. Hayes, *Galveston: History of the Island and the City* (2 vols., Austin: Jenkins-Garrett Press, 1974), 2: 445. J. O. Dyer, *The Early History of Galveston* (Centenary Edition, Galveston: Oscar Springer Printing Co., 1916), 17.

59. Millard to Huling, Sept. 10, 1843, Huling Papers; Manuscript Sources, Document No. 70-0442, Rosenberg Library.

Tremont Street, "adjoining Mr. Sergeant's crockery store." At one time, thinking he was near his end, Millard made a list of his current debts in his memorandum book, headed "Feby 1843: List of My Debts in Galveston not at present provided for" that estate administrators could consult in case of his death.[60]

Sometime during that year, however, his faithful friend Pulsifer moved to Galveston, almost certainly to take care of Millard. They opened a small drug and medicine store on Market Street under the name of Pulsifer & Co. In an attempt to improve his health, Millard made one or two sea voyages and once spent a few weeks in New Orleans, possibly to consult physicians there. Gradually, throughout the spring and summer of 1843, his physical condition slowly improved. That September, he felt able to write Huling, stating that "my health is improving rapidly and I have every prospect of soon being restored to my former good health." He included a comment that reflected poignantly the depths to which his morale—and his economic situation—had sunk: "My circumstances have been very low as well as my health. It has been cursed hard many times to raise the means to live . . . . times are even hard here, business dull and profits small, but," he added with a shadow of his old ebullient optimism, "we have every reasonable prospect of being able to keep along in a small way . . . . We have only to hang in and hope for a better state of things." He closed with a final pungent thrust at the number of foreigners in Galveston doing business for strictly cash, cotton, or barter, thereby ruining everyone else's credit. In spite of its touch of optimism, the tone of Millard's letter was elegiac, as if he were part of a vanishing world.[61]

Sometime during that time, perhaps because of his close brush with death, perhaps because there was at last adequate schooling available, Millard realized a long-standing dream: he brought his sons to Galveston. He enrolled them in the Galveston Academy, which in addition to regular subjects also taught Latin, Greek, and French.[62] Certainly the lonely man must have enjoyed having his family with him at last.

60. GWN, May 25, 1844; Millard, Memorandum Book.

61. GWN, May 25, 1844; Millard to Hulling, Sept. 10, 1843, Huling Papers.

62. *Telegraph and Texas Register,* Nov. 29, 1843. Three notations under the heading, "List of Debts not yet provided for—1844," included one to N. B. Yard, owner of a Galveston clothing store, for "cutting the boys clothes," one "to the sloop Cutter for the Boys Passage to the Sabine," and one "for schooling Due Mr. Huckins [the schoolmaster of the Galveston Academy] about 5 mo. for Frederick & Henry." This indicated that the boys came to Galveston to live with Millard. Millard, Memorandum Book.

Millard's hope for better times, so tenuously expressed, went unrealized. Although he apparently sent Pulsifer home to Beaumont, finally affiliated, on December 6, 1843, with Harmony Lodge, and made at least one journey to Beaumont in May of the following year to act as his mother's agent in a business transaction, his days were numbered.[63] In July of 1844 an epidemic of yellow fever hit Galveston, brought, it was believed, by the U.S. Man-of-War *Pansett* a few weeks before. In a note dated July 8, Millard's memorandum book recorded that he owed $3.00 to Dr. Nicholas D. Labadie, a prominent Galveston druggist and physician, almost certainly a debt for medicine or treatment, and on August 16, he resigned his position as county tax assessor. Perhaps he was already ill.[64]

Whether his final illness was caused by a flare-up of his old complaint, being in a weakened condition from its ravages, or he simply caught yellow fever in the prevailing epidemic, is a question that, in the absence of records, is impossible to determine. At any rate, knowing this time that he was going to die, he made a sort of informal will in the little memorandum book, by now his companion for at least 25 years. In it, he made a list of his current debts and stated that he wished only those debts paid, "for what little could be saved from the wreck of my Estate would not begin to satisfy the old debts of many years standing." He also directed that the proceeds from Philip Evans's labor should be directed first toward the retirement of the current debts, and after that was accomplished, toward the education of his two sons, "whom I desire to have as well educated as circumstances will permit." On August 28, near death, he made a formal will, leaving 1,000 acres each to his Natchez brothers-in-law, Franklin and Jefferson Beaumont, and the rest of his property to his sons. He reiterated his instructions concerning Philip, placing him under the direction of his friend John R. Talley, who witnessed the will. Talley also served as co-executor, along with Joseph Pulsifer. When Millard signed the document, he was so ill he could barely write.[65]

Sometime that day or the next, Henry Millard died in the little corner upstairs room of the Virginia House, a small story-and-a-half public house on the southwest corner of Market and Twenty-second streets. On August 30, the Masons, in the end both church and family to him, called a special meeting of Harmony Lodge "for the purpose of attending to the grave the remains of

63. Advertisement, *Galveston Evening News*, May 25, 1844; Minutes of Harmony Lodge No. 6, Dec. 6, 1843; JCDR, E: 160.

64. Ben C. Stuart, Scrapbook, 47, Rosenberg Library; Minutes, A: Aug. 16, 1844, Galveston County Commissioners' Court, Galveston, TX.

65. Millard, Memorandum Book.

Brother Henry Millard, it being his dying request." From their meeting place on Tremont Street, they proceeded to the newly-opened Episcopal Cemetery down Broadway and laid the body of Henry Millard to rest with a full ceremony of the Masonic rites that had meant so much to him.[66]

Millard died a "Texian," an honorific that Texans of his generation claimed for themselves. A new era was approaching; as new breeds from different lands thronged into the new state of Texas, new personalities appeared on the scene, land values changed, and the face of the country assumed new lineaments. If Millard had survived long enough, perhaps he might have resurrected his land business and gained the wealth he sought; if he had lived, perhaps he might have made his mark on the political history of the state. As it was, when, on February 19, 1846, his fellow Mason Dr. Anson Jones declared the Republic of Texas to be no more, Millard had slept for more than a year under the shifting sands of Galveston Island.

Millard's will was probated in Jefferson County, March 7, 1845. His trust in John Talley had been misplaced; Talley never performed his job as executor of the estate, and was finally removed by the Jefferson County Probate Court on March 2, 1846. The faithful Pulsifer struggled manfully with the burden, made heavier by the fact that so much of Millard's land interests were undivided, until circumstances forced his own resignation as executor in the same year. Neal McGaffey, a Jefferson County attorney who as agent for collection for another party held a heavy claim against Millard's estate, was appointed in Pulsifer's stead. Efforts to settle the estate went on into the twentieth century.

Millard's descendants, however, eventually reaped the benefit of his labors. Frederick Sipe and Henry Beaumont Millard inherited, besides numerous other lands, 1,280 acres near Georgetown in Williamson County which were patented posthumously to Millard in February, 1846. Sometime before 1857, the two Millard brothers came there to make their homes. Frederick Sipe Millard died in 1863, but his brother Henry, who reared Frederick's two sons, outlived him by many years, dying an old man in 1914.

Millard's brothers, D. J. Otho and Hosmore, died in Beaumont, in 1851 and 1854, respectively. In the year of his own death, 1853, Alfred, by now living in Carrollton, Louisiana (then a few miles above New Orleans), freed Philip Evans, his wife Ann, and their child Eveline, "from motives of benevolence and

66. Hayes, *Galveston History*, 310-311; Minutes of Harmony Lodge No. 6, Aug. 30, 1844; Tom Allen, *Those Buried Texans: No Stone Unturned* (Dallas: Hendrick-Long Publishing Company, 1980), 102.

humanity and also from long services rendered by them to me." In addition, Evans paid Alfred the sum of $1,043. Evans had not only retired Millard's debts and educated his children, but he had also earned enough to buy his own freedom. Millard's devoted partner and friend, Joseph Pulsifer, died in Beaumont in 1861. Millard's mother, Nancy, eventually moved to Sabine Pass, Texas, where she lived to the advanced age of 83, outliving all of her children but her daughter, Nancy Millard Bryan. The mother died in 1862 in Sabine Pass of yellow fever.[67]

67. JCDR, K: 275; Nancy Millard, Probate Packet No. 150, Jefferson County Clerk.

Republick of Texas } Know all men by
County of Jefferson } these presents that
I Abner Ashworth of the Republick
and County afore said have this day con
stituted and apointed Henry Millard Esqr
of the Republick and county afore said
my true and lawful atorney for me
and in my name to present to the
auditor of Publick accounts my disch
arge for three Months service and to do all
things nessary in the premis to have the
Same Audited as tho I was personaly
present in witness where of I have
setomy hand this 15 day January 1838
in the presents of } Abner + Ashworth
his mark
G. G. Hawkes
[illegible]
Wm H. Irion

In 1838, Abner Ashworth filed a claim with the Republic of Texas in order to recuperate expenses he incurred in support of the revoultion. Signing his name with an "X," he transfered power of attorney to Henry Millard. *Courtesy of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin, TX.*

Free Blacks in Early Texas

The Experiences of the Ashworth and Other Families of Southeast Texas

Patricia Clegg

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Some of the first African Americans in Mexico and Texas came with the Spaniards in the mid-1500s. They often married Native American and Spanish women and as the control of the region passed from Spain and Mexico to the Republic of Texas, a portion of the slaves, free blacks, mulattos, and their children were absorbed into the frontier society as people with Spanish surnames. Texas was a large and basically untamed country, rich farmland that was wide open, and full of potential for many people looking for adventure. There was much to be found for those looking for a new life.

The original entrepreneur, or *empresario*, who worked with the Mexican government to establish a settlement in Texas for Americans was Moses Austin. He died before he was able to realize his dream, but his son Stephen F. Austin was able to work with the Spanish authorities. In 1821, the Spanish government agreed that settlers could receive 80 acres of land for each bondsman brought to Texas.

In his classic study of free blacks in early Texas published in *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* between 1936 and 1937, Harold Schoen observed how most migrated to the region on their own.[1] In conjunction with the general westward movement of the U.S. population at that time, they came as individuals and families. They also arrived as slaves whose owners later freed them. Al-

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1. Harold Schoen, "The Free Negro in the Republic of Texas. Chapter VI. The Extent of Discrimination and its Effects," SHQ, 41 (July 1937): 108.

though free blacks came to Texas for the same reasons, their white counterparts had mixed feelings towards them. Some Anglo-Texans viewed them as ignorant, insolent and a bad influence on slaves, but others valued their industriousness and skills. This mixed reception prevented African-American immigrants from enjoying the freedoms and the sense of belonging that they hoped to find in Texas. A survey of the history of free blacks in Southeast Texas during the republic era will show how this opposition helped shape their experiences and identify their unique contributions to the region.

Historian Andrew Forrest Muir, who wrote a history of free blacks in Southeast Texas for a 1950 number of the *Journal of Negro History*, found that the U.S. Census of 1850 recorded 397 free blacks in Texas with 63 residing in Jefferson County. A large number of free blacks in Jefferson County were members of the Ashworth family. William Ashworth was one of the first members of the family who came to Texas in 1831 and moved to Lorenzo de Zavala's colony. Three brothers followed him—Aaron in 1833, Abner in 1834, and Moses in 1835. They probably moved from Calcasieu Parish in Louisiana. Two or possibly three were natives of South Carolina. Three Ashworths received land grants from the Mexican government, but before they located their claims, the Texas Revolution began. While the Ashworths represented one family, their history reflects the experiences and endurance of other free blacks in Texas.[2]

African Americans contributed to the Texas struggle for independence. Mexican law did not consider free blacks as inferior, and treated them equally to Anglo-American settlers. Free blacks, as well as other Texans, felt that the decree of April 6, 1830, issued by the Mexican government was unfair. The decree called for the collection of duties on goods brought into Texas from the United States.[3] The settlers had enjoyed duty-free goods up until that point and were not happy with this change. Texas residents, Anglo, African, and Tejano, placed most of the blame for their problems on what they felt were unjust laws and taxes placed on them by the Mexican government. When hostilities broke out between the government and the people of Texas, free blacks stood up and defended what they felt were their rights and privileges.

The Ashworths contributed to the cause in several ways. While the family primarily aided the Texas Revolution with money and supplies, two members sent

2. Andrew Forest Muir, "The Free Negro in Jefferson and Orange Counties, Texas," *Journal of Negro History*, 35 (April 1950): 185.

3. Schoen, "The Free Negro in the Republic of Texas. Chapter II. The Free Negro and the Texas Revolution," SHQ, 40 (July 1936): 26.

substitutes who served in Capt. B. J. Harper's company of Beaumont Volunteers from July 7 to September 7, 1836. Joseph Grigsby, chairman of a select committee, recorded that the Ashworth brothers had contributed, "both by personal Service and by their substance Generously bestowed without fee or reward."[4]

Schoen demonstrated that in addition to the Ashworths, other African Americans served in the Texas Revolution. Greenbury Logan was one of Stephen F. Austin's "Old 300," the first colony in Texas consisting of former U.S. citizens. Logan received a land grant on Chocolate Bayou in what would become Brazoria County. In 1835, he marched with Austin to San Antonio de Bexar, although the empresario would later claim that Mexican president Antonio López de Santa Anna intended to defeat Texas and populate it "with Indians and Negroes." In October 1835, Samuel McCullough joined Capt. James Collingsworth's company at Matagorda. This group seized the presidio at Goliad, during which McCullough was the only Texan wounded. He later claimed to have been "the first whose blood was shed in the War of Independence."[5]

Texas leaders were concerned that Mexican agents might attempt to recruit Indian groups as allies. Gen. Samuel Houston turned to William Goyens, who was an experienced interpreter to the Cherokees and other native peoples. Goyens had lived in Nacogdoches as early as 1821, and Houston enlisted him to secure the cooperation of their Indian neighbors. In his instructions, Houston wrote, "Sir, I send . . . a letter to my Brother Bowl [Duwali of the Cherokees], and would be glad if you cou'd take it to him, and have it explained . . . . I will be happy to see you so soon as you can return . . . . Give my compliments to your family." Houston's words reflected the regard he held for Goyens as well as his value to the Texan cause.[6]

Although free blacks willingly gave their help in the Texas Revolution, their contributions were not appreciated by everyone. After the Texans had officially declared their independence, they formed a provisional government. In one of

4. Muir, "Free Negro in Jefferson and Orange," 186. Grigsby quoted in Schoen, "Chapter II," 32.

5. Schoen, "Chapter II," 26-27; and "The Free Negro in the Republic of Texas. Chapter I. Origin of the Free Negro," SHQ, 39 (April 1936): 301. Austin quoted in Randolph B. Campbell, *An Empire for Slavery: The Peculiar Institution in Texas, 1821- 1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 42. McCulloch quoted in Schoen, "Chapter II," 26.

6. Sam Houston to William Goyens, July 3, 1837, in Eugene C. Barker and Amelia W. Williams, eds., *The Writings of Sam Houston, 1813-1863* (8 vols., rept. 1938-1943, Austin: Pemberton Press, Jenkins Publishing Co., 1970), 2: 132; Schoen, "Chapter II," 30.

its first acts, the General Council passed legislation that prohibited the migration of African Americans, prompted by a request from the Beaumont Committee of Safety. As Schoen observed, this evidently stemmed from the concern of slave owners who remembered the insurrections led by Denmark Vesy in South Carolina and Nat Turner in Virginia.[7]

These rebellions caused a great distrust of African Americans even though they contributed to the revolution. A joint resolution passed by the Texas Congress on June 5, 1837, permitted free blacks who were residents on the day of the declaration of independence to remain in the republic.[8] Three years later, however, this fear of sedition prompted the congress to pass an Act stating:

> That . . . it shall not be lawful for any free person of color to emigrate to this Republic . . . . That the President of the Republic do issue his proclamation, commanding all free persons of color who now are in the Republic, to remove from the same before the first of January, 1842 . . . . Be it further enacted, That two years shall be allowed, from and after the passage of this act, to all free persons of color who now are in this Republic, to remove out of the same and all those who shall be found here after that time, without the permission of Congress, shall be arrested and sold as provided in the act.[9]

This act caused a great deal of distress to the free blacks in Texas. Not only were they being asked to leave a nation that they had supported and adopted as their home, but the law threatened to sell them into slavery if they did not leave. Not all of the whites in Texas were afraid. Muir found that the Ashworths and other "free persons of color" in Jefferson County received the support of their white neighbors. In 1840, G. A. Patillo wrote to Pres. Mirabeau B. Lamar supporting Jesse Ashworth's residency within the republic, requesting a delay in any action until the next meeting of the congress. Patillo stated that Ashworth was "a quiet and unassuming [*sic*] good citizen . . . , a man of some property . . . of some benefit to the government." When it convened, the congress received three petitions presented on behalf of African-American citizens in Jefferson County. Almost all of the prominent office holders and electors of the community signed the petitions. A second petition presented for Aaron, David, Joshua, and Wil-

7. Schoen, "The Free Negro in the Republic of Texas. Chapter IV. Legal Status," SHQ, 40 (Jan. 1937): 171.

8. Schoen, "Chapter IV," 178.

9. *Laws of the Republic of Texas* (Houston: Telegraph Power Press, 1840), 152.

liam Ashworth mistook them for brothers, but noted that they had lived within the county for two years and were "peaceable and respectable citizens." Elisha Thomas, who was a brother-in-law to the Ashworth brothers, was described as a productive inhabitant and a Texas resident at the time of the declaration of independence. Muir further demonstrated that after receiving and reviewing the petitions, a select committee of the House of Representatives stated that "free Negroes as a general rule should not be encouraged but these were exceptions, for they had contributed both their substance and their personal service to the achievement of independence" and had "at all times conducted themselves well . . . upright in their dealings and peaceable in their disposition."[10]

The petitions passed in both houses, and on December 12, 1840, President Lamar signed the act which read:

> That William Ashworth, Abner Ashworth, David Ashworth, Aaron Ashworth, Elisha Thomas, and all free persons of color, together with their families, who were residing in Texas on the day of the declaration of independence, are, and shall be exempt from . . . an act of Congress entitled "An Act concerning Free Persons of Color" . . . ; and that the above named persons, with their families, are hereby granted permission to remain in this republic.[11]

The "Ashworth Act" helped establish a precedent that helped many of free black families who later petitioned for residency.

As Schoen pointed out, Samuel McCullough and Greenbury Logan, both veterans of the Texas Revolution, had to petition the Texas Congress on their own behalf in order for their families to stay in Texas. McCullough, his three sisters, and another family member were allowed to remain because of his military service. In his petition, Logan stated that he "had hoped that after the zeal and patriotism evinced in fighting for his country, and his willingness to shed his blood in a cause so glorious, he might be allowed the privileges of spending the remainder of his days in quiet and peace." Supported by well-respected Anglo-American citizens, the petition received a favorable ruling from the special committee, which found that and his wife should "remain permanently and enjoy all rights, priviliages [*sic*] and immunities of free citizens."[12]

10. Patillo, Ashworth petition, and select committee quoted in Muir, "Free Negro in Jefferson and Orange," 187.

11. *Laws of the Republic of Texas* (Houston: Telegraph Power Press, 1841), 85-86.

12. Logan and special committee quoted in Schoen, "Chapter IV," 176, 178.

In her book *Black Texas Women 150 Years of Trial and Triumph* (1995), Ruthe Winegarten observed that free blacks who did not directly participate in the revolution still desired to remain in Texas. In 1839, citizens of Brazoria County filed a petition on behalf of Tamar Morgan and her husband Samuel H. Hardin, who had been one of the original settlers from Austin's colony. This petition was granted.[13] The congress, however, did not approve all of the petitions for permission to stay in Texas. Schoen found that Zelia Husk, who had come to Texas in 1835, petitioned twice. Forty-one citizens of Houston supported her for "peaceably earning her livelihood . . . , exercising the industry of a washerwoman." Diana Leonard also came to Texas in 1835, also worked as a washerwoman, and received 12 signatures from her Houston neighbors on her petition. The congress, however, denied both applications.[14]

Schoen further noted that the Ashworth Act, combined with the law of February 5, 1840, divided free blacks into three groups. The first group were those who continued to immigrate in violation of the law, but once they arrived, they petitioned the legislature to stay. The second group consisted of those who immigrated after the Texas Declaration of Independence, March 2, 1836, and before February 4, 1840. Congress agreed to their residency for two years, and they tried to have their time limit extended. The third group were those that had arrived before the declaration, and the congress defined them as permanent residents. Whether or not congress recognized their contributions, free blacks provided services that were greatly needed.[15]

Some free blacks prospered in Texas. By 1850 in Jefferson County, as Schoen and Muir found, a former slave of Wylie Martin by the name of Peter amassed $16,000 as a freight hauler. In 1838 the commissioner's court granted William Ashworth the franchise to run a ferry "across Lake Sabine and up the Neches River to Beaumont," and the 1850 census counted him as a farmer with property valued at $7,205. The census also recorded Aaron Ashworth the elder as a farmer and with property of $3,764. Aaron the younger owned 2,570 cattle, making him the largest rancher in the county.[16]

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13. Ruthe Winegarten, *Black Texas Women 150 Years of Trial and Triumph* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 8.

14. Petitions quoted in Schoen, "The Free Negro in the Republic of Texas. Chapter V. The Law in Practice," SHQ, 40 (April 1937): 277.

15. Schoen, "Chapter V," 276-277.

16. Schoen, "Chapter II," 33, and "Chapter VI," 97; Muir, "Free Negro in Jefferson and Orange," 194.

Not all were successful. Schoen found that Greenbury Logan worked as a blacksmith before the revolution, but a wound that he received at the attack on Bexar diminished his ability to ply his trade. Unable to work, he and his wife Caroline turned to a series of unsuccessful businesses. In 1839, they claimed four lots in Brazoria valued at $3,100. One year later, they only owned three, and in 1841, he asked the government for a pension when he could not pay his property taxes.[17]

Reflective of their prosperity, the Ashworths and other free blacks in Texas owned slaves. The reasons that African Americans of means would participate in this system were numerous and complex, but like their white counterparts, they anticipated profit and prestige. Muir found that as early as 1839, William, Abner, and Mary Ashworth bought and sold several slaves, and the 1850 census documented that Aaron owned six, Abner three, and Joshua Ashworth one slave.[18]

Regardless of owning business, paying taxes, and owning slaves, free blacks in Texas did not hold full rights of citizenship. They could not vote, serve on juries, hold office, or serve as witnesses in criminal cases against whites. This, combined with some illiteracy, caused a great deal of injustices because some of their neighbors took advantage of them. Muir confirmed that eight of the Ashworths could not sign their names. Abner Ashworth was taken to court because he did not understand or know his rights. After a dispute over alleged drunkenness at a funeral, a man named Barns managed to coerce Ashworth into signing several promissory notes for $2,000. Christian Hillebrandt obtained the notes and eventually sued Ashworth. The case ultimately reached the Texas Supreme Court, where Royall T. Wheeler ruled that the notes had been obtained "without any value or sufficient consideration, and by taking advantage of his [Ashworth's] ignorance, and practicing upon his fears."[19]

Literacy, however, did not guarantee an escape from litigation. In the case of William Goyens, as Schoen demonstrated, his educational history and experience with Mexican law often led him to court. Over a 10-year period Goyens was involved in about 30 suits. In half of them, he was a plaintiff. He appeared

17. Schoen, "Chapter VI," 98.

18. Muir, "Free Negro in Jefferson and Orange" 195.

19. Wheeler quoted in Muir, "Free Negro in Jefferson and Orange," 196. Schoen located another case in which a white man named Joseph Hutchinson filed a complaint against William Ashworth and his ferry operation. Schoen, "Chapter VI," 97.

as a witness in two others, and on at least one occasion acted as an attorney, yet under the laws of the republic, Goyens could not give his own testimony.[20]

Texas law did provide for acts of manumission which contributed to the numbers of free blacks. Winegarten showed that between 1836 and 1845, Texas slaveholders filed 50 requests to manumit 38 slaves. Congress refused all but two. She and Schoen highlighted several cases. Wylie Martin, for example, freed his slave Peter because of his service in the revolution. The Texas army had conscripted Peter to transport supplies. In 1838, Joseph Walling filed one of the first petitions for manumission to the congress. He asked to free Moriah and her two children because she had "long since made to me full and ample satisfaction for her freedom." In 1841, Peggy Rankin, octogenarian of Montgomery County, requested that congress free her slave Sinez and her three children because of her lifetime of kindness.[21]

A darker side of slavery was the fact that many black women were held as concubines to their owners. Winegarten noted that some relationships began by force while others developed through affection. Women in these situations were usually treated better than other female slaves, and many times, it aided them in gaining emancipation for themselves and their children. In her book, *Women on the Texas Frontier* (1983), Ann Patton Malone finds that Rachel Bartlett lived as Columbus Patton's mistress on his Brazoria County plantation, but his family successfully argued that he was insane. They sent him to an asylum and sent Bartlett to work in the fields. When Patton died, his will freed Bartlett, and although the family objected, she eventually moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, and received an annual allowance from the estate.[22]

As the example of Patton and Bartlett suggested, a few mixed families resided in Texas. Schoen identified several. In 1826, white owner David Town brought his slave wife and children to Spanish Nacogdoches. In 1835, Samuel McCullough, also a white owner, brought his slave family to Jackson County. William Goyens married a white woman named Mary Pate Sibley from Georgia. The abolitionist author Benjamin Lundy visited the Goyens and observed that they seemed "to live happily together, are quite wealthy, and are considered as very respectable."[23]

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20. Schoen, "Chapter VI," 100.

21. Schoen, "Chapter II," 32; Winegarten, *Black Texas Women,* 9.

22. Winegarten, *Black Texas Women,* 29; Ann Patton Malone, *Women on the Texas Frontier: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, University of Texas at El Paso: 1983), 44-46.

23. Lundy quoted in Schoen, "Chapter I," 296, 298-300; NHT, 3: 269.

Not all Texas communities and neighbors welcomed mixed families, and the congress expressed its intolerance with an act passed on June 5, 1837. It stated that "it shall not be lawful for any person of European blood or their descendants, to intermarry with Africans, or the descendants of Africans; and should any person as aforesaid violate the provisions of this section such marriage shall be null and void, the parties on conviction shall be deemed guilty of a high misdemeanor." Muir showed that Texas authorities charged a number of families under this act. The Ashworth family received 17 indictments. All but one of the indictments was dismissed and no decision was ever made in that lone case. Henderson Ashworth married Letitia Stewart in Louisiana, but Texas did not recognize the union and further indicted the husband once for adultery and twice for fornication, resulting in one conviction but no punishment. Black women like Keziah Ashworth also endured charges, once for adultery and twice for fornication with a white man named Willis Goodman.[24]

Because of so many examples of mixed parentage, many residents of Texas were uncertain of their own ethnicity. Some represented a mix of Spanish, Indian, African, and Anglo ancestry. They could often pass as white, but when their neighbors questioned, they could face charges. A daughter of William Primm claimed that she was not aware that she had any African ancestry and appeared as white as did her father. She married a white man named David L. Wood, who also professed an unawareness of her background. The grand jury indicted him, and referring to himself in the third person, Wood explained to congress, "In the fervour and integrity of his heart, and in conformity to the usages of all the civilized world, he espoused and married a wife . . . . In doing which he was not aware that he was rendering himself obnoxious to any law whatever." Her father later testified that she was born a slave and legally remained one.[25]

The legacy of mixed ancestry has led to a measure of denial among Texans who descended from free black families. In her book *The Ashworth Family* (1987), for example, Vanda V. Ashworth refuses to accept her husband's mixed genealogy. He was a descendant of William Ashworth. Responding to the work of Harold Schoen, she replies:

> The statements and write-ups in the SOUTHWESTERN HISTORICAL QUARTERLY and other publications that the ASHWORTHS were NEGROES or COLORED is FALSE

24. *Laws of the Republic of Texas* (Houston: Telegraph Office, 1838), 235; Muir, "Free Negro in Jefferson and Orange," 198-199.

25. Schoen, "Chapter IV," 170.

> . . . . There were very few colored people with SIR names at that time and they were in no position to be called wealthy. Colored people would never have been allowed to live in a WHITE community and raise a family at that time in history . . . . There were no free colored people who had SLAVES.[26]

Texas offered many opportunities for a variety of people that came in search of the perceived fortunes. Free blacks were one of those groups, and their neighbors expressed conflicting attitudes about them. While some were afraid that they might foment slave insurrections, others appreciated the labor and services that they provided to the republic. Free blacks financially, materially, and personally contributed to the Texas Revolution. Despite attempts to deny their residency and other equalities under the law, some free blacks achieved prosperity.

26. Vanda V. Ashworth, *The Ashworth Family*, (Lufkin, TX: privately printed, 1987), 5.

The Texas Gulf Coast in the Civil War

Ralph A. Wooster

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On March 2, 1861, exactly 25 years after Texas declared its independence from Mexico, the secession convention meeting in Austin announced that the voters of Texas had overwhelmingly approved an ordinance of secession and that Texas was no longer a member of the union of American states. Quickly the secession convention moved to formalize the vote of the people and to pass an ordinance uniting Texas with the newly-formed Confederate States of America.[1] This action marked the beginning of a four-year struggle to establish a Southern nation extending from the Potomac on the north to the Rio Grande on the south.

The action of the Secession Convention was warmly applauded throughout the state. In some areas, particularly the Red River country and the German settlements of Central Texas, there were misgivings, and a few state leaders, notably

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In December 2006, after 50 years of teaching and administrative service, Ralph A. Wooster retired from Lamar University. He is a prolific scholar, having authored 10 books, including *The Secession Conventions of the South* (1962), *The People in Power: Courthouse and Statehouse in the Lower South, 1850-1860* (1969), *Politicians, Planters, and Plain Folk: Courthouse and Statehouse in the Upper South, 1850-1860* (1975), and most recently *Texas and Texans in the Great War* (2009). He also co-authored the state-adopted textbook, *Texas and Texans* (McGraw-Hill), edited four anthologies, and wrote over 70 articles. He is currently at work on another anthology on Texas Civil War history. Dr. Wooster was a founding member and has been a long-time supporter of the Texas Gulf Historical Society. He contributed as many as seven articles to the *Record* and between 2009 and 2010 served as its editor.

1. E. W. Winkler, ed., *The Journal of the Secession Convention of Texas, 1861* (Austin: Austin Printing Co., 1912), 35-44, 100-102; *Texas State Gazette* (Austin), Feb. 9, March 23, and 30, 1861; Anna Irene Sandbo, "First Session of the Secession Convention in Texas," SHQ, 18 (Oct. 1914): 162-194.

Gov. Sam Houston, refused to recognize the new Confederate government, but on the whole, secession was popular with the people of the state. In the Texas Gulf Coast country, scene of the thriving commercial center Galveston and its new, growing rival, Houston, as well as the rich sugar-cotton complex on the lower Brazos and Colorado rivers, the withdrawal from the Union was the occasion for rejoicing. Not a single Gulf Coast county had voted against secession in the popular referendum and much of the impetus for secession had come from Gulf Coast radicals such as John A. Wharton, Guy M. Bryan, and T. Jefferson Chambers. In Houston, militia units paraded, cannon roared, and flags were waved. In Galveston British consul Arthur Lynn noted that the atmosphere was one of "joy and congratulation that they can now free themselves from a connection which had been injurious to their interests." And in nearby Beaumont, William A. Fletcher was so excited about the prospect of seeing military service that he boarded a flatcar for Houston to enlist. Everywhere along the Gulf Coast there was a feeling of buoyant optimism.[2]

Texas escaped many of the ravages of war born by other states of the Confederacy. Although 60,000 to 70,000 Texans served in the Confederate army (and an additional 2,000 served in the Union army), and although its banners were carried on distant battlefields by such distinguished units as Hood's Brigade, Terry's Texas Rangers, Wharton's Cavalry, Walker's Division, and Polignac's Brigade, most of the state escaped military invasion and was spared the pangs of destructive battle. Not quite so fortunate was the Texas Gulf Coast because Union military forces made repeated efforts to gain and maintain a foothold on the Texas coast. These military operations began in the summer of 1861 and continued throughout the duration of the war but without great success for the Union. As assessed by historian Rupert N. Richardson, the defense of the Texas Gulf Coast was "one of the most brilliant chapters in the story of the Confederacy."[3]

The Civil War really began for the Texas Gulf Coast in July 1861 with the arrival of the Federal warship *South Carolina* off the coast near Galveston. In a few

2. Ralph A. Wooster, *The Secession Conventions of the South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962), 129-130; Stephen B. Oates, "Texas under the Secessionists," SHQ, 67 (Oct. 1963): 171. Arthur Lynn quoted in Earl W. Fornell, *The Galveston Era* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), 291. William Andrew Fletcher was so enthusiastic that he pumped a hand car from Liberty to Houston in hopes of enlisting. As luck would have it, he was forced to return to Liberty to find a company that was being enrolled for service. Fletcher, *Rebel Private, Front and Rear*, ed. Bell I. Wiley, New Edition (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1954), 6-7.

3. Rupert P. Richardson, *Texas, The Lone Star State*, Second Edition (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Printice-Hall, 1958), 189. The finest study of coastal defense in the Civil War is Alwyn Barr, "Texas Coastal Defense, 1861-1865," SHQ, 45 (July 1961): 1-31.

weeks' time, it had captured 10 Southern vessels. Federals armed three of them to aid in the blockade efforts along the upper Gulf from Galveston to Sabine Pass.[4]

The appearance of the *South Carolina* caused concern within the state, and during the summer and autumn of 1861, efforts were made to fortify the coast line. Artillery units were recruited and rushed to various points along the coast, but although men were plentiful in 1861, heavy cannon was not and the defensive efforts were seriously hampered. Brig. Gen. Paul O. Hébert, newly appointed Confederate commander for Texas, pushed efforts in late 1861 to fortify Galveston and Houston, considered the most vulnerable and important spots on the Texas coast. An attempt was made to improvise a harbor defense fleet, and garrisons were increased in numerical strength. But lacking in sufficient heavy ordnance, General Hébert felt the effort to hold the island of Galveston would be practically impossible, and in October 1861, he reported to the Confederate Secretary of War Judah P. Benjamin that "it will be almost impossible to prevent a landing at some point upon this extensive and unprotected coast. I have settled upon it as a military necessity that it must be fought on shore or in the interior."[5]

In November, Union vessels successfully surprised and partially burned the Confederate patrol schooner *Royal Yacht*, increasing General Hébert's apprehensions as to the safety of the city. Fortunately, however, no serious Union efforts against the city of Galveston were made in 1861. Instead, the Union forces contented themselves with occasional naval bombardment of Confederate positions near Aransas Pass, Port Lavaca, and Indianola.[6]

Although the main Union naval efforts during the spring and early summer of 1862 were directed toward forts Henry and Donelson in Tennessee, and towards New Orleans and Memphis on the Mississippi River, Union naval forces continued to make raids along the Texas coast. Lt. John W. Kittredge, commander of the bark *Arthur*, was especially troublesome in the Aransas region in the early summer months, obstructing coastal trade and lobbing artillery shells into coastal towns. In August, Kittredge, now commanding a small Union flotilla,

4. *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion* (31 vols., GPO, 1894-1927), Ser.1, 16: 595.

5. Paul O. Hébert to Judah P. Benjamin, Oct. 24, 1861, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (130 vols., GPO, 1880-1891), Ser. 1, 4: 127; Barr, "Texas Coastal Defense," 6-7.

6. *Official Records, Navies*, Ser. 1, 17: 71, 18: 690-691.

attempted to capture Corpus Christi, but was repulsed by Confederate forces commanded by Maj. Alfred M. Hobby. But another Union force in October overwhelmed a small Confederate garrison under Maj. Getulius Kellersberger at Sabine Pass, burned the railroad depot at Beaumont, and destroyed the Confederate fort, two schooners, and a railroad bridge before withdrawing.[7]

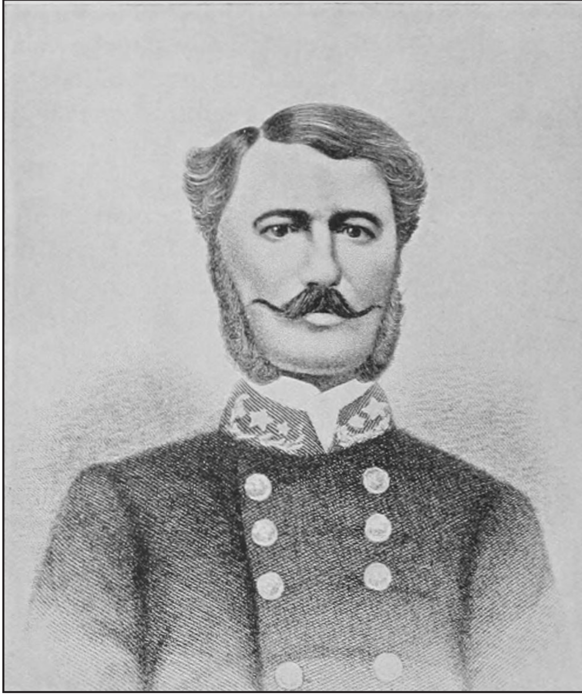
On October 4, 1862, the Union gunboat *Harriet Lane* sailed into Galveston harbor and demanded the surrender of the city. Shortly thereafter, seven warships followed, steaming past Fort Point on the tip of the island on into the bay. The garrison of Fort Point opened fire with their 10-inch gun, the only remaining heavy artillery in the city, but this gun was quickly reduced by fire from 11-inch guns on the Union *Owasco*. After two salvos from smaller guns proved ineffective, Confederate resistance on the island ceased, and Texas's largest seaport was now in Union hands. Gov. Francis Lubbock had ordered that the city be burned by evacuating troops, but the resistance of the local population to the destruction of their property prevented such action from occurring.[8]

The loss of Galveston in October 1862 was followed by a change in Confederate command in Texas. Brigadier General Hébert, who had never been popular with Texans, who considered him "a man of no military force or practical genius" who "preferred red-top boots, and a greased rat-tail moustache, with a fine equipage, and a suite of waiters, to the use of good, practical sense," was removed from command. The man who replaced Hébert was John Bankhead Magruder, a proud Virginian who had a reputation as a fighter. Although Magruder, known popularly as "Prince John" for his courtly bearing, suave and gallant manners, and regal dress, had been careless in the Seven Days' fighting around Richmond and had been criticized by Gen. Robert E. Lee, no one in Texas doubted his aggressive spirit. So optimistic were Texans that Prince John would reverse Confederate fortunes that many believed "the advent of General Magruder was equal to the addition of 50,000 men."[9]

7. *Official Records, Armies*, Ser. 1, 9: 610-624, 729; *Official Records, Navies*, Ser. 1, 19: 227-229; Barr, "Texas Coastal Defense," 11-12; Lester N. Fitzhugh, "Saluria, Fort Esperanza, and Military Operations on the Texas Coast, 1861-1864," SHQ (July 1957): 74-79.

8. *Official Records, Navies*, Ser. 1, 19: 254-260; Barr, "Texas Coastal Defense," 13; Earl W. Fornell, "Confederate Seaport Strategy," *Civil War History*, 4 (Dec. 1956): 67.

9. Thomas North, *Five Years in Texas: Or, What You Did Not Hear during the War from January 1861 to January 1866* (Cincinnati: Elm Street Printing Co., 1871), 105-106; John S. Ford, *Rip Ford's Texas*, ed. Oates (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1963), 343; Oates, "Texas under the Secessionists," 195.



Gen. John B. Magruder. From George F. Williams, *The Memorial War Book* (1894)

With Magruder's arrival in Texas, new plans were made for the recapture of Galveston. In late December, Magruder gathered up his forces for the assault—the Twenty-Sixth Texas Cavalry under Col. X. B. DeBray, French-born officer in Texas's service; several other cavalry groups, detachments, and companies under Col. Tom Green, who had gained fame in Henry H. Sibley's New Mexico invasion earlier in the year; and some volunteer infantry. Magruder also had a battery of artillery and two river steamers that had been converted into gunboats—the *Bayou City* and the *Neptune*. Magruder's plan of attack called for the land forces to move into the city while the river steamers, descending from the mouth of the Trinity, attacked and sank the Federal war vessels anchored in the harbor.[10]

The attack on Galveston was timed for the early morning hours of New Year's Day, 1863. At 1:00 a.m., while the Federal troops slept after a night of celebrating, Magruder led his land forces quietly into the city along the old railroad

10. Magruder's report, *Official Records, Army*, Ser. 1, 15: 211-220; Oates, "Texas under the Secessionists," 202-203.

bridge which had not been destroyed in the earlier fighting for the city. After the moon had set between 3:00 and 4:00 a.m. Confederate artillery opened fire on Federal ships and positions along the waterfront. The Federal troops drove back the first attack of the Confederate infantry but the Texans charged again and again. Meanwhile, the two Confederate gunboats moved against the heavily-armed Union warship *Harriet Lane*. Tom Green's dismounted cavalry picked off Union sailors running along the its decks, but the crew successfully returned fire and struck the Confederate *Neptune* with a shell, forcing it to veer off into shallow water and sink. The *Bayou City* meanwhile pulled alongside the *Harriet Lane*. The marines stormed aboard, captured the ship, and hauled down its colors.[11]

The other Union ships in the harbor meanwhile were having troubles of their own. The *Westfield*, the Union flagship, had run aground on a spit just off Pelican Island, and efforts of the *Clifton* to move it were unsuccessful. Three other small Union vessels, the *Sachem*, *Owasco*, and *Corypheus*, had been firing at the Confederates near the waterfront, but in a highly uncoordinated effort. The *Owasco* moved briefly to aid the *Harriet Lane* but pulled away to avoid hitting Union prisoners. And in the midst of the confusion the *Westfield* was rocked by a terrific explosion caused by premature detonation as the captain prepared to destroy it rather than risk capture. The explosion killed the captain and several members of the crew who had remained behind. The Union naval forces, now leaderless, confused, and disorganized, pulled out of the harbor rather than continue the fight. Over 200 Union troops looked on from the waterfront as the Union vessels steamed out into open sea. Without naval support the Union infantry soon surrendered to Magruder's forces. Galveston was once again in Confederate hands.[12]

Several days after the recapture of Galveston, Union gunboats returned to blockade the city and to bombard Confederate installations along the Gulf Coast. General Magruder worked diligently to prepare for an eventual Union counterattack on Galveston, but lack of adequate artillery hampered his defense efforts in the early months of 1863. To make up for this deficiency he cleverly improvised guns from wood. These "Quaker" guns appeared very formidable

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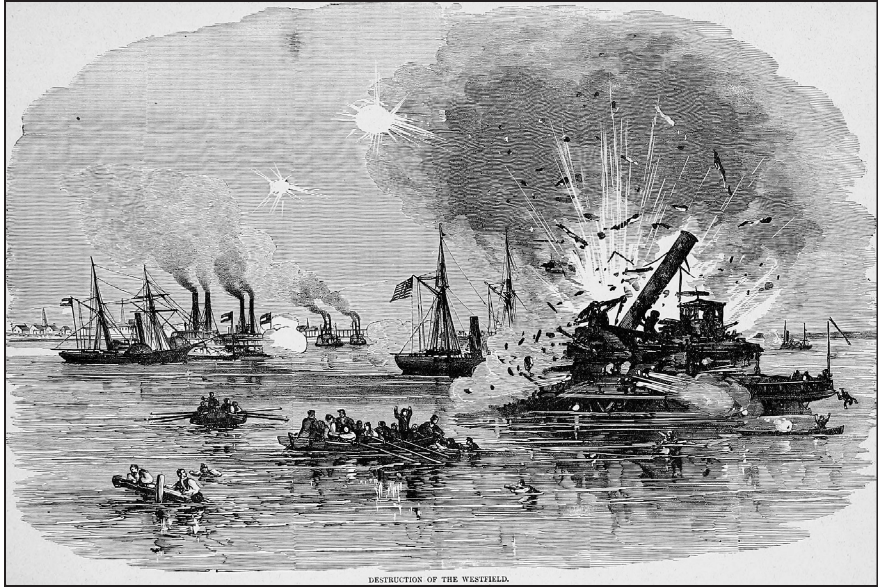
11. Oates, "Texas under the Secessionists," 203-204. See also, Frank Moore, ed., *The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events* (11 vols., New York: G.P. Putnam, D. Van Nostrand, 1862-1868), 6: 343-344.

12. Charles C. Cumberland, "The Confederate Loss and Recapture of Galveston, 1862-1863," SHQ, 51 (Oct. 1947): 109-130.



"Destruction of the *Westfield*." Engraving. Originally published in *Harper's Weekly* in 1863. From Alfred H. Guernsey and Henry M. Alden, *Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War* (1894).

from the distance and fooled Union naval officers for weeks. Unfortunately, an early spring storm ended the masquerade as high winds blew away one of the "cannons."[13] By June, however, Magruder had received some real guns from Houston and any threats of a Union invasion began to diminish.

The main Union thrust along the Gulf Coast in 1863 came of course not at Galveston but at Sabine Pass. Maj. Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks, the Union general commanding the Department of the Gulf with headquarters at New Orleans, had been ordered by Pres. Abraham Lincoln to reestablish Federal authority at a point in Texas to be selected by him. Banks had determined to move a large army force into the Texas coast, march them overland toward Houston, which was the center of railroads in early Texas, and then if possible move against Galveston from the rear. For this effort Banks had selected the Nineteenth Army Corps, consisting of some 4,000 infantry and commanded by Maj. Gen. William B. Franklin. Knowing that the Confederates had fortified Sabine Pass, General Banks planned to ferry the troops by transports to the coast, land them on the sandy beaches some 12 miles southwest of Sabine Pass, move overland

13. Barr, "Texas Coastal Defense," 20-21.

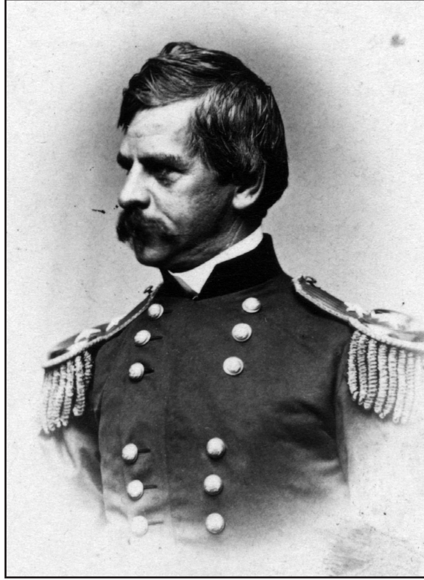
to the railroad running from Beaumont to Houston, and then move in strength to Houston. The transport ships ferrying the troops would be protected by four light draft gunboats, the *Clifton*, *Sachem*, *Arizona*, and *Granite City*, commanded by Lt. Frederick Crocker. In all, some 27 vessels would take part in the expedition.[14]

News of an impending invasion had leaked, and General Magruder alerted defenders along the Texas coast of an imminent attack. The Union invasion force was delayed somewhat by poor navigation and false rumors that the Confederate sea raider *Alabama* was off the coast at Sabine Pass, but in early September Union ships appeared off the Texas coast. Lt. Col. W. H. Griffin, commanding Confederate forces at Sabine Pass, was absent at the time, and so Lt. Richard Dowling, an Irish barkeeper from Houston, was in immediate command of the tiny Confederate garrison at Fort Griffin, which had been built the previous summer. Under his command were the Davis Guards, consisting of some 47 artillerymen and six cannon, as well as a converted river steamer, the *Uncle Ben*. Throughout the summer the Davis Guards had practiced diligently at their pieces and calmly awaited the Union attack. Members of the garrison were aided and encouraged by the local townspeople, who knew their safety depended upon the men at Fort Griffin.[15]

General Franklin, meanwhile, had decided to abandon Banks's plan of landing down the coast and marching northward to Liberty. Instead, he now proposed to move his gunboats up the channel, knock out the guns of the tiny Confederate fort, and bring the transport ships up into Sabine Lake. Early on the morning of September 8, 1863, Union gunboats began lobbing shells into the area around Fort Griffin, but it was not until the afternoon of the 8th that Union ships tried to force their way past the fort. When they did, the guns from Fort Griffin were leveled with deadly accuracy, firing 107 rounds in 35 minutes. The Union ship *Sachem* was hit by the third or fourth round of Dowling's 32-pounder and driven up against the Louisiana side of the channel, a helpless wreck. The Confederate guns then turned on the *Clifton*, which was closest of the three remaining Union vessels. A round of shot hit the tiller rope, "turning

14. Andrew Forest Muir, "Dick Dowling and the Battle of Sabine Pass," *Civil War History*, 4 (Dec. 1958): 412, 414. See also, Alwyn Barr, "Sabine Pass, September, 1863," *Texas Military History*, 2 (Feb. 1962): 17-22; Jo Young, "The Battle of Sabine Pass," SHQ, 52 (April 1949): 398-409; *Official Records, Army*, Ser. 1, 26: part 1, 309-312; *Official Records, Navies*, Ser. 1, 20: 517-561.

15. Muir points out that one local citizen, Neal McGaffey, butchered a beef, and another individual, Increase Burch, dug up some sweet potatoes for use by the garrison. The ladies, not to be outdone by the menfolk, baked bread, biscuits and cake, and brewed coffee. "Dick Dowling," 417.



Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks. Detail. Carte de visite print. 1861.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

her into a sitting duck, and a few minutes later another round went through her steampipe." Someone aboard struck the flag, and many of the men, thinking the ship was about to explode, plunged overboard and made it to shore, where they quickly surrendered to the Confederates who crowded about the water's edge to repel invaders. Meanwhile, the two remaining Union ships, the *Arizona* and *Granite City*, turned and withdrew from the pass. General Franklin determined that there was no alternative to this tenacious defense and ordered a withdrawal back to New Orleans. Though no Confederates pursued, many of the men on board the transports were panic-stricken and threw overboard some 200,000 rations to lighten their load. When the force returned to New Orleans, General Banks reported the defeat to Gen. Ulysses S. Grant but blamed it upon mistakes made by naval authorities.[16]

Repelled at Sabine Pass, the Federals next attempted to invade Texas through the lower Rio Grande valley. In November 1863, two months after the failure of the invasion at Sabine Pass, some 4,500 troops under the command of General Banks landed at the mouth of the Rio Grande and captured Brownsville, thus cutting the vital trade between the Confederacy and the Republic of Mexico.

16. Barr, "Sabine Pass," 21; Muir, "Dick Dowling," 418, 419. See also, Young, "Battle of Sabine Pass," 404-406.

Banks then divided his forces, sending one wing up the river to capture Rio Grande City, and sending the other along the coast to capture Corpus Christi, Aransas Pass, and all of the Matagorda Peninsula. General Magruder hurriedly took the field himself and gathered up a force of home guard troops, old men, and anyone else who could fight to oppose Banks's army. Fortunately, the Federal troops fell back down the coast toward Brownsville as a massive Union offensive was being planned in Louisiana for the spring of 1864 and troops were needed in this area. This worked to the advantage of Confederates in Texas, as Union forces in the valley were weakened to strengthen the Union efforts in the Red River campaign; as a consequence, Confederate forces under Col. John "Rip" Ford were able to retake the area occupied by Union forces, and, after heavy fighting in the summer of 1864, recapture Brownsville, thus reopening the vital trade with the Republic of Mexico. By the end of the year the only Federal-held territory along the Gulf Coast was Brazos Island.[17]

Although most Texas territory was again in Confederate hands by the end of 1864, the war had caused a severe interruption in the everyday life of Gulf Coast residents. Transportation, for example, had been severely affected as railroad building had been halted and normal repairs were not made during the war. The stagecoach line continued to operate along the coast but service was poor. Col. Arthur Fremantle of the British Goldstream Guards, who passed through the state early in the war, described his experiences on a Texas stage. The coach he rode was old and nine people were crowded into three transverse seats inside the coach while the overflow sat on the roof; by the time the trip had ended, there were 18 people inside and out. Those who sat on the roof of the coach dangled their legs over the side, according to Colonel Fremantle, "like mutes on a hearse returning from a funeral." This practice made it dangerous for those inside to put their heads out of the window "for fear of a back kick from the heels, or of a shower of tobacco juice from the mouths of the Southern chivalry on the roof." Another traveler, taking the train from Houston to Beaumont in 1862, noted that the train was delayed a number of hours because of a dead cow on the tracks. It was only through the efforts of passengers and crew that the train was able to proceed on to Beaumont. And accommodations for the traveler along the coast were frequently inadequate. Young Dunbar Affleck, a private in Magruder's command, stayed with a "gracious lady" at Richmond

17. Oates, "Texas under the Secessionists," 205-207; Fitzhugh, "Saluria," 95-100; Ford, *Rip Ford's Texas*, 353-366. For the importance of this trade see Robert W. Delaney, "Matamoras, Port for Texas During the Civil War," SHQ, 58 (April 1955): 472-487.

who gave him a lunch and invited him to return, saying her home was always open to soldiers. But all travelers were not so fortunate. The traveler on the Beaumont train mentioned above reported that he had great difficulty in getting anyone in Beaumont to open his door and then he had to gather his own wood for a fire to keep him warm while he slept on a floor during the night. Traveling by stage presented many special problems during the war. It was not unusual for the passengers to be required to repair bridges before they could be crossed by coach. Hotels were so crowded with refugees and travelers that a Houston newspaper editor wrote that the hotels in that town were crowded from attic to basement; he went on to state that Texas might be sparsely populated, but that he had seen enough people in Houston during the past few weeks "to whip any Yankee force that may be sent here." Usually it was necessary for the traveler to share hotel rooms that often lacked comforts and cleanliness. Colonel Fremantle, for example, found Houston crowded with refugees from Galveston but reported that as a great favor to a foreign visitor he was allowed to have a bed to himself; all "other beds in the room had two occupants each," he noted.[18]

Those who stayed at home had as many problems as the traveler, if not more. In nearly every coastal community there was a shortage of houses; this was especially true in areas near Galveston as thousands of refugees poured into the interior. Thomas North, a traveler from the Midwest, reported there was a general evacuation of non-combatants from Galveston Island, resulting in a "general stampede of people and valuables up country."[19]

Compared with other Confederate states, Texas suffered no serious food problems, although there were shortages of various items which normally were imported. Blockade runners brought coffee through the Union ships at Galveston, but there was never enough coffee to go around. Many substitutes were formed

18. Arthur Fremantle, *The Fremantle Diary, Being the Journal of Lt. Col. James Arthur Lyon Fremantle, Coldstream Guards, on His Three Months in the Southern States*, ed. Walter Lord (Boston: Little, Brown, 1954), 51, 63; Frank E. Vandiver, ed., "Letters from the Confederate Medical Service in Texas, 1863-1865," SHQ, 55 (Jan. 1952): 392-323; Dunbar Affleck to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Affleck, Dec. 15, 1863, Affleck Letters (in possession of Mr. T. D. Affleck, Galveston, TX); *Houston Tri-Weekly Telegraph* (TX), June 23, 1863.

19. North, *Five Years in Texas*, 106. See also Mary Elizabeth Massey, *Refugee Life in the Confederacy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), 92-93, 123-124.

from rye, okra, wheat, corn, sweet potatoes and other ingredients.[20] The shortage of salt was also a matter of serious concern in Texas as most residents of the Gulf Coast had obtained their salt from Morgan's works near Old Indianola, but Union military operations in the area during 1863 and 1864 forced Texans to look elsewhere.

Prices of food fluctuated throughout the war according to the value of currency and the availability of the product. Although it is doubtful if anyone in ordinary circumstances went hungry, there were instances of suffering on the part of refugees to Texas from southern Louisiana, where Union military operations increased in 1864, and in Texas seaport towns such as Galveston where Union military operations hampered commercial activities. The shortage of manufactured goods resulted in a number of home experiments in the coastal area. The *Galveston News* in October 1862, for example, describes how a man tanned his own leather by putting the hides in ashes and water to remove the hair; they were then put in a solution of oak bark that had been boiled and cooled until warm. Other Texans used their ingenuity to find substitutes for "the little things of life." Ashes of corn cobs served as soda; substitutes for ink were made of bark of dogwood, magnolia, oak, pomegranate rind, or green persimmons. Shoe blacking was also scarce but one writer reported making good blacking from chinaberries.[21]

Just as Texas women had to improvise and find substitutes for food and everyday items, so too did they find substitutes for medicines, and again the newspaper editors gave lengthy bits of advice in this respect. Residents of the Gulf Coast had depended heavily upon imported quinine to help in combating malaria fever. Now substitutes were attempted. The dogwood berry was reported to break fever as quickly as quinine; a Galveston newspaper editor claimed the dogwood berry had been used successfully a number of times and urged Texans to gather and dry the berries for future use. Among other home remedies published was one in which the editor claimed that the patient "will be entirely relieved of

20. Colonel Fremantle reported "the loss of coffee afflicts the Confederates even more than the loss of spirits" and that "they exercise their ingenuity in devising substitutes, which are not generally very successful." *Fremantle Diary*, 62. For the effect of the blockade on the coastal economy see *Houston Tri-Weekly Telegraph*, Oct. 6, 1862; *Dallas Herald*, Dec. 4, 1861; Fornell, *Galveston Era*, 298-299.

21. GWN, Oct. 22, 1862, and Jan. 27, 1864. See also *Brokenburn: The Journal of Kate Stone, 1861-1868*, ed. John Q. Anderson (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1955), 332.

the flux" if he would drink at intervals sage tea with red pepper stirred into it. According to the correspondent a second dose was never needed.[22]

The general health of coast residents during the war was good, although the perennial yellow fever and smallpox epidemics took a number of lives. Dr. George Holland reported between 50 and 60 cases of yellow fever in Sabine Pass in September 1862 and lamented that 25 patients died. Eight cases were reported at Beaumont during the same month, and one at Orange. Yellow fever was reported in epidemic at Matagorda in October 1862 and there were 30 to 40 cases in Houston and 8 to 10 deaths by the end of the month. Again in September 1864, yellow fever was reported at Galveston and Houston; according to the news account a few persons died and all military personnel on furloughs were ordered to remain at home. Smallpox was also prevalent in the coastal area; in December 1863, residents of Houston were urged to take every precaution against the disease. And an army surgeon at Beaumont reported a number of cases of "congestion" in the summer of 1864.[23]

Although there were hardships, shortages, and epidemics during the war, there were gayer times as well. In Houston, Galveston, Corpus Christi, and Brownsville there were theaters, military balls, concerts, and benefit shows for the aid of war refugees. And occasionally there were horse races, foot races, and gander pullings to amuse the onlookers.

On a more serious note, Texans along the Gulf Coast faced the last year of the Civil War with fears for the future. Every Confederate defeat beyond the borders of Texas—Grant's advances in Virginia, the loss of the seaports of Mobile, Charleston, and Wilmington, and the fall of Georgia and the Carolinas to William T. Sherman's advancing army—caused increased anxiety in Texas. By February 1865, residents of the state had developed a great fear of a possible Union invasion of the Texas coast. Down in the Rio Grande Valley, Colonel Ford's cavalry kept a constant watch on the Yankee force on Brazos Island, and all along the coast Texans maintained a lookout for enemy ships.[24]

Throughout the spring of 1865 Confederate forces along the Texas Gulf Coast stood alert for a possible Union offensive but nothing happened. Then on May

22. GWN, July 30, Sept. 10, and Oct. 28, 1862.

23. GWN, Sept. 17, Oct. 15, 29, 1862, and Oct. 28, 1863; Mrs. Thomas Affleck to Dunbar Affleck, Sept. 23, 1864, Affleck Letters; Vandiver, ed., "Letters from the Confederate Medical Service," 463.

24. The last days of the Confederacy are ably treated by Oates, "Texas under the Secessionists," 208-211.

11, down in the valley, "one of Ford's cavalry patrols spotted enemy troops coming off Brazos Island in a blinding rain storm." Ford called for re-enforcements to meet this new invasion and led his cavalry southeast to Palmito Ranch, where the Union forces were defeated and driven back to Brazos Island.[25]

As it turned out, Ford had stopped no new invasion force but only the regular island garrison composed mainly of African-American troops. From a prisoner, Ford learned that General Lee had surrendered a month earlier at Appomattox, and that the Federals on the island, having heard the news, had started for Brownsville expecting the Texans to surrender as well. The engagement at Palmito had been the last land battle fought in the Confederacy.

Reports of the Confederate collapse in the East caused increased uneasiness among residents of the Gulf Coast. General Magruder called on his troops to stand by their colors. Gov. Pendleton Murrah called upon all Texans to remain firm, and Gen. Edmund Kirby Smith, commander of the Trans-Mississippi Department, declared he would fight on. But the news that Joseph Johnston's force in the Carolinas had surrendered and that Richard Taylor's units in Alabama had also capitulated made further resistance appear futile. On May 15, troops at Galveston mutinied and took off for their homes in fear and panic; at the same time men at other garrisons all along the coast demonstrated an open disregard for discipline and organization. Although newspaper editorials called for discipline and both Magruder and Smith tried to restore order, it was too late.[26] When Kirby Smith reached Houston in May he found the army melting away and himself a commander without an army. In late May his chief of staff surrendered to the Trans-Mississippi Department at New Orleans and a Federal steamer brought surrender terms to Galveston for Smith's signature. There was little Smith could do but give his assent, and on June 2, with Magruder at his side, Smith boarded the ship in Galveston harbor and signed the surrender terms. The Civil War was over. Ahead were the long months of Reconstruction.

25. Ford, *Rip Ford's Texas*, 388-392; Oates, "Texas under the Secessionists," 209.

26. *Houston Tri-Weekly Telegraph*, April 17, 1865.

Reconstruction in Jefferson County, Texas, 1865-1876

Randolph B. Campbell

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Antebellum Jefferson County did not typify the slaveholding, cotton-planting Old South. Located in the southeastern corner of Texas, a region of marshy grasslands crossed by belts of heavy forests, the county offered little opportunity for plantation agriculture.[1] According to the census of 1860, 70 residents of Jefferson representing 14 percent of all families owned a total of 309 slaves, and the county's farmers reported the production of only 84 bales of cotton. John Stamps, the largest slaveholder with 26 bondsmen, was a railroad contractor rather than a planter. Instead of relying on their production of cotton, Jefferson County residents based their economic lives on small-scale agriculture, cattle herding, and, increasingly during the 1850s, on commerce. The milling of forest products such as lumber and shingles, an industry destined to become very important in the postwar years, also showed signs of its future by 1860. Beaumont, the county seat located on the Neches River, and Sabine

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1. For brief descriptions of Beaumont, Jefferson County, and Sabine Pass, see NHT, 1: 447-448, 3: 925-928, 5: 745-746. Information on population and slaveholding derived from 1860 Population and Slave Schedules, Jefferson County.

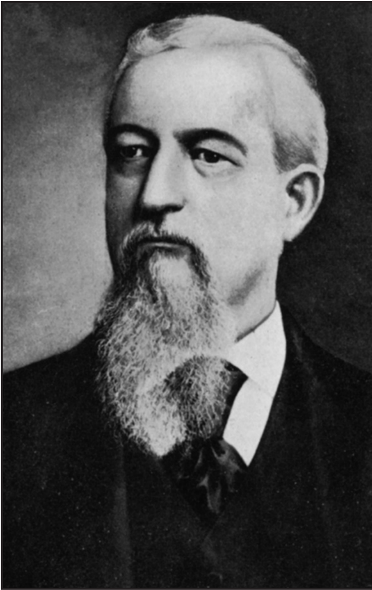
Pass, a smaller town situated on the channel of the same name that connected Sabine Lake with the Gulf of Mexico, became steadily busier as the commercial outlets of Southeast Texas, exporting cotton and forest products and importing a variety of manufactured items and plantation supplies.

Due to its location and development as a commercial center, Jefferson County had a notably diverse population. A majority of its 1,995 residents in 1860 were natives of the South, but, unlike the southern-born in most parts of Texas, many in Jefferson were families of French descent who had moved from southwestern Louisiana. The county also had a generous sprinkling of men, generally employed at non-agricultural occupations such as merchant, boat pilot, or skilled trades, who were native to the North or foreign nations. Finally, black slaves comprised 15.5 percent of the population.[2]

Although it did not have an economy or population typical of the Old South, Jefferson County responded to the presidential election of 1860 and the secession crises that followed in much the same way as the plantation regions of Texas. Three-quarters (257) of the county's voters supported John C. Breckinridge, the Southern Democratic candidate, in 1860, and one quarter (85) voted for John Bell of the Constitutional Union Party. These proportions were closely comparable to the vote statewide. In the secession referendum a few months later, 94 percent of those participating voted for disunion. Support for secession appears much greater than it was statewide (76 percent), but in fact disunion received one less vote (256) than did Breckinridge in 1860. Apparently most of the county's Unionists (defined as the 85 who voted for Bell), either seeing the hopelessness of their situation or intimidated by the strident secessionism of A. N. Vaughan's *Beaumont Banner*, stayed home. Only 15 voters cast "no" ballots on February 23, 1861.[3] However, some of Jefferson County's well known men, including Sheriff Andrew J. Tevis and George W. Tevis (sons of the founder of Beaumont), County Clerk George W. O'Brien, George F. Block, and William Lewis wanted to uphold the Union. After the firing on Fort Sumter, the county's Unionists either supported the Confederacy or avoided involvement in the con-

2. 1860 Population and Slave Schedules, Jefferson County.

3. Mike Kingston, Sam Attlesey, and Mary G. Crawford, *The Texas Almanac's Political History of Texas* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1992), 73; Joe T. Timmons, "The Referendum in Texas on the Ordinance of Secession. February 23, 1861: The Vote," ETHJ, 11 (Fall 1973): 15, 18; *Beaumont Banner,* Nov. 6, 20, 1860, and Feb. 19, 1861.



A native of Louisiana, George W. O'Brien moved to Beaumont in 1851. Although a Unionist before the Civil War, he served as a captain in the Confederate Army. During Reconstruction, he was an influential moderate in Jefferson County. From *The Standard Blue Book of Texas, 1908-1909* (c. 1909). *Courtesy of the Lamar University Archives and Special Collections, Beaumont, TX.*

flict as completely as possible; nevertheless, they represented a core of potential leaders for the process of reconstruction after the war.[4]

The actual fighting of the Civil War came closer to Jefferson County than to most regions of Texas, but like the state as a whole the county escaped the horrors of major battles and the rigors of military occupation. In September 1862, three U.S. ships overcame the fortifications at Sabine Pass and landed a raiding party that burned the railroad depot just north of the town and destroyed the railroad bridge over Taylor's Bayou before withdrawing. One year later a major Federal invasion force of 20 ships and 5,000 men was turned back at Sabine Pass by Confederate artillery commanded by Lt. Dick Dowling. The United States did not attack Southeast Texas for the remainder of the war.[5]

4. Evidence on the Unionism of these men is found in Andrew J. Tevis to Edmund J. Davis, Nov. 8, 1970, Governors Records: Edmund J. Davis, TXSL; Registration Book A [a list of Loyalists compiled by Freedmen's Bureau Agents in Texas in April, 1867], 70-71, Fifth Military District, District of Texas, U.S. Department of War, Records of the U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1821-1920, Record Group 393, USNA; W. T. Block Jr., "Capt. George W. O'Brien: A Torchbearer of Our Texas Civilization," (unpublished paper provided by the author); Block, "A History of the W. T. 'Will' Block, Sr. Family of Port Neches," (unpublished paper provided by the author); William Lewis to Andrew Jackson Hamilton, Aug. 12, 1865, Reconstruction Records, 1865-1873, Records of the Adjutant General, TXSL.

5. Alwyn Barr, "Texas Coastal Defense, 1861-1865," SHQ, 65 (July 1961): 12, 23-25; Ralph A. Wooster, "The Battle of Galveston," TGHBR, 28 (Nov. 1992): 31. [See also, Wooster's article reprinted in this volume—ed.]

Reconstruction in Texas began in June 1865, following the surrender of the last Confederate forces in the state and the arrival at Galveston of Andrew Jackson Hamilton, Pres. Andrew Johnson's appointment as provisional governor. Hamilton set up an interim state government and called for the election of a constitutional convention to prepare Texas for restoration to the Union. The convention would be elected in January 1866, complete its work between February and April, and order an election on June 25 to approve the amended constitution and choose state and local government officials under its terms. In the meantime Federal troops occupied all the major towns and strategic points of Texas, and Hamilton appointed interim civil governments in each county. U.S. troops, the Thirty-seventh Illinois Volunteers commanded by Maj. Ransom Kennicott, occupied Sabine Pass and Beaumont in July without any serious incident and began to parole ex-Confederates. The appointment of an interim county government took several months longer, however, and gave some indication of the conflict to follow.[6]

Jefferson County's Unionists sought from the beginning to influence Governor Hamilton's appointments to offices in their county. James Armstrong, a veteran of the Texas Revolution and member of the convention that wrote the first state constitution of Texas in 1845, went to Austin in August 1865 to urge the appointment of Union men. Armstrong had lived in Jefferson County during the 1840s, moved to Williamson County for the remainder of the antebellum years and the Civil War, and then returned to Beaumont. In 1867, the local Freedmen's Bureau agent would refer to him as "a man of unswerving Union principles and capable of filling any office." Armstrong was accompanied to Austin by Henry C. Pedigo from Tyler County, another leading Southeast Texas Unionist. William Lewis, a Massachusetts-born lawyer and long-time resident of Beaumont, did not go to Austin but wrote to Hamilton, urging the appointment of "a union man died [*sic*] in the wool" as judge of the Fifteenth Judicial District, which included Jefferson County.[7] The governor appointed Pedigo to the district judgeship on August 24, but did not name his choices for key

6. Charles William Ramsdell, *Reconstruction in Texas* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1910), 55-107; F. W. Emery to Ransom Kennicott, July 11, 1865, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (130 vols., GPO, 1880-1891), Ser. 1, 41 part 2: 1072.

7. 1860 Population Schedule, Jefferson County. For Armstrong, see NHT, 1:243-244; Registration Book A, 70-71. For Pedigo, see Randolph B. Campbell, "Scalawag District Judges: The E. J. Davis Appointees, 1870-1873," *Houston Review*, 14 (1992): 80. For the activities of Armstrong, Pedigo, and Lewis in August 1865, see Lewis to Hamilton, Aug. 12, 1865, Reconstruction Records.

positions in county government until October 12. Then, for reasons unknown, he simply appointed all the men who had won those offices in 1864 at the last elections held during the Civil War. John J. Herring resumed the office of Chief Justice; A. J. Tevis, that of Sheriff; and Alexis Blanchette Jr., James B. Langham, Samuel Remley, and Thomas Snow, the four county commissioner positions. In creating county governments across the state, Hamilton often appointed a few officials to the posts that they had held during the war, but returning an entire local government to office was unusual.[8] The choice of Sheriff A. J. Tevis is easily explained by his unimpeachable Unionist credentials, but there is no evidence that the other appointees had equally strong records. In any case, Hamilton's appointments should have been very reassuring to the majority of whites in Jefferson County. All six were southern-born, and four (Blanchette, Langham, Remley, and Tevis) had been slaveholders or were from slaveholding families. Moreover, they were the same officers elected while the county was still a part of the Confederacy.[9]

Developments in 1865 probably persuaded Jefferson County voters that Reconstruction would demand little in the way of political change, and the election, on January 8, 1866, of a delegate to the constitutional convention indicated that the majority did not intend to admit that secession had been a mistake. James Armstrong lost the election to Col. Ashley W. Spaight, a resident of Liberty County who had commanded Spaight's Battalion in the Confederate Army. The vote was close in Jefferson County, 56 to 47, but the defeat of a Unionist by a Confederate veteran, especially in Armstrong's home county, clearly demonstrated the political atmosphere as Presidential Reconstruction developed. Once the Commissioners Court and District Court resumed normal business and the constitutional convention met in Austin early in 1866, Jefferson County's conservatives must have breathed a sigh of relief.[10]

Restoration of civil government was not, however, the only task of Reconstruction; there was also the matter of the former slaves and their place in society.

8. The names of all state and county officeholders during this era are found in Election Registers, 1860-1876, Records of the Secretary of State, TXSL. For a general study of county officeholders during this period, see Campbell. "Grass Roots Reconstruction: The Personnel of County Government in Texas, 1865-1876," *Journal of Southern History*, 58 (Feb. 1992): 99-116.

9. For biographical and slaveholding data on these six men, see 1860 Population and Slave Schedules, Jefferson County.

10. Record of Election Returns, 1860-1867, and Commissioners Court Minutes, C: 191, Jefferson County Clerk, Beaumont, TX; District Court Minutes, D: 215, Jefferson County District Clerk, Beaumont, TX; NHT, 6: 2. For the purpose of electing a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1866, Jefferson was in a district with Liberty, Chambers, and Orange counties.

White resistance to black freedom created the first serious problems in Jefferson County after 1865. Ironically, the end of slavery left blacks in some ways more vulnerable than before. "After freedom," a former Jefferson County slave named Valmo Thomas remembered, blacks "could be more or less abused by anybody. The old master he had to take care of them, but after they were free anybody could bother them. They didn't have no protection, you see."[11] Capt. Frank Holsinger, the first Freedmen's Bureau agent assigned to the county, bore out the truth of Thomas's assertion in one of his earliest reports from Beaumont. A white named Henry Bullock, he reported, had shot Jackson Northweather, a freedman, in Bullock's words, "just to see him kick." A lot of other whites, Holsinger said, were just as dangerous to local freedmen. By May 1866, the situation was even more threatening, at least in the eyes of Lt. Charles C. Hardenbrook, the new Bureau agent in Beaumont. He reported that, immediately upon the withdrawal of Federal troops from the county, secessionists planned to burn the school for freedmen and murder him, his wife, A. J. Tevis (with whom he boarded), and the Bureau schoolteacher. The agent asked to be relieved of his duties and replaced by the local Unionist, William Lewis.[12] Citizens of Beaumont responded to Hardenbrook's fears by holding a public meeting chaired by George W. O'Brien. A resolutions committee that included County Judge John J. Herring and Unionist George W. Tevis drafted a statement pledging "support by all means, moral and physical" for Hardenbrook and all officials of the U.S. government. Thirty-three citizens signed the resolution and sent copies to the *Houston Telegraph* and the Bureau agent. Hardenbrook, however, doubted the sincerity of most of the signees and remained suspicious for several months. On June 22, although he had received the support of four soldiers dispatched from Houston and reported that all was quiet in the county, he asked again to be relieved of his post.[13]

11. George P. Rawick, ed., *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Supplement, Series 2* (10 vols., Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1979), 9: 3829.

12. Frank Holsinger to William H. Sinclair, March 19, 1866, and Charles C. Hardenbrook to Sinclair, May 7 and 10, 1866, Letters Received, Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the State of Texas, U.S. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1869, U.S. Department of War, Record Group 105, USNA. For a detailed account of the work of Holsinger and Hardenbrook in Beaumont, see Barry A. Crouch, "The Freedmen's Bureau in Beaumont," TGHBR, 38 (Nov. 1992): 11-22.

13. *Houston Tri-Weekly Telegraph* (TX), May 25, 1866; Hardenbrook to Sinclair, May 10 and June 22, 1866, Letters Received, Texas, U.S. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, USNA.

As is often the case in such disputes, it is impossible to determine who to believe. Hardenbrook probably exaggerated the threat to his safety, and some of the citizens doubtless overstated their willingness to support the Bureau. However, the Bureau agent's difficulties indicate that a good portion of the community would admit only that the war had been lost and the slaves freed. Acceptance of on-going Federal intervention in any form, especially to aid the freedmen, was another matter. Men such as A. J. Tevis and William Lewis would cooperate with Union authorities and seek to help the freedmen, but the majority of whites in Jefferson County wanted only minimal political and social change.

On June 25, 1866, voters across Texas went to the polls to approve the Constitution of 1866 (the work of the constitutional convention from February to April) and elect state and local officials under its terms. Jefferson County voted overwhelmingly (143 to 3) for the more conservative James W. Throckmorton over Elisha M. Pease for governor. The state representative's seat from the district including Jefferson, Liberty, Chambers, and Orange counties went to A. D. Kent of Beaumont over George W. O'Brien. Unfortunately, no local returns for this election are available, and we cannot know which candidate carried the county. O'Brien had served in the Confederate Army but so had Kent. O'Brien, however, had opposed secession and chaired a meeting promising support for agents of the Federal government. Moreover, his stance on Reconstruction in June 1866, although in disagreement with plans brewing in Washington for a congressional takeover, was not one of extreme opposition to the national government. "It is a very difficult matter," he wrote a friend in Liberty on June 4, "for us of this country to locate ourselves at present securely upon any political platform having reference to our uncertain future, but I shall endeavor to locate myself somewhere outside the ranks of the radicals before we meet and then let you know where I stand. At present it seems that about all left us is to 'hold fast to the willows' . . . and while endeavoring to stem the current of malice and oppression apparently about to engulf us, to trust in the final resurrection of *truth and justice*."[14] O'Brien, it seems, sought a moderate position between that of Radical Republicans in Congress and militant ex-Confederates in Texas. Perhaps that explained his loss of the election.

Elections to key county offices on June 25 appear to have reflected concerns related to Reconstruction in only a limited way. Hamilton's appointee, John J. Herring, continued as County Judge, defeating R. H. Leonard, a lawyer born in England, 92 to 68. The incumbent sheriff, A. J. Tevis, was not a candidate as

14. Kingston, Attlesey, and Crawford, *Political History*, 59; Election Registers, 1866; George W. O'Brien to William P. Duncan, June 4, 1866, Julia Duncan Welder Collection, SHRL.

G. W. Payne easily defeated William Fletcher and Alex Collins for that office. Perhaps Tevis chose not to run because of unpopularity stemming from his support of the Freedmen's Bureau, but there is no evidence on the matter. Two of the incumbent county commissioners, Alexis Blanchette Jr. and James B. Langham, ran, but an entirely new court composed of Otis McGaffey, Morgan Odom, Samuel Lee, and J. D. Magby was elected. McGaffey, Odom, and Lee were antebellum residents of the county (Magby could not be identified), however, and there is no indication that the issues of Reconstruction had anything to do with this result.[15]

The new county court met for the first time in September 1866, as did the district court under its recently elected judge, Samuel A. Willson, a former officer in Hood's Brigade. Lieutenant Hardenbrook remained in Beaumont, but his interest in the work of the Freedmen's Bureau had waned, and he would soon be reassigned.[16] Most residents of Jefferson County probably considered Reconstruction at an end. During the winter of 1866 and 1867, however, Congress under the leadership of Radical Republicans would overcome President Johnson and begin the whole process again, this time under congressional directives enforced by the U.S. Army. Jefferson County would feel the impact of Congressional Reconstruction beginning in the spring of 1867 and continuing for more than two years.

The first effect came with the so-called "Jury Order" controversy. On April 27, 1867, Gen. Charles C. Griffin, commander of the Department of Texas, in response to complaints that Unionists and freedmen could not obtain justice in district courts, issued an order requiring all jurors to take the Test Oath of 1862 that they had never voluntarily supported the Confederacy. At the May session in Beaumont, District Judge Willson accepted the claim of Deputy Sheriff Lastie Hillebrant that fewer than 15 men in the county could meet the requirement and adjourned his court. No district court was held in the county that year, but regular business resumed in 1868 without the requirement of the Test Oath.[17]

The "Jury Order" affected only the courts and people who had business there; new voter registration requirements and elections touched all men who had an

15. Record of Election Returns, 1860-1867; 1860 Population Schedule, Jefferson County.

16. Commissioners Court Minutes, C: 195; District Court Minutes, D: 260; Campbell, "The District Judges of Texas in 1866-1867: An Episode in the Failure of Presidential Reconstruction," SHQ, 93 (Jan. 1990): 363; Crouch, "Freedmen's Bureau in Beaumont," 18.

17. For a general discussion of the "Jury Order" controversy, see Campbell, "District Judges of Texas," 368-374. For the impact in Jefferson County, see District Court Minutes, D: 308-318, 323-361.

A veteran lawyer from Woodville and former captain in the Confederate Army, Samuel A. Willson was elected District Judge in 1866 but resigned two years later. He later served on the Texas Court of Appeals, 1882-1891. *Published with permission of the Tarlton Law Library, Jamail Center for Legal Research, University of Texas Law School, Austin, TX.*

interest in the county's political life. In March 1867, Congress extended the suffrage to all adult males regardless of color, except those who had previously sworn an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States and then engaged in rebellion. Registration of the eligible voters in each county was to be handled by a three-man board appointed by the state's military commander. In Jefferson County, William Lewis (the Massachusetts born Unionist), Allen Pipkin (a freedman who had come to the county from South Carolina with his owner, J. F. Pipkin), and Thomas Alyen (an unidentified white) composed the Board of Registrars. Mark Wiess, a local ex-Confederate soldier, served as the board's clerk.[18]

Voter registration began in Jefferson County on July 22, 1867, and closed on September 28. It is impossible to say exactly how many men the board refused

18. Board of Registrars of Jefferson County to Charles C. Griffin, Aug. 1867, Records of the Office of Civil Affairs for the Department of Texas and the Fifth Military District, 1865-1870, U.S. Department of War, Records of the U.S. Army Continental Commands, Record Group 393, USNA; Ramsdell, *Reconstruction in Texas*, 146, 161-165, 193-195. For William Lewis, Allen Pipkin, and J. F. Pipkin, see 1870 Population Schedule, Jefferson County. Mark Wiess served in Spaight's Battalion and the Twenty-first Texas Infantry. Index to the Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers who Served in Organizations from the State of Texas, U.S. Department of War, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109 (microfilm publication M323), USNA.

to register, but clearly the number was significant. The total registration, 186, included 88 whites and 98 blacks (53 percent). Thus enough whites either refused to register or were denied registration that blacks, although no more than 25 percent of the population, constituted a majority of the electorate in 1868. Clearly some whites attempted unsuccessfully to register because 29 names, enough to create a white majority, were struck off after having been originally placed on the rolls.[19]

Ironically, some of the most loyal men in the county such as A. J. Tevis were disqualified by congressional requirements, while former Confederates who had not held public office before the war registered if they wished. Tevis, who took an oath to uphold the Constitution when he was elected sheriff in 1860, resigned in 1861 rather than support the Confederacy. However, after being elected sheriff again in 1864 (without his consent) and seeing that service in local government was preferable to being forced into the army, he qualified for the position. He held the office only 11 days before being removed by the district judge for disloyalty to the Confederacy, but, for that service, the registration board disqualified him. Years later Tevis angrily (and with less than perfect literacy) summarized the situation: "Rebel captains lieutenants and their companys [*sic*] have all registered and are voters but myself and other men who stood firm against the secession movement and for the union through the hole storm and suffered all manner of abuse that could be put upon us by barbarous traders could not register."[20]

Tevis gained at least some measure of satisfaction in February 1868 by carrying Jefferson County's vote in the election of a delegate to the convention that was to write a new constitution for Texas. The vote was light—only 30 whites and 52 blacks participated—and he defeated James Armstrong by a margin of 48 to 30. Armstrong, whose unionism probably helped account for his loss to Colonel Spaight in 1866, now apparently found himself too conservative for the county's newly enfranchised blacks. He won the seat in the constitutional convention, however, thanks to support from other counties in the district, and wound up moving into the ranks of Andrew Jackson Hamilton's moderate Republicans and then returning to the Democratic Party.[21]

Congressional Reconstruction also affected Jefferson County by bringing changes in the personnel of local government. Beginning in the late summer of

19. List of Registered Voters in Texas, 1869, TXSL.

20. Tevis to Davis, Nov. 8. 1870, Governors Records: Davis.

21. Record of Election Returns, 1866; NHT, 1: 243-244.

1867, military authorities began removing the state and local officials elected in June 1866 as "impediments to Reconstruction," or simply for general disloyalty to the United States. When nearly all of the state's district judges were replaced in the fall of 1867, Samuel A. Willson of the Fifteenth Judicial District resigned rather than face removal. Henry C. Pedigo from Tyler County, who had occupied the Fifteenth District bench as Hamilton's appointee in 1865 and 1866, replaced Willson. Jefferson County's officials, however, unlike many of those elected on June 25, 1866, in other counties across Texas, remained in office until the spring of 1869. Local Unionists made few complaints, and military authorities, it seems, did not find the behavior of the government led by County Judge John J. Herring unacceptable. Then in April 1869, Congress required all state and county officials to swear the Test Oath that they had never voluntarily supported the Confederacy, and all the key officers elected in June 1866 were replaced by military appointees.[22]

The men appointed on May 19, 1869, brought Jefferson County the nearest approximation to a "radical" government that it experienced during Reconstruction. John A. Archer, the new county judge, was a native of England who had served as a lieutenant in the Seventh U.S. Colored Infantry during the war and become an agent of the Freedmen's Bureau after being mustered out of the army in 1866. Assigned to Beaumont in March 1867, he served there until the Bureau ceased operations in Texas at the end of December 1868. Archer found much less to object to in the treatment of local freedmen than had his predecessors, Holsinger and Hardenbrook, and generally filled his monthly reports with the statement: "Nothing new to report." Not surprisingly, he had less trouble than previous agents and after the Bureau closed remained in the county to raise cattle. Due to his foreign birth, Archer did not fit the standard definition of a "carpetbagger"—according to southern folklore, a northerner adventurer who moved South after the war to enrich himself at the expense of ignorant freedmen and oppressed native whites—but he had lived in the North before 1861 and came closer to carpetbagger status than any other official in Jefferson County during Reconstruction.[23]

The first military appointee as sheriff, Valery A. Blanchette, could not qualify for the position, probably because he had voluntarily served in the Confederate

22. Campbell, "District Judges of Texas," 375; Record of Election Returns, 1867 and 1869; *Congressional Globe,* 40th Congress, 3rd Session, 1869, part 3, appendix, 327.

23. 1870 Population Schedule, Jefferson County; William L. Richter, *Overreached on All Sides: The Freedmen's Bureau Administrators in Texas, 1865-1868* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991), 257-258.

Army. He was replaced in July 1869 by Randolph W. Tevis, son of George W. Tevis and nephew of A. J. Tevis. Although belonging to a Unionist family, the new sheriff was a native Texan and long-time resident of the county. Of the four new county commissioners, only William Ratcliffe from Tennessee was southern-born. George F. Block (Prussia) and W. J. Barton (England) came from foreign nations, and S. K. Burch was a native of New York. However, all four lived in Jefferson County before 1865 and cannot be classed as carpetbaggers.[24]

These six military appointees ran Jefferson County's government for approximately a year (Spring 1869 to Spring 1870). From every indication, the business of the district court and commissioners' court proceeded without any serious difficulties during that time. Undoubtedly many residents disapproved of government by appointed officials, but the individuals who actually served appear to have given reasonable satisfaction. Congressional Reconstruction came to an end in Texas following an election held November 30 to December 3, 1869, in which voters approved the new constitution completed earlier that year and elected state and local officials under its terms. This election posed a key test of strength for the fledgling Republican Party. Unless it could capitalize on the momentum provided by congressional policies and military appointments and build a coalition of white Unionists and black freedmen to control the state government and localities such as Jefferson County from the outset, it faced a very difficult future.[25]

Voters' registration opened again across the state for 10 days in November 1869. The registrars in Jefferson County—George W. Kidd (a white native of Tennessee), Lemuel P. Ogden (a white native of Texas), and Allen Pipkin (the freedman who had held the same position in 1867)—added 91 whites and 18 blacks to the rolls, bringing their total numbers to 182 and 116 respectively. Blacks were still overrepresented among the county's voters, constituting 39 percent of the total when they were only about 26 percent of the population, but they were no longer a majority.[26] Obviously, to give the Republicans any hope of victory, a significant number of whites had to join the freedmen in voting for the new party.

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24. 1860 and 1870 Population Schedules, Jefferson County; Index to Service Records (Texas).

25. Carl H. Moneyhon, *Republicanism in Reconstruction Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980), 104-128.

26. The registrars were named in General Orders No. 179 issued by Gen. Joseph J. Reynolds on October 8, 1869. Records of the Office of Civil Affairs. Names of those registered at this time are also in List of Registered Voters in Texas, 1869. The percentage of blacks in the population is calculated from 1870 Population Schedule, Jefferson County.

On December 3, 1869, after four days of voting at a central polling place in Beaumont, conservative candidates carried Jefferson County in every state-level contest. A. J. Hamilton, actually a moderate Republican who could be considered conservative only in relation to his opponent, Edmund J. Davis, received 108 votes to Davis's 23. Wells Thompson defeated James W. Flanagan 101 to 7 in the Lieutenant Governor's race. James Armstrong, now back in the Democratic Party, carried the county 113 to 8 over George W. Whitmore of Smith County in a contest for the U.S. House of Representatives. (Whitmore, however, won the election district-wide.) Edward B. Pickett of Liberty, a former major in the Confederate Army, defeated his opponent for a seat in the state senate, J. W. Thomas, 114 to 8, and W. T. Simmons of Beaumont was overwhelmingly elected to the Texas House of Representatives, getting 164 votes with no meaningful opposition.[27]

In the local elections, two county-wide races brought greater voter participation than did the contests for state office. Edward C. Ogden defeated E. P. Gray 108 to 76 in the race for sheriff, and Wilbur F. Gilbert became district clerk by the slim margin of 55 votes to 52 for Jeff Chaison and 42 for Thomas H. Langham. By contrast, the elections of five justices of the peace, who would constitute the county court under the new constitution, went largely uncontested. N. B. Bendy, the candidate for justice of Precinct One and *ex officio* presiding justice of the court, had no opponent; nor did S. K. Burch in Precinct Three and James Magness in Precinct Five. George F. Block easily defeated H. C. Smith in Precinct Two. Only Alexis Blanchette Jr. in Precinct Four had significant opposition in the person of William J. Barton, one of the military appointees to the commissioners' court. Blanchette won 13 to 10.[28]

Most of these winners of county offices, like their counterparts in the state-level contests, were conservatives. Sheriff Ogden, District Clerk Gilbert, Presiding Justice Bendy, and Justices Blanchette and Magness belonged (or would soon belong) to the Democratic Party.[29] However, George F. Block and S. K. Burch

27. For 1869 election returns, see Ramsdell, *Reconstruction in Texas*, 283-287; Senate Miscellaneous Document No. 77, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, 1870 (Serial 1408), 38-79. For a general discussion of the election, see Moneyhon, *Republicanism in Reconstruction Texas*, 104-126. For Pickett and Whitmore, see NHT, 5: 190, 6: 948.

28. Ramsdell, *Reconstruction in Texas*, 38-79. The Constitution of 1866 eliminated the position of county commissioner. Five justices of the peace comprised the county court, a circumstance that gave more importance to that office than ever before or after in Texas.

29. For identification of these men with the Democratic Party, see *Beaumont News Beacon*, Aug. 29, 1873.

were Unionists who had held office as military appointees, and yet they won without opposition. Perhaps no one in their respective precincts wished to run for the offices. However, both men were Unionists rather than Republican activists and apparently had the respect of their neighbors regardless of past differences over secession. At least, the election of Block and Burch indicates that loyalists did not face total proscription in the local elections of December 1869.

Activist Republicans took no consolation in the victories of a few Unionists and insisted that conservatives had won the election illegally. Charles W. Winn, a young native of Arkansas and former U.S. Army officer who edited the *Sabine Pass Union,* claimed in April 1870 that Sheriff Ogden and others had won through "fraud and intimidation." Governor Davis, he said, should replace Ogden with A. J. Tevis, a move that would constitute a "damaging blow at the very hearts of our rebel neighbors." Winn also said that since the formation of a Union League council at Sabine Pass he had found "a considerable white element in this county friendly to our Party and cause that from fear of personal violence have long disguised their real sentiments." With the appointment of Tevis and a little more encouragement from the Union League, Winn promised, Republicans would take permanent control of Jefferson County.[30]

The truth of Winn's charges about fraud and intimidation cannot be proven or disproven. Certainly the Republican vote should have been larger in 1869, and some whites no doubt attempted to keep blacks from voting. However, the election was held under military supervision; there were no official charges of stealing votes or threatening voters; and elsewhere in the state blacks and Unionists voted in large numbers.[31] Threats and fraud may have prevented Jefferson County's Republicans from making the best showing possible in 1869, but, as Winn's efforts during the next few years would show, the votes necessary to carry the county were not there and could not be found.

During the summer of 1870 Winn and Tevis created a chapter of the Union League at Beaumont, all the while complaining bitterly about the opposition of State Representative W. T. Simmons, James Armstrong, J. B. Likens (an attorney who had been a major in the Confederate Army), and B. F. McDonough (a merchant from Indiana who had no record of Confederate service in a Texas unit). These men, Winn insisted, represented the Ku Klux Klan at Beaumont and tried to keep Republicans from settling in the town and to prevent the proper education of freedmen. Winn appealed regularly to James P. Newcomb,

30. Charles W. Winn to George T. Ruby, April 24, 1870, James P. Newcomb Papers, BCAH.

31. Moneyhon, *Republicanism in Reconstruction Texas*, 123-125.

the Republican secretary of state in Austin, and George T. Ruby, the head of the Union League for Texas, and before the year ended both he and Tevis sought aid from Gov. Edmund. J. Davis. Winn asked Davis to appoint him registrar of voters for the county and to place Tevis, Edward Fink (a New York-born minister who headed the Union League council at Sabine Pass), and Bosen Godfrey (a freedman) on the Board of Appeals that reviewed complaints against the registrar and supervised elections. Davis complied, thus giving key positions to Republicans. The governor also aided his party's cause in Jefferson County by appointing William M. Chambers of Chambers County as judge of the new 1st Judicial District. Chambers, a former slaveholder, secessionist, and Confederate soldier, had become a strong Republican after the war.[32]

A. J. Tevis sought even more help from Davis in late 1870 by asking the governor to retain the restrictions on the suffrage that had existed from 1867 to 1869. "My opinion," Tevis wrote, "is that the enemy cant register under the reconstruction law untill they receive pardon from the Congress. Capt. C. Winn is of the same opinion and if this plan is carried out the republican party is sure to gain the coming elections. Let the registration be done over again in these eastern countys and we have got them." Governor Davis could not help in this case, however, because restrictions on the suffrage under the congressional Reconstruction acts did not apply once Texas's new constitution went into effect in 1870.[33]

Throughout 1870 Jefferson County Republicans insisted that they represented at least half the vote of the county and would have great success in future elections. As the year ended Thomas J. Russell, a recent convert to the party, wrote Governor Davis: "A good Republican Congressman will be elected here at the next election by an overwhelming majority. The greater part of the people wish to bury old dead issues so deep that there can be no resurrection for the issues nor for the supporters of them. An active campaign well carried on will do the work effectively. Such men as Armstrong, Likens, and McDonough will sink into oblivion."[34]

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32. Winn to Ruby, June 1, 1870, and to James P. Newcomb, June 10 and July 28, 1870, Newcomb Papers; Edward Fink to E. J. Davis, July 14, 1870, Minutes of the Union Republican Association of Jefferson County, July 12 and 28, 1870, and Winn to Davis, Sept. 15, 1870, Governors Records: Davis; Record of Election Returns, 1870; 1870 Population Schedule, Jefferson County; Index to Service Records (Texas); Campbell, "Scalawag District Judges," 80, 84-85.

33. Tevis to Davis, Nov. 8, 1870, Governors Records: Davis; Ramsdell, *Reconstruction in Texas*, 254-255.

34. Thomas J. Russell to Davis, Dec. 30, 1867, Governors Records: Davis.

Such predictions amounted to wishful thinking, however, once the county's conservatives organized and publicized their cause. The *Neches Valley News* began publication in Beaumont during 1870, calling itself "The White Man's Organ for the First Judicial District." The editor, W. L. Smylie, urged all Democrats to subscribe and promised to provide free copies to all Democrats who could not afford a subscription. This paper was joined by W. F. McClanahan's *Sabine Pass Beacon*, an equally strong Democratic journal. An editorial in the *Beacon* of June 10, 1871, urged Democrats to organize and described the fight against their Republican foes as "justice and right arrayed against treachery and villainy . . . loyalty and patriotism against corruption and plunder." Editor McClanahan, a 27-year-old Mississippian, made fun of a recent Republican meeting in Sabine Pass, saying that only six men attended. "We'll bet," he wrote, "that Jefferson County can boast the loudest talking and yet the most insignificant and sickly Radical concern that can be found elsewhere in Texas."[35]

The contest to elect a U.S. Representative from the First District during the fall of 1871 proved that, although both Republicans and Democrats exaggerated their strength, the latter were much stronger. George W. Whitmore, the Republican incumbent, ran against William S. Herndon, a former Confederate officer and conservative Democrat. Whitmore, who was from Tyler, personally campaigned in Jefferson County, speaking jointly with Herndon at a barbecue sponsored by Democrats in Beaumont on September 5. All the efforts of the incumbent and his local supporters failed, however, as Herndon carried the county by a vote of 200 to 101 and won the seat in Congress. The Republican candidate ran far better (34 percent of the vote) than in 1869 (6 percent), but the defeat was still overwhelming.[36]

The presidential election of 1872 presented additional problems for Jefferson County Republicans because Pres. Ulysses S. Grant was opposed by reform-minded members of his party calling themselves Liberal Republicans. Horace Greeley, the Liberal Republican candidate, received the endorsement of the Democratic Party as well. Jefferson County's Democrats, who had been represented by George W. O'Brien at the party's national convention, agreed with this strategy. Supporting the Liberal Republicans nationally and Democratic candidates in state elections, they enjoyed watching local Republicans fight over Grant and Greeley. A good many voters apparently reacted by staying

35. *Neches Valley News* (Beaumont, TX), Jan. 7, 1871; *Sabine Pass Beacon* (TX), June 10, 1871; 1870 Population Schedule, Jefferson County.

36. GWN, Sept. 8, 1871; Moneyhon, *Republicanism in Reconstruction Texas*, 212; Campbell, "George W. Whitmore: East Texas Unionist," ETHJ, 28 (Spring 1990): 23-24.

home, but the election once more indicated the strength of conservatives in Jefferson County. Greeley defeated Grant 127 to 64 (66 percent to 34 percent of the vote), and James Armstrong, running as a Democrat, won a seat in the state legislature. Soon after taking his seat in Austin in 1873, Armstrong introduced a resolution calling for the impeachment of District Judge William M. Chambers. Conservatives in Jefferson County were delighted, but, after the case dragged on for a year, the judge won acquittal on all charges.[37]

In the aftermath of the election of 1872, to compound the difficulties of local Republicans, some of their leaders became embroiled in factional disputes. Dr. R. S. Morgan, who had arrived in Sabine Pass early in 1872 and, with Charles W. Winn's support, been appointed medical officer at the port, informed J. P. Newcomb that Winn had endorsed Greeley. In response, Winn's wife claimed that Morgan had made speeches for Greeley. My husband, she told Newcomb, has always been a loyal Republican, but Morgan, as soon as he had an appointment, had turned against the party. He was a vile "scoundrel," she said, who had accused her of trying to kill her child and had attacked her with a hatchet in her own yard. Winn, with Tevis, represented activist Republicanism in the county, and this wild dispute with Morgan could hardly have helped the party.[38]

During 1873 the *Neches Valley News* and *Sabine Pass Beacon* combined to create the *Beaumont News-Beacon* under the editorship of W. F. McClanahan, giving the Democrats a unified voice in the county. The party held a county convention in August 1873 to choose delegates to district and state meetings to be held preparatory to the state and local elections on December 2. McClanahan, O'Brien, and others were prominently involved. The convention did not, however, make nominations for local offices, and the only evidence available on campaign activities in Jefferson County during the fall of 1873 was a brief comment in the *Galveston Tri-Weekly News* in September that Democrats there were preparing for the election "with every assurance of success."[39]

The election marked another clear victory for conservatives in state level races as the Democratic candidate, Richard Coke, received 277 votes to 71 (20 percent) for Edmund J. Davis. Returns for local races are unavailable, but what is known

37. *Neches Valley News,* July 27, Oct. 26, 1872; GWN, Nov. 14, 1872; *Beaumont News Beacon*, May 10 and 31, 1873; Campbell, "Scalawag District Judges," 87.

38. R. S. Morgan to Newcomb, May 13 and Nov. 18, 1872, and Winn to Newcomb, May 29, 1873, Newcomb Papers.

39. *Beaumont News Beacon,* Jan. 11, June 7, and Aug. 29, 1873; Galveston *Tri-Weekly News*, Sept. 8, 1873.

about the political records of the winners suggests that those contests were not highly partisan. Alexis Blanchette Jr. continued as justice of Precinct Four, and John J. Herring became the presiding justice. Both men had been elected to county offices in 1864 and been appointed by A. J. Hamilton in 1865. James D. Bullock, the new sheriff, and Ralph West, justice of Precinct Five, both native to the South, had lived in the county before 1865. However, two new justices, Peter D. Stockholm and Samuel Harper, were northern-born, and Stockholm was known as a Unionist. Thus, as in 1869, no Republican activists won office, but extreme partisanship was not the rule either.[40]

Coke's defeat of Davis marked complete "Redemption" of the state government by conservative Democrats. Then, to remove the last important institutional remnant of Reconstruction, Democrats called a convention in 1875 to write a constitution to replace the so-called "Radical" Constitution of 1869. No resident of Jefferson County served as a delegate in the convention. The three delegates from its senatorial district were all Democrats—E. B. Pickett of Liberty County, Lipscomb Norvell of Jasper County, and W. W. Whitehead of Tyler County. Texas voters went to the polls on February 15, 1876, to approve the new constitution and elect state and local officers under its terms. Jefferson County voted overwhelmingly for the constitution (264 to 94) and for Coke against William M. Chambers (291 to 102). Chambers received 26 percent of the total, compared to Davis's 20 percent in 1873, probably because he was from neighboring Chambers County. The race for district judge proved interesting in that Jefferson County voted overwhelmingly for J. M. Crosson against the Unionist/Republican Henry C. Pedigo (285 to 94), but the latter gained enough votes in other counties in the district to win the position.[41]

The results of county elections in 1876 suggest that the issues of Reconstruction, which were never critically divisive at that level, had largely passed. W. A. Crushman, a native of Massachusetts who appeared on the county's tax rolls first in 1865, became county judge (that office having been restored by the new constitution). By contrast the sheriff was Thomas H. Langham, a Texas-born Democrat whose family had owned slaves. Simeon Broussard, the son of a slaveholding family from Louisiana and ex-Confederate, won a seat on the commissioners court along with George F. Block (Unionist), Benjamin Granger (a carpenter from New York resident in the county by 1860), and C. C. Caswell

40. Record of Election Returns, 1873; Election Registers, 1873; 1860 and 1870 Population Schedule, Jefferson County.

41. GWN, Aug. 7, 1875; 1870 Population Schedule, Jefferson County; Election Returns, 1876; Election Registers, 1876.

(a merchant from Georgia who arrived after the war and worked with the Republican Party during the early 1870s).[42]

The launching of state and local government under the Constitution of 1876 closed the era of Reconstruction in most Texas counties. A few, usually those with black majorities, continued to elect Republican governments for some years after 1876.[43] Jefferson County, however, emerged from the era never having had a "radical" government controlled by carpetbaggers and freedmen. Indeed, during the entire period from 1865 to 1876 officials appointed by the military rather than elected by the voters controlled the county for only one year (spring 1869 to spring 1870), and most of the appointees were long-time residents of the county. Beginning in 1869 with the first elections under the "radical" constitution, Jefferson County's voters usually elected conservatives to county offices. Several well known Unionists also won positions, but activist Republicans, with the possible exception of C. C. Caswell in 1876, were not elected. Overall, extreme partisanship did not dominate the politics of local government.

The workings of county government in Beaumont did not become at any time a source of serious controversy, perhaps because local taxes remained relatively low during the period. The county tax rate reached its Reconstruction-era peak in 1871 at 55 cents per $100 evaluation (plus a 50-cent poll tax on all adult males). This was a tremendous increase over antebellum and immediate postwar rates, which usually stood at 12.5 cents on the hundred, but it was far lower than the rates in many other counties. For example, the 1871 rate in Colorado County was $1.125 per $100 and $1 per $100 in Dallas, McLennan, and Nueces counties. Reasons for higher tax rates in these other counties varied; nevertheless, Jefferson County did not have a "radical" government or "radical" tax rates.[44]

Race relations in the county suffered from incidents of violence by whites against freedmen, especially in the years immediately after emancipation, but there were no riots or major outbreaks of racial violence. Unlike the case in

42. Election Registers, 1876; 1860 and 1870 Population Schedules and 1860 Slave Schedule, Jefferson County.

43. Harrison County is a good example of such a county. See, Campbell, *A Southern Community in Crises: Harrison County, Texas, 1850-1880* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1983), 305-364.

44. County Real and Personal Property Tax Rolls, Jefferson, Colorado, Dallas, McLennan, and Neuces counties, Ad Valorem Tax Division, 1860-1876, Records of the Comptroller of Public Accounts, TXSL.

some counties, the proportion of blacks in the population of Jefferson increased during Reconstruction, rising from 15.5 percent in 1860 (309) to 26.1 percent in 1870 (498) and 34.4 percent by 1880 (1,199). More than likely the influx of freedmen resulted from economic opportunity in Beaumont, especially in the lumber industry. Of the county's 202 black households in 1880, 72 percent were in town. A majority of the heads of those households worked in sawmills or as day laborers, or, in the case of women, as cooks and laundresses. Wage-paying occupations such as those apparently held attractions for men and women seeking to escape reliance on a cotton crop produced through sharecropping.[45]

Jefferson County freedmen, in spite of prejudice and some incidents of violence, made significant political, social, and economic gains during Reconstruction. Blacks gained the right to vote in 1867. No freedmen were elected to office, but Allen Pipkin served on the board of registrars in 1867 and 1869, Bosen Godfrey on the county Board of Appeals in 1870 to 1872, and Woodson Pipkin on the same board in 1872 to 1874. In 1874 and 1875, the County Court chose Jackson Flowers and Bill Martin to serve on the county's grand jury. The social lives of freedmen centered on nuclear families as more than three-fourths of all black households in 1880 were occupied by a man, his wife, and their children. Of those households having children aged 6 to 16, 59 percent reported at least one child attending school within the past year. As noted above, most of the county's black citizens lived in town and worked as laborers, sawmill hands, shingle makers, cooks, and laundresses. There were also three teachers, three ministers, and six skilled craftsmen such as carpenters. Only 14 black household heads reported working farm acreage in 1880, but nine of those owned small farms. (One rented for cash, and four were sharecroppers.) The landowners all had horses, cows, and hogs and grew corn and sweet potatoes, and even those who farmed land belonging to others owned livestock.[46]

Thus Reconstruction did not revolutionize Jefferson County, but it brought meaningful change. Local government never came under radical control or adopted policies likely to bring drastic change in any way. Republicans gained some appointed positions, but generally found their aspirations frustrated. Conservative Democrats generally remained as completely in control as before the war and felt no strong need to proscribe Unionists. On the other hand, whites had to accept the freedom of blacks and, at least temporarily, extensive

45. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Tenth Census, *Statistics of the Population of the United States at the Tenth Census (June 1, 1880)* (GPO, 1883), 410; 1880 Population Schedule, Jefferson County.

46. Election Registers, 1867-1874; Commissioners Court Minutes, C: 371, 406; 1880 Population and Agricultural Schedules, Jefferson County.

interference by the national government in local affairs. This alone doubtless seemed radical to most whites and called forth strong opposition to Reconstruction and its supporters, particularly in state-level elections. Blacks found little except freedom at first, but the congressional takeover in 1867 provided opportunities that they eagerly embraced. Rights such as the vote and jury service would eventually be taken away, but at least one generation of blacks enjoyed them. In short, Reconstruction in Jefferson County harmed most whites less than is often claimed and benefited many blacks more than is often recognized.

The Mazzagatti family came to Southeast Texas in search of agricultural opportunity and would later establish a thriving grocery business. By 1910, about which time this photograph was taken, almost 500 native-born Italians resided in Jefferson County. *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

Two States with One Goal

Texas and Louisiana Recruit Italians

Cassandre Durso

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Scholars of Italian immigration highlight the urban, industrial experience in the northern United States. They detail the horrors of the tenements, abject poverty, the deplorable factory conditions, and other misfortunes that befell the immigrants who journeyed to the United States for a better life. However, these were not the only experiences of Italians in America. During the years of 1880 to 1925, when Italian immigration peaked, the southern states directly recruited Italian immigrants as farm laborers on plantations. After the abolition of slavery, a labor shortage developed as former slaves left the South for higher wages available elsewhere. Southern Italy provided a beneficial workforce who possessed knowledge and experience in agriculture as well as a strict work ethic. The peasant stock who answered the South's call for laborers co-existed well alongside the African-American workers due to their lack of familiarity with Jim Crow ideology. However, this placed them in the lowest socio-economic class of the South.[1]

Of the southern states, Louisiana and Texas boasted the highest number of Italian immigrants during this period. These two agricultural states faced similar problems after the abolition of slavery. African Americans possessed their

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1. See for example, John W. Briggs, *An Italian Passage: Immigrants to Three American Cities, 1890-1930* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978); Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, *Family and Community: Italian Immigrants in Buffalo, 1880-1930* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1982); Thomas A. Guglielmo, *White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

freedom, and with it came a certain power over the large landowners. Because a noticeable portion of freed slaves left the South in search of higher wages, a labor shortage on plantations developed. Therefore, the remaining workers had the ability to make demands for things such as better conditions or higher wages. Furthermore, if one employer refused to meet the demands, some black workers traveled to other plantations that promised to accommodate them. This problem prompted landowners to investigate new avenues for laborers. The processes utilized by each state to induce immigration varied, as did the outcome. Texas and Louisiana attempted to employ different types of immigrant labor for agricultural purposes unique to the South, and both would eventually target southern Italy and Sicily, which boasted a numerous and destitute peasantry in need of farm jobs.[2]

The processes each state used to recruit this peasantry warrant individual discussion. Planters formed organizations for recruiting as well as lobbied state legislatures to create immigration bureaus capable of encouraging immigrant labor to the South. Individual planters offered incentives in the form of housing, garden plots, or tenant farming. These efforts, however, varied by location and state.

2. Several scholars have studied the history of Italians in Louisiana. A. V. Margavio and Jerome Salamone provide an excellent survey of the Italian experience in the state, arguing that Italians in Louisiana experienced adversity but ultimately triumphed. Margavio and Salamone, *Bread and Respect: The Italians of Louisiana* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 2002). Part of the hardships Italians faced was discrimination. Jean Ann Scarpaci, for example, studies the Italians who worked in the sugar parishes in the southern region of the state, and the ways native whites deprived Italians of their white status. She highlights the racial inequities Italians faced because of their willingness to fulfill positions classified as "negro labor." Scarpaci, including, *Italian Immigrants in Louisiana's Sugar Parishes: Recruitment, Labor Conditions and Community Relations, 1880-1910* (New York: Arno Press, 1980); "A Tale of Selective Accommodation: Sicilians and Native Whites in Louisiana," *The Journal of Ethnic Studies* 5 (1977): 37-50; and "Immigrants in the New South: Italians in Louisiana's Sugar Parishes, 1880-1910," *Labor History* 16 (Spring 1975): 165-183. Lynching represented a manifestation of this discrimination that was unique to the southern experience. Richard Gambino examines the 1891 mass lynching of Italians in New Orleans and contends that Italians provided a ready scapegoat for the crimes committed in the city. *Vendetta: A True Story of the Worst Lynching in America, the Mass Murder of Italian-Americans in New Orleans in 1891, the Vicious Motivations behind It, and the Tragic Repercussions that Linger to This Day* (New York, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1977). Texas Italians, however, have received less attention. Valentine Belfiglio's excellent survey provides a history of Texas through the lens of Italian explorers in the 1500s and brings the story into the modern era with examples of individuals who contributed to major events. *The Italian Experience in Texas* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1995). Sam Parigi and Clara Jo Liberto examine the role of Italian immigrants to Southeast Texas, the industries they entered, the economies they created, and the problems they faced. "The Italian Americans of Southeast Texas," TGHBR, 16 (Nov. 1980): 14-22.

This article will explore these recruiting measures within each state and consider the similarities and disparities between them.

Louisiana opened its port to Italians in the late 1800s. New Orleans was the second-largest port in the United States in the early nineteenth century, and had established trade with Palermo, Sicily, for the importation of citrus. This connection led to the original colony of Italians in the city. Once the state began growing its own citrus fruits, the imports were no longer necessary, but the ships still sailed between the ports, carrying people instead of produce. Italian immigrants filled various positions when they arrived in southern Louisiana. Most became farm laborers on sugar plantations, while others worked in sawmills. The latter position generally followed the railroad lines and consequently the settlement patterns of Italians who bought land followed this route as well.[3]

Prior to 1861, Louisiana boasted 1,200 sugar plantations, but the disruption of the Civil War nearly destroyed the industry. By 1864, only 175, or 15%, of the pre-war plantations remained operational. Reconstruction exacerbated these dire conditions because only planters who pledged allegiance to the United States could continue operations, and with the emancipation of their slaves, labor became scarce. These difficult circumstances forced many plantation owners to sell their lands. The September 12, 1874, edition of the *Lafayette Advertiser* printed multiple advertisements about land and plantations for sale, which had once run on slave labor. Some of the advertisements stated the owner sold for financial reasons, presumably to reassure potential buyers that the quality of the land was not the cause. Many former Louisiana slaves left the state in order to exercise their new freedoms, and those who remained chose to test the new order by demanding higher wages and better conditions. Furthermore, if their demands remained unanswered, they would strike or leave the plantation altogether. Because of this, plantation owners labeled them as shifty, greedy, and lazy.[4]

In response to these strikes, some plantation owners agreed to a universal wage for jobs. They hoped that this practice would prevent black laborers from leaving one farm for another. Black laborers also struck for a more frequent pay period, because some planters paid their workers on a monthly or even seasonal basis making it hard to meet expenses. All of these problems stemmed from

3. *Lafayette Advertiser* (LA), June 1, 1889; Margavio and Salamone, *Bread and Respect*, 32.

4. *Lafayette Advertiser*, Sept. 12, 1874; Scarpaci, *Italian Immigrants*, 2-3; Margavio and Salamone, *Bread and Respect*, 35. Scarpaci's research provided the number of operational plantations, and the page from the *Advertiser* expands on that information to show that plantation owners continued to sell even once immigration from Italy began in Louisiana.

the shortage of labor and proved disastrous financially for southern planters. However, other laborers left for places like Kansas for the higher wages offered in the sugar beet industry. Therefore, planters began to doubt the practicality of the continued use of only black labor for harvesting crops. The *Lafayette Advertiser* expressed this point, when it stated, "For years negro labor in the South has been growing more worthless and unreliable. With plenty of work to do at good wages the negroes will not accept employment, but on the contrary the tendency among them is to leave the country and seek the cities where they eke out a miserable existence."[5]

To address this issue, the Sugar Planters Association, a cooperative of producers throughout the state, urged the legislature to create the Louisiana Bureau of Immigration. Formed on March 17, 1866, the bureau investigated the use of immigrant labor on plantations, hoping to bolster the number of white laborers in Louisiana. The chief officer of the bureau, James C. Kaufman, oversaw the publication of pamphlets in English, French, and German initially, for circulation both in the United States for quick response, and in Europe for new laborers. These pamphlets, according to Kaufman, contained information on the fertility of the soil, the climate, and the various industries that needed laborers. He could also appoint as many as five agents abroad to encourage immigration, "by giving counsel and information; in making contracts for public means of transportation; to bring to the port of New Orleans, at the lowest rates of passage possible, such immigrants as may elect to come to said port." This section of legislation also established that the landowners, and not the state bureau, retained the responsibility of payment for passage of the immigrants.[6]

Kaufman sent out letters requesting information from planters and county officials on lands for sale, positions available for immigrants, and whether these positions provided food and lodging for the workers. He stated that Louisiana lacked a system defining the availability of land for sale or lease, and that many other states implemented these systems to attract immigrants wishing to settle there. He felt that collection and distribution of this data would raise interest in Louisiana. Further, he stated that the only path to improvement for the agriculture industry lay in cooperation between the landowners and the bureau.

5. "Unsatisfactory Negro Labor," *Lafayette Advertiser*, Sept. 28, 1904.

6. James C. Kaufman, "Department of Immigration and Labor I—The Louisiana Bureau," *De Bow's Review, Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial Progress and Resources* 4 (Nov. 1867): 469-476. The name of the pamphlet was not listed in the letter from Kaufman, and as a result, research for it returned no results. All allusions to the pamphlet are based on Kaufman's letter.

He further encouraged the formation of local associations of planters to inform and update their status to the bureau.

In a letter that appeared in *DeBow's Review* in 1867, Kaufman detailed information from the pamphlets that the agents distributed. He listed the various types of soil and the location of each within the state, emphasizing the alluvial lands, which supported the sugar and cotton industries. He described the soils as immensely rich and able to support the same crop year after year without blight. This allowed repeated harvests of cash crops, providing greater profits each year. Lands for sale, he said, also appeared in the pamphlet, as well as the holdings of the United States, which comprised 3 million acres, listed as selling from $.50 to $2.50 per acre. The 19 million acres held by individual owners listed at a higher rate of $1.00 to $50.00 per acre reflected the more fertile and valuable lands. However, Kaufman wrote that the pamphlet did not detail the location of these lands within the state, and he hoped inclusion of this information would encourage immigrant labor to the state.[7]

Although Louisiana planters and the Bureau may have welcomed different immigrant groups, Kaufman cited a passage from the pamphlet which targeted Sicilians. For instance, when the pamphlet discussed the climate of the state, it specifically compared it to Sicily. For the peasant class there, owning land lent a certain amount of respect to a family, but property availability was scarce. Kaufman, as well as the pamphlet writers, may not have been aware of this fact, but conditions in Sicily created an immigrant pool well-suited to agricultural work in Louisiana. Wealthy absentee proprietors in Sicily owned large estates, and the best that the peasantry could hope for was the ability to buy into the corrupt tenant system, which would leave them further indebted to both the *gabellotto*, or overseer, and the proprietor whom the peasant farmer might never see. Advertising the low prices of land in Louisiana provided impetus for the landless Sicilians to immigrate. Kaufman's reference to the ability to grow nearly all vegetable types in the soil would appeal to Sicilians as well, as they usually grew their own crops for subsistence, rather than purchasing them, to minimize their cost of living.[8]

Louisiana planters discussed direct immigration from Sicily at a conference held in 1867 to address the continued labor problem. They decided to appeal to

7. Kaufman, "Immigration and Labor," 473.

8. "Italian Laborers," GDN, May 11, 1882; Kaufman, "Immigration and Labor," 474. Jerre Mangione and Ben Morreale provide an insightful look at the corrupt tenant system in Sicily. *La Storia: Five Centuries of the Italian American Experience* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, Inc., 1992), 51.

the state government for funding to establish a direct steamship line between Europe and Louisiana for the sole purpose of drawing laborers to the state. In response, the following year, the Louisiana legislature created the Department of Agriculture and Immigration, and appointed a Commissioner of Immigration of the State, as well as other agents outside the state, to spread the word of the need for labor with pamphlets. This organization aimed at recruiting immigrants to replace the African-American plantation laborers. The association also hoped to bring more white laborers, immigrant or native born, into the industrial, railroad, and construction industries because they felt the continued use of black workers was ineffective. An article in the *Lafayette Advertiser* on immigration stated that "the general rule will hold good that free Negro labor is not sufficiently practicable and reliable for the full development of Southern resources and industry." Another organization that shared this sentiment formed in October of 1876. The Teche Planters' Club consisted of 24 sugar plantation owners, who wanted to maximize production and minimize labor problems. Both of the associations turned to the use of immigrant labor as a solution.[9]

Louisiana recruiters first targeted the Chinese, but this group soon fell out of favor with employers who felt that they often broke contracts or simply left the plantations without warning. This behavior was similar to that of the former slaves, and precisely what planters hoped to replace. Walter L. Fleming, an American historian at West Virginia University, outlined their concerns in an article published in the *Political Science Quarterly* in 1905. He surveyed the progression of immigrant labor in the southern states, and stated that the planters opposed the use of Chinese labor because "it is certain . . . that the South will not tolerate the introduction of large numbers of Chinese or Japanese for fear of possible race complications." Fleming did not specify whether the complications referred to interaction with African-American workers or with the white elite. He did say that Italians became the preferred immigrant group of choice because "they have come in larger numbers than other foreigners, and, much to the surprise of all, they have proved successful as laborers on cotton and sugar plantations."[10]

The Sugar Planters' Association called a meeting on January 13, 1881, to discuss the idea of obtaining immigrant labor from Europe. John Dymond, president of the association, relayed his success with Italian immigrants on his plantation, and suggested the association look specifically to Italy for farm labor, instead

9. "Immigration," *Lafayette Advertiser*, July 10, 1869; Scarpaci, *Italian Immigrants*, 10.

10. Walter L. Fleming, "Immigration to the Southern States," *Political Science Quarterly*, 20 (June 1905): 291.

of all across Europe. He may have been the first plantation owner to employ Sicilian laborers in Louisiana's sugar parishes on his Belair Plantation. His drive toward employing immigrants stemmed from his disdain for the free black laborers. Like many other planters, he felt that this group was shifty, lazy, and an untrustworthy source of workers, and looked to the Italians. Therefore, the Association appointed a committee to address the issue of using Italian labor. The committee decided to implement the existing steamship lines between southern Italy and New Orleans for immigration. Despite the creation of a state bureau, the Association continued its own efforts for securing laborers. It is possible that the landowners remained dissatisfied with the state agency's work, and Kaufman referenced that problem in 1867. He stated that without cooperative measures, such as providing information on land availability and numbers of workers needed, the bureau remained powerless to fulfill the terms of its creation. Nevertheless, the Association's efforts succeeded, and on September 15, 1881, three steamships a month began running between New Orleans and southern Italy and Sicily at a rate of $40 per person. At the next meeting of the Association, the committee advised the creation of an office, which like the Bureau of Immigration, would publish and disperse pamphlets detailing the availability of jobs on the plantations, the nature of those jobs, wages offered, and information on steamship lines to Louisiana. The committee also specifically suggested targeting Sicily and southern Italy due to the character of the immigrants on Dymond's plantation and the similarities in climate with Louisiana. Other planters soon shared the success of Dymond by employing Italian laborers on their plantations, and employment of Italian immigrants continued through 1910.[11]

Throughout this time period, some established Italians chose positions as labor agents to help their compatriots find opportunities on plantations. Often these men would contract laborers directly from Sicily through family members still there. Despite a federal law passed in 1907 that forbade any establishment of contracts with foreign laborers, this practice continued. The operatives working with the Italian labor agent no doubt informed the potential immigrant not to divulge the fact that he already had employment. Vincent Lamantia was one of these agents for the Louisiana Immigration League, which formed in July of 1905 to work out a program for sending Italians to Louisiana who entered at Ellis Island. John Dymond served as the first president of the League, elected in December. The League also elected Charles Godchuax as the representative

11. "The Convention," *Lafayette Advertiser*, March 25, 1893; Scarpaci, *Italian Immigrants*, 18, 22; Kaufman, "Immigration and Labor," 471; Scarpaci, *Italian Immigrants*, 18, 22.

to New York, and for their Italian representative, they chose Lamantia, a New Orleans resident. They agreed to pay him two dollars for every immigrant he sent to Louisiana. Lamantia had experience with Italian immigrants. In fact, he was the U.S. Consul in Catania, Italy, for a time. Commissioner Charles Schuler suggested that the League dispense foreign language brochures highlighting the positive aspects of work in Louisiana, and he traveled to Europe in 1907 with 5,000 brochures printed in both Italian and German, which described the opportunities awaiting immigrants in Louisiana.[12]

Other privately owned companies provided similar resources as the Immigration League. One example of these was the L'Italo Americano Labor Bureau. This organization had an office on Poydras Street in New Orleans and advertised its services in newspapers and posters. The group's posters proclaimed, "The Italian immigrant [was] a valuable acquisition because of his willingness and his peculiar adaptability to hard work." Therefore, the Bureau sought to provide Italian immigrant labor to plantations, railroad companies, and any other business in need of unskilled labor. Further, the company claimed their connections spanned the entire nation for bringing laborers to the city.[13]

The campaign to recruit Sicilian laborers succeeded. According to the federal census, the number of foreign-born Italians in Louisiana rose from 2,214 in 1880 to 20,533 in 1910, a difference of over 18,000. However, the number of Italians on census records is not entirely accurate, because harvesting seasons drew in non-resident, temporary workers in numbers as high as 80,000. During cultivating season, for example, an 800-acre plantation required 75 field hands. Likewise, the same size plantation in the harvest season, employed 175 to 200 workers in the field and mill. By multiplying these figures by the 543 plantations of comparable acreage, the total number of laborers increases to 40,725 for cultivation and 101,541 for harvest. Some plantations retained laborers throughout the year in housing. Assuming the 75 hands from the cultivating seasons remained annually, which is a high estimate since the permanent labor force constituted a mix of black and Italian workers, the count for the harvest season still stood between 54,300 and 67,875.[14]

12. "Reaching out for Settlers," GDN, Dec. 6, 1905; Margavio and Salamone, *Bread and Respect*, 70; *Titusville Morning Herald,* (LA) Jun. 14, 1887.

13. Poster for L'Italo Americano, Joseph Maselli and Dominic Candeloro, *The Italians of New Orleans* (Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2004), 16.

14. 1880 Population Schedule, Louisiana; 1910 Population Schedule, Louisiana; Scarpaci, "Immigrants in the New South," 166. Based on the 800-acre plantation, Scarpaci calculated that the census could be in error of 30,000 to 80,000 because of the "seasonal influx" during harvest season. *Italian Immigrants*, 111.

Passenger record numbers are also inaccurate due to the seasonal migrants from Sicily who journeyed to Louisiana only for the harvest seasons. Planters knew of the latter group, and therefore when Congress proposed a bill to require a literacy test for incoming immigrants, they rallied to block it. Due to the high levels of illiteracy among Sicilians, the bill would have depleted a large portion of the plantation workforce. This action illustrated the importance Italian immigrant labor played in the Louisiana economy.[15]

Similar circumstances existed in the neighboring state of Texas, prompting them to introduce Italians into their agriculture industry as well. As in Louisiana, the abolition of slavery created a precarious labor problem, but Texas also suffered an insufficient railroad system, which confined the agriculture near the coast. However, state officials organized an immigration bureau with the hopes of securing white immigrants to supplant the African-American labor force within the state. Gov. Oran M. Roberts published a pamphlet in 1881, which was similar to those in Louisiana. He observed, "It is likely to continue as it is here, because hundreds of thousands of white people, from the other states and from Europe, are pouring into Texas, by which the importance of the blacks, as a class, either for labor or otherwise, is diminishing day by day." However, based on census data, these numbers did not yet include large numbers of Italians. Therefore, continued efforts to recruit immigrants for work in agriculture and railroad industries appeared to provide the answer to the black labor shortage. Governor Roberts also stated the reason for the slower rate of immigration into Texas in the past stemmed from, "no good port of entry on the Gulf Coast."[16]

Beginning in the 1880s, however, the expansion of railroads throughout the state facilitated the movement of immigrant labor. As is common, when one industry expands, it creates and expands others, and the same case applies to Texas and railroads. Miles of rail lines required timber, and lumber mills met these demands and their need for labor also grew. Towns grew up around coal mines which supplied the fuel for the trains. Moreover, the faster and cheaper transportation of goods on the railroad allowed planters to move further inland and cultivate larger cash crop estates. One industry which boomed around the turn of the century in Texas was the oil industry. With the 1901 Lucas Gusher in Beaumont, a refinery culture developed in Southeast Texas. This discovery brought Giuseppe Mazzu to Beaumont. According to the history of the Mazzu/Mazzagatti family, land availability stood out as the main interest for him and

15. Mangione and Morreale, *La Storia*, 185.

16. Oran Milo Roberts, *A Description of Texas, Its Advantages and Resources, with Some Account of Their Development* (St Louis: Gilbert Book Company, 1881), 8.

his siblings to settle in Texas. "Giuseppe Mazzu was intrigued by the fact that in this wonderful country there was land available; he started saving money so he could be a landowner. There was a real future here." All of these expansions required workers, and the Italians represented a pool from which many proprietors chose.[17]

Despite the fact that the population of Italians in Texas never rivaled that of northern states like New York, the state still contained the second highest number of foreign-born Italians in the southern states, Louisiana being the first. Some similarities existed between the experience of Italians in Texas and Louisiana, and indeed the experience of the immigrant in the South in general. These were the agricultural and rural lives that Italians led south of the Mason-Dixon Line. However, there were also elements unique to Texas for Italians immigrating during the new immigration period of 1880 to 1925.[18]

Italians appear in census records for Texas in 1880, though not in significant numbers. According to this data, only 510 foreign-born Italians resided in the state by that year. The high point for Italian immigration into the state was between 1900 and 1910 when the population of Italian residents climbed from 4,031 to 7,297 respectively. However, this increase took place 20 years after the Italians began coming to the United States, and even to the neighboring state of Louisiana. Therefore, the question must be asked, why was Texas so far behind in attracting the Italian immigrants to their state? Were the legislators, bureaus, or landowners taking any measures to increase prospective immigrant laborers? The answer to the latter is yes. The Texas Constitution of 1869 created the Texas Bureau of Immigration, and in May of 1871 the legislation for it passed. Gov. Richard Coke appointed Gen. Jerome Robertson as superintendent of the Bureau in 1874, but this appointment was short lived. The Constitution of 1876 disbanded the Bureau because it denied the use of state funds "for any purpose of bringing immigrants to the State," which transferred the task for funding immigration to the railroad companies and landowners.[19]

Landowners received advice from an article in the *Galveston News* on January 4, 1874, which stated if landowners offered immigrants cheap prices on land

17. Randolph B. Campbell, *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 309; Concetta Mazzagatti Cloninger, *From Calabria, Italy, to Beaumont, Texas, U.S.A.* (Houston: D. Armstrong Co., Inc., 1998), 75.

18. Eliot Lord, John J. D. Trenor, and Samuel J. Barrows, *The Italian in America* (Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1905), 5-6.

19. 1880 Population Schedule, Texas; 1900 Population Schedule, Texas; 1910 Population Schedule, Texas; NHT, 6: 296.

or low interest rates on loans to purchase land, they would be more likely to go to Texas. Throughout 1874, other articles appeared advising land and business owners on ways to attract more immigrants to the state both from Europe and those already in the country. Agents abroad also submitted letters for publication in newspapers that provided updates on the immigration issue. In one such letter, W. G. Kingsbury, an independent agent for Texas in St. Louis, recommended the establishing of local immigration societies to lure workers from other states. These societies would pay the rail fare. This process guaranteed the exact type of laborers needed for specific jobs. Kingsbury said, "Now if any arrangement, by local societies or individuals, can be made to pay the passage of these individuals, I can forward any number . . . . Their great desire is to get to the mild climate of Texas and get a situation before the cold weather sets in." He also suggested that the importation of immigrant labor would supplant the former slaves, a conclusion planters in Louisiana had also expressed.[20]

However, before the development of a direct steamship line to Galveston, New Orleans was the closest port of entry for immigrants and a logical place for agents in Texas to recruit. As early as 1874, General Robertson, the superintendent of the Immigration Bureau of Texas, sought to streamline this process by offering reduced fares for those wishing to travel from New Orleans to Galveston. According to the *Galveston Daily News* in July 1874, Robertson made an agreement with Charles Morgan, owner of the Morgan steamship line, for this discounted transport. Prospective immigrants paid a three-dollar fare for transport on the deck of the ship. He hoped this would bring in a larger proportion of immigrants through New Orleans. Robertson also stated that 400 Italians planned a visit to Texas from southern states hoping to find suitable locations for the migration of their families, though it did not state if they would travel by land or through the port.[21]

Texas also offered extra incentives to encourage the immigrants to become permanent settlers. In 1877, for example, an article in the *Southwestern Christian Advocate* detailed the availability of free homesteads in Texas to single men or heads of families. The condition stated the person must select the land and remain on it for three years, as well as pay the fees on it. For families, 160 acres of land were offered and for single men the amount was 80 acres. News of free land provided an enticing offer for Italians because it eliminated the need to work on the plantations for an extended time. Plus, with such a large tract of land

20. "Immigration or Emigration," "Information for Immigrants," "Immigration Matters," and W. G. Kingsbury, "Texas and Immigration," GDN, Jan. 4, May 16, July 30, and Aug. 14, 1874.

21. "Immigration Matters," GDN, July 30, 1874.

available, immigrants could employ their friends and family to help cultivate and harvest these lands.[22]

In fact, Italians cultivating lands was what Texans wanted. The *Galveston Daily News* described a meeting of a large group of landowners, land agents, and members of various immigration societies from around the state for the purpose of securing Italians to cultivate lands. One of the main points of the meeting was "that Italians . . . are especially desired for the settlement of Texas lands and to supply the demand for labor." Those present at the meeting also discussed the North German Lloyd steamship line, which made regular trips to Galveston from its European ports. These ships had a capacity of 1,700 passengers, so those in attendance proposed ways to bring more Italians to Texas. They considered using agents to disperse fliers abroad, but decided against it because of the contract labor law regarding immigrants. One participant suggested printing material about employment and lands for sale, specifically in Italian, to disperse to the immigrants already in the state. By doing this, they could send word home to their friends and family. Participant J. S. Daugherty explained, "It is my judgment that the necessities, education, training, and climatic conditions under which he is born and reared make of the Italian the most available source from which we can draw this labor." Daugherty stated earlier in his speech that Texas needed immigrants educated and trained in the ways of agriculture, and was not referring to formal education or training.[23]

The Texas press also acknowledged the importance of allowing immigrants to become landowners. The *Galveston Daily News* discussed the mistakes Texas landowners made by expecting immigrant laborers to fill the place of the former slaves as tenant farmers. To illustrate that point the article referenced the *St. Louis Republican*, which stated, "The European immigrant comes to America to secure a *home* for himself and his posterity. If he is expected to be merely a tenant, he will remain on the estates of the European aristocrat, rather than become a tenant on the lands of America." To this end, the article expanded, and strongly advised large landowners in Texas to divide portions of their property into parcels for sale to incoming immigrants, a measure that indicated the state's commitment to recruiting immigrants.[24]

22. "Free Homesteads in Texas," *Southwestern Christian Advocate,* Sept. 13, 1877.

23. "Foreign Immigration Move-Meeting of Land Owners and Land Agents at Houston to Settle South Texas Lands with Good Tenants," GDN, Feb. 1, 1905.

24. "Land-Owners and Immigrants," GDN, May 5, 1874.

Initially, no single immigrant group appeared any more desirable than another. However, beginning in the 1880s articles began praising the efforts of Italian laborers, just as they had in Louisiana. The *Galveston Daily News* ran several such articles, including one that argued against the claim that Chinese made better agricultural workers than Italians. The author claimed, "An exchange expresses the idea that Chinese immigrants are preferable to Italians, saying that the former work, while the latter never do anything but travel with hand-organs or sell fruits. This idea is not unusual; and many otherwise intelligent people know little or nothing of the agricultural laborers of Italy." The writer suggested further that Italians possessed greater ability with farming due to a long history of agriculture in their native country, and added that the population of laborers in Italy outnumbered the need for their skills. Discussion also appeared about the Italian's ability to obtain high yields from lands, as well as their knowledge of crop rotation for improving the soil.[25]

This information prompted planters, as well as state agencies, to recruit Italians. Brazos County landowners, for example, advertised in newspapers in Texas as well as Europe. One planter, Overton Young, submitted an editorial to the *Galveston News*, which boasted the cheap and fertile lands of Brazos County. Young also attempted to dispel the rumors of the county being unsafe on the grounds of disease. The climate, he stated, was pleasant, and after a period of acclimation, inhabitants there were as healthy as in any other county. Furthermore, the author provided advice for success in farming, ways to avoid sickness, as well as assistance in locating a place for families that decided to immigrate to the county.[26]

Despite efforts like these, Texas did not boast numbers of Italians as high as Louisiana. One potential reason for this could be that direct steamship lines between Europe and Galveston did not exist before 1896, when the high time for Italian immigration was already underway. In August of that year, the press began discussing the establishment of these lines and also hiring independent immigrant agents abroad for recruiting. According to one article, Emil Kohn, on such agent, felt that advertisement of the state resources combined with the equitable rates of passage to Galveston and New York from Italy would encourage immigrants to choose the southern route. The agent had also toured the lands between High Island and Winnie and stated that these areas would be good for the cultivation of grapes and vegetables with which southern Italians

25. "Italian Laborers," GDN, May 11, 1882.

26. "Information for Immigrants," GDN, May 16, 1874.

were quite familiar. In his opinion, the establishment of a direct steamship line would prove most advantageous for Texas. Railroad investors and immigration agents like Kohn made an agreement with the Hamburg-American and the German Lloyd steamship lines to provide direct transportation for prospective immigrants to Galveston. This effort succeeded, and between 1900 and 1910, the foreign-born Italian population of Texas nearly doubled. Like those entering though Louisiana, a majority of those who came through Galveston originated from the peasant class of southern Italy and Sicily.[27]

Similar to Italians who arrived in Louisiana, the agriculture industry provided a continuum of their native lifestyle in the new country, but Texas also provided opportunities for industrial employment. For one, railroads in the state expanded substantially in the 1880s. During this decade, companies laid 6,046 miles of track, increasing to 9,702 miles total within the state by the end of the century. Railroad companies received land grants from the state for construction of their lines. The Texas and Pacific railroad received 5,167,360 acres of land alone. In an effort to ensure success of their lines, the companies encouraged settlement on their lands. Since investors believed Italians increased the value of land, they saw them as a valuable asset. The more enterprising companies established immigrant depots where prospective settlers chose their lands along the routes. Another tactic for enticing immigrants was the offer for cheaper fares to those expressing intent on settling or working in Texas.[28]

The construction of new railways also connected the Gulf Coast to the north and central areas, thereby creating a boom in economic opportunities for others. Cheaper freight costs stimulated agricultural production that in turn required greater processing capacities, especially in wheat and cotton. Accelerated railroad construction drove the demand for lumber and broadened accessibility to markets, expanding Texas industries. Between 1870 and 1890, factories and sawmills increased by 120%, from 2,399 to 5,268. During this expansion, immigrant labor became more important in the economy of Texas.[29]

As the Italians grew in number and importance to both states, the question as to why they were so willing to leave their native land necessitates explanation. Italy in the latter part of the nineteenth century was a nation of disjuncture and

27. "Immigrant Business," GDN, Aug. 11, 1896; 1900 Population Schedule, Texas; 1910 Population Schedule, Texas.

28. "Immigrant Business," GDN, Aug. 11, 1896; Earle B. Young, *Tracks to the Sea: Galveston and Railroad Development, 1866-1900* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), 3-4.

29. Campbell, *Gone to Texas*, 309.

turmoil. Unification of the various Italian states faltered. The northern regions flourished with industrialization and modernization, while southern Italy faced destitution, starvation, persecution, crisis, and hopelessness. Unjust levels of taxation, forced conscription, lack of education, natural disasters and agricultural crises left many southern residents with no path or recourse within their own country. Rebellions broke out in 1860, 1866, and 1892 to 1894. Politicians and popular opinion in northern Italy held that southern Italians and Sicilians were ignorant, backward people incapable of functioning in society, much less governing themselves. An article in the *Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Science* in 1909 referenced this opinion that northern Italians expressed about southern Italians, stating that "if you mention Sicily and Calabria the people shudder and say, 'those pestholes; those breeders of vice and crime,'" which illustrates the contempt that led this southern peasant stock to leave their native country. The inability of the national government to reconcile these problems and the lack of national identity led to a mass diaspora of southern Italians in search of better opportunity for themselves and their families.[30]

In addition to the natural disasters, some Sicilians also faced political exile. The *fasci dei lavoratori*, or union of workers, was a large network of local societies that wanted reform in Sicily. They wanted the right to strike, reform of land and tax laws, removal of levies from food, freedom of assembly, speech, religion, and true elections—rights and freedoms that were available in the United States. In December of 1893, in a village called Giardinello, soldiers fired on *fasci* protestors to disperse them. The shots killed 11 and wounded more. What followed was a large scale riot that spread to surrounding towns. The *fasci* never aimed to cause violence; many of their demonstrations were peaceful strikes. However, in response to the riot, Francesco Crispi, the Prime Minister, declared martial law in Sicily, and demanded the immediate dissolution of the *fasci* organizations. For Sicilians who remained steadfast, political exile became their future, and they journeyed to the nation that granted the rights they had fought for.[31]

Whether political or economic, thousands of Italians and Sicilians answered the call for immigrant labor issued by Louisiana and Texas. Both succeeded in attracting more Italians than any other state in the South. The planters targeted

30. Donna Rae Gabaccia, *Militants and Migrants: Rural Sicilians Become American Workers* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 29; William S. Bennet, "Immigrants and Crime," *Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Science*, 34 (July 1909): 119. This issue was a special edition regarding races in the United States.

31. Sandra Benjamin, *Sicily: Three Thousand Years of Human History* (Hanover, NH: Steerforth Press, 2006), 346-347.

them for their determined work ethic, and their training in agriculture, but also because they perceived them as white immigrants. The expansion in the industries of Texas necessitated labor needs outside of agriculture alone. Nevertheless, state and local officials recruited Italians en masse from within and without the United States. Earlier efforts in Louisiana, combined with a busier port and established steamship lines, brought higher numbers into the state than Texas. The port at Galveston, while delayed, began steamship lines from Italy as well, benefitting the state. All of these factors combined to lay the foundation of the Italian immigrant experience in Louisiana and Texas.

The Growth of the Jefferson County, Texas, Rice Industry, 1849-1910

W. T. Block

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The early history of the rice industry of Jefferson County, Texas, parallels the growth and development of other agricultural commodities. Beginning in 1891, however, significant changes in investment and infrastructure reshaped the economy of the region. Thereafter, acreage was fenced, leveed, and planted in rice so rapidly that the industry mushroomed from a few small patches to 50,000 acres in only one decade.[1]

One of the mysteries of the county's nineteenth-century history is why so few early settlers devoted so little time and effort toward the development of agriculture into a profitable export enterprise. While the early travel accounts of Texas certainly underrated the fertility of the county's soil (causing many planters,

W. T. Block (1935-2007), the dean of Southeast Texas history, was a longtime member of the Society. He published 18 articles in the *Record* and served as the editor in 1974, 1975, and 1977. He wrote numerous books, including *A History of Jefferson County, Texas: From Wilderness to Reconstruction* (1976), *Cotton Bales, Keelboats, and Sternwheelers: A History of the Sabine River Trade, 1837-1900* (1978), *Emerald of the Neches: The Chronicles of Beaumont, Texas, from Reconstruction to Spindletop* (1980), and *Schooner Sail to Starboard: Confederate Blockade-Running on the Louisiana-Texas Coast Lines* (1997). He also authored over 300 newspaper articles. Block served in the Seventy-eighth Infantry Division during World War II, earning three battle stars, and worked 31 years for the U.S. Postal Service. In his memory, the Society passed a special resolution and declared February 19, 2008, as "William Theodore Block Day." For the text of the resolution and a memorial to Block, see TGHBR, 44: 40-41, 62-64.

1. In the original 1987 article, Block observed, "A story about the Japanese immigrant rice planters who settled in early day Jefferson and Orange counties would prove interesting if space had permitted." This significant topic remains unexplored, but see Hellmut Klicker's online article, "A Road in Texas," that describes the controversy over the re-naming of "Jap" Road and the history of the Mayumi family and farms in Jefferson County (hirasaki.net)—ed.

especially of cotton, to move farther west), the many local subsistence farmers were surely aware that most crops could be grown with ease. Nevertheless, it appears that the aim of every farm household in the county was only that of self-sustenance. Although the wealthier families might easily turn to ranching as a preferable substitute, the same cannot be said for those who owned no slaves and few, if any, cattle, and hence were forced to choose between a bare subsistence-level livelihood or the backbreaking drudgery of large-scale farming. Thus, a less-than-objective historian might quickly identify one of the causes as sheer laziness. In July 1847, Circuit Judge C. S. Buckley verbally chastised a grand jury of farmers and ranchers at Beaumont with the following statement:

> Gentlemen of the jury, in discharging you from the performance of your duties, I have to congratulate you upon the diminution of crime in your county, upon the rich and fertile soil upon which most of you reside, and upon the advantages of navigation and commerce which you enjoy. Whilst I do this, gentlemen, I sincerely regret that you do not seem yourselves fully aware of these advantages. For, believe me when I inform you that there are other products of agriculture as important as sweet potatoes, and other vocations as profitable as herding cattle. Therefore you will excuse me, gentlemen, if, in the language of Gen. Sam Houston to his troops after the Battle of San Jacinto, I respectfully advise you to "go home and plant corn."[2]

The subsistence production of "Providence" (unirrigated) rice in Jefferson County probably dates back to the Texas Revolution, but no records are available prior to 1849. It is likewise unknown who in the county first imported the grain or planted the seed. Certainly one of the earliest accounts of rice-growing in Southeast Texas occurred in 1843 in Harris County, where the *Telegraph and Texas Register* reported a "Mr. Simmons, we are told, will harvest about thirty bushels of rice to the acre on his farm on Cypress Bayou, about twenty miles from Houston."[3]

Between 1849 and 1880, the records left by four decennial censuses indicate that 1849 was perhaps the peak year of that period for rice production in Jefferson County, a factor likely attributable to badly-depressed cotton and corn mar-

2. "Charge to Cow-boys," *Huntsville Banner* as reprinted in *Telegraph and Texas Register* (Houston), July 26, 1847.

3. *Telegraph and Texas Register*, Oct. 23, 1843.

kets. Because of the small quantities of rice (at that time planted in rows) grown prior to 1890, production was usually rated in pounds rather than in bushels or barrels. In 1849, the following Jefferson County farmers grew a total of 18,900 pounds: Sterling Spell, 3,240 pounds; Alexis Blanchette, 2,400; R. S. Holland, 1,500; Hope Cooper, 1,500; Alexander Calder, 1,440; James C. Moor, 1,440; Richard West, 1,200; Joseph Hébert, 1,080; W. D. Cotton, 1,080; Abner Ashworth, 900; Joseph Trahan, 900; Cave Johnson, 900; David Garner, 600; and Nathan Foreman, 540 pounds.[4]

Reckoning 30 bushels to the acre as a good yield for Providence rice, Spell probably had no more than three or four acres under cultivation. Of the rice growers enumerated in 1849, only Garner and Ashworth were living in Jefferson County in 1836. Possibly due to flourishing cotton and corn markets, only Hébert attempted to grow rice, 1,000 pounds, in the county in 1860. Hébert, whose grandson Joseph Eloi Broussard and other descendants were to become prominent rice growers at later dates, died in 1865.[5]

A brief resurgence of production came in 1869, when 14,900 pounds were produced, but the count dropped to 5,910 pounds a decade later. Of 16 Jefferson County rice growers in 1869, the following grew quantities of 800 pounds or more, as follows: Moise Broussard, 3,000 pounds; J. B. Langham, 2,000; J. K. Robertson, 1,200; J. S. Marble, 1,000; A. Hargraves, 900; S. G. W. Swift, 900; Edwin Prater, 800; Emile Guidry, 1,100, and Ursin Fannett, 800 pounds. Of the seven rice planters of 1879, John Jay French Jr. of Beaumont grew 2,560 pounds, more than one-third of the county's production. Other growers and production figures of that year included, as follows: Clark Ashworth, 750 pounds; Stephen Marble, 750; P. C. Grammier, 798; Clem Revere, 700; Simeon Broussard, 200; and Giles Dugat, 150.[6]

In 1874, one account noted that "much cane and rice" had been planted in neighboring Orange County, but did not elaborate regarding the amount of acreage planted. Perhaps nearby Jasper County can claim credit for the first attempt at rice-milling in Southeast Texas. By 1866, Sweeney's Mills on Big Creek 12 miles south of Jasper, consisted of a water-powered grist mill, a cotton gin, and a tanyard. A Galveston newspaper reported that Sweeney,

4. 1850 Agricultural, Nonpopulation Census Schedules, Jefferson County.

5. 1850 Agricultural, Jefferson County; 1860 Population Schedule, Jefferson County; W. T. Block, *A History of Jefferson County, Texas, From Wilderness to Reconstruction* (Nederland, TX: Nederland Publishing Company, 1976), 49.

6. 1870-1880 Agricultural, Nonpopulation Census Schedules, Jefferson County

> by digging races and building levees, so arranged his pond as to flood it at will. This he converted into a rice farm. Upon this he raises from forty to sixty bushels per acre of the very finest of rice. Now having everything ready, he conceived the idea of putting up a rice huller, and by his own labor and inventive genius, he erected a complete machine, which runs by water power. He finds ready sale for his cleaned rice at from 7 to 8 cents per pound.[7]

The first attempt at rice milling in Jefferson County came late in 1877, when David and John J. French Jr. procured milling machinery in Louisiana and installed it on their farm west of Beaumont. Due to insurmountable mechanical problems, the mill was eventually adjudged a failure and abandoned, but it did operate throughout 1878, and it would be erroneous not to credit them with this first milling effort.[8]

In January 1878, the Beaumont *Lumberman* noted that "another advantage that our town can boast of is a good rice mill, owned by Col. John J. French. It turns out first-class article of merchantable rice." Three months later, the same newspaper observed that the "Messrs. French, three miles west of Beaumont, are this year planting rice, potatoes, corn, broom corn, etc." In June, the *Galveston Weekly News* noted that John J. French Sr. "shipped five barrels of rice to Houston this week and has more to ship." The following December, still a fourth account stated "the rice and lace leather exhibited at the Houston fair by Messrs. J. J. and D. French of this city [Beaumont] received special mention, and this morning they ship ten barrels of rice to Galveston."[9]

As late as 1890, many sources verify that all facets of agriculture in Jefferson County still operated at a subsistence level. In 1882, Ashley W. Spaight, the Texas Commissioner of Insurance and Statistics, wrote that the county's farm industry, "as a regular business, is pursued by a very small percent of the population. It is carried on sufficiently to show that corn, cotton, sugar cane, rice, tobacco, potatoes, melons, and all garden vegetables are successful crops and can be grown profitably."[10] A decade later, a *Galveston Daily News* article date-

7. GWN, Aug. 10, 1874, and Oct. 16, 1879.

8. F. Stratton, *The Story of Beaumont* (Houston: Hercules Printing Co., 1925), 140. This volume contains some information which is historically erroneous and should be utilized with caution.

9. The *Beaumont Lumberman* quoted in GWN, Jan. 14, April 8, June 10, and Dec. 16, 1878.

10. A. W. Spaight, *The Resources, Soil and Climate of Texas* (Galveston: A. H. Belo & Co., 1882), 163. Spaight once commanded all Confederate troops in the county.

lined Beaumont, June 24, 1892, observed that "there is very little farming in this county, melons and garden truck being raised principally, with the exception this year of about 1,500 acres in rice. Some cotton is raised in the Sabine Pass community, but not enough corn is raised to supply home consumption." Hence, it is not erroneous to state that, prior to the year 1892, there was never sufficient agriculture in Jefferson County to be worthy of the name. When asked in September 1900 what havoc the roaring hurricane winds had wrought in Jefferson County cotton fields, a spokesman for farmers replied, "Why, blessed if I know! We raise no cotton—and mighty little corn. Too expensive, too hard work! No Negroes in the rice fields. We raise a crop on which we make horses and mules do all the heavy work."[11]

Beginning in 1892, rice farming and a demand for the county's flat prairie lands brought the first significant real estate boom to Jefferson County. Prior to 1891, the price of open range land had varied but little in more than 50 years, large tracts still obtainable at prices between $2 and $3 per acre. As late as 1891 in neighboring Orange County, the *Daily News* reported, land "was a drug on the market at $1.50 per acre."[12] But an exodus of Southwest Louisiana rice planters into Texas was soon to alter that picture. Exorbitant land prices in Calcasieu, Jefferson Davis, Acadia, and Vermilion parishes made it possible for rice growers there to sell out and relocate to Jefferson County. They could purchase from four to six times their Louisiana acreages with the proceeds. In a year's span of time, the fantastic growth of the Jefferson County rice industry and the real estate boom that accompanied it were apparent. The *Enterprise* noted:

> Through the courtesy of Colonel W. L. Rigsby, deputy county clerk of Jefferson County, I have the official report of the sales of rice lands recorded since the first of the rice excitement, something over one year ago—20,814 acres of an average of $5 per acre; also a statement from L. J . Kopke, civil engineer and surveyor, the amount of state school land, amounting to 8,320 acres—showing the transfer of 29,134 acres purchased by parties who contemplate putting it under fence and planting large farms next year. About 1,000 acres are now being harvested at this time.[13]

11. "The Rice Crop," GDN, June 24, 1892, and Jan. 1, 1901.

12. "Rice near Orange," GDN, Sept. 12, 1893.

13. BE quoted in GDN, Oct. 18, 1892.

By 1891, the *Beaumont Journal* was also waking up to the sad state of agriculture in a county otherwise so thoroughly blessed with unlimited fertile soils, fresh water, and irrigation arteries. In an editorial, one writer observed, "County lands has [*sic*] been tested and proven, and it is one of the strange mysteries of the times that thousands of acres have not been planted in this valuable cereal . . . . Some good crops have been produced in various parts of the county, but they have been on a very small scale."[14]

The first commercial growers were Louis Bordages, Dan Wingate, and Edgar Carouthers. From 1886 to 1891, they farmed as much as 500 acres in the vicinity of Taylor's Bayou, or the Hamshire-Fannett area, as one of two regions in the county blessed by nature and geography for lands conducive to rice production. Through the 1890s, area farmers still depended on rainfall, which often resulted in near-failure or no more than half-crop production, but the Taylor's Bayou sector with its north and south forks and other tributaries, such as Hillebrandt, Big Hill, Alligator, Den, and Double Point bayous, had a seemingly endless potential for irrigation. In north Jefferson County, deep Pine Island Bayou, 100 feet wide and 75 miles long, offered similar capabilities. Elsewhere, the abundance of fresh water in the Neches River ran all the way to Sabine Lake. In 1890, this resource awaited the pump, the flume, and the irrigation canal to overflow the projected thousands of acres seeded with rice.[15]

During 1892, rice acreage doubled within the county, and that rate of increase for the tilling of new fields continued for each remaining year of the nineteenth century. As of April 1892, the following farmers had planted experimental rice crops: A. Arceneaux, 200 acres; J. Burrell, 300; M. DeMandrot, 150; George B. Green, 150; C. B. Lewis, 150; J. E. Carouthers, 50; Daniels and Terry, 75; Charles Ingalls, 50; Nash and Delaune, 50; W. A. Hébert, 50; C. J. Caylor, 50; J. P. Landrum, 50; and miscellaneous acreage, 175; total, 1,500 acres. In August, one of the largest rice land sales of 1892 took place when S. H. Van Wormer sold 5,867 acres of land from the Carr, Smith, and French headrights at Taylor's Bayou to W. H. Denny of Newton, Kansas, for $25,000. Samples of rice heads brought to the Beaumont *Enterprise* office during that month from the unirrigated Clark Ashworth farm at Pine Island Bayou proved that the shortest head measured 13 inches in length. One small patch, cultivated as a field crop, had grown to a height of seven feet and was estimated at 60 bushels production per acre. By November, the county's rice "fever" was so thoroughly epidemic that

14. BJ quoted in GWN, Oct. 1, 1891.

15. St. Francis Assisi Scanlon, "The Rice Industry of Texas," (MA thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1950), 37. See also, BE, July 22, 1930, May 31, 1936, and Oct. 1, 1939.

even the newly-organized Gladys City Oil, Gas, and Manufacturing Company was planning to seed 500 acres near Spindletop during 1893.[16]

The rice fever was equally endemic in neighboring Orange County. In 1892, George Catron planted 200 acres; D. R. Wingate, 150; and B. F. Hewson and F. Eastin, 200. B. H. Norsworthy likewise seeded a large field. On November 30, when Orange County shipped its first two box cars of rough rice, totaling 70,000 pounds, to New Orleans, the shipment included: from the Norsworthy and Wooster farm, 1,000 barrels; John Dorman, 200; Abel Lyons, 100; Roe, 500; W. Bluestein, 100; Hewson and Eastin, 1,500; D. R. Wingate, 300; and George Catron, 2,000. The owner of the first steam-powered thresher in Orange County, Norsworthy moved from farm to farm to help harvest the crop. By April 1893, the *Daily News* recorded, J. L. T. Waters was using a steam plow on his 500-acre rice farm, 12 miles west of Orange, which could do "the work of eight yoke of oxen or sixteen mules."[17]

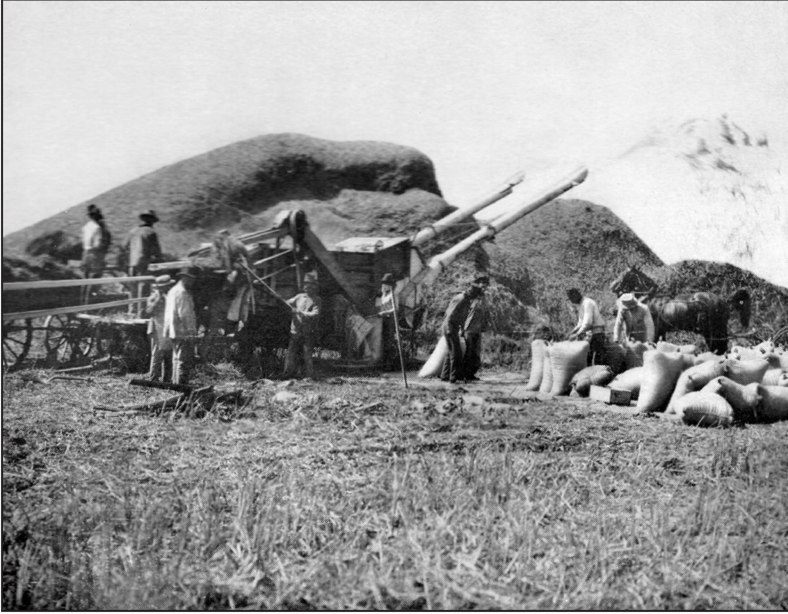
On January 1, 1893, P. S. and Willard Lovell of Crowley, Louisiana, and a Mr. Blevin arrived in Beaumont to take possession of the 5,867-acre tract of land that had been purchased for them by W. H. Denny of Kansas. "I intend," Willard Lovell told a reporter, "to cover the prairie with families. I will settle eight or ten families upon my new purchase this season." Lovell, who was president of the Crowley National Bank, was no stranger to the rice industry and may have been the largest rice grower in the nation. In 1892, he had harvested 25,000 barrels of rice from his Baker plantation near Crowley. In August 1893, B. C. Hébert and Joseph Eloi Broussard purchased a 1,260-acre tract of the Hotchkiss survey for a new rice farm from Broocks and Polk, a realty firm that was already skimming much of the profits from the rice land sales.[18]

As of 1893, no rice mill had yet been built in either Jefferson or Orange counties, and the production of both counties was still being shipped to New Orleans. The only rice mill of commercial significance in Texas was the Texas Star Rice mill in Galveston. Despite the existence of a mill at Lake Charles, Louisiana, as well, it was the New Orleans rice buyers who offered the best prices in order to lure the Beaumont box cars to their city. As a consequence, on August 18, 1893, Price Nash and Company, who had founded the Beaumont Roller Grist

16. "Beaumont Budget," "Water Melons and Rice," and BE quoted in GDN, April 19, June 25, Aug. 24, 1892; BJ, Nov. 28, 1892.

17. GDN, July 20, Dec. 7, 1892, Jan. 6, and May 11, 1893. For the complete record of the G. Catron farm and canal system, see Orange *Leader* quoted in GDN, July 4, 1892.

18. BJ quoted in GDN, Jan. 10, and Aug. 16, 1893.



"Rice Thresher at Work on Port Arthur Irrigation Company's Plantation." From Thomas U. Taylor, *Irrigation Systems of Texas, Water-Supply and Irrigation Paper No. 71* (1902).

Mill in 1888, announced that they had already ordered the machinery, capable of milling 240 sacks of rice daily, and intended to erect shortly a rice mill on vacant property adjacent to the grist mill. Construction began immediately, and by late November, although the mill was still two weeks short of completion, the company had already stored several hundred sacks of rough grain in anticipation of their opening day. On November 8, 1893, the new mill of the Orange Rice Milling Company, the second mill of commercial significance in Texas, began operations with new machinery capable of polishing 50 barrels daily. On August 24 of the same year, the following quote, datelined Beaumont, stated that the Jefferson County rice farmers were "preparing to harvest their crops. No less than five harvesters and binders were taken out from town Monday to as many farms. It is estimated that about thirty-five of these machines have been sold in this county this season. A great many planters already have their machines on their places."[19]

No further acreages or production figures are available for Jefferson County until the 1894 and 1895 seasons. In 1893, the rice fever swept on unabated with volume land sales, and the writer estimates the seeded acreage at from 2,500 to 2,800. On the whole, 1893 was not a good year, however, because the many Providence rice farms suffered until late in the season from a prolonged drought, and overproduction in Louisiana surpassed the market demand, depressing prices. But none of that affected the grand march to the Texas rice fields. Throughout the 1890's and early 1900's, the Texas and Louisiana planters appear to have given no thought to market demand, falsely assuming that new sources would arrive to devour the ever-increasing production.

By the end of 1893, Willard Lovell apparently kept his promise to "cover the prairies" with new rice farmers. At Beaumont, the *Galveston Daily News* noted, "Several families, with their implements, etc., arrived here a few days ago from Louisiana and moved yesterday down in the neighborhood of Taylor's Bayou, where they had already bought lands. These people have been rice farming near Crowley, Louisiana, but have come to this county to apply their vocation, as they think the lands here are more suitable for this business than those they have left." Certainly the influx of new Taylor's Bayou residents and the prospects for large rice shipments must have, to some degree, influenced the decision of the newly chartered Gulf and Interstate Railroad to lay trackage along a route from Beaumont to Galveston. By December 1894, the line was petitioning the Beaumont industrialists for a bonus of $35,000 before construction could be-

19. "Rice Mill at Beaumont," "Incidents at Beaumont," and "Orange Mill Notes," GDN, Aug. 19, 24, Nov. 11, and Nov. 25, 1893.

Table 1. Rice Acreage Planted in Jefferson County, 1894-1895

Planter	1894	1895	Planter	1894	1895
Broussard & Hébert	80	80	**G. B. Green**	200	300
J. H. Broocks	340	850	**C. E. Hillebrandt**	65	125
G. J. Peterson	100	125	**Broocks & Polk**	45	100
T. R. Jackson	100	225	**H. DeMandrot**	150	220
N. McGaffey	60	120	**S. Clubb**	85	85
Greene & Stengele	30	150	**P. McFaddin**	100	250
A. Delaune	300	500	**Charles Ingalls**	80	180
W. C. Duncie	200	200	**P. Landrum**	80	125
Price, Nash, & Co.	80	150	**J. M. Hébert**	200	250
W. A. Ward	100	250	**King, et al.**	200	400
J. L. Carouthers	300	250	**J. M. Peveto**	75	125
L. Hampshire	60	150	**William Budd**	60	85
Broussard Bros.	100	250	**G. W. Womack**	60	120
J. A. Arceneaux	60	100	**B. French**	100	150
Joe Dugat	30	60	**M. D. Gilbert**	10	60
J. Burrell	30	75	**P. S. Lovell**	450	800
Frank Smith	225	300	**Edward Moore**	60	100
Charles Will	120	250	**J. Kirby**	80	80
Turner & Sons	200	450	**Hillebrandt Farm**	—	550
N. Blevins	180	450	**Price & Price**	—	150
Gile & Co.	—	150	**W. H. Denny & Son**	—	125
Beckham Bros.	345	350	**Mrs. Weber**	100	70
G. H. Shoemaker	—	850	**D. & V. Fort**	—	45
M. L. Broocks	—	300	**Mr. Pipkin**	—	200
J. Parker	80	—	**F. Lege**	50	50
G. Burrell	—	60	**Geo. Stockholm**	100	—
F. Burrell	—	80	**C. F. Caylor**	50	—
Bordages, et al.	—	200	**Miscellaneous**	250	350
			Total	5,831	12,070

gin.[20] The list in Table 1 shows the distribution of at least 95 percent of the rice acreage planted in Jefferson County between 1894 and 1895.[21]

The *News* reported that Beaumont farm implement dealers also profited from the rice fever. In 1892, there were only three rice harvesters sold throughout Jefferson County. In 1893, more than 30 harvesters were sold to planters, whereas in 1894, "the sale of these machines increased to such an extent as to prevent an accurate report of the number." By March,1895, the Beaumont rice mill had turned the tables on its Louisiana competitors when it received 2,000 sacks of rough rice from Crowley for milling, with prospects of more to come. Rumors exchanged in rice circles anticipated the construction of a second mill, and two men from Lake Charles arrived in Beaumont "investigating the situation."[22]

By June 1895, the planters were predicting a county harvest of 70,000 sacks, expected to be worth more than $100,000. Also, the land boom received no respite from speculators with tract after tract changing hands. C. E. Hillebrandt sold his 5,038-acre homestead, which would eventually become the rice plantation of Col. John McClure. In May, Broocks and Polk bought 4,000 acres, including the 2,000-acre Beckham Brothers farm. The largest transaction of 1895, however, came in October, when Beaumont Pasture Company sold 41,850 acres, at $6.75 per acre, to the Kansas City Southern Railroad. Embracing a tract which stretched all the way from Spindletop to Sabine Lake, about one-half of the property was intended for irrigation and rice production under the railroad's subsidiary, the Port Arthur Rice and Irrigation Company.[23]

In October 1895, G. H. Shoemaker harvested 4,748 sacks of rice from a 476-acre field, a fair yield averaging 10 sacks per acre. Alex Broussard's 100-acre farm yielded, at a lesser ratio, 705 sacks. His Providence crop suffered badly for lack of sufficient moisture.[24] In general, both 1894 and 1895 were fairly good years, or at least the rice growers seemed to think so, with favorable prices partly due to tariff adjustments in the rice grower's favor and in part due to a half-crop in Southwest Louisiana, the unfortunate result of hurricane winds.

20. "Rice Farmers Moving In" and "Beaumont Is Ready," GDN, Dec. 13, 1893, and Dec. 9, 1894.

21. [Table 1] Compiled from lists published in GDN, Jan. 20, March 24, and 31, 1895.

22. "Beaumont Budget," GDN, Feb. 3, and March 17, 1895.

23. "Beaumont Budget," GDN, May 5, 26, and June 16, 1895; JCDR, 12: 64-74, 22: 50.

24. "Beaumont Budget," GDN, Oct. 27, 1895.

Among the new rice land purchases of 1895 was that of J. and L. Viterbo, a 1,600-acre farm located on Hillebrandt Bayou, about six miles west of present-day Nederland. Of Italian parentage, the Viterbos were born and reared in Istanbul, Turkey, but had resided in Paris for several years before immigrating to Lake Charles in 1885. They had farmed rice for 10 years in Louisiana before they decided to resettle in Texas.

In January 1896, the brothers began work on their fields and pumping establishment. They installed a pump and a 75-horsepower engine to lift water some six feet into a flume and a two-mile-long main canal which flowed across their property. Utilizing a ditching machine of their own design, they built levees at a rate of 1.5 miles a day, and in March began seeding a 300-acre patch which harvested a $10,000 investment profit. In 1897, the Viterbo brothers planted 800 acres of rice, which they began harvesting in August and which yielded a $30,000 return. The Viterbos were soon clamoring for a rice mill to be built at Port Arthur, and their model farm became a template for the Port Arthur Rice and Irrigation Company as well as for other canal systems which were then or later in the process of construction.[25]

The arrival of the Kansas City Southern Railroad (then known as the "Peegee," or Kansas City, Pittsburgh and Gulf) was welcomed by the rice growers in the same manner as the Gulf and Interstate. The railroad not only accounted for the births of Port Arthur and Nederland, but it also fathered an additional 13,000 acres of the county's rice production total, as well as providing the first north-south outlet to market. Not least among its accomplishments, however, was the Port Arthur Experimental Farm, a 200-acre facility begun in 1896, the purpose of which was to test all animal and plant life in search of those strains and varieties most adaptable to Jefferson County's soil and climate. Rice experimentation and seed was accorded top priority.

In March 1897, the Kansas City Southern transferred F. M. Hammon, the superintendent of the railroad's experimental farm at Amoret, Missouri, to manage the new experimental farm (located at present-day Pear Ridge) at Port Arthur. At the same time it employed three bulb growers and horticulturists, Bartle J. Dijksma, H. W. Naezer, and G. W. J. Kilsdonk, of Holland, so that immigrant rice farmers could receive necessary instruction in their native tongue. The farm

25. "More about Rice," and "Green and Growing—800 Acres of Rice in One Field," PAH, Aug. 12, 1897, and March 18, 1898.

immediately planted large patches of Honduras, Japan, and other varieties of rice, sowing about 90 pounds of seed to the acre.[26]

By July 1897, the farm's manager was reporting "great success" with its rice experiments, as well as with sea island cotton, two strains of tobacco, and several varieties of corn, beans, melons, peas, potatoes, and even asparagus. Its facilities also included an 80-acre orchard of young pear trees, orchards of oranges, figs, plums, grapes and olives, as well as a large herd of imported Jersey milk cows. In anticipation of the founding of Nederland, the "rice colony" that the railroad would soon establish, the farm manager had already selected the umbrella china as the ideal shade tree for a rice farmer's front lawn. A thousand seedlings for transplanting at Nederland were awaiting the arrival of hundreds of Dutch colonists.[27]

The founding of Nederland represented a novel and unique event indeed in the history of Jefferson County's rice industry, for it anticipated a colony composed solely of Dutch immigrant rice farmers, whose only previous experience with the cereal grain had been at the dinner table. Long before the rails reached Port Arthur, the idea was spawned in the mind of Arthur E. Stilwell, the entrepreneur president and founder of the Kansas City Southern. It was a sound business scheme designed to stimulate rail business at a point on the line that was barren of population, to dispose of 37,000 surplus acres of land at a sizeable profit, at prices ranging from $16 to $50 per acre, and to thank Amsterdam bankers, who had loaned the railroad $10 million. Stilwell recalled in his memoirs that "we owed a debt of gratitude to the Dutch people . . . [who] make exceptionally capable farmers. So I founded a town and called it Nederland and instructed my emissaries to make a drive on country districts of Holland and to entice a good class of citizens to the newly organized community." Eventually Stilwell, probably because of his huge investment, did not limit his new colony solely to immigrants, and the earliest rice farmers at Nederland included a good many native-born Americans, as well as Hollanders who had already lived in America for many years at points in Nebraska, Iowa, and Michigan.[28]

26. "Farm Manager to Arrive," PAH, March 18, 1897.

27. "Experimental Farm," PAH, July 22, 1897.

28. A. E. Stilwell and J. R. Crowell, *I Had a Hunch: The Amazing Story of the Last of America's Great Empire Builders* (Port Arthur: La Belle Printing Co., 1972), 77; T. Scheltema, "A Dutch-American Railroad: The Kansas City Southern," *Knickerbocker Weekly: "Free Netherlands"*, 2 (Nov. 23, 1942): 15-18; *De Grondwet* (Holland, MI), April 12, 1897, and May 24, 1898; *De Volkswriend* (Orange City, IA), Aug. 20, 1896; P. J. van Heiningen and W. Beukers, "Vraag en Antwoord," *Neerlandia* (The Hague, Netherlands), July 1898, 38-39.

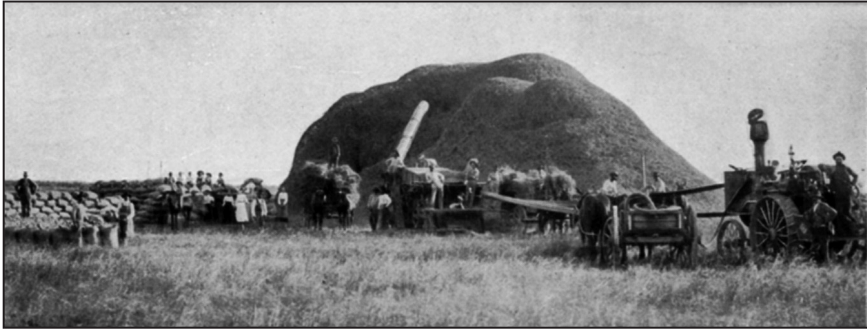
In October 1897, a month before the first immigrants arrived, Stilwell founded the Port Arthur Rice and Irrigation Company, capitalized at $50,000, as a subsidiary of both the railroad and the Port Arthur Land Company, and managed by F. M. Hammon of the experimental farm. Construction work began in January 1898 with 55 men and 27 mule teams, supervised by D. Zimmerman, a railroad engineer. The crew installed an 18,000-gallon-per-minute pump and a 100-horsepower Chandler and Harris steam engine at Smith's Bluff on the Neches River as well as constructed two miles of inclined outflow flume. The company began work on four main canals that would serve 20 miles of tributaries. The rice company built headquarters, stables, barns, and a dormitory for its employees on the railroad two miles south of Nederland at a point still known as "Rice Farm Road." As an auxiliary enterprise, the company also engaged in extensive rice farming, employing many indigent immigrants and U.S. citizens in its fields until they could save enough money to buy land and equipment.[29]

In 1898, the Port Arthur Rice and Irrigation Company, exclusive of its customers, planted 700 acres in rice, and by September had 35 men, four binders, and a new steam thresher harvesting its fields. The first 460 acres that were harvested produced a gross return of $21,000 from sales of bagged rice. In 1900 the rice company had 1,500 acres of its own under cultivation, and by 1904, the company and its clients accounted for about 13,000 acres seeded in rice along the canal system. Cultivation increased so rapidly that by 1900, the irrigation company raised its capitalization to $150,000 in order to enlarge its overtaxed equipment. Crews doubled the width of the outflow flume to 100 feet and added two new 24-inch pumps of 60,000 gallon-per-minute capacity.[30]

By 1903, the Port Arthur *Evening News* lauded the rice economy of Nederland, which was already boasting of its 500 residents, two-thirds of whom were Hollanders. The town had three leading mercantile and farm implement firms, whose owners were also leading rice farmers. The following men were rice growers at Nederland at the turn of the century: Hugh Kitchen, Rome Woodworth, Martin and Will Block, John and Klaus Koelemay, Conrad Wagner, Cornelius and Jacob Doornbos, W. F. and B. H. Lans, Jesse Peek, Ed. Rockhill, W. D. Cammack and brother, S. R. Hogaboom, P. J. and J. C. Van Heiningen, Sebe R. and Peter Carter, C. X. Johnson, Peter and Will Goodwin, Henry Spurlock, A. Burson, J. E. Weeks, George Vanderweg, Bauke Westerterp, A. E. Groves, H.

29. PAH, Oct. 28, 1897, Jan. 20, Jun 2, 1898, and March 30, 1899.

30. PAH, July 2, 14, Aug. 25, Sept. 15, 1898, March 30, 1899, Jan. 13, 1900; BJ, Dec. 11, 1899, and July 23, 1905; "The Culture of Rice in Texas," GDN, Jan. 1, 1900.



"Rice Harvesting near Beaumont." From *Souvenir, Beaumont, 1903* (c. 1903). *Courtesy of the Lamar University Archives and Special Collections, Beaumont, TX.*

P. Delabye, C. Vanderhout, W. I. Vandenbosch, L. M. Lauweenk, Ben Datema, E. N. Singleton, Joe Dock, and A. H. Scott.[31]

In July 1898, Nederland had a Dutch "Colonists Union," or farm cooperative, composed of 20 rice growers plus laborers and some mechanics. W. F. Lans served as president and P. J. Van Heiningen as secretary. Quoted in the *Beaumont Journal*, Van Heiningen commented on some of the costs that immigrant rice planters encountered. In addition to land at $20 per acre or higher, teams of horses or mules were worth, respectively, either $120 or $150, Jersey cows cost $70 each, and Louisiana rice seed was $5 a barrel. In 1902, another *Journal* noted that "Nederland rice farmers have the appearance now of millionaires . . . . Nederland is truly a rice center. The cereal is now rolling in in wagons from every direction . . . and there are none who look happier or more prosperous than the rice farmer."[32] Despite the costs, rice farming had already proven quite profitable for several people in Jefferson County, and at later dates many wealthy men often boasted of their humble origins as rice field laborers, as the following story reveals.

31. PAN, May 13, 1903; PAH, Nov. 4, 1899, and Jan. 13, 1900; Diamond Jubilee History and Museum Committee, *Nederland, 1898-1973: Diamond Jubilee* (Nederland: Nederland Publishing Company, 1973), 26.

32. BJ, Sept. 4 and 11, 1902; Heiningen and Beukers, "Vraag en Antwoord," 38-39.

It might interest the reader to learn that the old defunct First National Bank of Nederland was "born" in a rice field. In 1899, Ed Rockhill and Jesse B. Peek settled at Nederland as penniless rice field laborers working for the Port Arthur Rice and Irrigation Company. They were thrifty, however, and in a few months each had saved about $160 from his earnings. With that and other funds borrowed from friends, they put in two crops of their own in 1900 and 1901, from which they realized a $10,000 profit. One day as they were loading bagged rice into a wagon, Rockhill turned to Peek and confided, "Jess, my whole ambition in life is to engage in the banking business. Let's make money enough rice farming to go somewhere and start a national bank of our own; it's not hard to do, you know." Peek agreed and so stated at the time, but he dismissed the idea momentarily from his mind. Later they bought into a mercantile business together, and finally became aware that while their own financial stature was improving at a rapid pace, the same could be said for Nederland at large. Eventually, their dream reached fruition in October 1902, when they and other businessmen subscribed to a capital stock of $25,000, with Peek as vice president of the First National Bank and Rockhill as cashier.[33]

One of the early-day inconveniences was the bagging of rice, because with no rice mill at Nederland, the product had to be stored in large warehouses built along the Kansas City Southern tracks before it could be shipped to Beaumont or Port Arthur for milling. In 1900, the Port Arthur Rice Milling Company was organized and built with John W. Gates as president and George M. Craig as general manager. In March 1904 in order to end the sacking system at Nederland, Rockhill, Peek, a Mr. Fleming, and W. D. Cammack, a leading Nederland merchant and planter, organized the Nederland Rice Milling Company and constructed their facilities at the intersection of Nederland Avenue and Highway 347.[34]

The group executed a $35,000 contract with the Boland and Geschwind Company, rice mill machinery manufacturers of New Orleans, for a 400-barrel-per-day mill. J. A. Petty, a Crowley mill architect, began construction immediately, and the following August, the company hired Beaumont contractor W. Whitney to build a 60,000-bushel capacity elevator, costing about $20,000. Perhaps the lone vestige of the mill's erstwhile existence is a five-share stock certificate, signed by Ed Rockhill as president and Cammack as secretary, issued to J. W. Barr and until recently owned by the late J. Alvin Barr of Nederland. Within a

33. "Nederland Bank," BJ, Jan. 5, 1903; PAH, Oct. 25, 1902; PAN, May 13, 1903.

34. Map Record No. 1, plat of A. Burson Addition, Town site of Nederland, 1902, Map Records, Jefferson County Archives, Beaumont, TX; PAH, Sept. 28 and Dec. 14, 1901.

year the mill was in severe financial straits, and after bankruptcy proceedings, operations were resumed under the former lienholder, Boland and Geschwind, who later changed the mill's name to the Jefferson County Rice Milling Company.[35]

The rice mill failure was only the first sign of troubled times ahead. Thereafter Nederland business houses, including the bank, failed in rapid succession. The impetus of the Spindletop boom played out, and in the span of one year's time, rice acreage at Nederland plummeted from a high of 13,000 to 6,000 acres. A severe recession arrived in 1906, rice prices were quite depressed, and overproduction of the grain caused some Jefferson County millers to hurry to Europe in search of new markets. About 80 percent of Nederland's Dutch population soon moved away, many of them to Port Arthur or Winnie, in search of better economic opportunities.

Its "golden age" tarnished and gone, the rice economy nevertheless lingered at a greatly slackened pace. As its channel was gradually deepened to permit deep-sea shipping at Beaumont, the Neches River became increasingly brackish and saline during low water seasons, and the facilities of the Port Arthur Rice and Irrigation Company were no longer dependable due to the state of disrepair of the canal system and the pumping plant. About 1913, Jan Van Tyne, who managed the Port Arthur Land Company, borrowed money, and in a 'last ditch' effort to stave off financial ruin, imported canal experts from Holland and repair crews from New Orleans to rebuild the rice company facilities. But his efforts were in vain. With debts far exceeding its income, the Port Arthur Rice and Irrigation Company went into bankruptcy within a year. Thus the big engines and pumps at Smith's Bluff, later to be dismantled by the Sun Oil Company, were silenced for all time, leaving only the weed-studded embankments of abandoned canal levees to bear mute testimony to that era when rice was king of Nederland's economy.[36]

Jefferson County quickly rose to the forefront of the Texas rice-producing counties, and for many years thereafter its leadership was only mildly challenged by

35. "A New Rice Mill" and "Nederland Notes," BJ, April 1 and 23, 1904, also April 30, 1905; "Nederland Rice Milling Company," PAH, Aug. 20, 1904. In July 1904, a new Nederland rice growers' cooperative was organized which amalgamated the old Dutch Colonists' Union. See also, PAH, July 29, 1904.

36. *De Grondwet*, Jan. 18, 1910, and June 1, 1920; BJ, April 30 and May 7, 1905; Jacob Van Hinte, *Nederlanders in Amerika: een studie over landverhuizers en volkplanters in de 19e en 20ste eeuw in de Vereenigde Staten van Amerika* (2 vols., Groningen, Netherlands: P. Noordhoff, 1928), 2: 268-275.

Wharton and Matagorda counties. In 1900, rice cultivation in the eight leading Texas counties included, Jefferson, 43,400 acres; Matagorda, 33,650; Wharton, 24,300; Liberty, 16,000; Colorado, 11,260; Orange, 10,500; Harris, 10,000; and Chambers, 9,000. By 1903, the total acreage under cultivation in Jefferson County had reached 54,000. As of 1901, four of Texas's eight rice mills were located in Jefferson County. These mills included the Texas Star Rice Mills, Galveston; T. H. Thompson Rice Milling Company, Houston; Beaumont Rice Mill, Beaumont; Atlantic Rice Mill, Beaumont; Hinz Rice Mill, Beaumont; Orange Rice Milling Company, Orange; Port Arthur Rice Milling Company, Port Arthur; and the Lakeside Rice Mill, Lakeside.[37]

John Reimershoffer, owner of the Texas Star Flouring and Rice Mills at Galveston, gave the rice industry in Texas its greatest impetus. In 1888, he decided to add a rice mill to his grist mills at Galveston, planning to import the rough commodity from the fields of Louisiana and foreign countries. It occurred to him, however, that the flat gulf prairie of Texas offered exactly the same physical characteristics as that of Southwest Louisiana. He purchased several tons of Louisiana rice seed, which he advertised to give in small quantities at no cost to any Texas planter who was willing to experiment with that grain. His generosity resulted in all of the raw product that his mill could handle.[38]

No complete acreage figures for the period 1898 to 1900 in Jefferson County are available, but statistics for some of the county's largest planters and rice companies are known and appear to account for perhaps as much as three-fourths of the county's acreage as shown in Table 2.[39]

It appears that by 1900, the former Providence rice planters were no longer willing to gamble a year's labor and finances beyond those uncontrollable factors of hurricane winds and hail, and that some form of irrigation, either from the river, bayous, canal systems, or deep artesian wells, was in general use throughout the county. Irrigation pumps were first in use on the Taylor's Bayou watershed, but they quickly spread to other parts of the county as well. By 1901, the total irrigated acreage included Taylor-Hillebrandt area, 9,650 acres; from deep wells 1,380; Port Arthur Canal System, 8,500; McFaddin-Wiess-Kyle Canal System, 9,000; and Beaumont Irrigation Co., 15,000, for a total of 43,530 acres. Furthermore, the Taylor's Bayou planters and rice companies farmed the following

37. "Texas and Her Rice," BE, Aug. 4, 1902; "Industrial Beaumont," BJ, Oct. 6, 1903; "The Rice Industry," PAH, Feb. 15, 1902.

38. "J. Reimershoffer and the Texas Star Mills," GWN, Feb. 2, 1890.

39. "Texas Rice Culture," PAH, Jan. 6, 1900.

Planter	1898	1899	1900
Beaumont Irrigation Co.	—	5,000	20,000
Broussard & Hébert	1,800	1,800	1,800
Viterbo Bros.	500	600	1,000
McClure-Cameron	700	500	800
Southern Rice Co.	—	—	1,200
Stockwell & Davis	350	400	400
C. A. Place	150	250	600
Ed Moore	75	150	250
P. S. Lovell	700	1,100	1,100
Bigham Bros.	—	300	500
J. H. Hoopes	600	700	700
John C. Ward	600	600	600
Jesse G. Garland	300	400	500
George Gill	400	400	500
Alex Broussard	200	200	200
Port Arthur Rice Co.	700	750	1,500
Miscellaneous	500	350	3,000
Total	7,375	13,300	36,450

Table 2. Rice Acreage Planted in Jefferson County, 1898-1900

acreages: George Gill, 1,000 acres; J. H. Garland, 450; Jefferson County Rice Co., 2,300; J. H. Hoopes, 500; Bigham Brothers, 1,100; Lovell Brothers, 750; W. Ed Moore, 50; C. A. Place, 500; Col. John McClure and B. F. Cameron, 680; Southern Rice Co., 960; Stockwell and Davis, 300; and Viterbo Brothers, 950, for a total of 9,650 acres.

Although total irrigation from artesian wells did not account for a large percentage, it was an indispensable method for those planters of the Hamshire and China vicinities, who did not have access to the extensive canal systems of the present day. In the Hamshire area, Gov. H. C. Wheeler irrigated 300 acres from deep wells; the P. A. Heisig farm also overflowed its 185-acre fields from wells and the McManus farm, 120 acres. Near China, Hal Aldridge, J. W. Kirby, the Burrows farm, and the Southwestern Rice Company irrigated a total of 775 acres, using the artesian method. Usually one good well could irrigate about 80 acres of land. In west and southwest Jefferson County, such wells normally had to be bored to a depth of 150 to 220 feet in order to reach water-bearing strata

ranging from 50 to 80 feet in thickness. The wells were usually cased with either six- or eight-inch pipe, equipped with adequate straining systems installed on the bottom end, and pumped with 20- or 25-horsepower steam engines and pumps.[40]

P. S. and Willard G. Lovell, who had operated large plantations near Crowley, Louisiana, represented another model of rice farms in 1900 Jefferson County. P. S. Lovell first began work on his fields in 1893 and, before the year ended, had resettled a number of Louisiana farmers on his 5,800-acre tract. By 1900, 2,400 acres of their land was under cultivation by the owners or their tenants. An 18-inch, 20,000 gallon-per-minute Ivins pump lifted water to a height of 18 feet from Taylor's Bayou to fill a flume and main canal five miles long and 60 feet wide, which flowed across their property. As a further precaution against dry or low-water seasons, they added a man-made reservoir, five miles in length, which required 10 billion gallons of water to fill. Normally the Lovells used half a million gallons of water for each seeded acre in the course of a year. To sustain their large-scale operation, they owned 40 mules and employed from 12 to 30 men, supervised by foreman John Groskopf. Evidently, the Lovells quickly learned the value of crop rotation, for in 1900, the *Semi-Weekly Journal* reported that they were "putting in 900 acres this year, leaving the rest of the land idle in order to clear it of the red rice. In this way they manage to raise rice clear of red." In 1900, Willard Lovell estimated his total crop costs at $10 per acre and expected to realize a $30-per-acre profit. A disastrous hurricane in September of that year, however, may have reduced his expectations considerably. Regarding the county's rice crop of 1896, the *Galveston Daily News* observed that "those who were practical rice farmers have done remarkably well this season in Jefferson County. Their yield had been good, the quality up to date, and the price received net them a handsome income. There is no question but that the rice farmer who understands his business can make money in this locality and live royally at the same time."[41]

In 1897, the few Providence rice growers left in the county suffered badly from a prolonged drought. The Green and Stengele farm was the only one that harvested a normal yield. On September 13, a hurricane struck the region. Rice farmers greatly feared these natural upheavals. Fortunately, they had already harvested nearly three-fourths of the yield, but the Viterbo Brothers lost about one-quar-

40. The foregoing data on Jefferson County irrigation derived from "Texas and Her Rice," BE, Aug. 4, 1902.

41. E. Peperkorn, "Ideal Rice Farm," *Beaumont Semi-Weekly Journal*, May 1, 1900; "Texas Coast Country," GDN, Jan. 2, 1897.

ter of their last uncut crop, a 200-acre patch. Winds of hurricane velocity struck everywhere between Anahuac and the Sabine Lake, killing 10 persons at Port Arthur, founded only two years earlier, destroying many buildings.[42]

The disastrous Galveston hurricane of September 8, 1900, also wrought considerable havoc in the fields locally, although many considered the ripe grain to have weathered the storm better than most crops. Growers of the Honduras strain suffered greatest, and for some reason the Japan variety of rice withstood the winds much better. The H. C. Wheeler rice farm south of Hamshire lost three large storage barns and a new creamery. The 7,000 acres near Winnie, watered by the Trinity Rice and Irrigation Company of Stowell, suffered only a 10-percent loss to the winds. A 25-percent loss, however, was sustained on the 11,000 acres of the Beaumont Irrigating Company at Pine Island, as well as along the Port Arthur Rice and Irrigation canal system, but the average yield in the county still netted around 10 barrels to the acre. "If the storm had not occurred," remarked E. Goldsmith, manager of the Hinz Rice Milling Company of Beaumont, "they would have had an enormous crop!"[43]

During the two years after the storm, rice producers in the Winnie-Stowell area lengthened canal systems, dug deep wells, and achieved enormous gains in acreage. As a result, Winnie eclipsed Nederland as the "rice capital." An offspring of the Gulf and Interstate Railroad, the new community was named for Fox Winnie, general manager of the railroad, and until September 1915, shared another aspect in common with Nederland—80 Dutch families were settled there by Theodore F. Koch and Company of Houston. As of 1900, George Gill, whose 700-acre farm was four miles east of Hamshire, pumped from a Taylor's Bayou tributary and averaged 10 barrels to the acre, his storm loss amounting to 10 percent. John Stewartson, six miles west of Stowell, grew 100 acres of Honduras, which harvested a yield of 11.5 barrels. His crop also took first prize at the Houston Fruit and Flower Festival of 1900. Four families named Stagg, all brothers, had been growing rice at Crowley, Louisiana, for 22 years, when in 1900 they resettled 8 miles west of Winnie and grew 1,100 acres of rice. J. S. Jordan, whose 120-acre field lay on the railroad a mile north of Hamshire, irrigated from a single eight-inch well and yielded 11 barrels per acre. H. C. Wheeler, a former Iowa Governor who settled near Hamshire in 1896, operated

42. "Port Arthur Hurricane," GDN, Sept. 14, 15, and 17, 1897.

43. "The Rice Crop" and "Beaumont Country," GDN, Jan. 1, 1901.

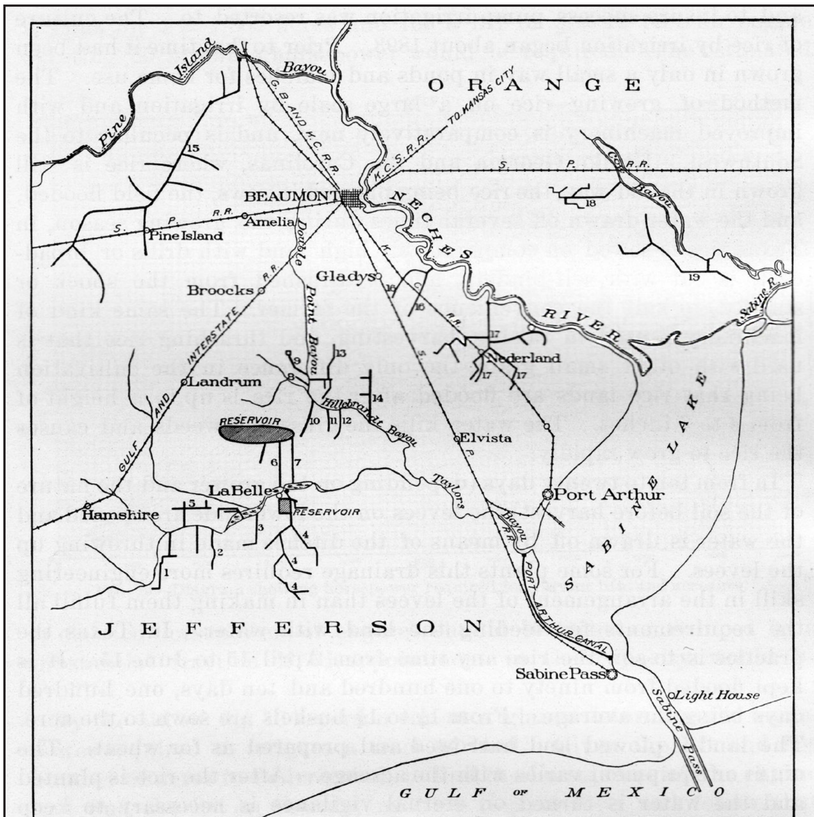


FIG. 20.—Map showing irrigation systems in the eastern half of the Beaumont section.

1. George Gill.
2. J. H. Garland.
3. J. C. Ward.
4. Jefferson County Rice Company.
5. J. H. Hoopes.
6. Lovell Brothers.
7. Ed. Moore.
8. Gulf Rice Growing Company.
9. Southern Rice and Trust Company.
10. C. A. Place.
11. Mr. Davis.
12. Schumacher & Fox.
13. Cameron & McClure.
14. Viterbo Brothers.
15. Beaumont Rice Company.
16. McFadden & Wiess Company.
17. Port Arthur Rice Company.
18. Des Moines Irrigation Company.
19. Cow Bayou Canal and Irrigation Company.

"Map Showing Irrigation Systems in the Eastern Half of the Beaumont Section." From Thomas U. Taylor, *Irrigation Systems of Texas, Water-Supply and Irrigation Paper No. 71* (1902).

a 1,000-acre dairy farm. He also harvested 11 barrels per acre from his 100-acre, well-irrigated field. In one year's time (1901), acreage watered by the Trinity Irrigation Company's canal system doubled from 7,000 to 14,000.[44]

In 1900, some Beaumont rice farmers also prospered. The Port Arthur *Herald* reported that Beaumont producers George H. East sold $9,035 of rice from 260 acres; E. W. May, 4,322 sacks from 275 acres; Robert Day, 4,678 sacks from 300 acres; George Day, 1,509 sacks from 100 acres; and Andrew Jones, Beaumont, Texas, 2,313 sacks from 160 acres.[45] County production had reached the point that the lone milling facility of the Beaumont Rice Mill, although it had just increased capacity to 400 barrels daily, was sorely inadequate. For that reason, much rough rice was again being channeled to New Orleans and elsewhere. Some pointed out that, even if the mill ran seven days a week throughout the year, it could process no more than 146,000 sacks, whereas optimists were predicting a countywide yield for 1900 exceeding 300,000 sacks.[46]

The county's early rice mills, principally at Beaumont but later including both Port Arthur and Nederland, were an important ingredient of the county's early economic history. They contributed many new jobs to the fledgling industrial economy, a field that had always been dominated by the sawmills. The first mill of commercial significance at Beaumont, and the third in the entire state, resulted from the corn and flour-milling activities of Price, Nash and Company. C. L. Nash and J. K. Price founded the Beaumont Roller Grist Mills, located on Lot 61 at Main and Forsythe Streets, about 1888, and on April 3, 1890, the owners sold an undivided one-third interest in the business to Joseph E. Broussard for $1,516. On December 7, 1891, Broussard became one-half owner of the business when he purchased half of Nash's interest. When he later acquired complete ownership, Broussard changed the name to Beaumont Rice Mills.[47]

In August 1893, Price, Nash and Company announced that it had ordered machinery to erect a rice mill adjacent to the grist mill, anticipating a capacity of 240 sacks daily. Although unconfirmed at this writing, the order was probably

44. GDN, Sept. 15, 1897, and Jan. 1, 1901. See also, W. T. Block, "Tulip Transplants to East Texas: The Dutch Migration to Nederland, Port Arthur, and Winnie, 1895-1915," ETHJ, 13 (Fall 1975): 36-50, which won for the writer the East Texas Historical Association's C. K. Chamberlain Award for 1976.

45. "The Rice Industry," PAH, Feb. 11, 1902.

46. "The Rice Industry" and "Texas Rice Culture," PAH, Jan. 6, 1900, and Feb. 11, 1902; *Beaumont Daily Afternoon Journal*, April 23, 1900.

47. JCDR, 2: 227-228, 4: 548-549.

placed with the Boland and Geschwind Company of New Orleans. By November 25, the company had already stored hundreds of sacks of the 1893 crop for use on its opening day early in December, or about one month after the Orange Rice Milling Company opened for business on November 8, 1893. In 1899, it was "rebuilt and enlarged and has a capacity of about 400 barrels of rice in twenty-four hours." At a later date, the mill was removed to its present location at 1800 Pecos in a new industrial section near the Southern Pacific tracks.[48]

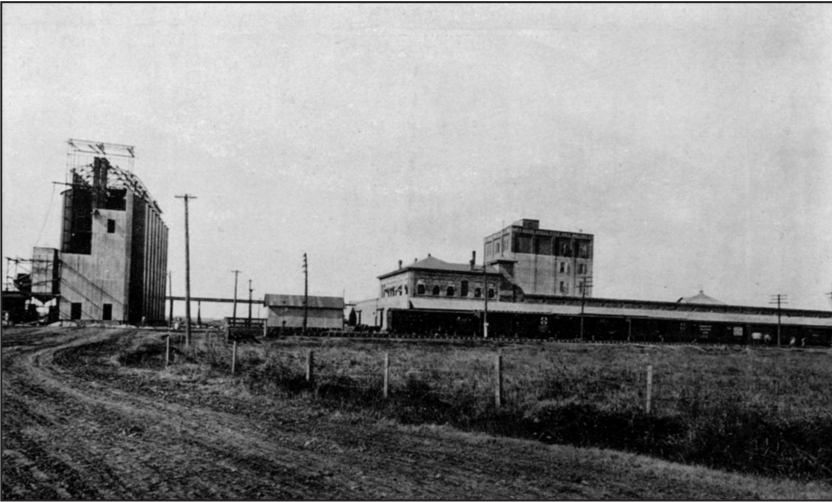
It should be stated that Joseph Eloi Broussard remained the symbol of the rice industry of Texas for more than six decades. Embracing the industry in every aspect from the canal pump to the market basket, he enjoyed extreme longevity and headed the Beaumont Rice Mills beyond his ninetieth birthday. The mill is still owned and operated by his descendants, making it, in the writer's opinion, exclusive of The Enterprise Company, the county's second oldest, continuously-operated business (the old First National Bank, founded in 1889, would be the only other close contender) and certainly its oldest industrial establishment.

By February 1900, two men of national milling stature were scouting Beaumont, seeking potential sites for rice mills. They were Gustave A. Jahn, a reputable miller from New York City, and A. Frederick Hinz of San Francisco. Hinz, a partner in the firm of Hinz and Plegeman, also represented M. J. Brandenstein, of Brandenstein and Company of California, each of the latter being a well-known Pacific Coast flour miller. Both Houston and Lake Charles were under consideration as well, and in order to secure the new firms, Beaumont industrialists had to pledge a percentage of the costs of locations for the mills.[49]

Jahn organized the Atlantic Rice Mill, incorporated in New York in May 1900, after several Beaumonters contributed $5,000 for a site at Main and Washington Streets, to include 200 feet of river frontage adjacent to the property of the Beaumont Lumber Company. Plans called for construction of a 400-barrel per day mill to be installed in a five-story brick building, with two large storage warehouses adjoining, at a total cost of about $40,000. Jahn planned to buy a tug and barges in order to freight rough rice from Taylor's Bayou to his wharf. By the following October, the Atlantic Rice Mills advertised themselves as "buyers of rice" as well as millers. Gradually the mill came under local control, with John N. Gilbert as president, and in October 1903, it was leased to

48. "Rice Mill at Beaumont," "Culture of Rice in Texas," et al., GDN, Aug. 19, Nov. 11, 25, 1893, May 5, 1895, Jan. 1, 1900; "Texas Rice Culture," PAH, Jan. 6, 1900; "Beaumont Rice Mill," BE, July 8, 1899.

49. "To Build Rice Mills," *Beaumont Daily Afternoon Journal*, April 3, 1900.



"McFaddin-Wiess-Kyle Rice Mill." From *The Standard Blue Book of Texas, 1908-1909, Edition Deluxe of Beaumont* (c. 1909). *Courtesy of the Lamar University Archives and Special Collections, Beaumont, TX.*

the McFaddin-Wiess-Kyle Rice Company. In June 1907, the Atlantic Rice Mill was re-chartered as a Texas Corporation, with W. M. Carroll as president; O. F. Corley as secretary; and W. S. Davidson, G. M. Bull, G. W. Carroll, J. N. Gilbert, and George C. O'Brien as directors. Jahn remained only as a stockholder.[50]

After much haggling concerning location and a contribution from local business, A. Frederick Hinz signed an indenture with George W. Carroll in July 1900, bonding himself for $2,000 and contracting to build a 1,200-barrel-per-day mill on a block south of the courthouse and operated as the Hinz Rice Milling Company. Estimated at $18,000, the plans included a three-story building and two storage warehouses, designed by J. A. Petty, mill architect of Crowley, Louisiana, and furnished with Boland and Geschwind machinery. By October 8, the company advertised its storage capacity of 75,000 bushels and its receipt of rough rice at its office on Pearl Street. L. Goldsmith was the local manager for Hinz.[51]

50. "Money for Rice Mill Site" and "The Big Rice Mill-Jahn and Co.," *Beaumont Semi-Weekly Journal*, April 2, 21, and May 4, 1900; "Jahn Is for Beaumont" and advertisement of Atlantic Rice Mill, BJ, Nov. 3 and 24, 1900; JCDR, 75: 492, 97: 327.

51. "Hinz Rice Mill," *Beaumont Semi-Weekly Journal*, July 10, 1900; Hinz Mill advertisements, BJ, Oct. 8, 25, and 29, 1900.

Contemporary with the new Beaumont mills, the Port Arthur Rice Milling Company was completed in the fall of 1900 as one of many railroad subsidiaries owned at Port Arthur. From the name of the mill's president, John W. Gates, one can see that the timing coincided with the receivership of the Kansas City Southern, an event which left Gates and a coalition of New York capitalists in control of the railroad and its properties. A 400-barrel mill, the machinery was installed by Messrs. Ivins and Hoelzel of the Boland and Geschwind firm. Managed by George M. Craig, the mill processed its first rice on November 26, 1900. The *Journal* reported, "Charles G. Gates started the engine, George M. Craig rolled the first bag to the truck, Charles E. Gates trucked it to the hopper, and Mrs. George M. Craig cut the stitches in the bag which allowed the rice to flow into the hopper. Mose Solinsky bought the first product of cleaned rice, paying therefor $10." The new Port Arthur mill drew much of its raw products from the Viterbo and Lovell farms, barged to Port Arthur from Taylor's and Hillebrandt bayous, and from the Dutch immigrant farmers along the Port Arthur Rice and Irrigation canal system.[52]

No sooner had the machinery of Jefferson County's five rice mills begun rotating when they were beset by a series of misfortunes. Perhaps the least of these in the history of the capricious rice market was financial, for supply was already surpassing demand. By 1904, the price of rice dropped to $1.50 a sack, 75 cents less than production costs, and the Texas rice farmers lost $2.5 million in that year. By April 1905, the Nederland rice mill was in bankruptcy, and its proprietorship was assumed by Boland and Geschwind, the lienholder, who soon changed the name to the Jefferson County Rice Land and Milling Company.[53]

On October 19, 1903, the first of two additional rice mill disasters occurred when the Hinz mill caught fire and burned, a total loss. The mill manager, I. N. Cook, estimated the cost of replacing the mill at about $75,000. He was uncertain of the exact amount of stored grain that had burned. However, since rice harvest was in full swing and the elevator was nearly full, the crop loss was considered to be about $100,000, or a total of $175,000, of which amount $125,000 was insured. A few days later, Pres. M. J. Brandenstein and the directors of Hinz Rice Milling Company met at San Francisco and announced their intention to rebuild an enlarged plant of 2,000 sacks daily capacity, and the Hinz firm dispatched A. W. Brown to Beaumont to begin the project. In April 1904, the McFaddin-Wiess-Kyle Company released plans to build a new

52. "Machinery Started Up," BJ, Nov. 27, 1900.

53. GDN, Jan. 7, 1906; "Rice Mill Fails," BJ, April 23, 1905.

1,200-barrel rice mill at Beaumont at an early date. Apparently, the Hinz combine felt another plant would add excess rice-milling capacity to the area's six existing mills, and they offered to sell or lease the new Hinz plant to the McFaddin interests. According to the *Galveston Daily News*, that company had, by 1909, "shipped to the Atlantic seaboard and Puerto Rico approximately 75,000 pockets of rice, making a tonnage of 7,500,000 pounds of clean rice, also vast quantities of rice byproducts, consisting of ground rice hulls, rice bran, and rice polish, that will approximate 1,000 to 2,000 tons."[54]

During the fall of 1905, the Beaumont Rice Mill built its new plant on Pecos Street, in the west end of the city, and for a couple of years, that company continued to operate both mills. In December, one newspaper observed that "the new mill of Beaumont Rice Milling Company in this city was running in an experimental way the past week. This is a modern structure and was intended to replace the old mill in the heart of the city on the Southern Pacific right of way, which must be abandoned in a year or two on account of expiration of the ground lease."[55]

Sadly, another rice mill disaster loomed in the offing. Before daylight on October 31, 1906, at the height of the harvest season, the new Beaumont mill also went up in smoke, a conflagration that consumed the $65,000 plant and $40,000 worth of rice. Luckily the five-story elevator, office, and one warehouse escaped injury, but the $60,000 insurance only partially covered the loss. J. E. Broussard announced that it would be rebuilt immediately. If one includes the founding and tenure of its predecessor concern, Price, Nash and Company, then the Beaumont Rice Milling Company became a century old in 1988. In 1909, the Beaumont Rice Mill shipped about 15,000 pockets of rice to the East Coast and 18,000 to Puerto Rico for a total 33,000 pockets, or the equivalent of 2.8 million pounds. The Atlantic Rice Milling Company marketed approximately the same amount: 17,000 pockets to the East Coast, 16,000 to Puerto Rico, for a total of 33,000 pockets.[56]

Between 1901 to 1909, the number of Texas rice mills increased from eight to 21 (with a total daily capacity of 25,200 sacks) along the coastal strip between Orange and Bay City. Of the latter number, there were three mills in Beaumont

54. "Hinz Mill Burns," BE, Oct. 20, 1903; "Will Be Rebuilt" and "Two More Rice Mills," BJ, Nov. 2, 1903, and April 6, 1904; GDN, Sept. 1, 1910.

55. "News from Beaumont," GDN, Dec. 10, 1905.

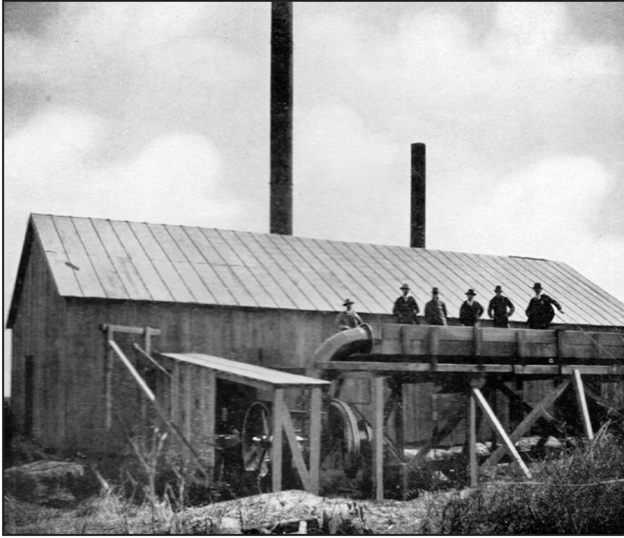
56. "Serious Loss in Mill Fire," BE, Nov. 1, 1906; "Texas Rice" and "Texas Rice Report," GDN, Sept. 1, 1910.

and one each in Nederland, Port Arthur, and Orange. Their daily capacities were as follows: Beaumont Rice Mill, 1,500 sacks; Atlantic Mill, 1,500; McFaddin-Wiess-Kyle Mill, 2,000; Port Arthur Rice Mill, 1,200; Nederland Mill, 600; and the Orange Mill, 1,000; total, 8,000 sacks. During 19 years' time, 1890 to 1909, Jefferson County production increased from a few acres to 78,000 acres, and Texas production increased from 135 acres in 1890 to 283,300 acres and 9.1 million bushels in 1908, or 45 percent of the national production. Of 21.9 million bushels grown in the United States in 1908, more than 20.6 million bushels, or 95 percent, had been grown in South Texas and Southwestern Louisiana. The Jefferson County rice industry had mushroomed into a $4 million enterprise, and the average Texas rice production per acre was 39.1 bushels.

In 12 years' time, 1898 to 1910, the Jefferson County irrigation canal system had also grown in like proportion, from nothing to 200 miles of main canals. There were four large canal companies in the county, as follows: Port Arthur Irrigation Company, north of Nederland; the McFaddin-Wiess-Kyle canal system, also four miles north of Nederland; the Beaumont Irrigation Company; and the Treadaway (Neches) Canal Company, as well as the Taylor's Bayou district, comprising the Lovell, Viterbo, and other small, privately owned systems. In neighboring Orange County, there were four more irrigation enterprises: Cow Bayou Canal Company; Adams Bayou Canal Company; Orange County Irrigation Company; and the Des Moines Canal Company. The Orange County canals flooded only 12,500 acres, but the Jefferson County irrigation arteries watered 78,000 acres, as follows: Beaumont Irrigation, 32,000 acres; Treadaway (or Neches) canals, 13,000; Port Arthur Rice and Irrigation Company, 10,000; McFaddin-Wiess-Kyle, 16,500; and Taylor-Hillebrandt system, 6,500.[57]

The Port Arthur irrigation complex, as already elaborated, began building in January 1898 and ultimately served 25 miles of main canals plus laterals. The Jefferson County Irrigation Company, later renamed the Beaumont Irrigation Company, was also organized in January 1898, and built its huge pumping plant on Pine Island Bayou, where the East Texas Railroad bridge crossed 9 miles north of Beaumont. The facilities began pumping in 1898 to 10,000 acres of rice land, using a $45,000 plant consisting of two 36-inch pumps of 60,000-gallon-per-minute capacity and two huge Corliss steam engines. Ultimately this system flowed water to 100 miles of main canals as well as laterals, flooding 30,000 acres of land. In 1904, the Beaumont Irrigation Company was the largest company of its type in the United States, and some believed it to be

57. "Texas Rice Statistics," GDN, Sept. 1, 1909.



"Pumping Station of the Jefferson County Rice Company." From Thomas U. Taylor, *Irrigation Systems of Texas, Water-Supply and Irrigation Paper No. 71* (1902).

the largest in the world. It belonged to W. A. Ward, A. F. Goodhue, J. E. Broussard, W. S. Davidson and others.[58]

In 1900, T. H. Langham, George C. O'Brien, W. B. Dunlap, W. M. Carroll and others organized the Treadaway Canal Company and installed a pumping system to 50 miles of canals and laterals, costing about $100,000 and watering 13,000 acres. In 1904, the board changed their charter to the Neches Canal Company. During litigation the same year, the Neches Canal owners claimed that they irrigated 40,000 acres and obtained an injunction against Beaumont Irrigation Company, which enjoined the latter from "excavation of any branch canal, ditch, or levee across lands owned by the Neches Company."[59]

Until after World War II, drivers along Highway 347 (at DuPont) four miles north of Nederland could see an old two-story house, an abandoned canal right-of-way and levees, and an old concrete smoke stack where present-day DuPont Road crosses the Kansas City Southern Railroad. In 1900 the house was

58. "Jefferson County Irrigation Co." and "A Magnificent Enterprise," BE, Jan. 8, 15, 1898, and June 17, 1899.

59. "Neches Canal Company," BJ, April 4, 1904; "Canal Companies Fight," GDN, Oct. 21, 1904.

headquarters of the "Mashed-O" Ranch and of the McFaddinWiess-Kyle Rice and Canal Company, and the old smoke stack was all that remained of the old abandoned canal system's pumping plant. The enterprise (as well as the rice mill of the same name) belonged to W. P. H. McFaddin, Valentine Wiess, and W. W. Kyle, with McFaddin as manager and Henry Davidson as its general foreman. In 1902, the McFaddin canal facilities pumped water to 8,000 acres of rice on the southwest side of Beaumont (where production averaged 15 barrels an acre), and by 1908, acreage along its ditches and laterals totaled 16,500.[60]

In only 18 years' time, Jefferson County had served as the torchbearer for the new Texas rice industry. The county's increase ranged from about 100 acres in 1890 to about 78,000 in 1908. In the latter year, Texas rice acreage had reached 283,000 acres, or 40 percent of the nation's production of 730,000 acres. Another noteworthy enterprise occurred in 1909 when Texas A & M University established the Amelia Rice Experiment Station, and that facility has since achieved an enviable 75-year record in its pursuit of new varieties of rice and new methods of eradicating blights and diseases.

Since 1910, rice production has had its ups and downs, with occasional fields laid bare by hurricanes, blights, or other causes. And although many Jefferson County farmers have suffered bankruptcy over the years, enough have survived to keep the county at or near the pinnacle of the state's production statistics, as well as endure the petty or major annoyances, such as quotas, which perennially plague rice planters. Generally, the rice farmers have become cattlemen as well in the process of tilling an acre one year and allowing it to "lie fallow" the next. And many of them now intersperse rice acreage with land sown in soy beans in the constant effort to survive agriculture's financial floodtides. As recently as 1970, rice income added $17 million to Jefferson County's economy, while beef cattle sales amounted to an additional $2.4 million. Hence, the writer predicts that, whatever hardships have been experienced in the past or whatever the future might hold, Jefferson County and its rice farmers have no alternative but to march hand in hand into the twenty-first century.

60. Beaumont *Daily Journal,* Oct, 11, 1902; "Rice in the Coast Country," GDN, Sept. 1, 1908.

Sawdust City

Beaumont, Texas, on the Eve of the Petroleum Age

Jonathan K. Gerland

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Economic change in Texas during the last quarter of the nineteenth century was characterized by a remarkable degree of industrial development and the rise of commercialized agriculture. Although Texas remained predominantly an agricultural state in 1900, farmers were finding money indispensable as local industries became giant factories supplying world markets and the new order of dependent commercialization replaced the agrarian ideal of self-containment. Texans, along with their former Confederate neighbors, adjusted and "standardized" to conform to the proven industrialized society of the North. The process was turbulent at times, but seemed to come naturally for Jefferson County, which had shown signs of industrial and commercial strength even before the Civil War. The rise and development of the city of Beaumont during this critical period embodied the economic formation of much of the state, which, along with the rest of the nation, charted an economic course leading to the oil fields at Spindletop, where industry attained ultimate supremacy over agriculture.[1]

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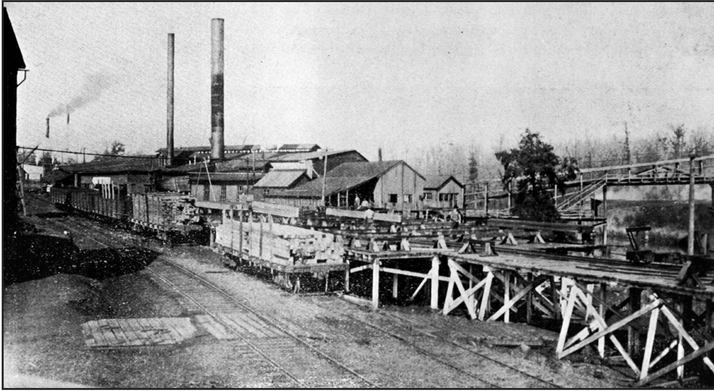
1. John S. Spratt, *The Road to Spindletop: Economic Change in Texas, 1875-1901* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1955), 4, 64, 251, 284-285; Vera Lea Dugas, "Texas Industry, 1860-1880," SHQ, 59 (Oct. 1955): 151-183; Billy M. Jones, *The Search for Maturity, 1875-1900* (Austin: Steck-Vaughn Co., 1965), 102-103; Jonathan Gerland, "Adjusting to Change: Railroads Brought New Way of Life to East Texas," *Crosscut* (First Quarter 1995); C. Vann Woodward,



[Frank] Trost, photographer, "Plant of the Reliance Lumber Co., Owned and Operated by the Kirby Lumber Co." From *The Advantages and Conditions of Beaumont and Port Arthur Today* (1901). *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

In 1838, the city of Beaumont first incorporated as a town but experienced its greatest percentage of sustained population increase between 1890 and 1900 when it nearly tripled (186 percent). No other city in the state, of Beaumont's size or larger, grew faster during the decade.[2] This phenomenal increase resulted from the economy created by a forest products industry which firmly planted itself in the heart of the city following the depressed years of Civil War and Reconstruction. Utilizing abundant natural resources and transportation opportunities and employing a ready supply of labor, Beaumont lumbermen established lucrative markets for their products all across the United States and the world during the 1880s, as southern yellow pine became the nation's leading building

Origins of the New South, 1877-1913 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 112-113, 123-124, 150-151; Francis Butler Simkins, *A History of the South* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), 326-328; Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The Rise of the City, 1878-1898* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1933), 14-15; W. T. Block, "A History of Jefferson County, Texas: From Wilderness to Reconstruction" (MA thesis, Lamar University, 1976), 33-65; Robert J. Robertson, "Beaumont on the Eve of the Civil War, As Seen in the Beaumont *Banner*," TGHBR, 30 (Nov. 1994): 9-26; Randolph B. Campbell, "Reconstruction in Jefferson County, Texas, 1865-1876," TGHBR, 31 (Nov. 1995): 10-28 [Reprinted in this volume—ed.]

2. An Act to Incorporate the Town of Beaumont and Town of Jasper, in H. P. N. Gammel, comp., *The Laws of Texas, 1822-1897* (10 vols., Austin: Gammel Book Co., 1898), 2: 9-11; Paul E. Isaac, *A History of the Charters of Beaumont, Texas, 1838-1947* (Beaumont: Lamar University Center for Urban Affairs, Mirabeau B. Lamar Series in Urban Affairs: I, n.d.), l. Population figures are based on numbers in U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States (1900), Volume 1, Population, Part I* (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Office, 1901), 476-477; *Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide, 1976-1977* (Dallas: A.H. Belo, 1975), 188-192.

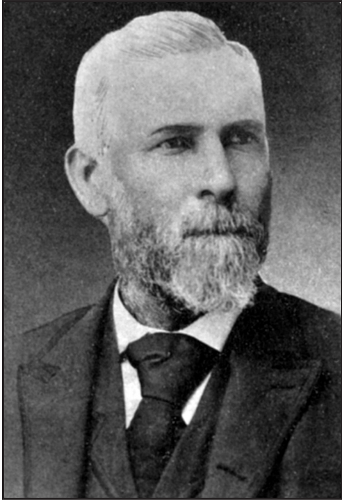
material.[3] By 1889, three of the largest sawmill establishments in the South were operating in Beaumont, all locally owned with a combined authorized capital stock of $2 million.[4] The city's commercial success was strengthened when two national banks were established in 1889 and 1899, as industrial, transportation, and related commercial interests burgeoned.[5] Municipal advancements, such as a fire department, a board of health, a streetcar system, brick street paving, sanitary sewers, water works, telephone communication, and electricity for power, lighting, and refrigeration, were developed and introduced before the end of the nineteenth century.[6]

3. Hamilton Pratt Easton, "The History of the Texas Lumbering Industry," (PhD diss., University of Texas, 1947), 112-116; "Beaumont's Big Business: Industry, Grit and Enterprise," GDN, Feb. 15, 1888; Block, comp., "Beaumont's Big Business, 1888," TGHBR, 13 (Nov. 1977): 84-90; Robert S. Maxwell and Robert D. Baker, *Sawdust Empire: The Texas Lumber Industry, 1830-1940* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1983), 20-22; Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 125; James Curtis Ballagh, ed., *The South in the Building of the Nation, Volume 6, Economic History, 1865-1909* (Richmond: Southern Historical Publication Society, 1909), 151-153.

4. The companies and their authorized capitalization in 1889 were Texas Tram and Lumber Company, $1 million; Reliance Lumber Company, $500,000; Beaumont Lumber Company, $400,000; and Long Manufacturing Company, a division of Texas Tram and Lumber Company, $100,000. See respective charters and articles of incorporation, TXSS.

5. First National Bank of Beaumont Minutes, April 9, 1889, 1: 1-4, 14-15, Archives Division, THL; "The Beaumont National Bank," in *The Advantages and Conditions of Beaumont and Port Arthur of Today, Published under the Direction of the OU Exchange and Board of Trade, Beaumont, Texas* (New Orleans: W.E. Myers, 1901), n.p.

6. Judith Walker Linsley and Ellen Walker Rienstra, *Beaumont: A Chronicle of Promise* (Woodland Hills, CA: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1982), 65-67, 73; John H. Walker and Gwendolyn Wingate, *Beaumont: A Pictorial History* (Norfolk, Virginia: The Donning Co., 1983), 101. Municipal services in general are recorded in "Beaumont's Big Business" and "Texas Business Centers: Beaumont," GDN, Feb. 15, 1888, Sept. 1, 1890; "Beaumont: The Houston of East Texas," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* Sept. 20, 1890, 129; *New Orleans Times-Democrat,* March 29, 1889, in BEN, 79-85. Concerning the water works, see City of Beaumont City Council Minutes, Dec. 15, 1887, through Feb. 1, 1888, 1: 237-257, THL. Information on the city's first electric plant can be found in Beaumont Ice, Light, and Refrigerating Company, Charter and Articles of Incorporation, June 20, 1888, TXSS; J. B. Coltharp, *The Story of Electrical Service in Beaumont* (1934 rept., Beaumont: Gulf States Utilities Company Advertising Department, 1955); BEN, 545-546. Concerning street car railways, see "Street Car Line," BE, Oct. 31, 1891; City Council Minutes, May 5, 1891, 1: 519-520, March 1, 1898, 2: 261; "Joe Loeb Tells of Exciting Trip on First Street Car Run and Plans to Be on Last," BE, April 26, 1937 (news clipping, vertical files, THL). For the Board of Health, see City Council Minutes, Ordinance No. 34, Feb. 8, 1882, 1: 39; Isaac, *History of the Charters,* 3. Members of the Board of Health consisted of Drs. J. A. Gilder, A. N. Perkins, and Z. T. Fuller. "Beaumont: What the *Tribune* Man Saw in the Mill City," BE, March 12, 1881, records the use of telephones between two sawmill offices about a mile distant in the city. The two offices were those of Long & Company and Beaumont Lumber Company. GDN, Dec. 21, 1883,



"William A. Fletcher, Prominent Lumberman and Capitalist" (detail). From Marcellius Elliott Foster, *South and Southeast Texas: A Work for Newspaper and Library Reference* (1928). *Courtesy of the Lamar University Archives and Special Collections, Beaumont, TX.*

Beaumont, popularly identified with the Spindletop oil discoveries of 1901 and 1925, was recognized first for lumber and shingle manufacturing. To a wood-intensive culture, the area provided all the right ingredients. Situated along the Neches River, 50 miles from the Gulf of Mexico and near dense cypress and pine forests, Beaumont showed economic promise from the earliest days of American settlement. The Civil War, however, partly inhibited the region from realizing its true potential. Capital became scarce and transportation and market conditions suffered heavily. In 1865 after serving in the Confederate army, William A. Fletcher realized that he not only "lost" four years to war but also found his old wages at one of the Beaumont sawmills reduced by more than 50 percent upon his return home.[7]

in BEN, 315-316, reported that Beaumont would "soon" have a telephone exchange. By the end of 1900 more than 800 telephones were in service in the city. See "Phone Figures Grow," in Beaumont Chamber of Commerce, *Beaumont,* Jan. 1920, 32, THL. For brick street paving and sewer work, which was limited, see "The Paving Work Accepted," *The Weekly Enterprise* (Beaumont), June 10, 1899; Record of Street Paving, 1899-1930, untitled oversized manuscript, THL; *Facts about Beaumont,* (Beaumont: T. A. Lamb and Sons, 1899).

7. The Spindletop oil discoveries have been popularized in James A. Clark and Michael T. Halbouty, *Spindletop* (New York: Random House, 1952). The local sawmill was that of James M. Long and Frank L. Carroll. For perspectives which stress the early importance of the lumber industry, see Florence Stratton, *The Story of Beaumont* (Houston: Hercules Printing and Book Company, c. 1925), 132-138; Block, "Lumber Bridged Gap to Urban Beaumont," BE, April 29, 1977; Block, "Beaumont Became City Before Oil," *Beaumont Sunday Enterprise-Journal,* Sept. 3, 1978; Richard Stewart, "Beaumont before Oil?," BE, June 5, 1977; Joanne Scarborough, "Long Means Lumber," BE, July 4, 1976; William A. Fletcher, *Rebel Private, Front and Rear* (Beaumont: Greer Press, 1908), 193.

Change elsewhere, however, created renewed economic opportunity for Texas and Beaumont during the 1870s. At this time, the nation began to feel the effects of a limited supply of soft-wood building material resources due to the depletion of the white pine forests of the northeastern United States. As transportation conditions improved across the South, and especially in Texas, national lumber markets began seriously to consider southern yellow pine as an alternate wood supply. The annual value of Texas lumber mill products rose from less than $2 million in 1870 to nearly $18 million in 1900.[8] The manufacture of lumber, perhaps the most overlooked industry of the New South, became the most important industry in Texas during the 1880s, ranking first in number of wage earners, wages paid, capital invested, and value of manufactured products.[9]

From the late 1870s through the rest of the century, lumber also ranked first in tonnage moved annually by Texas railroads.[10] Lumber and shingles from East

8. "Lumber and timber products" were valued at $16,296,473 in 1900, enough to rank first in the state in value of manufactured products. When the value of the census classification "lumber, planing mill products, including sash, doors, and blinds" is added, the total figure increases to $17,901,770, or 15 percent of the total value of the products of the state. U.S. Bureau of the Census, including, *Ninth Census of the United States (1870), Volume 3, Statistics of Wealth and Industry* (GPO, 1872), 453-454; *Eleventh Census of the United States (1890), Volume 13, Manufacturing Industries, Part 3* (GPO, 1895), 606; *Twelfth Census of the United States (1900), Volume 8, Manufacturer, Part 2* (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Office, 1902), 864, 872-875; Maxwell and Baker, *Sawdust Empire,* 20-22; James Elliott Defebaugh, *History of the Lumber Industry of America,* (2nd Ed., 2 vols., Chicago: American Lumberman, 1906), 1: 500.

9. Texas produced more than 2.1 billion board feet of lumber in 1907, ranking third in the nation behind only the states of Washington and Louisiana. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Eleventh Census of the United States (1890), Volume 11, Manufacturing Industries, Part 1* (GPO, 1895), 596-600. The identity of the southern lumber industry has yet to be adequately explained. Thomas D. Clark argues that the southern lumberman has been too long overlooked and suggests that "historians have been cotton-blinded, seeing mostly staple agriculture, slavery, sectional politics, and 'wasted' southern society." *The Greening of the South* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984), 19. Ayers declares that the "South's largest industry has remained virtually ignored" and that "lumbering, more than any other industry, captures the full scope of economic change in the New South, its limitations as well as its impact." *Promise of the New South,* 123.

10. C. W. Raines, *Year Book for Texas, 1901* (2 vols., Austin: Gammel Book Company, 1902), 1: 242; Spratt, *Road to Spindletop,* 257-259; S. G. Reed, *History of Texas Railroad and of Transportation Conditions under Spain and Mexico and the Republic and the State* (Houston: St. Clair Publishing Co., 1941), 746; Jones, *Search for Maturity,* 103. For the year ending June 30, 1901, Texas railroads moved 4,889,467 tons of lumber, 19.8 percent of all freight. In second, at 3,699,704 tons, was coal, coke and lignite (15 percent). At least an additional 1,105,545 tons, identified as "other and unclassified forest products," was also moved by Texas railroads during the year. Total forest products moved by Texas railroads during the year accounted for at least 24.3 percent of the total tonnage. *Tenth Annual Report of the Railroad Commission of the State of Texas for the Year 1901* (Austin: Von Boeckmann, Schutze & Company, 1901), Table No. 13.

Texas were carried to treeless West Texas and to virtually every state and territory in the Union. Lumber was also shipped through Sabine Pass to ports in the United States, Mexico, Central and South America, and Europe. Lumber rose to a place of economic pre-eminence in Texas so rapidly, one Galveston newspaper correspondent in 1878 wrote from Beaumont "that for feeding mouths and clothing backs, the Texas lumber mills are unsurpassed."[11]

Railroads played an integral role in the history of the southern lumber industry and in the development of Beaumont and Southeast Texas. With efficient transportation to new markets, the region was transformed into an important industrial center. In addition, Beaumont became the crossroads of five distinct lines of railway before 1900, increasing its status as a regional commercial center and as a leading national distribution point of forest products.[12]

The greatest impetus to the rise of commercial lumbering in Southeast Texas was the reconstruction of the Texas & New Orleans Railroad in 1876. This vital road, first built before the Civil War, dilapidated rapidly and became inoperable by the late 1860s. Reconnecting both Beaumont and the neighboring city of Orange to the city of Houston in November 1876, the Railroad's reopening had a significant impact on the entire region. In Beaumont, the number of lumber mill establishments increased from two in 1870 to seven in 1880. Invested capital in these mills grew during the decade from $10,600 to $270,000, and the annual value of products increased from $16,750 to $465,500. Annual wages

11. "Orange and Beaumont, Two Towns on the Texas and New Orleans Railroad: Sketches by 'N.A.T.'," "Beaumont's Big Business," "Beaumont: Foreign Lumber Orders Still Coming In," and "Texas Business Centers," GDN, March 9, 1878, Feb. 15, 1888, Oct. 25, 1889, and Sept. 1, 1890; "Beaumont," *Frank Leslie's,* Sept. 20, 1890, 129; "Beaumont" in *The Export Pine Trade of the Southern States of America* (London: The Timber Trades Journal, 1898), [44-47]; Spratt, *Road to Spindletop*, 257-259.

12. Melvin C. Johnson and Gerland, "Tapping Green Gold: The Steam Rail and Logging Tram Roads of East Texas," *Environmental History,* 1 (Oct. 1996): 46-65; Reed, *History of Texas Railroads,* 230, 745; "Beaumont's Many Railroads," BJ, Dec. 16, 1896; Easton, "History of the Texas Lumbering," 116. The five lines of railway included the state's number one carrier of forest products, the Texas & New Orleans, which consisted of the original east-west line and the north-south Sabine & East Texas. The other lines were the Texarkana & Fort Smith (owned by the Kansas City, Pittsburgh & Gulf), the Gulf & Inter-State, and the Gulf, Beaumont & Kansas City. These roads were, or soon after their completion, became parts of the Southern Pacific, Kansas City Southern, and Santa Fe systems. Although it is impossible to determine exactly the volume of forest products moved by rail through Beaumont or any other point, the published records of the Railroad Commission of Texas for 1901 show that one-third of the state's total forest products tonnage was moved over roads which traveled through Beaumont. *Tenth Annual Report of the Railroad Commission*, Table No. 13.

"A Log Train in the Woods near Beaumont" (detail). From *New England Magazine* (Sept. 1891).

paid by the lumber companies increased accordingly, from $4,100 in 1870 to $113,000 in 1880, an increase of more than 2,656 percent.[13]

Beaumont experienced unprecedented economic growth during the late 1870s, as individuals and families, white and black, sought a new life in the lumber boom town. George C. O'Brien, an early Beaumont attorney, remembered the decade as a time when "[p]rogress began to march . . . . Things were prosperous. There was money floating about." Work and progress were observed throughout the city and were reported in the pages of the local newspaper *Beaumont Weekly*

13. T. J. Russell, "Pioneer Reminiscences of Jefferson County," BJ, April 8, 1906 (newspaper clipping, Thomas J. Russell Scrapbook, 24, THL); Reed, *History of Texas Railroads,* 84-87, 230, 745. Rail connections with New Orleans were not completed until 1881. "First Train over the Line from Houston to the Sabine," GDN, Nov. 21, 1876; Charles S. Potts, *Railroad Transportation in Texas* (Austin: University of Texas, 1909), 31, 36-40. The city of Orange experienced similar growth. The number of sawmills there increased from five to eight, capital from $18,300 to $212,000, and value of products from $61,250 to $512,900. According to the census reports, there were only seven independent planing mill establishments in the state in 1880. One was located at Beaumont (the firm of Young & Williams or Globe Planing Mills), four were in Harris County, and two were in Dallas County. Many of the largest sawmill establishments across the state, however, operated planing mills in conjunction with their sawmills and were not identified by the census as a separate planing mill establishment. *Ninth Census of the United States (1870), Volume 3,* 453-454; *Tenth Census of the United States (1880), Volume 2, Manufactures* (GPO, 1883), 359-361.

Lumberman.[14] New wharves and freight houses were built along the river. New business and residential houses were constructed, including boarding houses, hotels, and restaurants. By 1879, eight full-time schools "inside the town proper" were reported in session. Churches were established and built, including three which maintained "stationed ministers" and Sunday schools for African-American congregations. An excited *Galveston Daily News* correspondent who visited the bustling mill city in August 1879 wrote that he was proud to have found in Beaumont "a place where cotton is not king and where people do not complain of hard times."[15]

Much of Beaumont's optimism during the latter part of the nineteenth century was sustained by the seemingly insatiable demand for southern pine and cypress lumber products. Only insufficient supplies of rail cars inhibited the mills from near-continuous operation. At other times the sawmills slowed down only when their workers were sent into the woods and swamps for more logs. Editor John S. Swope of the *Beaumont Weekly Lumberman* reported in May 1879 that every man and boy in town who could "swing an ax . . . pull at the end of a crosscut saw . . . or float a log" was busy supplying timber to the mills.[16]

Millions of logs were rafted and boomed together and floated down to Beaumont from as far away as Angelina and San Augustine counties, over 300 river miles in distance. Log jams "as high as twenty feet above the surface of the water" were reported 100 miles or more above the city, taking weeks to clear. Calked boots, worn by logging raftsmen, were stocked at several Beaumont stores and were advertised in the newspapers. River rafting logs was such a part of life and the economy that log brands were registered in Jefferson County during the first year of implementation of the state log brand law approved in April l879. The mandate required all floating logs on Texas rivers to be marked for identification and the marks to be registered at the appropriate county courthouses. In most cases logs were "stamped," "chopped," or "gouged" with an ax. Reflective per-

14. "Remembrances of George C. O'Brien as Recorded by His Daughter, Erin O'Brien, at His Dictation in 1943" (typescript), Texas Gulf Historical Society Collection, THL. Few issues of the *Beaumont Weekly Lumberman* are extant. The Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, has one issue dated April 23, 1880. The *Lumberman* was quoted often, however, by the *Galveston News* in the "Texas News Items" section from 1877 through 1880. Much of the Beaumont information reprinted from the *Lumberman* in the Galveston newspapers has been compiled in BEN.

15. *Beaumont Lumberman* quoted and "Beaumont: Growth and Prospects of the Town," GDN, May 5, June 19, Aug. 7, 1879.

16. "The Beaumont Boom" BE, April 2, 1881; *Beaumont Lumberman*, quoted in GDN, May 5, 1879. See also, *Beaumont Lumberman* quoted and "Beaumont: Growth," GDN, June 19 and August 7, 1879.

Beaumont Weekly Lumberman.

VOLUME III. BEAUMONT, TEXAS, FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 1880. NUMBER 30.

Beaumont Weekly Lumberman, April 23, 1880, edited and published by John S. Swope. A native of Iowa, Swope was a printer at Indianola, Texas, in 1860 and at Houston in 1870. He moved to Beaumont and began publishing the *Lumberman* in the fall of 1877, using the press of George W. O'Brien. In early fall 1880, Swope returned to Houston and ceased publication of the newspaper. In November, John W. Leonard began the *Beaumont Enterprise*, using the same press. *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

haps of economic aspirations, the mark of native Beaumonter Pattillo Higgins, of later Spindletop oil fame, was a dollar sign ($).[17]

City government was reorganized in 1881, as citizens and visitors paced themselves to the sounds of industry—the whir of machinery, whine and screech of saws, and shrill screams of steam whistles.[18] Lumber yards, each with multiple railroad connections, occupied over a dozen city blocks and influenced the development of residential and commercial construction for decades. "Immense piles of lumber" were sometimes stacked on the public square, becoming a "local eyesore." Trains loaded with forest products blocked city streets for hours, rousing complaints from "the ladies." Pine saplings, symbols of the city's pros-

17. Ashley W. Spaight, *The Resources, Soil and Climate of Texas, Report of the Commissioner of Insurance, Statistics, and History* (Galveston: A.H. Belo & Company, 1882), 4; "Texas Business Centers" and "Sawmills and Lumber," GDN, Sept. 1 and Dec. 24, 1890; BE, Nov. 27, Dec. 4, 1880, and Feb. 12, 1881; Gammel, comp., *Laws of Texas,* 8: 1381-1382; *Register of Log Brands, Jefferson County, Texas, 1879-1925*, SHRL; Gerland, "Log-boats and Sawdust Cities," *Crosscut* (First Quarter 1996), 3; Gerland, "Sawdust City Name Comes from Logging," *Beaumont Journal,* 1 (June 27-July 3, 1996): 14. Pattillo Higgins's dollar sign log brand was registered for the year 1886. See also, Robert W. McDaniel and Henry C. Dethloff, *Pattillo Higgins and the Search for Texas Oil* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1989).

18. Beaumont was incorporated in an election on July 12, 1881, by a vote of 115 to 107, under provisions in Article 513, Chapter 11, Title 17, Revised Statutes of Texas. John C. Craig, merchant and native of Ireland, was elected mayor on August 15, 1881. City Council Minutes, July 19 and Aug. 15, 1881, 1: 1-3; Isaac, *History of the Charters,* 2-3.

perity, were proudly fastened to awning posts in front of stores and houses at Christmas and other festive occasions.[19]

Sawdust was everywhere. As a waste product, it was burned along the river near the mills and in "the swamp" near the courthouse. Some of it was used for insulation at ice plants and in refrigerator rail cars, and it was sometimes exported for this purpose. Still more of it was dumped in the streets by tons in hopes it would soak up the mud and serve as fill-in pavement.[20] It so pervaded all aspects of life that Beaumont was a veritable "sawdust city" during much of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In 1915 when test bores were drilled near the courthouse during construction of municipal port facilities, sawdust was found at several points more than 17 feet below ground level.[21]

Between 1870 and 1880, the industrial labor requirements of the new commercial lumber mills doubled the city's population. Most of the labor was native to Texas and the southern states, but skilled workers from the Northeast were not turned away. The *Beaumont Enterprise* reported in 1880 that a certain Bostonian

19. James H. Rachford, *Rachford's Complete Map of the City of Beaumont, Jefferson County, Texas* (Beaumont: Jefferson County Abstract and Map Company, 1897); *The Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Beaumont* (New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, 1885, 1889, 1894, and 1899); Tax Rolls, Jefferson County, TX, Form E, Assessment of Railroads, see especially year 1895, THL; "City and County," BE, Feb. 12 and 19, 1881; "Southeastern Texas: Grand Preparations for the Deep Water Convention at Beaumont" and "Beaumont's Budget: Fine Christmas Display Made," GDN, July 16, 1889, and Dec. 22, 1895. For various franchises granted to railroad companies, see William L. Thompson and D. P. Wheat, comps., *The Charter and Ordinances of the City of Beaumont, May 1899,* ([Beaumont]: n.p., 1899), 187-201.

20. "Texas News Items: Jefferson County" and "Beaumont: Cotton, Lumber, Etc.," GDN, May 27 and Sept. 11, 1879; "Westward Ho! Beaumont, the 'Future Great' of Eastern Texas-the Grand Lumber Center of the Locality," reprint of correspondence to the *New Orleans Democrat,* in BE, July 23, 1881; "Remembrances of George C. O'Brien;" John W. Leonard, "Beaumont as I Knew It 50 Years Ago," BE, Golden Anniversary—Progress and Development Number, July 22, 1930; "Beaumont," in *Export Pine Trade*, [40]. Much of the area between Main Street and the river, especially the small peninsula where the port is today, was referred to as "the swamp" during the nineteenth century. See *The Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Beaumont* for the year 1889 and GDN, July 26, 1891, in BEN, 477.

21. Three of nine test holes contained sawdust at least 17 feet below ground surface. The three were bored at surface elevations ranging from + 5. 9 to + 9.8 feet. The elevation of buried sawdust ranged from -7.2 to -14.1 feet. Field Notes of O. A. Seward, assistant city engineer, July and August 1915, *[City of Beaumont] Wharf Book #14*, 34-35, 37-38, 40, THL; "Beaumont's Big Business," GDN, Feb. 15, 1888; Block, "The Sawdust City in the 1880s: Beaumont before Spindletop" and "A Tale of 'King Lumber': Godparent of Beaumont," in Block, *Frontier Tales of the Texas-Louisiana Borderlands* (Nederland, TX: privately published, 1980), 236-241, 378; Block, "Much of World Knew Wiess Brothers, Timber Barons," *Beaumont Sunday Enterprise-Journal*, Nov. 9, 1980.

was "doing a good work for Beaumont in the way of sending us the working men of New England who find immediate and profitable employment in the . . . saw and shingle mills." One mill owner reportedly "sent for men" from "the lumber regions of far away Michigan," as some special tasks were better performed by seasoned lumbermen from the North. The 1880 Beaumont population census recorded many log raftsmen born in the northern states. Three were born in Canada.[22]

Most characteristic of Beaumont's initial population growth, however, was a large immigration of former slave families from agricultural areas within the state. The African-American population in Jefferson County increased by 285 percent between 1860 and 1880. By comparison, the white population of Jefferson County increased by only 36 percent during the same period. By 1880, African Americans accounted for 45 percent of Beaumont's total population, as the sawmills depended heavily upon their labor.[23] (Table 1 shows the comparative population by race of Texas, Jefferson County, and Beaumont from 1860 to 1900).

A visitor to Beaumont in March 1878 reported that "the employees [of the lumber mills] are nearly all Negroes, who are paid $1.25 a day, feeding themselves, or $1 a day when the mills feed them." It was later remarked in 1879 that "most" of the lumber mill labor in Beaumont was "done by the negro, but no white man, especially one with a family, ever comes here [Beaumont] without getting work." The declared occupations in the manuscript returns of the 1880 population census seem to verify both these observations. Of those persons with listed occupations, 73 percent of the black males and 54 percent of the white males worked in the mills or related lumber yards within the city. In all, 55 percent of 346 total males, who were listed with lumber mill-specific or

22. Federal Writers' Project, *Beaumont: A Guide to the City and Its Environs,* (Houston: Anson Jones, 1939), 84; "A Progressive Town" and "Beaumont's Big Business," GDN, Aug. 13, 1879, and Jan. 15, 1888; 1880 Population Schedule, Jefferson County; BE, Nov. 6, 1880; GDN, Nov. 18, 1880, and Jan. 13, 1882, in BEN, 134-135, 245, 264.

23. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States (1880), Volume 1, Statistics of the Population of the United States* (GPO, 1883), 410; 1880 Population Schedule, Jefferson County; Campbell, "Reconstruction in Jefferson County," 22-23. For an overview of labor in the southern lumber industry in general, see Vernon H. Jensen, *Lumber and Labor* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1945), 71-98; Ruth A. Allen, *East Texas Lumber Workers: An Economic and Social Picture, 1870-1950* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961) lacks a detailed analysis of African-American labor during the nineteenth century. Little attention is given to the lumber industry in Lawrence D. Rice, *The Negro in Texas, 1874-1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 186, and Alwyn Barr, *Black Texans: A History of Negroes in Texas, 1528-1971* (Austin: Pemberton Press, 1973), 92.

Table 1. Comparative Population by Race in Texas, Jefferson County, and Texas, 1860-1900

	1860			1870		
	White	Black	Black%	White	Black	Black%
Texas	420,891	182,921	30	564,700	253,475	31
Jefferson Co.	1,684	311	16	1,408	498	26
Beaumont				509	328	39

	1880			1890		
	White	Black	Black%	White	Black	Black%
Texas	1,197,237	393,384	25	1,745,935	488,171	22
Jefferson Co.	2,290	1,199	34	3,638	2,218	38
Beaumont	884	717	45	1,959	1,337	41

	1900		
	White	Black	Black%
Texas	2,426,669	620,722	20
Jefferson Co.	10,290	3,945	28
Beaumont	6,472	2,953	31

lumber yard-specific occupations, were identified as black or mulatto, while the variety of listed occupations in the mills and yards among white males suggests that most, if not all, of the skilled labor was performed by them. Moreover, of an additional 85 males with listed lumber-related occupations not necessarily involving labor at the mills, 86 percent were whites. For example, all 10 of the resident mill owners were white; and although there were two black foremen, all 13 mill superintendents and "watchmen" were white. Of the 25 log raftsmen, only four were black, and of 37 carpenters, 29 were white.[24] According to the manufacturing census schedules, 542 persons were employed at the Beaumont mills at peak production periods during the 1880 census year, an increase of more than 1,400 percent over the 1870 census year.[25]

As was true of labor, most of Beaumont's industrial leadership was southern. Although numerous lumber manufacturers from the North operated profitably in the southern forests, including Texas, the lumber industry in Beaumont was owned, operated, and controlled primarily by men of the South with antebellum roots to Beaumont, a fact recorded often by traveling journalists and proudly proclaimed in the pages of the *Beaumont Advertiser.*[26] Sharing a common heritage, many company leaders had grown up together with little or

24. All five of the saw filers, perhaps the highest skilled job in the mill at the time, were white; two were born in Texas and one each in Louisiana, Wisconsin, and Ohio. No complete study was made of women with occupations, but it is noteworthy that several African-American women were listed with occupations at the shingle mills. "Orange and Beaumont" and "A Prosperous Town," GDN, March 9, 1878, and Aug. 13, 1879; 1880 Population Schedule, Jefferson County; Jensen, *Lumber and Labor,* 76-77.

25. Information from the 1880 manufacturing census schedules can be found in Block, comp. "Documents of the Early Sawmilling Epoch," TGHBR, 9 (Nov. 1973): 55-57. See also *Tenth Census of the United States (1880), Volume 2*, 360; *Ninth Census of the United States (1870), Volume 3,* 735. The *Beaumont Weekly Lumberman* reported in January 1878 that approximately 900 persons, including workers and their families, derived their "sole means of living from the labor of the sawmills." GWN, Jan. 14, 1878, in BEN, 61.

26. For the Southern heritage of the Beaumont lumber industry, see Thomas J. Russell, *Pioneer Reminiscences of Jefferson County* (Beaumont: Southeast Texas Genealogical and Historical Society, 1986), 66-73, 77-79; "Beaumont's Big Business," GDN, Feb. 15, 1888; Joanne Scarborough, "Long Means Lumber," *Beaumont Sunday Enterprise-Journal*, July 4, 1976; Block, *East Texas Mill Towns and Ghost Towns* (Lufkin: Best of East Texas Publishers, 1994), 116-117, 120-122; and "From Cotton Bales to Black Gold: A History of the Pioneer Wiess Families of Southeastern Texas," TGHBR, 8 (Nov. 1972): 39-61. Maxwell largely ignores Beaumont lumbermen, see, "The Pines of Texas: A Study in Lumbering and Public Policy, 1880-1930," ETHJ, 2 (Oct. 1964): 77-86; "The Impact of Forestry on the Gulf South," *Forest History*, 17 (April 1973): 31-35; and "Researching Forest History in the Gulf Southwest: The Unity of the Sabine Valley," *Louisiana Studies*, 10 (Summer 1971): 109-122. Maxwell does make passing mention of William A. Fletcher of Beaumont. "Lumbermen of the East Texas Frontier," *Forest History,* 9 (April 1965): 12-16.

Table 2. Composition of the First Corporate Boards of the Major Beaumont Lumber Companies

Corporation and Directors	Date of Incorporation	County of Residence	State and Year of Birth
Tram & Lumber Company*	1881		
B. D. Crary		Jefferson	New York, 1819
William A. Fletcher		Jefferson	Louisiana, 1839
John W. Keith		Jefferson	Florida, 1845
Henry L. Long		Jefferson	Texas, 1861
A. N. Vaughan		Jasper	Virginia, 1829
Beaumont Lumber Company	1884		
Francis L. Carroll		McLennan	Alabama, 1831
John N. Gilbert		Jefferson	Texas, 1855
George W. Carroll		Jefferson	Louisiana, 1855
Long Manufacturing Company	1886		
T. S. Long (widow of J. M. Long)		Jefferson	Georgia, 1837
William A Fletcher		Jefferson	Louisiana, 1839
John W. Keith		Jefferson	Florida, 1845
John L. Keith		Jefferson	Texas, 1860
Henry L. Long		Jefferson	Texas, 1861
Reliance Lumber Company	1889		
Valentine Wiess		Jefferson	Texas, 1845
William Wiess		Jefferson	Texas, 1842
Mark Wiess		Jefferson	Texas, 1842
Harry W. Potter		Jefferson	New York, 1840
J. C. League		Galveston	Texas, 1850

*Tram & Lumber Company became Texas Tram & Lumber Company in 1883.

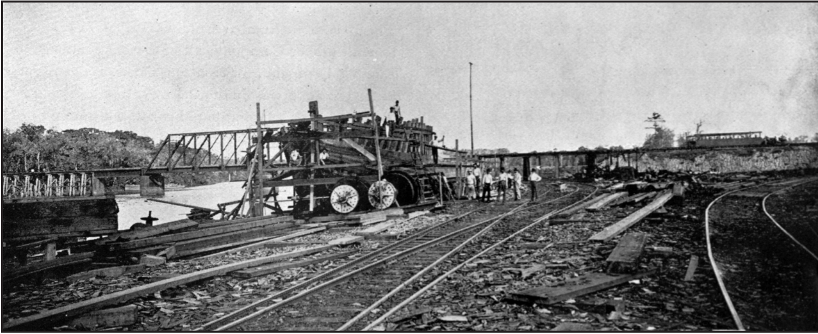
no formal education, learning their professions from youth by working at the early Beaumont sawmills before and after the Civil War. Several became related through marriage to the daughters of Davis L. Long, a local sawmill owner and native of Georgia. The Beaumont Lumber, Long Manufacturing, Nona Mills, Texas Tram & Lumber, and Village Mills companies all originated from the operations of the Long and related families.[27]

Northern lumber manufacturers were distinctively absent from Beaumont's economic base.[28] By 1880, no resident mill owners were born in the North. The returns of the 1880 manuscript population census for Jefferson County show two owners to have been natives of Texas and one owner each a native of Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee. The three remaining owners were listed as having been born outside the United States. These foreign-born owners relocated by the late 1880s, however, leaving four predominantly-southern corporations in command of local industry.[29] (See Table 2). For example, the Fletcher, Keith, and Long families owned 62 percent of the Texas Tram and Lumber Company's more than $700,000 of purchased stock during the 1890s. Similarly, the Carroll family owned more than half of the Beaumont Lumber Company's nearly $400,000 of stock; the Wiess family controlled the Reliance Lumber Company; and the Long Manufacturing Company, like the Texas Tram and Lumber Company, was managed jointly by the Fletcher, Keith, and Long families. Of the 15 original members of the boards of directors of these companies, seven were born in Texas, two each in Louisiana and New York, and one each in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Virginia. One of the members born in

27. Russell, *Pioneer Reminiscences,* 77-79; Sam S. Roberts, "Heirs of Davis Long" (manuscript, 1967), Texas Gulf Historical Society Collection, THL; Scarborough, "Long Means Lumber;" Stratton, *Story of Beaumont,* 137; J. Montgomery Seaver, *The Keith Genealogy,* (Philadelphia: n..p., 1930), 132; Block, *East Texas Mill Towns,* 116-117, 128-129.

28. An influential part of the lumber manufacturing experience at Orange, Texas, was provided by Henry J. Lutcher and G. Bedell Moore, who moved their lumber operations from Pennsylvania to Texas in the late 1870s. For sawmilling at Orange and the Lutcher-Moore Lumber Company, see Maxwell, "The First Big Mill: The Beginnings of Commercial Lumbering in Texas," SHQ, 86 (July 1982): 1-30; Howard C. Williams, ed., *Gateway to Texas: The History of Orange and Orange County,* (Orange: Heritage House Museum of Orange, 1986), 107-117; Block, *East Texas Mill Towns,* 247-286.

29. 1880 Population Schedule, Jefferson County; Charters and Articles of Incorporation Papers for Texas Tram and Lumber Company, Beaumont Lumber Company, Long Manufacturing Company, and Reliance Lumber Company, TXSS.



[Frank] Trost, photographer, "View of the Texas Tram Ship Yard." From *The Advantages and Conditions of Beaumont and Port Arthur Today* (1901). *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

New York, Harry Potter, was earlier a sawyer in Beaumont at the Long family sawmill in 1870.[30]

Having interlocking family relations and influential public connections, the lumbermen viewed their interests as interwoven with one another's and those of their community. Their business enterprises were collaborative as well as amiable, and they were responsible civic leaders.[31] Company steamboats, such as Texas Tram & Lumber Company's *W. P. Rabb,* named after a local carpenter, were used in log drives and towing jobs on the rivers and Sabine Lake for the

30. Stock statements, Texas Tram and Lumber Company Ledger "D-1" (1890-1891), 1, and Ledger "I" (1901), 112, KLC-SFA; "Beaumont," in *Export Pine Trade*, [47]; "Among the Lumbermen," GDN, Jan. 27, 1900; Undated Beaumont Lumber Company dividend statement from the 1890s (author's collection); 1860 Population Schedule, Jefferson County; Block, *East Texas Mill Towns,* 116-117, 121-123.

31. Traveling journalists often commented on the friendly business relationships shared by the Beaumont lumbermen. It was reported that company books were always open, and agreements existed concerning rightful credit for logs inadvertently cut by the improper mill. Beaumont Lumber Company Log journal 1 and Log journal 2 (1890s), KLC-SFA. The civic leadership and benevolence of the lumbermen can be partially seen in the records of the City Council Minutes, THL. Some lumbermen served as school superintendents; some were city officials. Lumbermen Christopher Columbus Caswell and John W. Keith served as city mayors. For the relief efforts of William A. Fletcher and others during the 1886 storm which devastated the southeast Texas coast, see BEN, 340-373.

benefit of all the local mill firms.[32] The lumbermen worked jointly in developing and building their own machinery and tools suited to their particular needs. The Wiess brothers invented saw sharpening tools and a special steam powered log handling apparatus for use at the mills. William A. Fletcher designed and built steam-powered combination log loaders and skidders, which were compatible with the region's logging railroads, receiving patents from both the United States and Canada. Fletcher also devised a log scale which was the legal gauge in Texas for many years.[33] They also worked together in forming trade and shipping organizations, such as the Consolidated Export Lumber Company, and became state leaders in the deep-water development of the Sabine region. The organization of the East Texas and Louisiana Lumbermen's Association in 1883 by the Beaumont lumbermen brought together dozens of sawmill operators across Texas and Louisiana in addressing issues of lumber pricing, grades of classification, and railroad shipping schedules and rates.[34]

Beaumont benefitted greatly from the success of its lumbermen. One early historian simply noted that "upon them rested the prosperity of the city." Through their active participation in national and world trade, the city was connected with the modern commercial and financial world. The lumbermen frequently traveled across America and to foreign countries, seeking new markets. When John N. Gilbert of the Beaumont Lumber Company traveled to Mexico in February 1889, he carried letters of introduction from Houston and Galveston bankers and merchants.[35] At the organization of the First National Bank of

32. "Beaumont," in *Export Pine Trade*, [46]; Gerland, "Log Boats and Sawdust Cities," 3; Texas Tram and Lumber Company Ledger "C" (1888-1889), 94-103, and Ledger "D-1" (1890-1891), KLC-SFA.

33. Block, "From Cotton Bales," 55; Vallie Fletcher Taylor, "Afterword," in *Rebel Private: Front and Rear,* (New York: Dutton, 1995), 218; *American Lumbermen: The Personal History and Public and Business Achievements of One Hundred Eminent Lumbermen of the United States,* Second Series, (Chicago: American Lumberman, 1906), 381-384; W. A. Fletcher and Sons, *Something New in Logging* (Galveston: Clarke and Courts, c. 1897); Ellis A. Davis and Edwin Grobe, *The New Encyclopedia of Texas* (Dallas: Texas Development Bureau, [c. 1926]), 988-991; "The Herring or Beaumont Rule," in Ralph Clement Bryant, *Logging,* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1914), 112; "Question of Gauges," GWN, May 7, 1891; "Crumbs from the St. Louis Banquet," GDN, Sept. 6, 1891, in BEN, 456, 480.

34. "The Export Lumber Trade," BJ, Dec. 16, 1896; Block, "Cotton Bales to Black Gold," 56; Loose papers of the East Texas and Louisiana Lumbermen's Association, in Gilmer Lumber Company Records, BCAH.

35. Stratton, *The Story of Beaumont,* 136; Correspondence of John N. Gilbert, Gilbert Family Collection, THL; Joseph L. Clark and Elton M. Scott, *Texas Gulf Coast: Its History and Development* (4 vols., New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1955), 3: 82-84.

THE ST. LOUIS LUMBERMAN

DEVOTED TO THE LUMBER, SAW-MILL, AND WOOD-WORKING INTERESTS OF THE WEST AND SOUTH.

VOL. VIII. ST. LOUIS, AUGUST, 1891. NO. 2.

Polishing Wood With Charcoal.

The method of polishing wood with charcoal, now much used by French cabinet makers, is thus described in a Paris technical journal: All the world now knows of those articles of furniture of a beautiful dead black color, with sharp, clear cut edges and a smooth surface, the wood of which seems to have the density of ebony. Viewing them side by side with furniture rendered black by paint and varnish, the difference is so sensible that the considerable margin of price separating the two kinds explains itself.

The operations are much longer and more minute in this mode of charcoal polishing, which respects every detail in carving, while paint and varnish will clog up the holes and widen the ridges. In the first process they employ only carefully selected woods of a close and compact grain, then cover them with a coat of camphor dissolved in water, and almost immediately afterward with another coat, composed chiefly of sulphate of iron and nutgall. The two compositions, in blending, penetrate the wood and give it an indelible tinge, and, at the same time, render it impervious to the attacks of insects. When these two coats are dry, they rub the surface of the wood first with a very hard brush of conch grass (chien dent) and then with charcoal of substances as light and friable as possible, because if a single hard grain remained in the charcoal, this alone would scratch the surface, which they wish, on the contrary, to render perfectly smooth. The flat parts are rubbed with natural stick charcoal; the indented portions and crevices with charcoal powder. Alternately with the charcoal the workman also rubs his piece of furniture with flannel soaked in linseed oil and the essence of turpentine.

Motors snd Shafting.

Very few engineers have yet given any time to the consideration of the application of separate electric motors to systems of shafting in mills, doing away with cumbersome jack shafts, heavy pulleys and dangerous belting. Jack shafts, pulleys and main belts take up a large amount of floor space, and by dispensing with all of these, and suspending two or more electric motors on shelves above reach, all this now wasted room can be utilized. By subdividing the shafting in a room we have much more complete control in a case of accidents, or any of those small mishaps which frequently call for stoppage of the engine and all the works. One section of shafting can be easily stopped and started again without interfering with the rest. In fact, a cord could be easily arranged along the side of the room if required for dangerous work, so tnat the section could be stopped by any employe who saw the necessity of it.

Again, by closing all main belt holes, we get rid of that very dangerous element, the risk of carrying fire through from one floor to the other. In cases where belt towers are built outside the mill, to prevent the fire risk, it is a very costly rig, and the electric motor will be found fully as cheap and quite as efficient. The main engine can be placed to the best advantage in relation to fuel and water. No great attention need be given to lining up with the mill, etc. Wires are easily carried in any direction and accommodate themselves to anything, whereas long lines of shaft or cable require constant attention, and are very costly to repair in case of accident, besides stopping a large amount of work. The same man who now oils and looks after the main shaft bearings can do all there is to do about the motors, and have time to spare. In case of accident to the motors they are very easily and quickly repaired, as all the best makes are interchangeable in all their parts. Long lines of heavy shaft take a large amount of power in friction, about the same whether loaded or not, and this is a draw on an engine. With the electric motor it is automatic clear back to the engine, and stops work just in proportion to the load. Belting is also a heavy item of expense, and by slipping wastes a large amount of power; this is especially the case with vertical belts, as they are nearly all used for mill work. It is also a constant care to keep them clean, taut and pliable.—Power.

John N. Gilbert, Esq.

We are pleased to present in this connection a really excellent portrait of Mr. John N. Gilbert taken from a recent photograph. Mr Gilbert is one of the best known manufacturers in Texas. In Beaumont he is identified with every movement that looks to the betterment of that city. He is a native of Limestone County, Texas, where he was born in 1855. Mr. Gilbert moved to Beaumont in 1861 and as a boy found employment in one of the saw mills in 1872, at $3 per week. In 1875, while in the employ of Long & Co., he was promoted to the position of clerk in the store at $40 per month. When the Beaumont Lumber Company was organized in 1877, he was taken in as a partner and put in charge of the merchandise department. Later he took charge of the shipping department. In 1882 the Beaumont Lumber Company was reorganized and Mr. Gilbert elected secretary and General Manager. He has filled that position ever since with great credit to himself and satisfaction to his associates. Mr. Gilbert is also president of the Beaumont Furniture and Art Wood Mfg. Co., president Higgins Mfg. Co., vice-president First National Bank of Beaumont, and director in a number of other enterprises in the city and State.

JOHN N. GILBERT, ESQ.

Exposure of the grindstone to the sun has a tendency to harden it, and if one part be left in the water habitually, it will grow soft and wear away faster than the other. If the trough is put upon moveable supports in a frame, it can be adjusted to the stone without much loss of time. Or allow the water to drip from a water spout, an old white lead keg will answer, fixed above the stone. Always clean off all greasy or rusty tools before sharpening as grease chokes up the grit; and always keep the stone perfectly round by razeeing it off when necessary.—Tradesman.

The Product of Wood Material.

Mr. E. B Fernow estimates that the total annual product of wood material of all sorts consumed in the United States may be valued in round numbers at $1,000,000,000, representing, roughly speaking, 25,000,000,000 cubic feet of wood, or the annual increase of the wood growth of 500,000,000 acres of forest in fair condition. This value exceeds ten times the value of our gold and silver output, and three times the annual product of all our mineral and coal mines put together. It is three times the value of our wheat crop; and, with all the toil and risk which our agricultural crops involve, they can barely quadruple the value of this product yielded by nature for the mere harvesting. If to the value of our total mining product be added the value of stone quarries and petroleum, and this sum be increased by the estimated value of all the steamboats, sailing vessels, canalboats, flatboats and barges plying in American waters and belonging to citizens of the United States, it will still be less than the value of the forest product by a sum sufficient to purchase, at cost of construction, all the canals, buy up at par all the stock of the telegraph companies, pay their bonded debts, and construct and equip all the telephone lines. The value of the annual forest product exceeds the gross income of all the railroad and transportation companies. It would suffice to pay the indebtedness of all the States, if we leave out New York and Pennsylvania, including that of all counties, townships, school districts and cities within those States (in 1880); and it would more than wipe out the remaining public debt of the United States. In fact, ranking manufactures of all kinds and agriculture as respectively first and second in importance, as far as production of values goes, the forest product occupies the third place. This was the case according to the census of 1880. It is claimed that since then the lumber industry has enlarged to such an extent as to make its product second, if not first in value.

Not only does the forest furnish the material for the construction of dwellings and other structures, our railroad consumption of 500,000,000 cubic feet of timber included, but it yields to two-thirds of our population the fuel to warm their houses and to prepare their food; it gave us the first means of using our mineral resources, and even now 600,000 tons of our iron product depend upon charcoal. Not only does the wood in its natural form serve our needs, but our ingenuity has invented methods by which we can transform it into cellulose, paper, and even silk, while lately it has become possible to prepare from the brushwood a feed for cattle more nutritious than straw and equal to hay. By distillation of the wood numerous new products are derived from it, like alcohol, acetic acid, gas, vanillin, etc.; the bark yields indispensable tanning material. Resin and tar to pitch our vessels, and turpentine, sassafras oil, and quinine to cure our ills, rubber and cork for a great variety of uses, maple sugar and cinnamon to flavor our food, all are derived from the forest; an enumeration of the use of forest products would be almost endless.

National publications like the *St. Louis Lumberman* often featured Beaumont operators like John N. Gilbert as leaders of spokesmen for the industry. *St. Louis Lumberman*, Aug. 1891. *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

Beaumont in April 1889, Galveston investors, such as J. C. League, William L. Moody, J. W. Hutchings, and George W. Sealy, purchased stock freely in the enterprise.[36]

The lumbermen also appeared regularly in trade journals published both in America and England, sometimes being photographed for the covers.[37] Newspaper and magazine publishers across the country solicited the lumbermen to write articles and furnish information and statistics for their publications.[38] Fletcher was honored as "the old man eloquent" in and out of the state. Mark Wiess became a celebrated spokesman for the development of Beaumont across the country and in England. He was influential in efforts that resulted in the construction of the Gulf and Inter-State Railway, which connected Beaumont with Bolivar and Galveston in 1896. Among the titles given him by several publications were "the Great American Traveller" and "the Bishop of Beaumont."[39]

Due in large part to the attention received by the lumbermen, the city was spotlighted during the 1890s in popular publications, such as *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* as "the Houston of East Texas." Beaumont was featured in the September 1891 issue of *New England Magazine* as "a striking illustration of the new life of the New South," and was chosen by the publication over the larger cities of Dallas, Galveston, Houston, and San Antonio as representative of the South's enterprising and "wide awake" spirit.[40]

By the late 1880s, the annual value of the city's forest products was more than a million dollars, and the lumber town had indeed "taken on town ways" and a "metropolitan appearance." Brick began to replace wood in downtown con-

36. Except for Valentine Wiess, who was the largest individual stockholder, Beaumonters invested no more than $1,000 each in the bank. Beaumont lumbermen held the board positions of president and vice president and all three positions of the finance committee, but bankers and merchants from Galveston accounted for more than 60 percent of the initial paid in Capital stock. First National Bank of Beaumont Articles of Association and Copy of Organization Certificate, April 9, 1889, Minute Book I, 1-16, THL; Clark and Scott, *Texas Gulf Coast*, 4: 467-470.

37. For example, John N. Gilbert appeared on the front page of *The St. Louis Lumberman* in August 1891 and Mark Wiess appeared in *The Timbertrade Journal,* published in London, England, in 1898.

38. For example, see Charles A. Edwards to John N. Gilbert, Sept. 24, 1889, Gilbert Family Collection, THL.

39. "The Beaumont Road," GDN, Sept. 25, 1890; GDN, June 14, 1891, BEN, 472-473, 480; "Beaumont," in *Export Pine Trade*, [44].

40. "Beaumont," *Frank Leslie's,* Sept. 20, 1890, 129-130; "The New South, A Rising Texas City" and advertisements, *New England Magazine* (Sept. 1891), 8, 23, 35-39, 68-76.

struction, perhaps as early as 1884.[41] The First Baptist Church of Beaumont built a brick structure for worship in 1887, complete with frescoed ceilings and walls, carpeted floors, and "opera chairs." It was described in the *Galveston Daily News* in 1890 as "one of the finest church edifices in the state."[42] A water works was constructed in 1888, including five miles of pipe. Electricity for power and light was supplied throughout the city in early 1889.[43] By 1890 numerous brick structures were either under construction or already completed within the city, including the three-story Langham and Blanchette buildings, the two-story Goodhue "brick block," and a two-story public schoolhouse. Proud of its advancements, the city hosted the New Birmingham Deep Water Convention in July 1889 in the newly finished brick Goodhue Building on Crockett Street. In 1890 the Southern Pacific Railroad completed a brick fourteen-stall locomotive roundhouse and a two-story brick depot, said to have been "one of the handsomest" in the state. A brick three-story Jefferson County courthouse was completed in 1893 which would serve the county through the 1920s.[44]

Other conveniences, such as ice factories and telephones, also began to be available to Beaumont citizens and visitors in the late 1880s. By the end of 1900, more than 800 telephones were in service in the city. A horse- and mule-drawn streetcar railway system, originally planned to be electrically driven, was completed in 1891.[45] The city's growth was also reflected in the publication of sever-

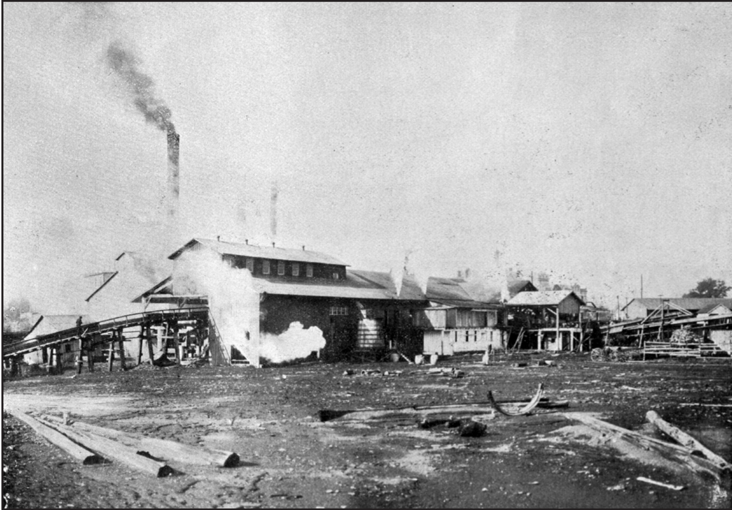
41. Linsley and Rienstra, *Beaumont*, 73; BEN, 80-81, 386. The *Galveston Daily News* reported in January 1884 that "a number of brick masons from Houston are at work in the construction of a large, two-story brick house, the first of its kind ever built in Beaumont." The identity of this structure is unknown. GDN, Jan. 1, 1884, in BEN, 316.

42. "Beaumont: New Church Dedicated," "Texas Business Centers," and "Women's Edition," GDN, Dec. 17, 1889, Sept. 1, 1890, and Dec. 21, 1896; "First Baptist Church," BJ, Woman's Edition, Dec. 16, 1896; William R. Estep states that the structure built in 1887 by First Baptist Church of Beaumont "held the distinction of being the first brick building erected in Beaumont." *And God Gave the Increase* (Beaumont: First Baptist Church, 1972), 54.

43. In 1888, the city of Beaumont constructed a water works at the urging and with the support of the lumbermen, who wanted fire protection for their mills. The Beaumont Ice, Light, and Refrigerating Company, capitalized and managed by the lumbermen, took over management of the works. O. J. Gorman of Pennsylvania was secretary and general manager of the electric company and supervised in the construction of the plant. BEN, 83-84, 435, 545-546. See also note 6.

44. "Southeastern Texas: Grand Preparations" and "Texas Business Centers," GDN, July 16, 1889, and Sept. 1, 1890; "Beaumont," *Frank Leslie's,* Sept. 20, 1890, 129; Walker and Wingate, *Beaumont,* 18-19. See also, BEN, 80, 392-394, 424, 427. The public schoolhouse was completed in 1889, costing a reported $10,000. A photograph of the schoolhouse appeared in *New England Magazine* (Sept. 1891), 68.

45. See note 6.



[Frank] Trost, photographer, "Plant of the Beaumont Lumber Co., Owned and Operated by the Kirby Lumber Co.." From *The Advantages and Conditions of Beaumont and Port Arthur Today* (1901). *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

al local newspapers, including the *Beaumont Recorder,* which began publication in May 1889, proclaiming it would "look after the interests and vindicate the cause of the Negro." When the paper began its second year of publication, it announced to its readers that "the Recorder now possesses a snug little office of its own and everything is done by Ham's descendants." Fascinated with all the changes, the editor of the *Jasper Newsboy* remarked in 1891 that Beaumont had "grown beyond recognition."[46]

By 1890 Beaumont mills were producing a consistent 75 million board feet of lumber and 40 million shingles annually. The reported lumber sales of the city mills for the year 1888 were 98,834,412 board feet.[47] Railroad mileage was ex-

46. *Beaumont Recorder* quoted in GDN, May 8, 1890, in BEN, 428-429. See also GDN, March 20, 1890, in BEN, 424. According to *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* Sept. 20, 1890, 129, the *Beaumont Recorder* was "managed by E. Aclands & Company." *Jasper Newsboy,* reprinted in GDN, June 23, 1891, in BEN, 474.

47. *New Orleans Times-Democrat,* March 29, 1889, in BEN, 80-81; "Beaumont's Big Business," GDN, Feb. 15, 1888. The combined annual rated capacity of the Beaumont sawmills was 120 million board feet of lumber by 1890; actual production, however, was around 75 million feet annually. Between 12,000 and 15,000 rail cars of lumber were shipped yearly by Beaumont mills. "The Beaumont Road," GDN, Sept. 25, 1890.

panding rapidly across Texas and Mexico, and the mills at Beaumont supplied a large part of the construction and related building materials.[48]

Railroad mileage also increased in Southeast Texas. Beaumont had been the intersection of two lines of railway since 1881 and would gain three others during the 1890s. The Gulf, Beaumont & Kansas City Railway was constructed from Beaumont into timber lands in Hardin and Jasper counties in 1894 and 1895, intended primarily to serve as a logging road. Three members of the first board of directors were Beaumonters William A. Fletcher, William Wiess, and W. C. Averill. Rail connections from Collier's Ferry Junction to Collier's Ferry Landing on the Neches River were built in 1894, and a log dump was established at the landing to receive the logs bound for the Beaumont mills about 10 miles downriver. Records of Texas Tram & Lumber Company show that between 250 and 650 cars of logs per month were carried from areas around Kirbyville to Collier's Ferry Landing at the rate of $4.00 per car throughout 1897. The road was sold to the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway System in 1899. Beaumont also received rail connections to Bolivar in 1896, providing better access to Galveston than over the rails of the Texas & New Orleans railroad through Houston. Direct access to Kansas City, Missouri, was established in 1897, over the rails of the Kansas City, Pittsburgh & Gulf railroad, providing the mills another trunk line export route. The Beaumont Wharf & Terminal Company railroad was also built during the 1890s, serving the city as a belt link[49]

With a sound economic base from lumber sales, other industries were established in the city, many of which were synergistically related to the forest products and transportation industries. The Beaumont Iron Works was established in 1883 and incorporated in 1885 to build and repair sawmill machinery and railroad cars throughout East Texas and western Louisiana. Its foundry and machine shop were visited by reporters from the *New Orleans Times-Democrat* in March 1889. They recorded that the plant used "electric lights at night throughout their many buildings, a fact that no other institution of its kind in the state of Texas can boast of." This firm, as well as the Neches Iron Works, organized in 1899, continued successful operations for many years, diversifying to serve

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48. GDN, Sept. 9, Oct. 7, 1888, Nov, 25, and Dec. 15, 1890, in BEN, 385, 445-447; Texas Tram and Lumber Company Ledger "C" (1888-1889), 178-181, 206-219, and Ledger "D-1" (1890-1891), KLC-SFA.

49. "Beaumont's Many Railroads," BJ, Dec. 16, 1896; "An Ordinance Granting Beaumont Wharf & Terminal Company Right to Run over Certain Streets," *Charter and Ordinances, May 1899,* 194-196. See also Texas Tram and Lumber Company Journal "G" (1897), 5, 34, 65, 151, 157, 197, KLC-SFA; Gerland, "Log Boats and Sawdust Cities," 3; NHT, 3: 375, 377, 1030.

A. S. Clark, photographer, downtown Beaumont, intersection of Texas & New Orleans railroad and Pearl Street, looking northwest (c. 1899). The building to the immediate left is the Southern Pacific passenger depot (built 1890). The center building is the A. F. Goodhue Building (built 1889). The building to the immediate right is the Ogden Building (built prior to 1894). *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

the needs of the petroleum industries during the 1900s. Furniture and brick factories were established during the 1880s, as well as ship yards and a creosote works during the 1890s. Invested capital in local industry grew from $10,600 in 1870 to $270,000 in 1880 to $2,562,802 in 1890 to $3,113,766 in 1900.[50]

50. "Beaumont's Big Business" and "Texas Business Centers," GDN, Feb. 15, 1888, and Sept. 1, 1890; *New Orleans Times-Democrat,* March 29, 1889, in BEN, 84, 546; Block, *Frontier Tales,* 238-239; *New England Magazine,* Sept. 1891, 75; BEN, 450-452, 460-462; *Ninth Census of the United States (1870), Volume 3,* 735; *Tenth Census of the United States (1880), Volume 2*, 360; *Twentieth Census of the United States (1890), Volume 11, Manufacturing Industries, Part I* (GPO, 1895), 602; *Twelfth Census of the United States (1900), Volume 8, Manufacturer, Part 2* (Washington, DC: United States Census Office, 1902), 867. J. J. Crichton, E. C. Ogden, and L. P. Ogden organized Beaumont Iron Works. The Fletcher family organized Neches Iron Works. Beaumont Oil Exchange and Board of Trade, *The Advantages and Conditions of Beaumont and Port Arthur of Today* (New Orleans: W. E. Myers, 1901); *Souvenir of Beaumont, Texas, 1903* (Dallas: Jones Advertising Company, [c. 1903]), 31, 33; *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Beaumont*, 1885, 1889, 1899, and 1902; Charter and articles of incorporation files, TXSS. To expand its business, Texas Tram and Lumber Company's charter of 1889 called for the building of vessels to transport timber and "do a general shipping business." Charter, TXSS; "Boat Building: An Industry Becoming of Importance to Beaumont," BJ, Dec. 22, 1899; "At the Creosote Works," *Beaumont Semi-Weekly Journal,* Dec. 29, 1899; "Texas Business Centers," GDN, Sept. 1, 1890.

Along with the tremendous growth in industry and transportation facilities, the population of Beaumont rose from 3,296 in 1890 to 9,427 in 1900, a 186 percent increase. Annual wages paid in Beaumont by local industries, including the railroads, were reported at $900,000 in 1899. A special charter was provided the city by the state legislature that year, granting broader taxing powers and the addition of certain areas near the city.[51] Although the events of 1901 would profoundly influence life in Beaumont, the city was more than just a "sleepy sawmill village" at the turn of the century.

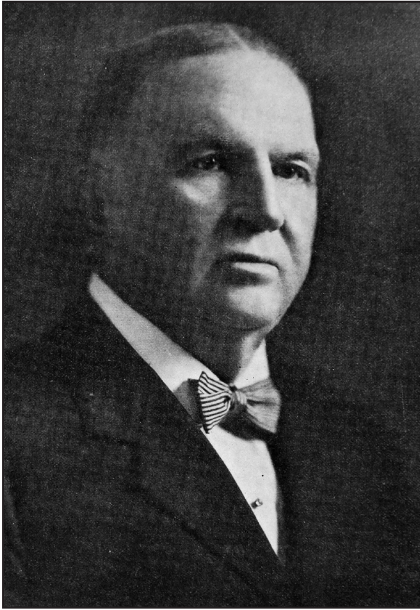
Known nationally as the "Gay '90s," the last decade of the nineteenth century witnessed Beaumont's greatest percentage rate of sustained population growth and the city's continued rise as a modern economic center. Based upon a wood-intensive culture, the city's industrial development had become a model for the region and the state. Southern business leadership in Beaumont played an important role in the enterprising spirit which revitalized Texas after the depressed years of the 1860s and early 1870s. The local industries in Beaumont fostered the formation of capital and created an atmosphere where unassuming individuals, such as the reformed Pattillo Higgins, could gain the friendships and financial backing of influential and wealthy industrialists and city leaders.[52] One industry led to another, crushing completely agrarian ideals of economic self-sufficiency.

Numerous fortunes were made in Beaumont before 1901, besides those of the premier lumber families. A classic example was Samuel Fain Carter, who at the age of 23 left his type-setting job at the *Galveston Daily News* to work as a bookkeeper at the Long and Company sawmill in 1881. Young Carter quickly learned the lumber trade, invested all his earnings in the company, and became a director of Texas Tram and Lumber Company in the middle 1880s. He then sold all his interests in the company in 1892 and formed the Emporia Lumber Company with lumberman M. T. Jones of Orange, the uncle of financier Jesse H. Jones of Houston. After buying out Jones' interests, Carter sold Emporia Lumber Company in 1906 for a reported $1 million and founded the Lumbermen's National Bank of Houston in 1907.[53]

51. *Facts about Beaumont*; Isaac, *History of the Charters of Beaumont,* 3-5.

52. NHT, 3: 594-595.

53. Dermot H. Hardy and Ingham S. Roberts, eds., *Historical Review of South-East Texas* (2 vols., Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1910), 2: 487-488; Davis and Grobe, *New Encyclopedia*, 1: 238; Gerland, "Carter Lumbering Brothers of Emporia, Angelina County," *Crosscut* (Fourth Quarter 1993), 2-3; Suzanne L. Summers, "Banking in Houston, 1840-1914," *Houston Review,* 12 (Fall 1990): 39.



Samuel Fain Carter. From Ellis A. Davis and Edwin H. Grobe, *The New Encyclopedia of Texas* (c. 1925).

Before 1901, big business in Beaumont meant lumber. The city was a crossroads of five railroads before oil became an industry in the South and Spindletop became an international place-name. The "green gold" of the East Texas forests built an economically sound and thriving community known as "sawdust city." Although lumber's pre-eminence gradually diminished after 1901, it continued to be a vital part of Beaumont's economy well into the 1930s. An early twentieth-century writer suggested that "for popular favor" lumber might always "retain the leading place in the affections of [Beaumont's] people."[54]

The changing times are perhaps reflected best in the 1900 population census. Residing in the household of William A. Fletcher, probably the state's most renowned lumberman at the time, was a young man from Pennsylvania whose occupation was "oil driller." W. S. Davidson, prominent local banker, financier, and business associate of lumberman John Henry Kirby, was also enumerated

54. *Souvenir of Beaumont*, 8. "The great lumber industry has fed more people, done more to develop Beaumont and Southeast Texas and made more millionaires than any other ten industries combined in this section of Texas, and the present industrial development now going on and the commercial progress of this section of Texas is largely due to the lumber men of Beaumont." *The Standard Blue Book of Texas, 1908-09, Edition Deluxe of Beaumont* (Houston: A.J. Peeler Standard Blue Book Company of Texas, 1908), 23.

with the Fletcher family. Within the next year and a half, Fletcher and the other Beaumont mill owners sold their businesses to Kirby's new $10 million Kirby Lumber Company, marking the high tide of lumbering in Beaumont. Exclusive railroad logging had already proven its value over logging by river, and under Kirby management the Beaumont mills were gradually replaced by more efficiently operated inland mills. The city continued for many years, however, to be administrative headquarters for forest operations throughout East Texas and western Louisiana, while smaller mills operated in and around the city.[55]

Beaumonters greeted the twentieth century and the year 1901 not much differently than it had any others. The ringing in of the new year by competing night watchmen at the lumber yards had become a favored tradition. A new sport, rugby football, came to town and was first played on New Year's Day 1901 on a field of sawdust. Austrian petroleum engineer Anthony F. Lucas was drilling for large quantities of oil at Spindletop hill just south of the city and writing letters through the newspaper, telling curious Beaumont citizens to leave him alone and mind their own business.[56]

The "gusher" of oil came soon enough, on the morning of January 10, 1901. The people came in droves to see it. Lucas never could have expected to keep them away. The event accelerated the course of history, and the "sawdust city" was no more. Yet it was still lumber which helped finance the event, and it was lumber which helped build the new industry, because early derricks were made of wood, and it was over wooden crossties and trestles that the oil machinery came. Beaumont's foundations were being built upon, not created.

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55. 1900 Population Schedule, Beaumont, Jefferson County. The combination of interior trunk line railroads and company-owned and operated logging tram roads had proven their value in the Texas forests in the early 1880s. In fact, the Beaumont lumbermen were pioneers in this trend which shaped the character of the lumber industry in Texas tor the more than five decades. See Johnson and Gerland, "Tapping Green Gold," 48-52; *Timber Resources of East Texas: Their Recognition and Development by John Henry Kirby through the Inception and Organization of the Kirby Lumber Company of Houston* (Chicago: American Lumberman, l902), 112-113; "Texas' Great Industrial Banquet," *The Lumber Trade Journal,* Nov. 15, 1901, 15-18.

56. "The City in Brief" and "Gladys City Mystery: Geologist Lucas Explains the Illumination," BJ, Jan. 1 and 2, 1900, also Jan. 2, 1901; "Rugby Football," BE, Jan. 2, 1901.

The Case of Archie Washington

Thomas Reid

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In the early nineteenth century, prior to the construction of the railroads, Orange was an isolated village reached only by the Sabine River and by trails through the dense, surrounding pine forests. To the south forests gave way to coastal prairie and to marsh grass. By the end of that century, Orange was a community easily accessible by rail and by newly improved roads. The continued decline in the value of cotton diminished its influence upon a viable urban economy, and by 1893, it was no longer a major factor in the economy of Orange. It had been replaced by timber. One major impact of this industry was caused by the commonest method of transportation. Thousands of logs were skidded to the Sabine River and its tributaries and floated to the mills in Orange. This practice represented a serious hazard to navigation, and was, along with the railroads, a major factor in the declining traditional commercial role of the river. Labor to serve the timber milling industry came from both East Texas and western Louisiana, as well as from large numbers of foreign immigrants attracted to the area by the promise of jobs.[1]

As late as 1889, Orange retained a sufficient degree of frontier lawlessness. In August, a vigilante mob seized a prisoner from the county jail, hanged him, and fired a hundred bullets into his body. The traditional site of such outrages was

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1. Howard C. Williams, ed., *Gateway to Texas: The History of Orange and Orange County* (Orange, TX: Heritage House Museum, 1986), 46, 181, 187-8; Robert C. Cotner, *James Stephen Hogg: A Biography* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1959), 372.

an old live oak tree that grew near the porch of a mercantile establishment at Fourth Street and Front Avenue, four blocks from the jail. Officials removed the most prominent overhanging limb after this incident, and the tree later died from what the locals said was lead poisoning. In addition those accused of crimes, some peace officers became victims of lawlessness. County Sheriff James Fennel was shot to death in 1885 trying to apprehend a murder suspect. That suspect was also later hanged on the old oak.[2]

The rule of the lynch mob was so prevalent in Texas that it became one of the primary targets of reform of Gov. James S. Hogg. In response to a particularly odious case in Atlanta, Texas, in which a suspect was tied to a persimmon tree and burned alive, the governor issued his proclamation against mob action on October 29, 1891. It stated, "There is no room for mobs in Texas, and they must cease their criminal raids if any virtue clings to established government. They are a menace to the life and liberty of every unprotected citizen; they are enemies to the Bill of Rights; they are incubators and propagators of crime, visiting vengeance on the defenseless, often the innocent, striking down the bulwarks of liberty and laying waste to civilization."[3]

This proclamation had a major impact on potential lynchers. First, it offered large rewards for their arrest. It also sparked a debate throughout the state. The *Galveston Weekly News*, which was widely read in Southeast Texas, strongly supported the governor's position. Other editorialists, such as one cited from the *Austin Evening News*, stated the root cause of lynch justice was ineffective and unresponsive courts. "[I]n cases of extreme barbarity . . . to make punishment certain they resort to judge lynch. Let the courts punish crime and there will be no mob law." Economic considerations were also having a substantial impact at the end of the nineteenth century. Northern investors were unlikely to look favorably on towns with lawless reputations.[4]

One fact often overlooked was that lynch mobs were sometimes made up of blacks that, with the aid of whites, took vengeance on members of their own community. It was lawless blacks whose burning of the suspect in Atlanta inspired Governor Hogg's proclamation. African Americans in Orange lynched a man accused of abusing and killing a child in late 1890. As pointed out in the

2. GWN, June 18, 1891; Williams, ed., *Gateway to Texas*, 61; Nina Harden Chick, "A History of the Orange County Jailhouses and Sheriffs," *Las Sabinas*, 15 (April 1989): 25-26.

3. Cotner, ed., *Addresses and State Papers of James S. Hogg* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1951), 153-154.

4. GWN, Nov. 12, 1891.

Austin Evening News editorial, whites did not perceive the fundamental causes of lynching at that time as racial, but due to shortcomings in the judiciary system.[5]

Judged by the standards of the time, relations between the races in Orange appeared to have been cordial during the 1890s. The census in 1880 recorded working-class neighborhoods that were racially diverse. The municipal elections of April 1891 indicated that blacks were free to vote, if not run for office, and that white candidates actively solicited their support. The grand jury report published November 14, 1891, stated "nothing could be more gratifying to the community in which we live than the increased respect that is being . . . developed for law and order." The results of the state elections of 1892 solidly supported the progressive Democratic platform of Governor Hogg. The Republicans could no longer depend on an undivided racial bloc vote as they had during the era of Reconstruction. Black voters were entering the mainstream.[6]

In the field of public education for African Americans in Orange, the Mount Zion Baptist Church took the lead shortly after its founding in 1871. A school housed in its fellowship hall grew steadily during the 1890s, both in the academic credentials of its staff and in its enrollment. Like white schools of the period, Mount Zion received little public funding, but primarily depended on tuition and the support of the members of the church.[7]

It was reported in the summer of 1891 that "tremendous interest is being manifested in temperance matters. Two important meetings have been recently held at the courthouse under the auspices of Methodists and Presbyterians." The influence of the temperance movement, both in the black and white communities, should not be underestimated. Temperance lecturers stressed the progressive nature of alcohol use, and abuse, with depravity and immorality as its final result. It was probably an important factor in attitudes and judgments by jurors concerning Archie Washington's crime.[8]

As the time for Orange city elections came closer in April 1891, a controversy began to emerge. Charges were made that none of the taxes collected in the previous two years had been turned over to the city administration. City Marshal and Tax Assessor P. Frank Eastin was threatened with legal action. Eastin must

5. Cotner, ed., *Papers of James S. Hogg,* 153; GWN, June 18, 1891.

6. 1880 Population Schedule, Orange County; GWN, Nov. 19, 1891, and July 28, 1892; Cotner, *James S. Hogg*, election map opposite 313.

7. Williams, *Gateway to Texas*, 199-200.

8. GWN, July 2, 1891.

have made some arrangements satisfactory to his critics, for no suit was ever filed. The matter evidently involved city officials as well, for the matter was not put to rest until Orange Mayor A. Ellis and two aldermen resigned. Due to the lack of local newspapers during this period, it is difficult to reconstruct any factual basis for the controversy. One of Eastin's deputies, Hammond Starks, took advantage of the unpopularity brought about by the sheriff's questionable conduct and announced that he would run for the position. Other citizens came forward to run for the positions vacated by the discredited mayor and aldermen. John L. McKinnon, William H. Stark, and H. D. Street waged successful campaigns for seats as Orange aldermen. McKinnon and Stark had already been appointed to the offices to complete the terms of the vacated aldermen. J. S. Brice, Fred Smith, and F. Moss, who were untouched by the scandal, were reelected as aldermen.[9]

It was in this environment of change and confrontation that the case of Washington precipitated a showdown within the judiciary between conservative incumbents and progressives, embodied in young, college educated lawyers. The former were represented by District Judge William Harrison Ford, originally of Newton County, who was a veteran of the Confederate 27th Cavalry Regiment of Ross's Texas Cavalry Brigade. After a term as sheriff of Newton County, Ford was elected District Attorney in 1878 and had served as District Judge since 1880. First term District Attorney William Perry Nicks, of Woodville, Tyler County, who had served as a commissioned officer in the 13th Texas Cavalry Regiment, assisted him. The young attorneys who represented the defendant were John T. Hart and O. R. Sholars.[10]

The Orange County Sheriff at the time of the Washington case was Nathaniel Burton. Nathaniel and his brother John G. Burton had built a large general merchandise business in Orange, which they sold some time after 1882. John was a successful candidate for Orange County Judge in January 1885. In November of the same year, following the murder of Sheriff James Fennel, the Commissioners Court appointed Nathaniel to serve out Fennel's term. He was

9. The two county offices of Tax Assessor and Sheriff were combined in most less populous counties by the Texas Constitution of 1876. C. K. Chamberlain, "East Texas," ETHJ, 4 (March 1966): 18. At this time, the sheriff no longer served as Orange City Marshal. The *Galveston News* article mentions Hammond Starks as serving in this capacity. GWN, Oct. 29, 1891; J. V. Pennington, "History of the City of Orange" (manuscript photocopy), appendix 2, Orange Public Library, Orange, TX.

10. Register of Elected and Appointed State and County Officials, TXSL; Janet B. Hewett, ed., *Texas Confederate Soldiers: 1861-1865* (2 vols., Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1997), 1: 173, 387.

elected to the position in 1886 and served until 1894. Records indicate that Burton approached his duties pragmatically, and with little of the flamboyance and risk-taking habits of some of his predecessors. At the time Burton entered on his duties he was married with four children.[11]

The background of the victim, Clark Washington, is a bit more difficult to reconstruct. In 1880 at the age of 30, he was a laborer working in one of the many sawmills in Orange. He illustrates the legacy of slavery, for he was unable to read or write. Although born in Texas, he did not know the birthplace of either of his parents. His 16-year-old wife Irene was a light complexioned Creole. Unlike Clark, she was literate. Her mother had been born in Louisiana and her father in Maryland. Three years earlier, at the age of 13, Irene had given birth to their first child, a son who was named Moses. By 1891, Clark Washington was employed by the town of Orange as a police officer. Later events indicated that he performed his duties faithfully, but unarmed and without adequate training. He died as a result of overconfidence in the law he served.[12]

Very little can be found pertaining to Archie Washington (1871-1892) or to a Washington family that resided in Orange, other than Clark's. Archie's mother's maiden name was probably Harris. The census of 1880 listed no Washington other than Clark as the head of a household. Three African Americans with that surname were included, but two were minors described as stepchildren and the other was a single young man who lived with a family as a boarder. In the census of 1900 two Washington households were listed. Neither entry is clearly legible, nor is it possible to determine first names. These men, aged 24 and 27, may have been Archie's younger brothers. Both had been born in Louisiana. A writer for the *Galveston Weekly News* reported in 1892 that "Archie Washington was a rather prepossessing looking young negro, 21 years old, about 5 feet 4 inches in height, and weighed about 140 pounds. His education was above average, being able to read and write fluently, and was well liked by all his former employers." It can be added that Archie most likely received his education in the Mount Zion Baptist Church School. His education may have helped him find employment in Orange's mercantile establishments, rather than in the shingle and saw mills. The reporter's comments concerning Archie's former employers suggests this,

11. 1870 and 1880 Population Schedules, Orange County; Chick, "Jailhouses and Sheriffs," 26-27; Williams, *Gateway to Texas,* 238.

12. 1880 Population Schedule, Orange County. The *Galveston News* described Clark Washington as a "special colored policeman." GWN, July 28, 1892.

since the mills employed hundreds of laborers, and a young African American would be unlikely to have been remembered or described as "well liked."[13]

Based on later protracted legal battles on Archie Washington's behalf, it can be inferred that he was receiving considerable financial support from his family. They may have possessed means beyond those of average laborers. In the old Hollywood Cemetery in Orange, while most nineteenth century memorials were made of wood and have not survived, two professional marble monuments marking the resting places of Charles and Francis Washington remain as an indication of the family's resources. A law firm whose name appeared in very prominent cases during the period represented Washington. Later developments indicate that these legal expenses exhausted the resources of the family.[14]

The confrontation between Clark and Archie Washington to place on April 4, 1891, a pleasantly cool Saturday night. The Mount Zion Baptist Church was sponsoring a political rally and ice cream social in their fellowship hall, which was located at the unpaved intersection of John Avenue and Fourth Street. The church was a focal point for the black community, and a large gathering was anticipated. The speakers that night probably included James Saunders, a candidate for mayor, J. S. Brice and J. L. McKinnon, candidates for the two seats as aldermen of the First Ward, and Hammond Starks, a police officer running for city marshal and tax assessor. Other candidates may also have spoken. The audience was largely African-American, but some whites were there as well. Present in the audience was Clark Washington, the black city police officer.[15]

When the candidates finished speaking, they left the hall, which was soon rearranged by members of the church for the ice cream social, a fundraiser for the church or school. Shortly after the social began, a disturbance erupted. Archie Washington, obviously intoxicated, was brandishing a pistol, threatening to "empty it into anyone who interfered with him." He was confronted by Officer Clark Washington, who tried unsuccessfully to disarm him, but he did manage to convince the drunken man to step outside and leave the crowded fellowship hall.[16]

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13. The *Galveston News* reported that the surname of Archie Washington's uncle was Harris. GWN, Oct. 29, 1891, July 28, 1892; 1880 Population Schedule, Orange County; Williams, *Gateway to Texas*, 199.

14. Docket of the First District Court (Orange County), volume A, SHRL.

15. GWN, April 3 and 9, 1891; Williams, *Gateway to Texas*, 199; Pennington, "City of Orange," appendix 2.

16. GWN, July 28, 1892.

Once outside, the police officer engaged Archie Washington in conversation in an effort to calm him down. Witnesses later said that the two talked for nearly half an hour in a normal conversational tone on the south side of the building. No record of their talk exists. It would be difficult to imagine two men with more different perspectives. Clark Washington, a figure of reflected white authority, 40 years old, a family man who clearly remembered the burdens of slavery, probably tried to reason with the young man. Archie Washington had no family responsibilities. He was literate with a degree of education, which may have made the officer's simple concept of law and order seem insulting. But above all else, Archie Washington was drunk. Later, witnesses attested:

> [T]he policeman was heard to say: "If you don't quit making so much noise I will arrest you and put you in jail." Archie, leaving answered: "I guess you are a G—d d—d liar." Clark then grabbed Archie to arrest him. The latter jumped back a few feet and shot Clark twice with a pistol. At the second shot Clark turned and ran, Archie calling after him: "Now die you—die!" Clark ran a short distance, staggered, recovered himself, called for a doctor, ran into the hall at the door and fell mortally wounded on the floor.[17]

Twenty minutes later he died from wounds in the abdomen and the forearm. He was pronounced dead by Dr. F. Hadra, a local unlicensed practitioner.[18]

Orange city officers soon arrived at the scene and took statements from the eyewitnesses. Later that night, Officers Hammond Starks and Jefferson D. Bland arrested Archie at his home, finding him asleep in bed. He was taken to the county jail north of the courthouse on Division Avenue.[19]

Charges were filed with the district clerk on April 21, 1891. The First District Court convened twice a year in Orange County, in April and October. The record indicates that the prosecutor was District Attorney William Perry Nicks. Archie was represented at the arraignment by the law firm of Bullitt and Bullitt, but by the time of the trial John T. Hart and O. R. Sholars represented him. The District Judge, William H. Ford, following his Confederate cavalry service, had attended Lebanon Law School in Tennessee. After returning to Newton

17. GWN, July 28, 1892.

18. Dr. Hadra was probably a recent immigrant, and while he may have had adequate credentials, he was not registered with the county. Record of [Doctors,] Dentists and Embalmers, volume A, Orange County Clerk, Orange, TX.

19. GWN, July 28, 1892. Starks and Bland later appear at the trial as witnesses for the state.

County, he was appointed in 1872 to complete an unexpired term as sheriff and tax assessor by Edmund Davis, the last governor of Texas during the era of Reconstruction. He was first elected as judge in 1880.[20]

Judge Ford convened the grand jury and instructed them on their duties. District Attorney Nicks briefed them on the docket and presented the evidence against Archie Washington. The indictment was returned on April 29, 1891. The judge tentatively set the trial date for the thirtieth. Ford wrote these orders in the docket book in his often undecipherable handwriting, using a blunt pencil. The stage was set for the trial.[21]

The trial began at nine o'clock and the jury was brought in and seated. Judge Ford gave them cursory instructions. Archie Washington entered a plea of not guilty. Among the testimonies called by the state were eyewitnesses to the shooting, the arresting officers, and the doctor who had attended the dying officer. Attorneys Hart and Sholars called a number of the defendant's friends and former employers, including Ed Earl, Fred Holsten, Sol Raney, Amanda Lee, and Charles Johnson,. After much of the evidence had been presented, Judge Ford was notified that a child of one of the jurors, A. J. Lyons, had been taken violently ill. He discussed the matter with both the prosecution and defense attorneys, and with their agreement, the jury was dismissed. A new trial was set for May 7, 1891.[22]

A new jury was empanelled and given instructions a week later as scheduled. There were some changes in the witnesses both for the prosecution and the defense. Washington's plea was unchanged. District Attorney Nicks substituted testimony from G. A. Hudson and J. P. Tatum for that of Officer Jefferson Bland and Dr. Hadra. The defense called Lizzie James and James Lyons in the places of Amanda Lee and Charles Johnson. After both sides had presented the evidence, the jury retired. When they returned, Judge Ford asked the foreman, Casey Peveto, if they had reached a verdict. Peveto replied in the affirmative, and

20. Docket of the First District Court, A: 15; Minutes of the First District Court (Orange County), volume G, SHRL; GWN, July 28, 1892; Chamberlain, "East Texas," 18.

21. Docket of the First District Court, A: 15.

22. The jurors were David Teal, Silas Bland, J. H. Jones, B. Beasley, J. P. Tatum, G. L. Mosier, J. A. Jett, A. James Lyons, J. Y. Reeves, D. L. Jett, T. C. Hare, and J. C. Roebuck. Jury Records of the First District Court (Orange County), volume. A, SHRL; Minutes of the First District Court, G: 131.

then read "We the jury find the defendant guilty of murder in the first degree and assess his punishment at imprisonment in the state penitentiary for life."[23]

The next morning Hart and Sholars appeared before Judge Ford with a motion for a new trial. Ford denied their motion. Washington's attorneys then gave notice that they intended to file with the Texas Court of Appeals. The judge gave them three days to prepare their case.[24]

The Court of Appeals considered the case on June 17, 1891. The chief justice was J. P. White and Assistant Attorney General R. H. Harrison represented the state. Hart and Sholars again represented Washington. After hearing the case and reviewing the matter, Justice White wrote that "an error is pointed out which under the previous well-established rule in this state necessitates a reversal of the judgment. The learned trial judge has failed in his charge to define the meaning of the terms 'malice' and 'malice aforethought,' the most essential requisites to murder. This . . . is held to be an error, and will necessitate a reversal of a conviction for the crime of murder."[25]

Although this decision may have seemed like a victory to Washington, who was still confined to the Orange County jail, it was tempered by Judge Ford's refusal to set him free on bond on July 15, 1891.[26] Although his attorneys had taken advantage of a fundamental lapse on Ford's part that certainly was not a legal technicality, it is not clear what they hoped to gain by their successful appeal. It may have been the reduction of the charge to that of manslaughter, given their client's intoxicated condition at the time of the offense. If so, it was not successful. Washington's request for bail was appealed, but the higher court declined to hear the case.

Washington's new trial began at nine o'clock on October 29, 1891. It may be assumed that Judge Ford's instructions to the jury included a thorough definition of both "malice" and "malice aforethought." The trial began, and District Attorney W. P. Nicks left nothing to chance. He called 11 witnesses for the prosecution. One witness, G. A. Hudson, had testified for the defense in May. Even the judge was listed as a witness. He explained to the jury the reasons

23. The new jurors were J. A. Parish, John Pevito, Jr., Sam Burgess, James Pevito, J. M. Powers, F. C. Myers, Joshua Bland, D. A. Patillo Jr., Robert Berwick, Albert Lyons, W. R. Hill, and Casey Peveto. Jury Records, volume A; Minutes of the First District Court, G: 131.

24. Motion Docket of the First District Court, volume A, SHRL.

25. *The Southwestern Reporter, Volume 16* (St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Co., 1891), 653.

26. Motion Docket, volume A.

for dismissal of the earlier judgment. He also made certain that they did not believe that the success of the earlier appeal cast any doubt on the defendant's guilt.[27]

The attorneys for the defense could only produce two witnesses, Frank Holliman and S. H. Wilson. After testimony was completed, the jury retired to consider Washington's plea of innocence in the light of what was certainly overwhelming evidence of guilt. The jury returned with their verdict, which was delivered by the foreman, A. M. Rogers. "We the jury find the defendant Archie Washington guilty of murder in the first degree and assess his punishment at death." Following this crushing blow to his friends and family, Sheriff Burton led Washington out of the courtroom and across the street to the jail.[28]

Shortly after Washington's first verdict was overturned, he had, no doubt heard of the arrest of his uncle, Jake Harris, who on July 10, 1891, was charged with exhibiting a gaming table. This may have planted a seed in his mind that Harris was engineering an escape plan for him. The same thought was in the mind of City Marshal Hammond Starks. On October 21, 1891, Harris was found guilty of the charges and sentenced to a $30 fine and 10 days in jail. Starks approached Sheriff Burton and warned him that Washington's relatives were plotting an attempt at his escape. When Harris arrived at the jail from the courthouse, he was subjected to a thorough inspection. A new triangular file was discovered in the lining of his vest. Harris's evident disappointment at this revelation suggested that he had planned his arrest in order to help Washington escape.[29]

Uncle Jake's 10 day sentence was completed October 31, 1891. Following Washington's death sentence, any discussions they may have had of escape must have taken on even greater urgency. Although the jail was nearly new, having been built in 1885, records suggest that the foundations had shifted. In 1894 the grand jury inspected the facility and reported, "The traps [latches] that operate the cage doors are useless. We are informed they always have been and

27. The jurors were Charles W. House, B. F. Stakes, J. G. Johnson, Will Graves, P. A. Perez, A. M. Rogers, Elsey Bland, A. I. Stephenson, G. W. Lyons, R. M. Hall, Charles Hunt, and J. D. Peveto. The witnesses for the state were Isom Isaacs, M. White, Dr. F. Hadra, Jefferson D. Bland, Hammond Starks, Nathaniel Burton, G. A. Hudson, Judge W. H. Ford, J. M. Powers, George F. Poole, and R. P. Mullins. Jury Records, volume A.

28. Docket of the First District Court, volume A.

29. Docket of the First District Court, volume A; GWN, Oct. 29, 1891.

the fact has been called to [Sheriff Burton's] attention before." Some temporary and less effective system of locking the cells was in use.[30]

Washington's attorneys filed their appeal of his latest conviction and death sentence on Sunday, October 31, 1891. On that Halloween night or early Monday morning, he escaped. The clearest path lay to the west along the Old Spanish Trail and the route of the Texas and New Orleans Railroad to Beaumont, Liberty, and Houston. Near either Liberty or Houston, Washington turned north. Judging by the distance he traveled, 160 miles in six days, he remained afoot, and did not risk either the train or any wagon, which may have passed. He was recaptured near Huntsville. The date of his capture, November 7, 1891, is confirmed by Judge Ford's actions that Saturday. He considered a new motion for suspension of judgment and retrial. He denied both of these requests, clearing the way for a second appeal following the October 29, 1891 trial.[31]

The complicity of Jake Harris in Washington's escape is strongly suspected. The escape came on the evening of Harris's release. Plans may have been made to provide money or provisions for his journey. Harris was a dubious character and was later convicted of robbery. He was sentenced to two years in the state penitentiary in October 1892.[32]

Authorities returned Washington to the questionable comforts of the Orange County jail. The grand jury complained in 1894 that "we wish to call attention to the bad condition of [the] sanitary . . . appliances. They are so constructed as to absolutely fail to fulfill their purpose. The jailer must use buckets and pails instead . . . The walls are cracking and falling apart." Eight years later, another such report said there was "no heating arrangement, nor any thing to make the prisoners comfortable." Besides the shortcomings of the lodgings, following his escape attempt, Washington was required to wear leg-irons. The jailer, Dan Griffith, seems to have had nearly as an unpleasant time as the prisoners. In addition to dealing with the "buckets and pails" and bringing food to the prisoners, he was required to house mentally ill detainees. His salary

30. Chick, "Jailhouses and Sheriffs," 5-27.

31. The first appeal of the death verdict was filed October 31, 1891, but was dismissed when the Court of Appeals was notified of the prisoner's escape. Motion Docket, volume A; *Southwestern Reporter, Volume 19* (St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Co., 1892), 900-901.

32. Minutes of the First District Court, G: 337-338.

was increased from 50 cents to $1.00 a day when the patient was particularly difficult.[33]

The winter passed uneventfully. On March 21, 1892, Washington's case was heard at the Court of Appeals at Galveston. Justice John P. White dismissed it as having no merit. This action cleared the way for sentencing when the District Court reconvened in late April. Hart and Sholars staged a last ill-advised and bizarre legal ploy when Washington appeared for sentencing on May 12, 1892. Prior to reading the sentence, Judge Ford asked if there was any reason that the sentence should not be passed. The defendant "announced that the Archie Washington who was convicted of this offence had escaped from jail, and that he was not and is not the defendant . . . but that he is another and different person." In spite of this, Judge Ford read the sentence. He quickly reconsidered his action and decided that a trial by jury should make a positive determination of identity. The trial was set for the next day.[34]

Friday, May 13, 1892, would prove to be a fateful day for Washington. The jury was seated and heard the evidence. It was later recorded that "a great number of witnesses were sworn, all of whom testified to their long acquaintance with and intimate knowledge of [him], and his identity as the person who had been previously tried and convicted of murder. His identity was complete. Not a word of contradiction appears in the record upon this issue." The jury considered the evidence briefly and returned to the courtroom. The foreman, A. J. Lyons, had been on Washington's first jury, which was dismissed when his child became ill. He certainly had no difficulty in identifying him. They found that this defendant was the same person who was convicted and who escaped before sentencing. Judge Ford then thanked the jury and passed sentence. "Archie Washington . . . shall, on Tuesday the 12th day of July, A.D. 1892, in Orange County, Texas, be hung by the neck until he is dead, and [it is ordered] that the Clerk of this Court issue a death warrant . . . and deliver it to the sheriff." Immediately after sentencing, Hart and Sholars took exception and told the judge they would appeal.[35]

The case was heard by the Court of Appeals on June 18, 1892. Counsel for the defense requested that the murder conviction and death sentence should be

33. GWN, July 28, 1892; Register of [Orange] County Expenses, 1887-1893, SHRL; Chick, "Jailhouses and Sheriffs," 5-6, 26-7.

34. Minutes of the First District Court, G: 331, 333-334.

35. *Southwestern Reporter, Volume 19*, 900; Minutes of the First District Court, G: 334-335. Judge Ford was defeated in the fall of 1892 and retired. Williams, *Gateway to Texas*, 238.

dismissed, since Judge Ford had ignored Washington's denial of identity and sentenced him in spite of it. Although this was corrected within moments, and a jury trial ordered, Hart and Sholars argued that the judge had no legal right to correct the error once sentence had been passed. Justice J. Davidson, writing the decision, made clear his low opinion of the merits of this argument. "This action by the court [the trial of identity] was corrective of an error, and manifested the upright judge. Ignoring . . . the requirement of the statute might lead to fatal results ending in the wrong taking of life or liberty of the innocent." He went on to say that since the judge's actions had been correct, Washington had no right of appeal, having already been sentenced. The request for dismissal of the conviction and sentence was denied. One final course of action was available. A petition for clemency was presented to Governor Hogg. Unless the governor acted favorably, the execution would take place July 12, 1892.[36]

In late June 1892, Sheriff Burton was authorized by the Commissioners Court to take bids to build a scaffold for the execution. The successful bidder was P. B. Curry. The ominous sounds of its construction filled Washington's cell prior to the scheduled day. The cost to the county was $40. A later order of the court gave specifications for "a scaffold to be 10 feet high on 4 X 4 posts, 8 feet [wide] and twelve feet long, properly braced with 2 upright 4 X 6 with a 4 X 6 beam across, and steps . . . built to suit the sheriff." One day before the hanging was to take place, Governor Hogg sent word by telegraph that he would consider the petition for clemency. A two-week reprieve was granted. The petition was later denied, and the sentence would be carried out on July 26, 1892.[37]

A reporter for the *Galveston Weekly News* arrived in Orange and wrote an account of the crime and execution. This eyewitness account is extensive and informative. The reporter's perspective was in keeping with the views of his newspaper and of the governor. He praised the community and its leaders for the humane treatment afforded the prisoner and the efficiency of the execution. He was apparently very favorably impressed with Washington. The reporter noted the prisoner's "wonderful resignation and fortitude." This was a departure from the tone often set in that newspaper, which often referred to the accused as "fiends" or "beasts." Perhaps the editors realized that their lurid style of reporting crime helped lynch mobs justify their acts.

36. *Southwestern Reporter, Volume 19*, 900-901.

37. Register of County Expenditures, 1887-1893, 28; GWN, July 28, 1892; Chick, "Jailhouses and Sheriffs," 27.

He reported that in the morning and early afternoon of July 26 the jail was filled with "a constant stream of colored sympathizers [who were] permitted to bid him a last farewell. The sad and sorrowful countenances of his friends, especially the little ones, as they shook Archie's hands and bade him good-bye was extremely pathetic . . . For all of them he had but one reply: "Good-bye; we part, but not forever. May God be with you till we meet again." At two o'clock the last of the friends and relatives were led outside. Sheriff Burton read the death warrant and Washington listened attentively. Burton then showed three black ministers into the cell, probably those of the Mount Zion Baptist Church, Saint Paul Missionary Baptist Church, and of Salem Methodist Episcopal Church. They conducted a "service of song and prayer, in which Archie took an active part." Thirty minutes later, the sheriff told him that the time had come. Washington replied that he was ready. Before the officers led him outside, at his request, they removed the shackles from his legs.

Hundreds of people stood outside the enclosure surrounding the scaffold on the north side of the jail. The crowd spread over several blocks and every vantage point was taken. Within the enclosure were "the press, physicians, immediate relatives, officers and attorneys." Washington, Sheriff Burton, two escort officers, and one of the ministers climbed the steps and stood on the scaffold. The prisoner was allowed to speak briefly. The minister then "read a few [verses] of the Bible, [and] delivered a short but eloquently fervent prayer." The sheriff placed the noose and a black hood over Washington's head. Final farewells were spoken, and Sheriff Burton cut the rope, springing the trap. The execution was described as perfect. Death was instantaneous, "without the twitching of a single muscle." A doctor declared Archie Washington dead at three o'clock. Moments later, his body was placed in a casket and conveyed to the old Hollywood Cemetery, where he was buried.[38]

Washington's death did not end lawlessness in Orange County, but it did mark the end of an era. The *Galveston Weekly News* described it in headlines as the "First Legal Hanging in Orange." Such cases destroyed the flimsy justifications for mob violence and exposed it for the criminal activity it was.

One fact remains to be considered. It appears in the financial records of Orange County. On August 11, 1892, the Commissioners Court authorized the payment of two bills presented by Sheriff Burton. One was in the amount of $32.05 and the other $127.15. Unlike any other entry in the ledger, these appear with no details of the expense. In the far right margin is the simple

38. GWN, July 28, 1892.

THE FIRST LEGAL HANGING

ARCHIE WASHINGTON PAYS THE EXTREME PENALTY AT ORANGE.

He Met His Fate With Resignation—History of the Crime for Which He Was Condemned and Hanged.

Headline from the *Galveston Daily News,* July 27, 1892.

notation "Archie Washington."[39] It would seem that the county assumed the costs of the coffin and the burial expenses. Perhaps legal costs left Washington's family unable to meet these final obligations.

The facts surrounding the case of Archie Washington illustrated three areas of change in Orange County. First, the day of the lynch mob was ending. Social pressures, such as Governor Hogg's proclamation and widespread support for his position in newspapers had an important impact. The second change, closely related to the first, was increased trust and dependence on legal remedies for the solution of problems. Finally, racial polarization and mutual distrust aggravated by the forces of occupation and Reconstruction were being overcome. A partnership, although an unequal one, was emerging.

Judge William H. Ford, possibly because of his perceived errors in the Washington case, was soundly defeated for reelection November 8, 1892 by Stephen P. West of Woodville, a young, well-educated attorney. District Attorney William P. Nicks, the successful prosecutor of the case, ran unopposed and garnered nearly 6,000 votes. Gov. Joseph D. Sayers later appointed him as Judge of the First District in 1902. John T. Hart and O. R. Sholars went on to brilliantly successful careers. In Sholars's case, he served several terms as County Judge and two terms as mayor of Orange.

Some causes of these changes were also transforming Orange itself. The timber boom of the last two decades of the nineteenth century had supplanted the cotton trade, and to a large extent, the social and power structure which it

39. Register of County Expenditures, 1887-1892, 28.

supported. Labor demands in the mills brought many newcomers to the county. A large percentage of these were recent immigrants from northern Europe, accustomed to a greater degree of regimentation and government control. Much power passed into the hands of the mill owners who dominated the economy. Few of these men were native to Orange. Their interests demanded a stable, law-abiding community, which could attract a sufficient labor force to meet their needs. These forces brought about the changes that first began to be clearly seen as the nineteenth century came to an end.

A Biographical Sketch of George Washington Carroll

Terry Lee Rioux

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At the turn of the century George Washington Carroll was well established in the lumber industry centered at Beaumont, Texas. He was a man devoted to his Baptist faith, to his city, and to the people of Texas. Carroll lived by the ideals of Christian giving. It seemed predetermined that the more money he gave away the more money he made. Eventually, financial setbacks accumulated, but he kept giving. One of his contemporaries, Baptist leader Dr. J. B. Cranfill, recalled that Carroll's only faults were the excesses of his virtues. Even as a poor old man Carroll found joy in putting his last few coins in the collection plate. George W. Carroll was neither a fool nor a fake. He simply sought to "prove my faith by my works."[1]

George Washington Carroll was born in Mansfield, Louisiana, on April 11, 1855. He was the first son of Francis Lafayette Carroll and Sarah Long. In

In 2000, Terry Lee Rioux attained her MA in history at Lamar University. She extends her gratitude for assistance in the preparation of this article to Marjorie (Mrs. Ed E.) Carroll (1912-2012) of the First Baptist Church of Beaumont, Jonathan K. Gerland and Judith Walker Linsley of Tyrrell Historical Library, Ryan Smith of Texas Energy Museum, Christy Marino of Spindletop/Gladys City Boomtown Museum, and historians and authors Jo Ann Stiles, Ron Ellison, John W Storey, Ralph A. Wooster, and Robert W McDaniels. Rioux is the author of *G. W. Carroll: The Spirit and Proof of an American Christian* (2001) and *From Sawdust to Stardust: The Biography of DeForest Kelley,* Star Trek*'s Dr. McCoy* (2005). She currently resides in Los Angeles, working on a biography of Eddie Albert, writing and consulting on screenplays, and teaching online courses for Lamar.

1. J. B. Cranfill, *From Memory* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1937), 91; "George W. Carroll," BJ, Dec. 16, 1935. For an overview of the lumber industry in nineteenth-century Beaumont, see Jonathan K Gerland, "Sawdust City: Beaumont, Texas, on the Eve of the Petroleum Age," TGHBR, 32 (Nov. 1996): 20-47. [Reprinted in this volume—ed.]

March 1860, the elder Carroll and his brother-in-law James Long established a sawmill in Beaumont, and in 1873, they moved their families there. Young George Carroll worked in the mill for $1.25 a day. He enjoyed his earliest business successes with John N. Gilbert, a friend he met in Beaumont. Together, they labored on a two-man logging operation and doubled their investment in only two years. Hard work, a conservative faith, and the business acumen typical of his family made him a man for his times.[2]

In late 1877, Carroll's world took shape through his Christian faith, his marriage, and an assignment as superintendent for Beaumont Lumber Company's logging camp at Cairo.[3] Carroll labored at the camp four years and saw how alcohol ruined the lives of workers. By the early 1880s he and his wife, Underhill Mixson, returned to Beaumont and became active in a variety of city endeavors. He was a charter member of Beaumont Fire Company Number 1 and the city school board, while she led many of the Baptist women's efforts and was a founding member of the Beaumont United Friends of Temperance. Carroll had the good fortune to marry a woman who held similar devotions.[4]

As a conservative Southern Baptist, Carroll was committed to the ideal of personal conversion and his belief in the acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Perhaps Carroll's greatest success in the salvaging of souls was Pattillo Higgins, a local bad boy who in 1881 had shot and killed a Beaumont lawman in the confusion of a midnight prank. After Higgins was found not guilty of murder, Carroll gave him a job and began to care for the misguided youth in ways which led directly to Higgins's Christian conversion and baptism in 1885 into the Baptist Church. The young convert referred to Carroll as his pastor, meaning his spiritual leader and shepherd.[5]

2. Cranfill, "How Carroll Began His Fortune," BS, June 6, 1901; Dean Tevis, "Sixty Years," BE, March 19, 1933. Through marriage, the extended Long family represented much of Beaumont's industrial leadership throughout the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The families included the Carrolls, Fletchers, Keiths, and others. Gerland, "Sawdust City," 33-36; W. T. Block, *East Texas Mill Towns and Ghost Towns* (3 vols., Lufkin: Pineywoods Foundation, 1994), 1: 116.

3. Cairo is about seven miles northwest of Buna in southwestern Jasper County. For the origins of commercial logging at Cairo, see "The Captain at Cairo or How I Became a Land Lubber: E. I. Kellie's Account of Log Driving on the Neches River," TGHBR, 33 (Nov. 1997), 77-81.

4. "Carroll," BJ, Dec. 16, 1935; Judith Walker Linsley and Ellen Walker Rienstra, *Beaumont: A Chronicle of Promise* (Woodland Hills, CA: Windsor Publications, 1982), 67; "Reformer with Record," BJ, July 30, 1904; "Mrs. Geo. W. Carroll," BE, Jan. 25, 1927.

5. Robert W. McDaniel, "Pattillo Higgins' Fool Notion about Oil" (Sealy, TX: unpublished typescript, 1998), ch. 2, 3; W. E. Penn, *The Life and Labors of Major W. E. Penn* (St. Louis: C. B. Woodward Printing and Book Manufacturing Co., 1896), 139.

George W. Carroll. From *Souvenir, Beaumont, 1903* (c. 1903). *Courtesy of the Lamar University Archives and Special Collections, Beaumont, TX.*

In the same year of Higgins's conversion, Carroll surprised his fellow Baptists by pledging $500 for the building of a new First Baptist Church building. Carroll at the time received a monthly salary of $83.00 a month from the newly incorporated Beaumont Lumber Company of which he was a founder and director. Barely 30 years old, he had shown some investment skills, but was certainly cash poor. Astounded by the large pledge, a friend insisted he "needed a guardian." To this concern, Carroll responded, "My purpose is first to help build a house for the Lord; if it is His will, I will build one for myself." He then convinced his friends Dr. H. W. Smith and Higgins to join with him in securing a loan. Together they bought an entire city block in Beaumont in order to have an appropriate site for the church. The choicest lot was then given to the Baptist membership, and 18 months later Carroll sold his remaining share of the block at a significant profit. The new brick church opened its doors in September 1887, by which time Carroll and his wife were established in a lovely home paid for with the profits from the property sale. In 1889, Carroll's interest in Baptist efforts

in Texas brought him to the newly formed Southeast Texas Baptist Association. He was assigned to the executive board, designated as messenger to the Baptist State Convention, and was a deacon of the First Baptist Church in Beaumont.[6]

About this time, Carroll encouraged Higgins to leave his work as lumberman and become involved in real estate and the manufacture of brick. Both men were committed to creating environments that were healthy and that encouraged a Christian lifestyle. Higgins was convinced that the geographical rise called Spindletop Heights, just south of Beaumont, concealed treasures of oil and gas. In 1892, he presented his benefactor with plans for a concept city, promising millions of dollars for both of them if Carroll would trust him with $1,000. Carroll borrowed the money, and with it, Higgins acquired 1,000 acres on the Spindletop Heights—$1.00 an acre in cash and $5.00 an acre to be paid at a later date. The two men conceived a city that would be powered by petroleum and supported by the manufacture of oil and its by-products. These resources would provide a stable base for an ideal industrial community. Higgins planned Gladys City to be a pure and wholesome web of schools, churches, and economic opportunities. Higgins and Carroll would provide the ways and means of a Christian life for a large number of people. Gladys City would have none of the corrupting influences that endangered other citizens of industrial centers.

In 1892 with George W. O'Brien, Emma E. John, and J. F. Lanier, Carroll and Higgins chartered the Gladys City Oil, Gas and Manufacturing Company. Higgins could not convince the conservative board of directors to take the financial risks necessary and eventually acquired a reputation as an eccentric and abrasive man. Carroll, on the other hand, moved further into the civic and spiritual life of Beaumont, and beginning in 1894 he served the city as alderman. Carroll was patient with Higgins, but he was financially involved in lumber and other concerns. Higgins left the company after eight years of frustration. By the time Higgins found Anthony Lucas in 1899, everyone was tired of the whole affair. Business became difficult, rife with plots and counterplots. Carroll held

6. Higgins seems to have accompanied Carroll to meetings of the association in 1889, but showed little interest thereafter. Minutes of Southeast Texas Baptist Association, 1889, courtesy Ron Ellison, Beaumont, TX; Mary Anna Crary Anderson, "Tyrrell Public Library: History of the Site and the Building," TGHBR, 6 (Nov. 1970), 48; William R. Estep, *And God* Gave *the Increase* (Fort Worth: First Baptist Church of Beaumont and Evans Press, 1972), 52-56.

on to the company with O'Brien, another long-time friend. It was a difficult period for friendship and the Golden Rule.[7]

Oil did indeed exist as Higgins had always insisted. As events developed in January of 1901, J. B. Cranfill, a prolific commentator and editor of the *Baptist Standard*, observed, "I would not be surprised if at the Judgment Day the truth comes out that God let the oil gush from George Carroll's land in order to make him rich." Cranfill was referring to the Lucas gusher and the Spindletop Heights oil fields. Carroll owned a large portion of the Spindletop acreage. He did well as president of Gladys City Oil, Gas and Manufacturing Company. The intrigue and involvement of outside interests ensured that Higgins and Carroll would never see their industrial "City of Man" come to fruition. As his friendship with Higgins suffered, Carroll's fortune multiplied as he quickly diversified his interests in oil production and involved members of his family in various corporate efforts including the Sunshine Oil Company and the Yellow Pine Oil Company. Word spread rapidly about the tremendous oil boom and Beaumont was flooded with every kind of hopeful American. The great Texas oil rush was on, and Gladys City itself was a wide-open shanty town.[8]

George Washington Carroll believed that individual redemption alone could not transform a society. "So I began to help churches and schools and movements that promoted men's welfare until it became a veritable passion with me," he said later. Between January and June 1901, Carroll gave $10,000 to Buckner Orphan's Home, $60,000 to Baylor University for a science center, $10,000 to

7. McDaniel, "Pattillo Higgins' Fool Notion," ch. 2 & 3; McDaniel and Henry C. Dethloff, *Pattillo Higgins and the Search* for *Texas Oil* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1989), 21-46; Pattillo Higgins, *Prospectus: The True History of the Beaumont Oil Field* (Chicago: Higgins Standard Oil Company, 1902); Everette Martin, "A History of the Spindletop Oil Field" (MA thesis, University of Texas, 1934), 10-11. Included in the thesis are quotes for Martin's interview with Carroll. Christine Moor Sanders, *Captain George Washington O'Brien* (Beaumont: privately published, 1992) 16-23; Estep, *And God Gave the Increase,* 69; NHT, 6: 29-30.

8. Cranfill, "How Carroll Began His Fortune;" Paul Wagner, "Spindletop's History Making Comeback Lacks Human Background of Old," *National Petroleum News,* Sept. 22, 1926; Sanders, *Captain George Washington O'Brien,* 16-23. Diversification of Carroll's interests are evidenced through documents and stock certificates held at Gladys City Boomtown Museum, Beaumont, Texas. Higgins personally sued Carroll for settlement of a percentage share of the Gladys City profits. See *Higgins v. Carroll,* June 14, 1901, No. 2907, Plaintiffs Original Petition, Texas Energy Museum, Beaumont, TX. The matter was apparently resolved out of court and over time the friendship mended and strengthened, as evidenced by later business associations and letters of recommendation. For an excellent treatment of the era, see Marilyn Dianne Stodghill Trevey, "The Social and Economic Impact of the Spindletop Oil Boom on Beaumont in 1901" (MA thesis, Lamar University, 1974).

the Baptist Education Commission, and $16,700 to the *Baptist Standard.* In six months he had given away nearly $100,000, or one third of all the money he would ever make through the Gladys City Oil, Gas and Manufacturing Company. Seeking to provide some alternative to the local bars, gambling dens, and brothels, Carroll also gave $10,000 to the building fund for Beaumont's first Young Men's Christian Association, along with a desirable building lot on Forsythe Street, next to the First Baptist Church, and he was elected president of the Association. In connection, the First Baptist Church assembled a missionary program to help handle the influx of boomers and steer them away from sin.[9]

J. B. Cranfill, part owner of the financially troubled *Baptist Standard,* arrived in Beaumont to see the oil fields for himself. He also met with Carroll to discuss a partnership in his publication. With little prompting Carroll became owner of a third of the concern. In 1901 the *Baptist Standard* served the faithful readers of Texas, featuring each week religious news and discussions of doctrine by experts. Cranfill and frequent contributor J. B. Gambrel exercised great influence through the paper, especially in promoting the anti-alcohol campaign in all its forms. Both men, driven by missionary zeal, advocated action by the Baptist faithful. For them, as well as the *Baptist Standard* as an enterprise, applied Christianity was more than a feature of the Southern Baptist life. It was the cornerstone and the proof of a life devoted to Christian ideals. Carroll was in good company. On May 9, 1901, the paper announced that Carroll was co-owner with Cranfill and millionaire rancher C. C. Slaughter. Carroll and Cranfill intended to turn the paper into a chronicle of Texas Baptist life by "placing the *Standard* in the home of every Baptist pastor, church, associational clerk, and associational moderator in the Southern States."[10]

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9. Cranfill, "How Carroll Began His Fortune;" "Carroll," BJ, Dec. 16, 1935; George Washington Carroll, letter of recommendation for Pattillo Higgins, Aug. 14, 1911, Higgins Collection, Texas Energy Museum; *Beaumont Daily Journal,* Aug. 2, 1904; Bill Von Maurer, "'Y.M.C.A. Founded," BE, Jan. 11, 1951; Estep, *And God Gave the Increase,* 69-70.

10. Various issues of *Baptist Standard,* 1900-1901; John W. Storey, *Texas Baptist Leadership and Social Christianity, 1900-1980* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1986), 16-20. Cranfill also launched the short lived San Jacinto Oil Company. He wrote regular accounts in the *Baptist Standard* about the oil fields and his company through 1901. J. B. Gambrel was one of the most influential Baptist advocates of applied Christianity and foreign missions of his day. C. C. Slaughter of Dallas was a ranching millionaire and son of a Baptist minister. He held a number of high offices in a variety of Baptist organizations. Cranfill, including, "The Great Deed of a Plain Christian Man," BS, Dec. 12, 1901; *From Memory,* 88; and *Dr. J. B. Cranfill's Chronicle: A Story of Life in Texas* (New York: Fleming Revel Company, 1916), 450-452; original stock certificates, Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown Museum.

Gambrel and Cranfill were not only pillars of the *Baptist Standard,* they were also ardent prohibition activists and chairmen of the state Prohibition Party. In July 1902, the party gathered in Dallas. Gambrel fulfilled his role as chairman of the platform committee. The unanimously accepted platform of the Texas Prohibition Party stated that liquor making and selling was a crime against humanity and that it was "immoral for the government to license immoral institutions." The revenues raised by alcohol sale was blood money. George Washington Carroll of Beaumont and Arthur A. Everts of Dallas were chosen as nominees for governor and lieutenant governor for the 1902 election. Carroll could now vigorously support his applied Christianity on a wider stage.[11]

The struggle between wet and dry in Texas began at the very start of Anglo settlement. Stephen F. Austin wrote in 1829 that "philanthropy cannot but weep at the incalculable mass of human misery and degradation which the use of ardent spirits heaps upon mankind," but he resigned himself to the presence of liquor in frontier Texas. The battles between drinkers and abstainers continued and took many forms. Local option (prohibition by local mandate) had made great strides since the beginning of the effort in 1893. The *Baptist Standard* reported that there were 104 wholly dry counties in Texas by 1902 and that some 725,816 Texans lived in dry or nearly dry areas. By comparison, the wet counties had a reported population of 693,651.[12]

For Cranfill and like-minded Texans, however, the "local option" that allowed voters to enact local prohibition was "too local and too optional." The Prohibition Party became a great protest against not only the saloon but also the established political machine, which was, in Texas, the Democratic Party. Carroll would make a stand for local option, county and state prohibition, and the "extermination of the entire liquor traffic, root and branch." Cranfill described the race as a protest and the votes as an announcement of resistance by the citizens intended to make "every liquor vendor in the state shake in his boots." Carroll expressed gratitude to the people who nominated him in a moral campaign. He seemed overwhelmed that he should be chosen to be their "standard bearer." In explaining why he agreed to work in a fashion that did not really suit his nature, he clearly stated, "Whatever degrades citizenship directly affects the

11. "Carroll at Head," GDN, July 5, 1902; J. B. Gambrel, "Saloons and Cities," BS, July 17, 1902.

12. Austin quoted in William Ransom Hogan, *The Texas Republic: A Social and Economic History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1946), 41; "War on Texas Saloons," BS, Oct. 30, 1902.

foundations of the government . . . . I am a Prohibitionist in politics because the saloon is in politics."[13]

Carroll was concerned with a broad spectrum of issues and had no qualms about personally confronting situations he felt were demoralizing or dangerous to people in general, dry or wet. His orthodox and literal Baptist faith was tied to a social conscience. He felt free to apply himself to any cause that appealed to his sense of Christian purpose. In the autumn of 1902, Carroll turned to the issue of the oil fields on Spindletop, which were by then a tangle of derricks. On October 7, the Hogg-Swayne tract at Spindletop caught fire and 20 deaths resulted. This tragedy was only one of a series. The human and environmental costs of the industry in its infancy were great. What little safety and fire-fighting techniques existed had to be put into action regardless of the wishes of the company executives. Carroll, the veteran firefighter, pushed for reform. On October 15, the Beaumont *Daily Journal* reported that an injunction case of *Carroll vs. The Guffey Petroleum Company* forced the corporation to adhere to the new safety procedures agreed to by a joint meeting of oil men at Spindletop. Guffey would comply with the recommendations of the safety committee and would also use only electric lights, effective casing heads, and basic storage safety measures. Carroll used his position in Beaumont and his personal will to force into compliance a large oil company that would later become Gulf Oil Company.[14]

Carroll had humanitarian interests as well. He attended the first meeting of the Beaumont Benevolent Society that intended to address the desperate situation in some of the city's neighborhoods. Jewish, Episcopalian, and Baptist clergy met with the successful merchants and society matrons of Beaumont. Mrs. Levy, Mr. Beck , Mrs. Gano, and Mr. Carroll took on the group's fundraising agenda, and on October 28, 1902, the *Beaumont Journal* announced the founding of the society. Ironically, the column alongside the story reported the establishment and immediate construction of a great new brewery. Executives and investors assured potential investors that analysts had found that "there was no finer wa-

13. BS, Aug. 12, 1902; Paul E. Isaac, "Municipal Reform in Beaumont, Texas, 1902-1909," SHQ, 78 (April 1975): 413-414.

14. "Spindle Top Fire," GDN, Oct. 8, 1902. The threat of fire, however, continued at Spindletop, and Carroll's brother Monroe established a safety committee for the Yellow Pine tract of the Spindletop fields. Ditches and levees and a comprehensive firefighting strategy was introduced, as well as the addition of round-the-clock fire watches. Carroll presented a strategy of dividing Spindletop into territories and providing each with chemical firefighting apparatus. Convinced the apparatus was necessary, he ordered one for the Yellow Pine tract on his own. The one that belonged to the general safety committee was credited with preventing a number of major fires. "Protection Provided," BJ, Oct. 29, 1902.

ter in the United States for the manufacture of beer." From his perspective, it seemed that for every step Carroll took to help people, someone else was taking a step in the opposite direction. Nevertheless, he conducted business on his own principles while the Prohibition Party worked its way toward election day.

In the election of 1902, Samuel W. T. Lanham defeated Carroll and other gubernatorial hopefuls. The *Standard,* in its November 27 issue, praised Carroll for the more than 7,000 votes he received in the race, a great increase over the 2,000 garnered by the party in 1900. In spite of the real numbers, the columnist proclaimed that victory over the saloon was attainable, nationwide, if there was efficient organization. But while Carroll was an ideal candidate, no one man could truly change the status of the whiskey power base. The Carroll vote was greater than past campaign results, but the end numbers were also disheartening because they revealed the weakness of the movement and the strength of the anti-prohibition element. The Prohibition ticket received only 45 votes in Houston, whereas the Socialist Party of America garnered 103. Underlying everything was the common knowledge that a Democratic landslide would result in an increase of votes at the next national convention. It seemed Texans were not willing to waste their vote on a third party protest.[15]

With the election over, Carroll returned to his work in Beaumont as alderman of the Third Ward. As one of the wealthiest men in Southeast Texas he continued his support for philanthropic causes. Earlier in 1901, he and his father F. L. Carroll made large donations to the Baptist-affiliated Baylor University, and in April 1903, they traveled to the campus for the dedication of two buildings that they had made possible. The festivities included what the *Baptist Standard* reported as "the largest academic procession ever formed in the State." B. H. Carroll, then dean of the theological department and president of the board of trustees, began the day of honors and oration by commenting that the Beaumont Carrolls had donated a final sum of $150,000 to Baylor University. Among the dignitaries were former U.S. Congressman and Texas Railroad Commissioner John H. Reagan and former Texas governor Francis R. Lubbock. Dr. W. R Harper of Chicago University, considered a national expert in education at the time, pointed out that the gifts of the two Carroll men would

15. "War on Texas Saloons," BS, Oct. 30, 1902; "Hon. W. H. Pope Is District Judge," BJ, Nov. 5, 1902; "Houston Democratic," GDN, Nov. 7, 1902. In Carroll's home county of Jefferson, there was an expectation of a large Carroll turnout, in spite of the fact that the candidate's county was a decidedly wet one. Part of the disappointment may have been due to the fact that many areas in Texas had no printed ballot tickets for the prohibition voter. The *Standard* rushed instructions into the October 30 issue. A Texan had to scratch out the names of a ticket supplied by another party or print them up themselves or send for them at a price from the party itself.

not have been possible without the support and inspiration of the two Carroll women—George's mother Sarah and his wife Underhill. For that comment he received the largest cheers of the event. Over 30 college presidents attended as well as Baylor alumni in the hundreds. The ceremonies and celebrations went on for days.[16]

The Geo. W. Carroll Science Hall was four levels high with an observatory dome. According to the Baylor newspaper, it housed "all the modern apparatus for doing experimental work in physics, engineering, chemistry biology, geology, mathematics, and astronomy." G. W. Carroll had already supplied an assortment of artifacts purchased from a private collection. The F. L. Carroll Library and Chapel was completed by the family's donation of a pipe organ. B. H. Carroll underscored the fact that the Chapel and Science Hall were appropriate expressions of the balance necessary in the education of the young mind and soul. Significantly, he said, "These donors, father and son, are not college men, nor jurists, but as philanthropists represent a broader humanity. What wealth they have is the fruit of honest industry, thrift, and economy. Their donations to the public good are not in the way of penance to ease a guilty conscience nor meant as expiation of sin in the method of accumulation. Not a stone, brick or timber will cry out against them in the judgment. That they may be generous, no fellow-man is injured, no laborer robbed of honest wage, no widow or orphan stripped of meager patrimony." In other words, the Carroll gift was not the Gilded Age philanthropy of old men who gave so that they could sleep at night.[17]

Back home in Beaumont, the First Baptist Church constructed another new church building, having outgrown the 1887 brick edifice. The new structure's elaborate appearance of gray limestone, Gothic lines, and Romanesque windows reflected the prosperity of the oil boom city. Carroll donated spectacular stained glass windows and prudent business management to the new church,

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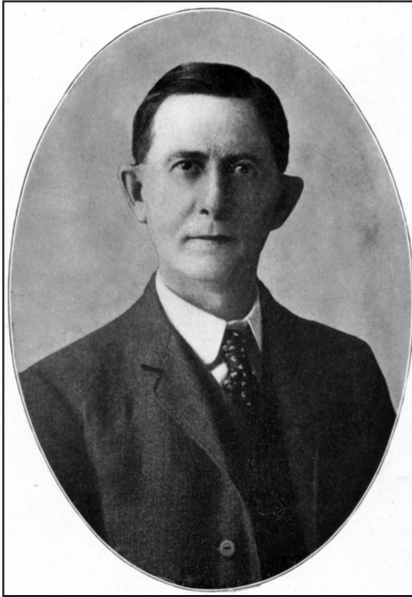
16. Frank E. Burkhalter, "Dedication of the Carroll Buildings at Baylor University," BS, April 30, 1903. B. H. Carroll was, during his lifetime, the foremost Southern Baptist theologian and educator.

17. Burkhalter, "Dedication of the Carroll Buildings;" "Mr. Carroll's Gift," *Lariat*, May 4, 1901; John B. Fisher, "The Contributions of F. L. Carroll and George W. Carroll and Members of Their Families to Baylor University," (unpublished paper presented to the Baylor Historical Society, Waco, Texas, 1949), 39. F. L. Carroll and his wife Sarah Long Carroll, as well as other members of the clan, made their homes in Waco following the 1870s.



A clean-shaven George W. Carroll. From *The Standard Blue Book of Texas, 1908-1909* (c. 1909). *Courtesy of the Lamar University Archives and Special Collections, Beaumont, TX.*

while continuing as part owner of the *Baptist Standard* and as a trustee of Baylor University.[18]

Carroll also continued to serve the city of Beaumont as an alderman, where he became known as one of the "soundest, safest, and most conservative members of that important body." For some time Carroll had taken authorities to task for not enforcing the laws of the city. At a temperance meeting in early 1903, Carroll described Constable Will Reddick as a heroic man for standing up to saloon toughs. Six weeks later Reddick was shot dead in the line of duty by a barkeeper. Within a year, Carroll joined forces with a wealthy like-minded reformer, William Wiess.

Public gambling was a known activity, but City Marshal James H. Stewart insisted to Carroll that nothing of the kind was happening. The two men clashed during a city council meeting. Earlier, Carroll had hired private investigators to gather evidence, but, to be certain he could make his case, he also gathered it himself. Letting it be known that he would go to the largest gambling house in town at two o'clock on a certain day, Carroll shaved the beard he had since early adulthood, threw on some old clothes, and made his way to the den to see for

18. *Souvenir of Beaumont, Texas, 1903* (Dallas: Jones Advertising Company, [c. 1903]), 39; Estep, *And God Gave the Increase*, 77-79. See also various issues of *Baptist Standard* from 1903.

himself. When he entered there was standing room only, because many of the leading citizens had come to see the reaction of the hardcore gamblers. Having exposed public gambling, Carroll announced to all who he was, whereupon gamblers bolted for the doors and exited through windows. Because the event was so well attended, there were more than enough credible eye witnesses, and Carroll made his point with the authorities. He testified the next morning before police judge Wyche Greer, but refused to charge anyone. For a time there were raids and enforcement of the laws and ordinances. The demonstration did not hold, however, and Carroll was soon pressuring law enforcement officials again because saloons resumed serving on Sundays. The gambling dens went underground or chose to ignore Carroll and other reformers.[19]

At the turn of the century, factions divided the national Prohibition effort, sparring over issues like temperance, abstinence, or the local option. Men and women like Carroll advocated national extermination of liquor production and sale. Even among the hard-liners, divisions arose concerning tactics. The Anti-Saloon League was a coalition that worked as a lobby group. The Prohibition Party was a political machine filled with its own battles and dissent. The "narrow gaugers" wished to make Prohibition the one and only issue, while the "wide gaugers" saw it as central but also supported women's suffrage and child labor in their platform.[20]

On June 29, 1904, the Prohibition Party met in convention at Indianapolis. After considering Gen. Nelson A. Miles, the party approved the firebrand Rev. Dr. Silas C. Swallow as its presidential nominee. The platform was simple: extermination of the liquor traffic, but the group also supported suffrage based on mental and moral qualifications, direct election of senators, honest civil service, enforcement of the Constitution, use of the country's power for peace in the world, as well as outlawing polygamy, easy divorce, and prostitution.[21]

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19. Vivian Yevetta Simons, "The Prohibition Movement in Beaumont, Texas, 1835-1919," (MA thesis, Lamar University, 1970), 37; BS, June 16, 1904; Isaac, "Municipal Reform," 424-425; Dean Tevis, "Sixty Years," BE, March 19, 1933.

20. Roger C. Storms, *Partisan Prophets* (Denver: National Prohibition Foundation, 1992), 11-28; Jack S. Blocker, *American Temperance Movements* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989), 99-102.

21. Nelson A. Miles declined consideration because he was uncomfortable with the one-issue platform. "Prohibitionist Push for General Miles" and "The Prohibition Ticket," *New York Times,* June 30 and July 1, 1904; Robert Wooster, *Nelson A. Miles and the Twilight of the Frontier Army* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 250-253; Thomas H. McKee, *The National Conventions and Platforms of All Political Parties, 1789-1905* (St. Clair Shores, MI: Scholarly Press, 1970), 405-407; James T. Havel, *U.S. Presidential Candidates and the Elections* (New York: MacMillan, 1996), 96, 557.

"Swallow & Carroll. Prohibition." 1904 Presidential campaign pin. *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

Presidential nominee Swallow was a Methodist and a Mason. In 1900, he had turned down the presidential nomination for the Prohibition Party and the United Christian Party. He was called the "Fighting Parson" for his confrontation of Pennsylvania politicians and was a veteran of the Eighteenth Pennsylvania Regiment during the Civil War. The vice-presidential nominee, George Washington Carroll, on the other hand, was a capitalist, son of the Confederacy, lumberman, oilman, Southern Baptist, and philanthropist. The fighting parson characterized their intentions by saying that "the Sewards raised the battle cry that this country 'cannot long remain half-free and half-slave'—the conviction [now] is growing rapidly upon the American people that this country cannot long remain half drunk and half sober." Prohibition bridged the chasm of North and South a generation after the Civil War. Their campaign slogan was "The Swallows Will Be Singing Carrolls."[22]

In its number of July 7, 1904, the *Baptist Standard* announced George W. Carroll's nomination for Vice-President of the United States. An editorialist for the paper wrote, "He is the rebuke of the pettifogging sycophant in politics.". The paper also ran a new likeness of him, beardless. Official acceptance of the selection came on July 22 when Swallow and Carroll appeared on stage together at the Tomlinson Hall in Indianapolis. The crowd rose to its feet and cheered. The

22. Silas C. Swallow, "Prohibition-Why?" *North American Review* (1904): 554; Storms, *Partisan Prophets,* 29.

presidential candidate remarked that it was better to lose as a Prohibition man than to win as a saloon pawn. If the saloon would admit its sin at that moment, it would have to acknowledge the pain it had inflicted on millions over the generations, such as mental illness, squandered genius, and the suffering children. Only the voter could make it right.[23]

In his address to Prohibitionists, Carroll insisted that their national campaign was not a protest but a deadly serious cause and a legitimate political agenda. He appealed to the home-loving man to protect his homestead from the evils and corruption of the saloon and from the power hungry politicians that were the puppets of liquor traffic and to exterminate the threat "root and branch." He bridled under the accusations by Northern critics of the Southern balloting system and political shenanigans. He shot back that the issue was nothing compared to the rampant corruption nationwide of alcohol and its servants at every level of American life. Carroll meant to "strike at the heart of this deadly curse."[24]

In the Election of 1904, Republican Theodore Roosevelt received 56.4 percent of the national vote; Democrat Alton B. Parker, 37.6; Socialist Eugene Debs, 3.0; and Prohibitionist Silas C. Swallow, 1.9. Carroll's home state gave Swallow only 3,933 votes (out of nearly 234,000)—more than it gave the Socialists—but even political parties listed as "other" received double the number. Significantly, however, Carroll did not allow his ownership of the *Baptist Standard* to booster his political pursuits. In fact, editorials concerning Carroll were much more frequent in years prior to the election. He did not use his press to promote himself, nor did he allow his admirers to do it for him.[25]

While the national scene regrouped and looked forward, Carroll hardly missed a stride in his efforts to improve Beaumont and, at the very least, enforce the existing laws. In late November 1904, Carroll confronted Marshal Stewart again. He kept the pressure on, using friendly policemen both in their official roles and as bodyguards when he himself went on gambling hall raids. Carroll was joined by the women of Beaumont in his cause for civic reform. He was reelected alderman, and it was believed the winning votes came from black supporters. He

23. "Prohibitionists First to Notify Candidates," *New York Times,* July 23, 1904; "George W. Carroll," BE, Dec. 15, 1935.

24. *Beaumont Daily Journal,* Nov. 7, 1904.

25. Congressional Quarterly Publications, Presidential *Elections, 1789-1992* (CQI, 1995), 106; "County Official Election Return," *Beaumont Daily Journal,* Nov. 9, 1904. Shortly after the election, Carroll allowed non-professional journalists to run the *Standard*. Cranfill believed this was a mistake. Cranfill, *From Memory,* 88-89.

continued as city alderman and served through 1906. During those years, he continued to fight for the human side of the issues that he had addressed on the state and national level.[26]

Carroll and like-minded Texans eventually funneled their frustrations into the Anti-Saloon League, which campaigned for ever more restrictive liquor laws and the preservation of gains made at any level of society. The League embraced an open membership. The field secretary in 1903 wrote, "Politically, this constituency is drawn from all parties; morally, it embraces adherents of all phases of religious belief as well as those who are followers of no creed." Carroll, in his civic and benevolent work, had already shown an open perspective. While he would vote the Prohibition Party ticket whenever he could, the inability of the Party to show any real progress made the League activities appealing. They were direct, pragmatic and efficient. The League would not directly engage in putting up candidates but would support any who would stand up to the liquor power. Carroll's old friend J. B. Gambrel joined him on the executive committee that in 1907 ushered the Anti-Saloon League into Texas. The Superintendent of the League in Texas was Benjamin F. Riley, a talented organizer and reformer. On July 4 through the *Baptist Standard,* Riley announced the League's presence in Texas. In an August issue, Gambrel and Carroll wrote an open address to the people of Texas, in which they posed the question, "If so much splendid success has been attained without organization, what may we not expect if we present a combined and well organized front?" Gambrel's 1902 wish to see the "good" unite against the "wicked" had come to pass.[27]

Riley's leadership had a distinctive and military ring. He promoted and portrayed Texas as the center of the movement and galvanized people. His "victory for virtue" was on the horizon. In 1909, the *Baptist Standard* adopted the Anti-Saloon League as the best means of fighting the alcohol powers. While national prohibition was still a decade away, the means were well established, and people like Carroll had an effective organization through which to work.[28]

Carroll continued his fight for prohibition and reform in Texas, particularly in Beaumont. He remained a successful capitalist and servant of the community as described in *The Standard Blue Book of Texas, 1908-1909, Edition Deluxe of*

26. Isaac, "Municipal Reform," 420-429.

27. Harvey Graeme Furbay, "The Anti-Saloon League," *North American Review* (1904): 434- 439; Tevis, "Sixty Years;" Storey, *Texas Baptist Leadership,* 19-22.

28. B. F. Riley, "The National Outlook for Prohibition," BS, Oct. 31, 1907; Storey, *Texas Baptist Leadership,* 21.

Beaumont, which listed him as Vice President of Nona Mills Company, President of the Y.M.C.A., Vice President of Park Bank and Trust Company, and since 1881 a charter member of the Board of Education for the city system of schools. He was member of the Beaumont Country Club. He kept offices in the John N. Gilbert Building, just two blocks north of the First Baptist Church where he served as deacon. He resided at 942 Park, where he, Underhill, and his sons Charles, Lee, and George Washington Jr. lived well.[29]

In 1910, while traveling to California, Carroll's bank crashed, revealing the first signs of his fortune's decline. He later wrote, "I came home to find myself broke." He gave up the blooded horses he used to drive through town and contented himself to walk. The Southeast Texas Baptist Association and the First Baptist Church assisted him by assuming the $1,500 loan that Carroll had personally secured for the Baptist Sanitarium in Beaumont. His reduction in circumstances would continue, but his generosity remained constant.[30]

Dean Tevis of the *Beaumont Enterprise* befriended Carroll. In 1924, Carroll told the reporter, "Many there are . . . who believe that I lost my fortune by giving it away. This is not true in any sense, for the only part which I did save was that which I gave away. I have that to look back upon with purest delight, and feel that I really have that part of my fortune [which] left me." In 1927, his wife Underhill died. By this time Carroll was known as "Uncle George" to many citizens. At the age of 74, his family and friends made donations so he could attend the 1929 Southern Baptist Convention. He took the money and then asked for more, believing the church could build up a trust fund "to help worthy young men get a start in the world." In adversity and old age, Carroll increased his faith and walked the city streets with cheer and a broad smile. What more reward could anyone wish than the satisfaction of having done a little toward helping men to find themselves and aiding the forces that bring these salvaged men to their highest worth? Carroll finished his days as a resident of the Beaumont Y.M.C.A., the refuge he had done so much to build. In December 1935, he passed away of pneumonia at Hotel Dieu.[31]

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29. *1905 Handbook of the First Baptist Church* (Beaumont: First Baptist Church, 1905).

30. Tevis, "Sixty Years." Carroll was vice president of Park Bank and Trust, later named the Commercial National Bank. While the First Baptist Church assumed half the debt, the Association could only pledge $500. Minutes of the Southeast Texas Baptist Association, 1910, copies provided by Ron Ellison, Beaumont, TX.

31. "Carroll Begins Trust Fund Plan," BE, April 29, 1929; "George W. Carroll Remembers," BE, Nov. 20, 1930; "Carroll," BJ, Dec. 16, 1935. Hotel Dieu was a Catholic hospital in Beaumont. Carroll's younger sister Alice Carroll Keith carried on his philanthropy.

The African-American Educational Legacy in Beaumont, Texas

A Preliminary Analysis

Amilcar Shabazz

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Following emancipation, African Americans overcame numerous difficulties to build and sustain schools for themselves and their children. After a late start, in comparison to other Southern states, black education in Texas made noble gains.[1] From these early efforts a movement emerged in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, building the foundation of an African-American educational legacy. This movement, suffused with internal contradictions yet fueled by the unifying effects of white dominance and exploitation, grew until the middle of the twentieth century when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional the separate education of blacks and whites. The decision gradually led to dramatic institutional and ideological changes in terms of public school access. The desegregation process also had many crucial even

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1. Lawrence D. Rice noted, "During the last three decades of the nineteenth century, Texas made greater progress in reducing Negro illiteracy than any other state . . . . Until about 1880 Texas retained her primacy in Negro education, but by 1900 the state had lost this lead" in all areas except the number of high schools. *The Negro in Texas: 1874-1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1971), 209.

if unintended consequences for the black community. This study attempts a broad examination of the education of the African American within Beaumont, Texas. Although many sources were consulted on black schooling practices and attitudes both during and after the era of *de jure* segregation, the interpretation presented here is a preliminary one. This article should be read as a suggestive work, rather than a comprehensive treatment of the subject. Those with access to material—written, photographic, and oral—as well as interested researchers are encouraged to supplement the facts and perhaps refute assertions put forward in this article. The author would be most pleased with such an outcome.

The ex-slaves' enthusiastic desire for education has become something of a truism in the revisionist historical writing of the black experience after the Civil War. In Southeast Texas, the thirst for knowledge was evident among blacks, but the quenching of this thirst for themselves and for their children was firmly grounded in the political and economic realities of their place and time. Scot Glen, an ex-slave of Beaumont, reported, "I didn' had no teachers nor schoollin' in slavery, but atter freedom come I went to school. My teachers was name' Mr. and Mrs. Truitt, and Mr. Moore, and Mrs. Tilton. Dey was white folks. I guess dey was from de Norf." Glen admitted that he did not get a satisfactory education, but not because of a lack of desire. "I uster tek my spellin' book 'long wid me. I uster had to go to de mill wid co'n to git groun' into meal. While I waitin' for de mill to grin' de co'n I ax de white boys 'roun' to tell me what de words was. I git 'em to help me dat away."[2] In nearby Chambers County, Jacob Branch found a way to acquire the rudiments of literacy while still a slave.

> Dey have a school for de w'ite chillen in Double Bayou and I uster go to meet de chillen when dey comin' from school. Dey would take me 'longside de way and tek dey school books and teach me my ABC. Dey done carry me as far as Baker in de book when de ol' missus foun' it out and she mek dem stop. De war was a-comin' on den and us daresent even pick up a paper to read. When I found out 'bout de war I git so scared I done forgit all de chillen had already learned me.[3]

The reaction of Branch's owner to his learning how to read and write was not unusual. Although Texas had no laws prohibiting the education of free blacks or

2. George P. Rawick, ed., *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Supplement 2, Series 2* (10 vols., Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979), 5: part 4, 1510-1511.

3. Rawick, ed., *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography, Supplement 2, Series 2*, 2: part 1, 412.

slaves, Branch's story illustrates how racist customs regulated the slave complex and effectively kept most blacks (not to speak of many poor whites) illiterate and untutored.[4] Rural life, notions of racial purity and superiority, and intense fears of slave revolts and escapes were the operative factors that shaped most whites' ideology on the question of black education in the antebellum period.[5]

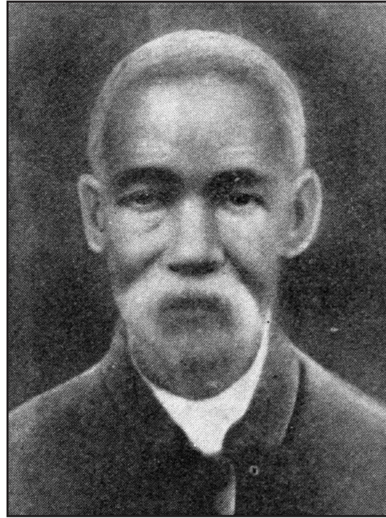
Moreover, an article published in an 1860 issue *The Beaumont Banner* likely reflected the attitude of whites toward the educability of blacks. The author wrote, "I do not think—with sorrow I pen it—that he [the Negro] is capable of moral elevation to any . . . appreciable extent." In essential agreement with the ideas that Thomas Jefferson advanced in the *Notes on Virginia* almost 80 years before, the author claimed that the mental faculties of blacks and whites were not equal, and that the only antidote to the "propensities to evil" of blacks was diligent labor for "ten or twelve hours daily."[6] In contrast to the South and other parts of the state, most slaveholders in Southeast Texas did not place a premium on a slave having any literacy or other intellectual skills.

The long and widely promoted myth of black sub-humanity, combined with defeat in the Civil War, the loss of slave property, and Union Army occupation, intensified southern white opposition to black education in the postwar period. In time, however, certain whites realized the usefulness of schools as a tool in the subjugation and control of black labor in the New South. The growth of compulsory, tax-supported education in Texas, as throughout the South, was

4. Rupert N. Richardson, Ernest Wallace, and Adrian Anderson, *Texas: The Lone Star State* (Fifth edition, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1981), 197.

5. An example of whites' racism can be seen in Beaumont's revolutionary Committee of Public Safety, which in 1835 opposed the immigration of free blacks into Texas. Wendell G. Addington, "Slave Insurrections in Texas," *Journal of Negro History,* 35 (Oct. 1950): 431. Nevertheless, a minority of free blacks in Jefferson and Orange counties were generally considered with respect in the area and were supported in their desire to remain in Texas by locally prominent whites when threatened with removal by an 1840 Texas law. Most of these free blacks were of the large Ashworth family that owned land, livestock, and slaves. It is interesting to note that one Aaron Ashworth of Jefferson County had a white schoolmaster, John A. Woods, living in his household in 1850, apparently as a tutor to his children. As the Civil War neared, as elsewhere in the South, racial tension grew in the southeastern corner of Texas. Andrew Forest Muir, "The Free Negro in Jefferson and Orange Counties, Texas," *Journal of Negro History*, 35 (April, 1950): 183-206. For free blacks in Texas and whites' attitudes toward them, see Harold Schoen, "The Free Negro in the Republic of Texas," SHQ, 40 (Jan. 1937): 169-199. [For a synthesis of Muir, Schoen, and others, see Patricia Clegg's article in this volume—ed.]

6. A plate of the front page bearing "The Negro and His Management," *The Beaumont Banner,* Sept. 11, 1860, appears in Judith Walker Linsley and Ellen Walker Rienstra, *Beaumont: A Chronicle of Promise* (Woodland Hills, CA: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1982), 48.



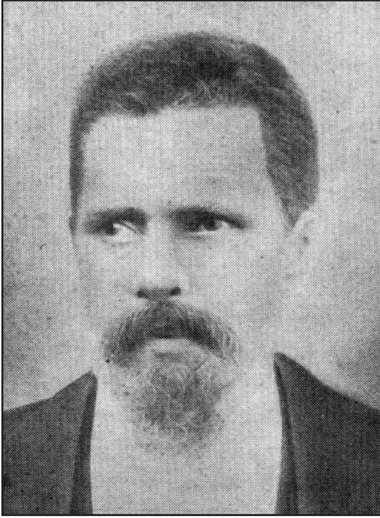
The Rev. Woodson Pipkin. *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

a complicated issue. Long-held patriarchal customs, such as a man's right of control over his wife and children, contributed to the difficult and complex transition to a public school system. The dialectics of race, class, and gender as units of analysis are critical then to interpreting the development of black and white patterns of educational access to the public school system.

African-American education in post-slavery Beaumont began with two freedmen, Rev. Woodson Pipkin and Charles Charlton. John Fletcher Pipkin, an itinerant preacher who ministered along the region's "Alligator Circuit" before settling in Beaumont in 1859, was the owner of Woodson Pipkin.[7] As a body servant to the Methodist minister, Pipkin's experience differed greatly from the average ranch hand or field slave of the area. Pipkin learned how to read and write, probably with the permission and help of his owner, and also was allowed to preach to other slaves. After emancipation, Pipkin ministered to the Methodists in the freed community of Beaumont and received some assistance from whites for his religious educational work.[8]

7. The Alligator Circuit was the term used to describe the route preachers travelled on horseback to the various congregations in Southeast Texas in the period before the establishment of churches with resident ministers. Sallye Sheppeard and Walter Sutton, *Texas in the Twenty-First Century: The Cultural and Historical Background of Southeast Texas* (Beaumont: Texas Committee for the Humanities and Lamar University, 1989), 14.

8. Fayetta Donovan, telephone interview with author, August 3, 1990. Donovan, granddaughter of Woodson Pipkin, has a complete interview on file at the John and Mary Gray Library of Lamar University, Beaumont.



Charles Charlton. *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

Where Pipkin represented black leadership emerging within a religious context, white paternity facilitated Charles Charlton's civic career. Commonly known as Charlie Pole, a short form of Charles Napoleon, he was the son of a white slaveholder, Napoleon Bonaparte Charlton, and a slave woman. According to a descendant of Charlton who has researched the matter, Charlie Pole received an education in his father's home from his stepmother Sarah. It is likely that Sarah and her children resented Charlie Pole's very presence, but for the most part, they were powerless to act on this sentiment as long as Napoleon Charlton was alive. Charlton's father, nevertheless, agreed with slavery and its customs. As Tyler County's representative to the Texas legislature and a signer of the state's Ordinance of Secession, he fully supported and defended slavery. Before the elder Charlton died, however, he requested that Charlie Pole be given a part of his estate. In 1869, Charlton left Woodville for Beaumont and used his inheritance to start a business career. His entrepreneurial activities included lumber, concrete blocks, piers, and real estate. From his success in these enterprises, Charlton made significant contributions to the uplift of the freed community.[9]

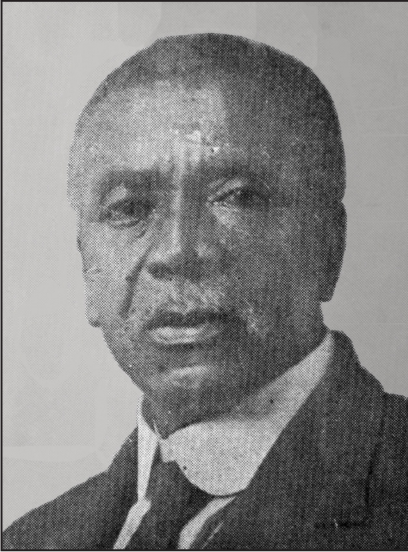
9. Kirkland Jones interview with the author, July 17, 1990. Napoleon Charlton, an investor in one of Beaumont's general merchandise firms, would sometimes bring goods to the store. Charlie Pole may have first visited the area on a trip with his father. W. T. Block. "Beaumont in the 1850's: Extracts from the writings of Henry R. Green," TGHBR, 11 (Nov. 1975): 58, 69; Martha Swain Reed, *Beaumont Sesquicentennial* (Beaumont: Sesquicentennial Committee, 1987), 69; Federal Writers' Project, *Beaumont: A Guide to the City and Its Environs,* (Houston: Anson Jones, 1939), 81.

Pine Street School (1900). *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

Soon after the coming of freedom on Juneteenth of 1865, both Pipkin and Charlton began to look at how they might exploit the advantages their uncommon backgrounds afforded them. They rose to form the vanguard of Beaumont's first indigenous crusade for black schooling. At the heart of the movement was the deep-seated desire to control and sustain black education. Stories vary on the exact site and year of the founding of Beaumont's first school for blacks, but the standard tale points to 1868 when the African Methodist Episcopal Church founded Saint Paul's Church. There, Pipkin organized and gave basic instruction in the church's first Sunday school.[10]

Fayetta Donovan provided a different account. From an oral tradition passed on to her, she recalled that in 1870 "a white man from the north was the first teacher." and organizer of a day school. She recorded the teacher's name as Erliss and that he included his two sons in the first class. In a short time, for no clear reason, Erliss's school was moved to the second story of Pipkin's home. Beaumont whites may have forced Erliss to move. His "Yankee" bearing and his integrated classroom may have provoked a hostile reaction from the white community. In any event, by 1873, Erliss was replaced by a southern-bred white named Rigsby

10. Works Progress Administration interviews with ex-slaves conducted in 1937 (such as those cited above) indicate that there was a period in Southeast Texas in which Northern teachers instructed blacks. This work remains forgotten in most of the historical writing on the area. Sheppeard and Sutton, *Southeast Texas,* 42.



Elisha Adams. *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

and a black teacher from Jasper named Elisha Adams, who later replaced the former as head instructor.[11]

In 1874, Charles Charlton helped open a school in the Live Oak Baptist Church, of which he was a founding member. According to Robert B. Lee, writer for the *Beaumont Enterprise*, the step resulted from a struggle inside the black community over fundamental social questions. "The fact that the early school, under the dominance of Woodson Pipkin, generously utilized the assistance of whites, and his additional advocacy of Methodism . . . led Charlton . . . to seek to establish an alternative."[12]

White involvement in black education could easily have been a divisive issue in the African-American community. In line with the struggle for self-reliance and control over the educational process that many blacks were waging elsewhere in the South, but contrary to Pipkin's approach, Charlton fought against whites as teachers in black schools. According to Lulu J. Benson, a teacher and early

11. Robert B. Lee, "Black Schools Here Date back More Than 100 Years," BE, Nov. 9, 1980; Lula J. Benson, *Beaumont Colored Schools: 1880-1926* (Beaumont: American Printing Co., [1927?]), 7. Deplorably little is known about the actions of the Freedmen's Bureau, particularly in relation to black education. Barry Crouch, who has written many works on the Bureau in Texas, is currently doing research on its activities in the Beaumont area. [Since the original publication date, Crouch published his findings in two articles. See, TGHBR, 28: 8-27. 29: 8-29—ed.]

12. Benson, *Colored Schools,* 3; Lee, "Black Schools."

historian of black education in Beaumont, Charlton felt that whites were "not adapted to the task of giving the kind of training our children should receive, and [he] replaced them with colored teachers." He also raised support for the construction of another facility, the Oak Ridge Colored School, outside the Beaumont city limits. This school opened just after the city took over the Live Oak School, and it remained beyond the realm of white control until 1924, when the city lines were extended.[13]

It is difficult to assess what the contrasting views of white involvement in the education of blacks between Pipkin and Charlton might have meant to the black community of their day. Many blacks may have shared Pipkin's apparent belief that the freed community should utilize the managerial and pedagogical skills of benevolent whites, at least until they could find equally qualified or more talented blacks. On the other hand, Charlton's preference that black schools should remain as a resource operated by and for themselves may have also been a widespread viewpoint among blacks. Even when the imposition of a white-led school board over black schools became unavoidable, Charlton insisted on serving as a board trustee. It is doubtful he was successful in this demand without some constituency in the black community. The limited data does not indicate whether or not Charlton's social thought became more broadly supported than Pipkin's. It does not support the characterization of Pipkin's views as an "accommodation to Jim Crowism" or a shift from an "emphasis on integration to a defensive ideology of self-help and racial solidarity," as sociologist William J. Wilson describes.[14] Judging from the available record, Pipkin was no more an Uncle Tom than Charlton was a black-nationalist hero. A proper assessment of Pipkin and Charlton requires further research and study.

The black community's drive for public education, whatever internal divisions it may have had, illustrated a strong enthusiasm for schooling, and it played a crucial role in the rise of a school system that ultimately served the needs of all Beaumonters. The evolution of a public school system in Southeast Texas had several forces behind it. Among the most vibrant and yet frequently unmentioned of those social forces was that of the ex-slaves. In the 1880s, blacks' push

13. Benson, *Colored Schools,* 3, 28. Joseph J. Vincent adds that the Oak Ridge School consolidated with the French school system when it became an independent school district inside Beaumont in 1924. "A Brief History of the Jefferson County Schools," TGHBR, 4, (Nov. 1968): 29. See also, Ezekiel Dearon, "The Beaumont City Schools" (undated photocopy, "Education," vertical files), THL.

14. William J. Wilson, *Power, Racism, and Privilege: Race Relations in Theoretical and Sociohistorical Perspectives* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), 110.

Beaumont's first black graduating class of 1901. George Douglas, standing. T. L. Anderson, seated. *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

for education focused on sustaining a primary school system even though it would have to exist under white supremacist control. In 1883, an election was held that founded the Beaumont Independent School District (BISD). It also settled a controversy over how to select the board members of the new school system. According to local historian Alyce McWilliams, a close vote put the district "under the direction of a board appointed by the City Council." Black schools were absorbed into the new system.[15]

After the board took charge of the Live Oak School (which in 1881 had 90 pupils), it at once dismissed the school's four black trustees. The city-appointed board then executed the purchase of the Odd Fellows' Hall to house the new black public school. This hall had been the Queen of Texas lodge after it was granted dispensation on November 10, 1879, from the Odd Fellows' mother lodge. The Odd Fellows, which had an affiliated black self-help association, was one of the earliest community organizations after emancipation that supported the organizing of schools for the ex-slaves.[16]

15. Alyce McWilliams, "A Brief History of the Beaumont City Schools," TGHBR, 2, (Nov. 1966): 23. In 1883, only 88 of Beaumont's 1,500 inhabitants voted. The decision went 86 to 2 for an independent over a common school system, and 44 to 42 for a city-appointed board. "Beaumont School System Spends $500,000 Annually to Educate 15,000 Pupils," BE, May 31. 1936.

16. Benson, *Colored Schools*, 5; Charles Brooks recorded that the Odd Fellows "spread like wildfire in Texas" after 1879. The black faction of the order was established in New York City in 1843. *The Official History and Manual of the Grand United Order of the Odd Fellows in America* (Freeport, NY: Libraries Press, 1971), 150. Mason Brewer noted that state legislator David Abner Jr. founded Texas's first lodge in 1879. *Negro Legislators of Texas* (Austin: Pemberton Press, 1970), 42.

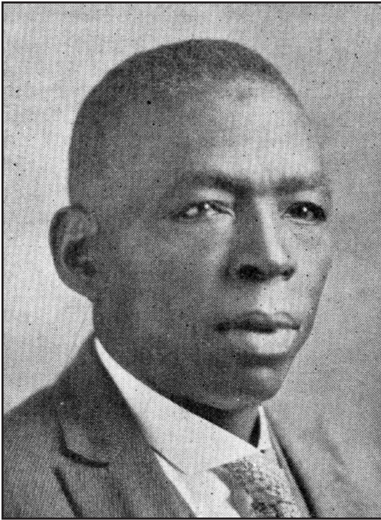
From November 1885 to July 1889, the administration of the white and black schools was assigned to their principals. The problem of financing was a major issue for the fledgling school system. There were five white and three black teachers whose salaries had to be paid, books and other supplies that had to be bought, and buildings that had to be maintained. State funds provided only enough money to keep the schools open for four to six months per year with the black schools typically being forced to close before the white schools. For the 1896-1897 academic year, all schools were closed "because of inadequate funds." In the fall of 1897, they reopened with state financing and a new municipal property tax of 25 cents per $100 of assessed value. This development enabled the district to extend the scholastic calendar of the white schools to a nine-month session, but no similar improvement for the black schools occurred until years later.[17]

Schoolhouses for blacks languished into a pitiful condition. These schools reportedly had become nothing more than "miserable, disease-breeding shacks." George O'Brien Millard, president of the Board of Trustees, supposedly advocated better schools for blacks, but nothing came of this alleged concern. In 1903, H. F. Triplett became superintendent of schools and black schools finally received some attention from the board. In 1904, two frame buildings were constructed on the north and south ends of town. Triplett secured the funds for this work from Beaumont's first school bond issue for $85,000, which voters had approved the year before he went to work. A white high school, built in 1903, consumed $60,000 of this amount. The amount spent on the black school buildings was minimal. For one of these schools Triplett had the 14 year-old frame building which formerly housed the all-white Millard Elementary, moved to the black area of Pine Street. The opening of the schools, despite the niggardliness of the school trustees, apparently endeared Triplett to many blacks as "a tried and true friend."[18]

In 1912, the Pine Street School became Charlton High School. The other school, located on College and Neches streets, became Luckie High School, named for C. W. Luckie, a Prairie View Normal College professor, who influenced the lives and educational ideology of many Beaumont students. Luckie High later

17. BE, May 31, 1936; Vincent, "Jefferson County Schools," 30-31; McWilliams, "Beaumont City Schools," 24.

18. BE, May 31, 1936; McWilliams, "Beaumont City Schools," 23. Moreover, when Triplett announced "his intention of resigning as Superintendent . . . 1200 Negros petitioned that he remain at the bead of educational affairs of Beaumont." Despite this action, Triplett left the post to become a member of the Texas Senate. Benson, *Colored Schools*, 9, 12.



T. T. Pollard. *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

merged with Charlton High, and in 1925 was renamed Charlton-Pollard in honor of Charlie Pole Charlton and T. T. Pollard. A former student of Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute, Pollard was an educator whose work spanned from the late 1880s to the early 1940s. Also, in 1912, the district took charge of two schools, the Adams and Carroll Street schools, both reportedly housed in dilapidated frame buildings.[19]

The changes that took place in black schools after 1900 involved more than names and administrative moves. Black educators were making superb efforts to upgrade the quality of instruction in their schools. They worked diligently to attract well-trained teachers with the highest ranked state certificates. Also, grades were being added in order to turn out better prepared graduates. Another major step in the quality of the school facilities provided for blacks came in 1924, when funds from a $500,000 bond issue were used to upgrade the Adams and Carroll Street schools. This desperately needed action, which came only after white school-building and improvement projects were completed, was still not enough. Columbia University, in a 1927 study of Beaumont's Schools, found

19. Linsley and Rienstra, *Beaumont,* 68; Reed, ed., *Beaumont Sesquicentennial*, 19, 69.

Charlton-Pollard High School graduating class (1918). *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

that "the crowded and dangerous condition of the Pipkin School makes the construction of the first unit of an elementary school for these children imperative." The survey also found that school administrators spent substantially more on the education of each white student ($99.24 per day on instruction) as compared to the average amount spent per black student ($29.55 per day). BISD spent over "twice as much per pupil on a white child as on a colored child for taking him through the first five grades," and the salary of a black teacher was "approximately two thirds that of a white teacher of the same grade." It is, moreover, not evident that any equalization in spending patterns in either the Beaumont school system took place before 1950, except, to a limited degree, in the salaries of black and white teachers. These findings, which deserve much more detailed scrutiny than can be presented here, called attention to other problems and inequities affecting black education. Nevertheless, white disregard, the Great Depression, and World War II contributed to the wide gap between the quality of black and white schooling. In 1947, some relief did occur when the George Washington Carver Elementary School and a new Charlton-Pollard High School were opened.[20]

The period between 1919 and 1938, in which M. E. Moore acted in the capacity of Beaumont School Superintendent, warrants a few additional comments. In these two decades, leaders from the city's white middle class and a nascent black middle class argued for greater support for black education. This rationale centered on the ability of schools to reduce "Negro lawlessness" and to assimilate blacks to the norms and expectations of the larger society. "The conception as to what constitutes an educated citizenry has been broadened," wrote Lula Benson in 1926, "and in all our schools the child and not mere books is being taught; the children and teachers by this constant pounding of Supt. Moore at last realize that books are means to an end and not the end." Benson was an African American who worked for decades in the city's black schools as well as promoted the educational needs of black children and adults. Superintendent Moore appealed for white support for black education in his report to the Board of Education for the 1925 to 1926 school year. "If the white citizens of Beaumont more fully understood the Colored Schools of their city," he observed, "they would more deeply appreciate them and their real worth. They constitute

20. Teachers College, Columbia University, *Report of the Survey of the Schools of Beaumont, Texas* (New York: Columbia University, 1927), 130, 149, 148. Beaumont's school districts, like those in other Southern cities, seldom documented the extent of the inequality in per pupil expenditures between the races. For a discussion of educational inequality in the state in the 1940s and early 1950s, see Alwyn Barr, *Black Texans* (Austin: Pemberton Press, 1973), 204-206.

a real asset to the stability and good will existing between our two races, and they do much to make our Negro population more law-abiding and trustworthy." Moore also stated that "T. J. Charlton, principal of the colored high school [and son of Charlie Pole Charlton], has made the claim that there are now more than 500 graduates of the colored high school, and that not a single one of these graduates has ever been tried in the courts or has ever cost the public a penny for punishment." Moore's motto that "it is cheaper to run schools than courts" was echoed in a remark "a leading Negro" made before the Beaumont Rotary Club that "it is cheaper to educate the Negro than it is to hang him."[21]

Measures designed to improve academic achievement such as "annual school institutes," curriculum changes, and standardized tests were also introduced in the Beaumont schools under Moore's tenure. The first "Colored School" nurse, a school physician, a "colored supervisor" of the intermediate grades, training teachers, a night school for adults, and the addition of Music departments reached the black schools in the 1920s. The creation of an athletics program with equipment and a playing field began in the 1930s largely through grass-roots black support.

In other school districts, education policies and practices also experienced change within the context of a racially divided and exploited system, which is to say limited improvements after and only after white school needs had been met. In the South Park Independent School District (SPISD), the education of blacks started in 1894 in a one-room school in the Pear Orchard settlement "as the result of the combined effort of [N]egro leaders and some white friends." In 1909, the Prairie View School served the area with John P. Odom as its principal. For the school term of 1913 to 1914, the district rented at a token cost a building from an African American named Vince Bailey. The next school year a frame building was erected on land that two other blacks, Usan Hebert and Ozan Blanchette, had deeded to the district in 1909. In 1915 with 160 black pupils enrolled, the need for improved facilities was dire. In 1922, Pear Orchard residents, in response to increasing enrollments, built their first brick school, named in honor of Hebert. Also, in the district's early years, blacks voted in

21. Benson, *Colored Schools*, 10-12. Later in his report, Moore says that the view that "Negroes should not be educated beyond teaching them how to work" is unsound. In support of academic ("the study of reading, writing, arithmetic, geography and history") over industrial education, he writes that "education is to teach one how to live, not merely to make a living, and it is good for any man of any color or in any condition of life whether he be a servant or a king."

No school years completed:	1,700
Elementary	
1 to 4 years:	3,735
5 to 6:	2,280
7:	1,285
8:	1,250
High School	
1 to 3 years:	2,255
7:	955
College	
1 to 3 years:	355
4 or more:	305
School years not reported:	235

Table 1. Years of School Completed by African American Students (1950).

board elections and served as trustees until Louis R. Pietzsch, a key supporter of Beaumont's Ku Klux Klan, became superintendent of the district in 1913.[22]

By mid-century, black educational progress continued to lag behind that of whites. In 1940, the median number of years of school completed by persons 20 years old and over was 9.2. For blacks, it was 5.8. In 1950, this number increased to 10 years for all persons 25 years old and over, but only to 6.4 for blacks (see Table 1).[23]

After 1948, two independent school districts (and a few parochial schools) administered Beaumont's educational needs. BISD was the larger of the two, but SPISD was better funded. In the 1953-1954 school year, the district's scholastic

22. Louis Pietzsch, "Kiwanis Hears about College," BJ, June 23, 1923; Vincent, "Jefferson County Schools," 33; Ray Asbury, *The South Park Story* (Fort Worth: Evans Press, 1971), 23-25, 29; Thomas E. Kroutter, "The Ku Klux Klan in Jefferson County, Texas, 1921-1924" (MA thesis, Lamar University, 1972), 160. [See also Shabazz, "Racial Terror and the Attempt to Stop the Desegregation of Lamar State College of Technology," a paper delivered at the 2004 Beaumont History Conference and available online at ScholarWorks, University of Massachusetts, Amherst (scholarworks.umass.edu)—ed.]

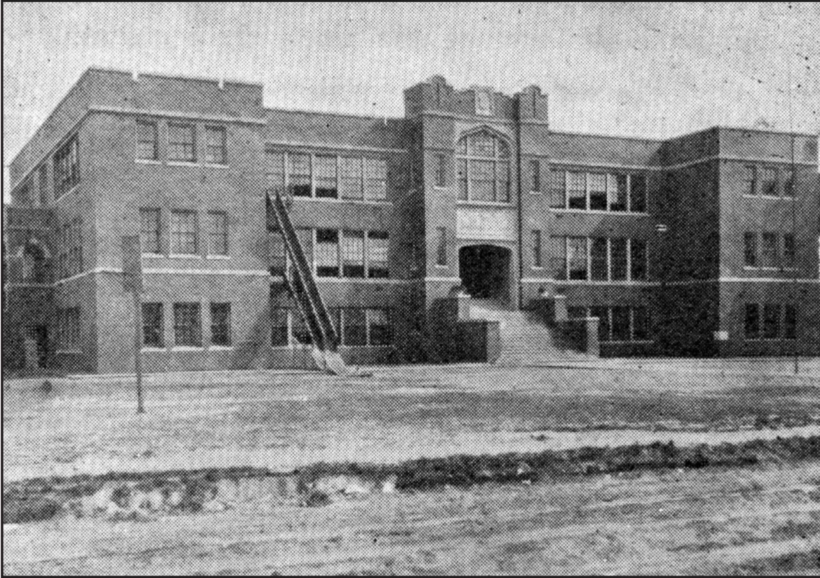
23. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940. Population, Volume IV, Characteristics by Age, Marital Status, Relationship, Education, and Citizenship, Part 4, Ohio-Wyoming* (GPO, 1943), 605; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *A Report of the Seventeenth Decennial Census of the United States, Census of Population, 1950, Volume II, Characteristics of the Population, Part 43, Texas* (GPO, 1952), 99, 121.

Adams School and teachers (1918). Top row, left to right: R. T. Tatum, Florence Williams, Robbie Gentry, and Miss [Mattie] Denson. Middle row: Mabel McGowan. Bottom row, left to right: Mrs. Sheffield Byrd, Nellie Tatum, Constance Edwards, Hazel Gilder, and Eola Cleveland. *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

population was 13,809, with an enrollment of 8,726 whites (63.2%) and 3,825 blacks (27.7 %). South Park's scholastic population was 6,867, with an enrollment of 4,224 whites (61.5%) and 1,919 blacks (28.0%).[24]

The physical facilities the districts provided for blacks provide another example of chronic racial inequality persisting into the 1950s. "During the fall of 1950," one writer observed that South Park's black schools "were in a deplorable condition. They needed a new high school building and also a new elementary building. The original Hebert High building . . . was overcrowded and . . . with eight other grades all on this same site it was complete bedlam." In 1952, South Park did make a partial improvement when a new Hebert High School (with a separate junior high school on the same campus) and an elementary school were hastily erected. These new schools were in part a gesture of appreciation from South Park superintendent Joe Vincent to Archie Lee Price Sr., the well-known principal of Hebert High who was instrumental in getting out the black vote to approve a $3 million bond election that was held in 1951. Price was in danger of

24. *Texas Almanac, 1956-1957* (Dallas: A. H. Belo, Corporation, 1955), 308-309.



Charlton-Pollard High School (1926). *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

losing all credibility in the black community if Vincent did not begin to address blacks' dire educational needs.[25]

The educational crusades the black community waged after emancipation to 1950 did confront a pattern of neglect from white community leaders and school administrators. For blacks, however, the involvement and experiences gained in these crusades molded a legacy of acting upon their enduring beliefs in education and self-improvement. In their first crusade, between 1865 and 1885, they set up schools for themselves and even goaded the dominant white group's progress in this area. In the black community's second crusade, between 1885 and 1950, they succeeded in creating a more developed elementary school system and a fully accredited high school that prepared and guided scores of black students to go to college. These graduates returned with professional skills that increased the black political and economic power resources of their com-

25. Asbury says the election went 641 to 231 with the Hebert School box's 261 to 9 decisively for the bond issue. *The South Park Story*, 128, 133.

munity, and raised the pride and aspirations of succeeding generations. An "unintended" outcome of this process, according to historian Henry Allen Bullock, was that Jim Crow education trained its most formidable enemies.[26]

In 1950, emboldened by many factors, black educational leaders launched a new crusade for the elimination of segregation. The first local victory was the 1956 eradication of race as a factor in the admissions policy of the Lamar State College of Technology. It was followed in 1963 with the court-ordered desegregation of formerly all-white schools in Port Arthur, Orange, Silsbee, Hamshire-Fannett, and SPISD in Beaumont, as well as in other areas in Southeast Texas. In the 1970s, due to a federal court order, white students, first a few and later more, were assigned to formerly all-black schools. This step marked the real beginnings of integration of Beaumont's schools.[27]

Although it was local black leaders and a sizable part of the black community that supported desegregation and later busing for the near elimination of all-black schools in Southeast Texas, one of the consequences of this process was the eradication of the black high schools that had become a major source of pride for blacks in a Jim Crow world engineered to deny them self-respect. First, Charlton-Pollard High School closed, and its student body transferred to the formerly white high schools of BISD. The name was added to one of the white schools to create Beaumont Charlton-Pollard High School, later renamed to Central High School. In SPISD, Hebert High School retained its name until the two districts merged and new plans turned Hebert into a campus for the ninth grade only under the name of West Brook along with the former Forest Park High which became the senior campus (with the tenth through twelfth grades).

Certain policies and practices that emerged among black educators during the era of segregation were also discarded, or at least transformed. For instance, the concentration of power in the hands of an authoritarian principal, which was customary during the Jim Crow years when white school boards and district officials cared more about minimizing the amount of money spent in the black schools than the internal educational practices or hiring and firing decisions,

26. Henry Allen Bullock, *A History of Negro Education in the South from 1619 to the Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), xv.

27. See Amilcar Shabazz, "The Desegregation of Lamar State College of Technology: An Analysis of Race and Education in Southeast Texas" (MA thesis, Lamar University, 1990), 73-109. [Since the original publication, Dr. Shabazz has expanded and published his work in *Advancing Democracy: African Americans and the Struggle for Access and Equity in Higher Education in Texas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004)—ed.]

could not continue with an integrated personnel. Black principals, at least in the initial years of integration, often had white teachers who felt uneasy, if not upset, about their job assignments. Placating and trying to make for an easier transition for all seems to have supplanted the old dictatorial styles of school management. Black teachers also refused to allow passively a double standard and actively resisted unfair treatment. Indeed, a host of problems and issues involving both teachers and students arose in the era of integration and, of course, many persist today. But the effect of integration on the continuity of the educational ideas, ideology, and mentality of black parents, children, educators, special interest groups, and community leaders is probably the most ill-understood and neglected of all. The changes that this process of reformulating race relations wrought on black people are the most pressing historical and social problem of our time.

Positive aspects of the African-American school tradition may have experienced adverse conditions and ultimately underwent decline in the integrated schools. By the early 1900s, schools had become one of the most important institutions in the black community. High schools like Charlton-Pollard, Hebert, and Lincoln in Port Arthur united blacks of differing religious denominations and churches, income levels and jobs, sexes and ages. Through interscholastic events, such as football games, the schools even brought together blacks from various neighborhoods and towns and provided them with entertainment and occasions when proud parents could support their children in the marching band or on the team, and where teachers and staff could celebrate their accomplishments. It meant something to be a Bulldog, a mighty Panther, or a Bumblebee and to sing the school's alma mater and fight songs. It meant something to live near and to know your children's teachers. Black boys had black men for teachers, mentors and role models, and black girls had black women in those same roles. Integration created a major displacement for both black pupils and the black community. It may have eliminated the major physical and psychological costs and inequalities of Jim Crow education, but it may have also created many others yet to be estimated and addressed.

Laborers collecting turpentine cups in the Piney Woods of Southeast Texas (c. 1910). *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

Struggle in the Piney Woods

Land, Labor, and Working-Class Formation in Southeast Texas

Steven A. Reich

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Historians have recently challenged a generation of scholarship that held that supremacist ideology prevented white workers from identifying blacks as their true class allies and that white racism pushed blacks out of trade unions, which whites used to defeat job competition from African Americans and to deny them access to skilled jobs. New studies of West Virginia coal mines, the New Orleans waterfront, the Birmingham steel industry, and industrial Memphis uncover a vigorous and complex tradition of biracial unionism and suggest that organized labor in the South practiced racial policies that were far from monolithic, that relationships between white and black workers were far more complex and less predictable than once assumed, and that black workers agitated for civil rights through labor struggles.[1]

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1. One classic statement of the conventional view is William H. Harris, *The Harder We Run: Black Workers since the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982). Joe William Trotter, *Coal, Clan, and Color: Blacks in Southern West Virginia, 1915-1932* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990); Eric Arnesen, *Waterfront Workers of New Orleans: Race, Class, and Politics, 1863-1923* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Henry M. McKiven, *Iron and Steel: Class, Race, and Community in Birmingham, Alabama, 1875-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Robin Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); and Michael K. Honey, *Southern Labor and Black Civil Rights: Organizing Memphis Workers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993). For historiographical explorations of the new revisionism in twentieth-century labor history, see Robert H. Zieger's introduction to his edited volume *Organized Labor in the Twentieth-Century South* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), Arnesen, "Following the Color Line of Labor: Black Workers and the Labor Movement before 1930," *Radical History Review*, 55 (Winter

Despite such important advances in our understanding of the lives of Southern workers, these studies have little to say about the process of working-class formation, nor do they examine critically the process of proletarianization. They tend to consider industrial laborers, especially African Americans, as divorced from the countryside and focus their attention almost exclusively on events within the city or industrial center. These studies also fail to capture the texture of emergent working-class lives in an agricultural region transformed by industrial development and describe the rural South narrowly as a place to escape. By describing how the harsh logic of the marketplace threatened to impoverish and uproot a traditional white yeomanry or how blacks languished in an endless cycle of debt, poverty, and oppression, historians have provided little insight into how social relationships evolved in the rural South during an era of rapid industrial change. Without exploring the various paths by which blacks and whites came to take "public work," our understanding of how they related to each other as wage earners and how they related to their employers will remain incomplete.

The manufacture of lumber, an important but often neglected industry of the New South, played a significant role in working-class formation and the transformation of a rural region. By the late 1880s, a constellation of factors attracted northern lumbermen to the southern forests and to the longleaf pine belt of Southeast Texas in particular. There they found an abundance of high quality southern yellow pine. Land and timber sold for as little as 25 cents an acre, and the warm climate and physical geography permitted year-round logging. Experienced in timber exploitation, northern lumbermen bought the smaller mills of the region and introduced large-scale operations, bringing all phases of the business—owning the timber, logging the forests, and managing the sawmill—under centralized control. Such projects required the recruitment, supervision, and control of an army of common laborers who would cut the logs at the front, load them into railroad cars, ship them to the mill, and process them at the mill site. By the early twentieth century, an interracial workforce of blacks, whites, Mexicans, and European immigrants congregated in company town complexes that lumbermen constructed at regular intervals along the new main-line railroads that cut wide swathes through the forest. As Ruth A. Allen noted in her

1993): 53-87; and Rick Halpern, "Organized Labor, Black Workers, and the Twentieth Century South: The Emerging Revision" in Melvyn Stokes and Rick Halpern, eds., *Race and Class in the American South since 1890* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 43-76.

history of East Texas lumber workers, "company towns became an ever-present, even dominating feature of the eastern Texas scene."[2]

At first glance, these company towns appear quite similar to the classic descriptions of the mining towns of Appalachia and textile villages of the Carolina Piedmont. Contemporary observations described sawmill towns of the Piney Woods as police states or industrial plantations. In 1913 and 1914, for example, Federal investigators for the Commission on Industrial Relations found the rule of lumbermen "avowedly absolutistic." Mill operators, explained socialist reporter George Creel to the national press in 1915, exploited mill hands and logging crews whose lives were "dull, sordid, and uninspiring." Under feudal conditions "as absolute as any described in the pages of [Sir Walter] Scott," lumber workers were paid "a hopeless minimum" and forced "to choose between submissive servitude and starvation." Fifteen years later Charlotte Todes echoed these themes in her report for the Labor Research Association, in which she described workers as "permanently in debt to the company" and "forced to submit to intolerable conditions because they cannot leave the town."[3]

A focus on the men and women—black and white—who passed through and resided in these industrial settlements exposes sawmill villages, not merely as citadels of corporate control, but also as porous, fluid, and dynamic places in which every-day social and labor relations were contested. Mill-village inhabitants were never total victims, without options, of all-powerful sawmill owners and managers. If lumber operators tightened their control over employees too aggressively, workers and their families returned to nearby family farms, left to hunt, fish, or raise livestock in the open woods, sought more favorable working conditions at other sawmills, or migrated to urban centers along the Gulf Coast. As long as such options remained open in this unevenly developed region, lumber workers could threaten production and deprive sawmill owners not only of labor but of revenue from rent and transactions at the commissary.

2. Ruth A. Allen, *East Texas Lumber Workers: An Economic and Social Picture, 1870-1950* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), 143. For details on the emergence of large-scale lumbering in Southeast Texas, see Steven A. Reich, "The Making of a Southern Sawmill World: Race, Class, and Rural Transformation in the Piney Woods of East Texas, 1865-1930" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1998).

3. David Saposs, "Self-Government and Freedom of Action in Isolated Industrial Communities," Report No. 1036, Jan. 20, 1915, 6, Commission on Industrial Relations Papers, Record Group 174, USNA; George Creel, "The Feudal Towns of Texas," *Harper's Weekly*, 60 (Jan. 23, 1915): 76-77; Charlotte Todes, *Labor and Lumber* (rept. 1931, New York: Arno Press, 1975), 81.

Despite what would seem a plentiful supply of cheap, available laborers living in the piney woods, lumber operators continuously proved unable to mold woods dwellers into the dependent labor force of their liking. Access to land empowered local farmers to resist company attempts to reduce them to dependent wage laborers. Area residents sustained rural homesteads throughout the lumbering bonanza, in part because they invested into their farms income earned in a host of ancillary economic activities supported by lumbering—cutting ties, hauling logs, and peddling produce in mill towns. Woods farmers looked upon wage work in similar terms. Cash income from a few months of work unloading logs at a nearby sawmill or employment in any number of other industries in the growing regional economy—oil fields, refineries, coastal wharves—could supplement living expenses, cover losses from a bad harvest, pay taxes, meet a mortgage payment, or be reinvested in other productive resources such as a new wagon, an extra mule, fertilizer, or orchard trees. Many lumber workers traveled only short distances for public work, forming a localized migration pattern and labor market around sawmills and logging operations. Jim Franklin's father, a former slave who in the 1880s migrated from Alabama to Jasper, Texas, is typical of those who sustained rural plots with wage labor. He supplemented his $1,400 farming enterprise with periodic sojourns to area sawmills and logging fronts. "Atter the wuk in the timber was done for the year," his son explained, his father "would come home in the winter and he'p mudder sew and patch." Other relatives and neighbors would "run mills in the winter and fa'm in the summer."[4]

Satisfying cash needs through temporary wage work enabled blacks to sustain productive investments in spaces beyond the confines of the mill. In fact, land ownership rates among Piney Woods blacks remained high, partly because of the availability of wage work. Such earners would often leave to tend their own enterprises, as in the fall of 1911 when one Kirby Lumber Company superintendent notified his superiors that "I have been getting shorter and shorter each day for men . . . and unless there is a change [soon], we will be in bad shape." Many of Kirby's black employees heightened the superintendent's fears of an impending shutdown as they "are farmers and they have to go home to gather their crops which will take a week or ten days."[5]

Close proximity to family and friends in the woods enabled black mill hands to leave for leisure and cultural celebrations. African Americans forced saw-

4. Federal Writers' Project, *Texas Narratives* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979), 1415-1417.

5. J. A. Herndon to C. P. Myer, Sept. 16, 1911, KLC-SFA.

Workers' Camp for Nona Mills (detail, c. 1905). *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

mills to shut down every June when they celebrated Juneteenth, or June 19, the traditional anniversary of emancipation in Texas. Blacks "made it a practice so often to celebrate, and celebrate so hard on that date in the saw mill district," explained one industry analyst, "that it requires from two to four days for [them] to recover from it." Unable to curtail these rituals, mill operators yielded the nineteenth "as a holiday for three to four days instead of one day." Similar problems were encountered by the Kirby Lumber Company at its logging operations near Magnolia Springs, in Jasper County. When a black resident died, most of the blacks in the woods crew left to attend a "ten days Apostile [*sic*] meeting, and a ten days Holiness meeting," leaving the superintendent to wait several days "before we will have a crew to do anything." Attending to harvest chores, Juneteenth celebrations, funeral ceremonies, and Holiness revivals were just a few of the ways in which area blacks contested labor arrangements favored by lumbermen.[6]

6. *Southern Industrial and Lumber Review, Southwest Edition*, Nov. 20, 1907, 29; J. B. Hodges to R. L. Weathersby, Dec. 26, 1918, KLC-SFA. Black Texans have traditionally celebrated Jun-19th, or Juneteenth, as their day of emancipation. On that day in 1865, Gen. Gordon Granger landed at Galveston, occupied the city in the name of the federal union, and declared the slaves free. In 1980, Juneteenth became a legal holiday in Texas.

Unable to rely on the immediate local population to supply mills and logging camps with disciplined workers, mill owners looked further afield for dependable laborers. Although seasonal, part-time nonfarm work in the expanding economy of the Gulf Coast sustained high rates of landownership among African Americans in the Piney Woods, this pattern of movement among the region's blacks into seasonal nonfarm work increasingly led not to the establishment of a tenancy or an independent homestead but away from farming altogether. Green farmhands who went to work at a sawmill or logging camp for the first time established contacts and made friends with men of varied work experiences and diverse backgrounds. These acquaintances shared information about other work opportunities, or where one could earn higher wages, or where management supervision was less strict.

A succession of moves gave blacks the confidence and experience to widen their scope of travel and to search further afield in their continuing quest for higher wages and better treatment. As historian Peter Gottlieb explains in his study of the origins of black migration to Pittsburgh, "work gangs at sawmills, lumber and turpentine camps . . . were transmitters of job information," and "even if the black farmers returned to work in the fields again they now possessed the rudiments of work experience, information, and social contacts necessary for movement farther from their homes." Instead of passing on land to sons, parents increasingly saw their children move away. Dennis Grant of Jasper County "wukked all ober d' country 'n' as far soufs d' Gulf." When A. C. Pruitt turned 21 he started "wanderin' 'roun' from dis place to anudder." He tried farming for a while, "but dat ain' suit me so good."[7]

Thus by the first decade of the twentieth century, the concentration of land in the hands of large lumber companies, the diminishing size of farms, the downward social mobility of smallholders and tenants, immigration from the east, and natural population increase contributed to the growth of a reservoir of disproportionately black, landless, low-wage, floating laborers who migrated throughout the region in search of work opportunities. Lumber operators in East Texas tried to channel this stream of migrating work-seekers into sawmill towns, but did so with only partial success. Their situation in the regional economy placed them in competition for workers with West Texas cotton plantations, East Texas oil fields, wharves along the Gulf Coast, and oil refineries in port cities. Each autumn, thousands of black sawmill workers left the Trans-Sabine

7. Peter Gottlieb, *Making Their Own Way: Southern Blacks' Migration to Pittsburgh, 1916-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 25-26; and Federal Writers' Project, *Texas Narratives*, 1549, 3200-3206.

forest to earn higher wages offered by agribusiness cotton plantations in Central and West Texas. *The Southern Industrial and Lumber Review, Southwest Edition*, the regional trade journal of the lumber industry, reported each September how "the call of the cotton patch has robbed the sawmills of thousands of good men, and will make labor scarce through the fall." To meet periodic acute labor shortages, lumber companies recruited and settled Bohemian, Macedonian, and Italian immigrants at various Piney Woods mills or recruited Mexicans from San Antonio.

Migrating blacks and Mexicans, European immigrants, and local woods farmers—white and black—all filtered through, at one time or another, these lumber towns. Although sawmill operators owned and controlled the territory in and around these villages, they proved unable to control their borders or monitor who came and went over the railroads they constructed for the transporting of timber. The *American Lumberman* reported that one mill owner complained that despite decreasing the workday from 12 to 10 hours and providing tenant houses rent free, hardly a week passed without the disappearance of several blacks. As long as multiple options remained open—the ease of travel to Houston or West Texas over rail, news of better work conditions at competitive mills, access to land and resources of the open woods—black workers would assert their independence from sawmill owners, who would conclude, as a group of Mississippi mill owners did, that raising wages merely worsened labor shortages as they made black workers even more undependable and shiftless.[8]

To attract a more permanent, dependable labor force, mill operators constructed low-cost, single-family rental dwellings. To reduce their dependency on unpredictable part-time farmers, the Kirby Lumber Company promised prospective black workers "good comfortable houses" serviced with "wholesome and healthy" water and "surrounded by a quiet neighborhood." More importantly, they provided land to prospective workers, giving them "room enough around your home to cultivate a garden and raise chickens and hogs and have your cows if you desire." As one company official explained, "quite a number of the employees who worked in the woods lived or boarded out in the country and we are trying to eliminate this class of labor altogether and think we would be able to build up a much better organization if we can have them all live in our houses at the mill."[9]

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8. *American Lumberman*, June 16, 1900; Nollie Hickman, *Mississippi Harvest: Lumbering in the Longleaf Pine Belt, 1840-1915* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1962), 241-243.

9. *New York Age*, Dec. 26, 1912; H. B. Hildreth to J. W. Link, May 7, 1924, KLC-HPL.

The economics of lumbering and efforts to minimize costs and sustain profitability, however, pressured mill owners to reduce expenditures on worker accommodations. As one company secretary explained, "a sawmill operation can last only as long as it has a timber supply." A company town, therefore, could not "very well" provide "expensive dwellings for its employees." Caught between trying to lure farmers into mill towns and reducing costs, mill owners generally offered inadequate accommodations, which tended to increase rather than minimize labor turnover. Housing at Kirby Lumber Company's Evadale mill, located "down where the malaria hovers thick and the mosquitoes bite hard," fell into such a state of disrepair that it nearly suspended operations. According to company reports, 50 cases of malaria disabled the workforce and kept others from coming near the site. Unless "the general premises [were] drained, weeds cut and all tenant quarters given a cleaning," warned the report, the epidemic of fever would "further interfere with operation." Deterioration, one observer concluded, "is the inevitable result of temporary interest in the residences by both their owners and tenants."[10]

Company houses did attract a host of migrants that mill owners neither desired nor were able to evict with ease. Waves of destitute floaters often flooded lumber towns and logging camps, claiming unoccupied houses and overwhelming mill superintendents' ability to monitor and control the residential population of their plants. As one report on the Call plant complained, "[W]ith the number of houses there are here it is difficult to keep out stragglers and these wanderers who seek such situations with the view of never paying rent." The availability of gardens and pasture attracted those who sought to encroach on company land and put a few acres under cultivation. Mill men realized that one of the ways they could lure semi-independent woods dwellers out of the forest and into the mills was to offer them opportunities to cultivate land. The availability of this land, however, attracted people who came with little intention of working for the sawmill. As one Kirby Lumber Company manager instructed a mill superintendent, although employees should "be encouraged to put in home gardens . . . there is nothing to be gained by having anyone occupy tenant houses who devotes the major portion of his time to farming rather than our operations."[11]

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10. Abraham Berglund, et al., *Labor in the Industrial South: A Survey of Wages and Living Conditions in Three Major Industries of the New Industrial South* (Charlottesville: The Institute for Research in the Social Sciences, University of Virginia, 1930), 53; A. L. Harris, Monthly Report on Tenant Housing (Evadale) May 2, 1921, KLC-HPL; William T. Chambers, "Life in a Southern Sawmill Community," *Journal of Geography*, 30 (May 1931), 183-186.

11. Harris, Monthly Report on Tenant Housing (Call) Sept. 1921, and [E. D.] Bloxsom to [?] Crockett, memo, Feb. 4, 1919, KLC-HPL.

"Laying new tram road. Silsbee." From John H. Kirby, *Timber Resources of East Texas* (1902). *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

Removing unwanted and troublesome tenants was never easy. Although one manager insisted that "no one who neither works nor pays ought to be allowed to keep possession of any of our houses," mill men seldom could enforce such declarations. If they pushed too hard, tenants simply left, depriving mill men of back rent. Fear of reprisals against company property or against them personally also tempered how mill superintendents approached troublesome tenants. One manager cautioned against "pushing the rent problem" too aggressively. "There might be some collected," he admitted, but "then again an antagonism might be aroused whereby small depredations"—stealing windows, doors, fence posts, lumber—"from time to time might result in more than any revenue received from" rent. Mill superintendents exerted pressure on undesirable tenants in other ways that stopped just short of eviction. One method was to let rental property fall into disrepair. Superintendents also found it expedient to intimidate residents, especially African Americans, into vacating. When Charlotte Limbrick of Call, "an old negro woman who washes for a living," lost her means of support,

the mill superintendent reported confidently that he did not need to secure legal papers to evict her and another black tenant because they "are niggers and . . . it will more than likely be possible to scare them into moving." Precisely what the superintendent did is unclear, but within a month Limbrick had left.[12]

To deny potential workers access to land and other economic options outside the mill, sawmill owners organized and attempted to control all transactions in company towns around a complex credit system of scrip and company-owned commissaries. Wages paid out to workers in tokens and merchandise checks circulated back into company coffers via the commissary and rent collector. Since the company controlled the commissary, it could artificially raise prices above market value, thus reducing the purchasing power of the wages it paid, ultimately keeping workers broke or in debt to the company, which operators believed would cure mill hands' "wandering spirit." But to gain a monopoly over trade, companies tried to eliminate competition from local merchants and peddlers through coercion. In 1914, investigators for the U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations reported how superintendents, usually through the authority of local law enforcement, exercised their power to "indiscriminately prohibit all merchants from entering their grounds." One Louisiana firm even constructed a fence around the black quarters, patrolled its perimeter, and issued an ultimatum to black workers to trade at the commissary or risk discharge and eviction from the village.[13]

Workers and area merchants resisted these various attempts to reduce them into dependence on the mill. Mill owners found repeated cases in which employees creatively forged mill checks, left the service of the company with substantial outstanding debts, or assumed the risks or traveled long distances in order to trade and shop elsewhere. The Fullerton Lumber Company of western Louisiana tried to deny the "red bones"—a mixed racial group of Indian, African, and French ancestry—access to the mill town to sell produce. These farmers and hawkers, considered by many to be "a fighting stock," sabotaged company operations by embedding spikes in logs destined for the mill. After a series of spiked logs ripped the company's saws to pieces and a "couple of watchmen had

12. Bloxsom to [G. E.] Davison, Aug. 26, 1920, Harris to Davison, Hildreth, and Bloxsom, March 26, 1921, Crockett to Davison, Oct. 18, 1921, and to [B. F.] Bonner, Nov. 12, 1921, KLC-HPL.

13. David Saposs, including interview with T. J. Pinchback, Aug. 26, 1914, Additional Interview with Deputy Sheriff Haven, Cravens, Louisiana, Aug. 26, 1914, and interview with Gus Sims, Aug. 26, 1914, Commission on Industrial Relations Papers.

their clothes shot off," mill managers reached a "tacit truce," eased restrictions, and permitted the "red bones" to peddle their wares in town.[14]

Because of the fluidity of company towns race relations among workers were not fixed. Although blacks, whites, and Mexicans worked alongside each other in the mill and at the logging front, lumber companies divided their labor force racially into segregated residential districts. Journalist Max Bentley found that at the end of the working day in the woods of the Wier Long Leaf Lumber Company, workers clambered aboard a caboose "filled to suffocation with human freight . . . a close mingling of whites, Mexicans, and negroes filled with the thought of home and supper." Such mingling ended when the train reached the mill village. Miriam Havard Tatum of Manning recalled "that curious parting at the caboose door—the colored man to his quarters, the foreigner to his home down the tracks, and the white men to their separate streets, determined by sawmill caste." The spatial and physical layout of East Texas lumber towns reflected this preoccupation with establishing and maintaining a racial order of separation. For example, the town of Wiergate was divided into three residential districts atop three hills clustered around the mill, "each with its distinct boundaries." Closest to the mill and commissary was "White Town," some 600 yards away lay "Darkey Town," and further away across Little Cow Creek and "hidden in the pines" was "Mexico."[15]

At times both black and white workers challenged the absurdity of this elaborate racial etiquette. For example, the company meat market at Diboll was segregated, with the white side selling things such as pork chops and pork sausage and the black side offering hog jowls and chittlins. If a white wanted hog jowls or a black desired pork chops, patrons would wait outside the store until someone from the other race came along with whom they could "swap meat." More often, however, race relations were uneasy, which partly reflected the different economic paths people followed to sawmills. Economically vulnerable white farmers and millhands feared that migrant blacks, Mexicans, and Italians would not only depress wages during periods of expanding production but would also linger in the region during slack periods and compete for scarce jobs or access

14. Saposs interview with Pinchback, Commission on Industrial Relations Papers.

15. Max Bentley, "The Dirge of the Lonesome Pine," *The Southlander* (publication of St. Regis Paper Company, Autumn 1976, partial reprint of an article which was earlier published in *Holland's Magazine* in the 1920s); Miriam-Havard Tatum, *River Road* (Diboll, Texas: 1979), 32, quoted in Thad Sitton, "New Perspectives on Boom-Era Sawmill Towns" (unpublished manuscript in author's possession).

to land and other resources of the woods economy. White workers took arms to defend their position and force mill operators to abandon their plans to recruit migrant workers. George Morrison, who worked for 40 years in the woods for the Angelina County Lumber Company, recalled how white workers on the steel gang tried to "run Negroes off the job by circulating unsigned notices and making threats by hand bill." White millhands of the tiny sawmill town of Tioga, Louisiana, fired shots on successive evenings into a camp of recent black migrants who were building the brick foundations of the Lee Lumber Company. According to reports the attackers intended "to scare the negro labor away from the mill." Incidents such as these, repeated time and again throughout the Piney Woods, at times sparked full-scale riots.[16]

A consideration of East Texas lumber towns has implications for our understanding of company towns in the New South more generally. Since employer control was never as complete in the South as David Corbin suggested that it was in the mining towns of southern West Virginia, interracial solidarity did not emerge as easily. Blacks encountered hostilities from embattled whites over jobs as well as harsh treatment from foremen and mill superintendents. Nor did class consciousness cohere in the way that Jacquelyn Hall described for the textile villages of the Carolina Piedmont. The men and women who passed through lumber towns had diverse backgrounds and work experiences and since they did not share a commitment to a "traditional rural ethos," it is unlikely that they tried to recreate in sawmill towns the patterns of an older rural culture that stressed mutuality and cooperation in an effort to blunt the shock of industrial discipline.[17]

Evidence from East Texas lumber towns suggests that proletarianization proceeded unevenly in this rural region of the New South transformed by the passing of industrialization. As a number of historians of industrialization in rural South Africa have argued, the process of proletarianization took time and was defined by a series of hidden struggles. Popular consciousness in such a setting

16. Sitton, "New Perspectives;" George Morrison interview with Robert S. Maxwell, Aug. 8, 1958, (typescript), East Texas Lumber Industry Project, 1954-1967, Forest History Collections, East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University; *Southern Industrial and Lumber Review, Southwest Edition*, Aug. 20, 1917, 47. For one riot, see *Polk County Enterprise*, March 19, 1908.

17. David Corbin, *Life, Work, and Rebellion in the Coal Fields: The Southern West Virginia Miners, 1880-1922* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981); Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987).

was complex and contradictory as people intertwined new ideas and ideologies about land and work with old.[18] Such a perspective has implications for our understanding of urbanization and the Great Migration as well. Rather than a homogenous mass of landless sharecroppers that hopped trains to the urban north, African Americans in the South long had multiple work and travel experiences. Migration was not a single event in people's lives but part of a much larger, protracted process transforming the rural South, a process in which blacks played an integral role.

18. Two influential works include, Charles van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1900-1933* (London: Pluto Press, 1976); and William Beinart and Colin Bundy, *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa: Politics and Popular Movements in the Transkei and Eastern Cape, 1890-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

L. L. Allen, photographer. Yount-Lee Company Oil Field, Spindletop, TX (c. 1927). *Courtesy of the Lamar University Archives and Special Collections, Beaumont, TX.*

The Yount-Lee Oil Company and the Second Spindletop Oil Field

Fred B. McKinley

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Any study of the Yount-Lee Oil Company must begin with its founder, Miles Frank Yount. For all practical purposes, he was the heart, soul, and directing force of the privately owned corporation on which the economic development of Beaumont and surrounding areas were so dependent. Yount was born on January 31, 1880, near Monticello, Arkansas. When he was nine years old, his father died; and Frank, who was among the oldest of the children, was forced to accept additional responsibilities. As a result of that circumstance, his formal education in the public schools of Monticello ended with the eighth grade.[1]

In 1897, Yount moved to Texas and took a job on an irrigation crew working in the rice fields near Beaumont. In fact, he helped dig a ditch through the McFaddin land on which he would one day make his great Spindletop oil strike.

A native of Beaumont, Fred B. McKinley graduated from Lamar State College of Technology (1964), attained his MA in History from Lamar University (1987), and received a law enforcement certification from Louisiana State University (1995). He is retired from the Louisiana Department of Justice, where he served as a supervisory criminal investigator in the Office of the Attorney General. McKinley is the author or co-author of five books, including *Chinqua Where? The Spirit of Rural America, 1947-1955* (2003); *Black Gold to Bluegrass: From the Oil Fields of Texas to Spindletop Farm of Kentucky* (co-authored with Greg Riley, 2006); *Devil's Pocket* (novel, 2007); *A Plea for Justice: The Timothy Cole Story* (2010); and *King Cotton: Coach Cotton Robinson and the Buna Boys' Basketball Legacy, 1948-1963* (co-authored with Charles Breithaupt, 2012). He is a strong supporter of the Innocence Project of Texas.

1. Fred B. McKinley, *The Yount-Lee Oil Company* (MA thesis, Lamar University, 1987), 1; BE, June 15, 1933; Joseph L. Clark, *The Texas Gulf Coast: Its History and Development* (4 vols., New York: Lewis Historical, 1955), 3: 109; NHT, 6: 1133; *Who Was Who In America, Volume I (1897-1942)* (Chicago: Marquis, 1950), 1893.

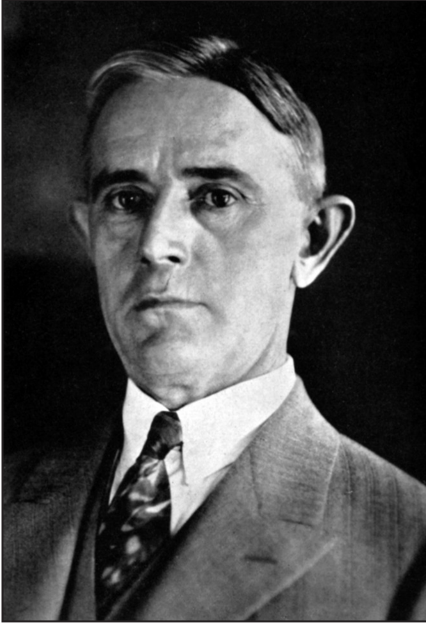
He began his own business in 1901 and contracted labor for the harvesting of rice crops in the area. Later, he operated a water-well drilling service, which was necessary for successful rice irrigation. This field of endeavor had been neglected, because drilling operators were concerned with a far more lucrative product: oil. Yount adapted the rotary drilling process, and while it had been used previously at Spindletop, most drillers still relied upon the older "cable tool" method. Although only 24 years old, Yount was determined to go into the oil business, and with the exception of approximately two years, he was associated with this industry from 1904 until his death. He never achieved any real success, however, until he entered a partnership with Thomas P. Lee of Houston in December 1914.[2]

Lee, cofounder of the American Republics Corporation, invested $25,000 in return for half of Yount's interest. The new venture, styled the Yount-Lee Oil Company, was formed on December 22, 1914, with a stock capitalization of $50,000. It assumed the leases that had been obtained by Yount and Talbot F. Rothwell, Lee's son-in-law, while they had operated briefly as the Yount-Rothwell Oil Company. The new Yount-Lee Oil Company's principal offices were located in Sour Lake, and the officers of the new corporation were Yount, president and general manager, Rothwell, vice president and superintendent of production, and John Henry "Harry" Phelan, secretary-treasurer. In the spring of 1923, Yount-Lee moved its corporate headquarters to Beaumont. At that time, the Spindletop Oil Field was very different from what it had been in 1901. The previous year's production had been only 295,015 barrels, and it was obvious that the peak years had taken their toll on the old field.[3]

In Beaumont, Frank Yount came into contact with Marrs McLean, an oil promoter who was convinced that undiscovered oil lay in the flanks of the old salt domes. Accordingly, McLean had purchased expired leases in the old Spindletop field, which were previously owned by the Gulf Production Company. These

2. BE, July 3, 1928, and Nov. 14, 1933; James A. Clark and Michel T. Halbouty, *Spindletop* (New York: Random House, 1952), 217-218, 220-222; *Houston Post,* Nov. 15, 1933; Charter Records, no. 28005, Jan. 21, 1915, vol. 3, TXSS; Deed Records, 65: 208, Hardin County Clerk, Kountze, TX; Ellis A. Davis and Edwin H. Grobe, eds., *The New Encyclopedia of Texas* (2 vols., Dallas: Texas Development Bureau, n.d.), 1: 1058.

3. Charter Records, no. 28005, March 23, 1923, vol. 1, TXSS; *Beaumont City Directory, 1925-1926* (Houston: Morrison & Fourmy, 1925), 492; BE, Jan. 29,1928; Wallace Davis, "History Repeats Itself—Spindletop Is Concrete Example," *Oil Weekly*, 40 (Aug. 27, 1926): 37-42; C. A. Warner, *Texas Oil and Gas Since 1543* (Houston: Gulf, 1939), 70; Thelma Johnson, et al., *The Spindletop Oil Field: A History of Its Discovery and Development* (Beaumont: Neches Printing, 1927), 12; "The Texas Corporation," *Fortune,* 1 (April 1930): 50.



Miles Frank Yount. From Marcellius Elliott Foster, *South and Southeast Texas: a Work for Newspaper and Library Reference* (1928). *Courtesy of the Lamar University Archives and Special Collections, Beaumont, TX.*

leases were primarily on property that was owned by two entities: the Gladys City Oil, Gas, and Manufacturing Corporation and the McFaddin, Wiess, and Kyle Land Company. McLean tried to sell his idea of deep flank production to the major oil companies, but one by one, each turned him down. A chance meeting with Yount during a walk home for lunch, in which McLean discussed his inability to find anyone to drill on his Spindletop leases, began the process by which both men prospered, probably beyond their wildest dreams.[4]

Yount jumped at the chance to take over McLean's leases at Spindletop, and on May 11, 1925, the two oil men completed their negotiations. The uncomplicated terms called for McLean's retention of a 3-percent royalty interest on approximately 1,200 acres of McFaddin, Wiess, and Kyle and Gladys City leases, which were turned over to the Yount-Lee Oil Company. Otherwise, the only condition of the agreement was the location of the first well. Yount consented to the stipulation that his initial attempt should be south of the location where Gulf had failed, just inside the dome's southeast perimeter on McFaddin prop-

4. BE, Nov. 15, 1925, and March 14, 1931; Paul Wagner, "Spindletop's History-Making Comeback Lacks Human Background of Old," *National Petroleum News,* 18 (Sept. 22, 1926): 75; Clark and Halbouty, *Spindletop,* 207-208; James A. Clark, *Marrs McLean, A Biography* (Houston: Clark Book Co., 1969), 6-22; Warner, *Texas Oil and Gas*, 205.

erty. If this attempt resulted in a dry hole, McLean assured him that a second attempt 200 to 300 feet away would produce oil.[5]

Keeping his promise, Yount commenced his Spindletop operations where McLean had indicated; however, the Yount-Lee McFaddin No. 1, on which drilling began September 15, produced nothing but dust and a bit of good news. The lone encouraging factor was that the salt dome was encountered some 700 feet lower than at the previous unsuccessful Gulf effort. This evidence prompted Yount to tell his partners that he would definitely strike oil the next time. Yount extended the field's boundary and moved out another 300 feet from McFaddin No. 1. Drilling on McFaddin No. 2, which was located beyond the edge of the known producing area and approximately one-half mile southeast of the original "Lucas Gusher," started October 20. Although the new well was in capable hands, Yount personally supervised all activities. With too much at risk, he wanted to make sure that everything went according to plans. Core samples indicated that oil would be discovered, but the main question was, how much?

On Saturday, November 14, Yount was on the grounds, working as usual with the field hands. The annual South Texas State Fair was in full swing, and by the end of the day, over 25,000 spectators crowded through its gates. The weather, typical of the season, was very warm and rainy. About 5:20 that afternoon, the Yount-Lee Oil Company accomplished what others had dreamed of for the last 20 years; it brought in a sizeable well at Spindletop. McFaddin No. 2 came in under perfect control from a depth of about 2,517 feet. The well, under its own pressure and contained by a half-inch choker valve, produced at the rate of approximately 1,500 barrels a day; speculation was that, if unleashed, it would have flowed between 12,000 and 20,000 barrels. Yount left the rig just long enough to telephone a brief message to his wife: "I've got a well, and a big one." Percy Wiess and his family, who lived next door on Calder Avenue, drove Mrs. Yount to the field for a firsthand view. The entire area surrounding the site was extremely muddy and inaccessible by automobile, the nearest road being 1,400 feet away. Mrs. Yount and her party waded through the mud to the location, where she received congratulatory remarks by lantern light from several "visitors" who had already arrived. Before the night was over, several hundred people came to witness the event.

The nearby Unity Oil Company lent its tanks for temporary storage, and Yount-Lee crews laid a pipeline that connected the tanks with McFaddin No. 2. Yount remained on the scene and supervised the work to make certain that

5. Clark, *Marrs McLean*, 53-55.

L. L. Allen, photographer. Blow out of Yount-Lee Oil Co. McFaddin No. 29 (1927).
Courtesy of the Lamar University Archives and Special Collections, Beaumont, TX.

very little crude, if any, was wasted during the process. When it was finished, his company had achieved a feat very different from that of the crews on the 1901 "Lucas Gusher," the first well of the old Spindletop field, where millions of barrels were wasted before the well could be brought under control and proper storage facilities erected.

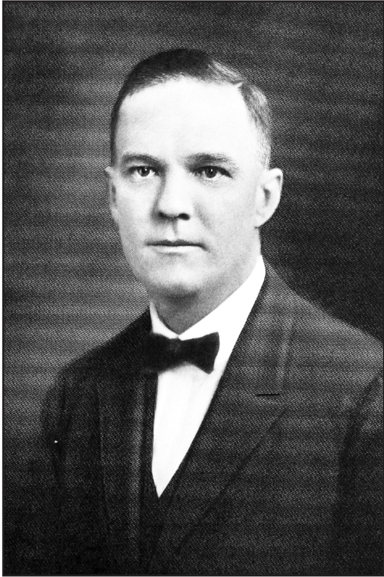
News of the discovery circulated to the fairgrounds about half an hour after McFaddin No. 2 blew in. It became the topic of conversation there, as well as on the streets downtown. The thought that Spindletop had come back was something to be excited about. People remembered the prosperity that the first great boom had generated, and Beaumont, mired in a business slump, needed

Thomas P. Lee. Engraving by E. G. Williams & Bro. From Ellis A. Davis and Edwin H. Grobe, *The New Encyclopedia of Texas* (c. 1925).

another push. The next morning, the headlines of the *Beaumont Enterprise* read, "Spindle Top Yields New Oil Gusher," and the accompanying story contained the hope and the speculation that McFaddin No. 2 would spark a new era of production. Thousands visited the "discovery well of New Spindletop," as McFaddin No. 2 came to be called, and hoped that a revival era was under way.

The local newspapers fueled this perception, but within a few days, it became apparent that Yount-Lee owned the "choice" leases on the hill and would retain firm control of the field. In his usual quiet manner, Frank Yount stated that his company would continue drilling operations on the leases, which involved about 1,200 acres; and, although common opinion ran to the contrary, he intended to put down wells at a steady, controlled pace. What the public did not fully realize at the time was that, although there would be a revitalization of the old field—one of spectacular proportions when compared to the years between 1901 and 1924—there would be no repetition of the wild and speculative "boom days" associated with the Lucas Gusher.[6]

6. The foregoing account of the success of the McFaddin No. 2 drawn from BE, Nov. 15 and 16, 1925.



Marrs McLean. From Ellis A. Davis and Edwin H. Grobe, *The New Encyclopedia of Texas* (c. 1925).

Yount-Lee immediately began another well on the north side of Spindletop, this one on a Gladys City tract. Known as the Gladys City No. 1, it showed promise as it reached a depth of 700 feet on November 18. Six days later it attained 1,600-feet level, but salt, encountered at 1,800 feet, forced its abandonment.[7] The anticipation of the well's success was short-lived, and its eventual failure served only to strengthen the notion held by diehards who believed that Spindletop was finished and that the company was wasting both its time and money.

For the time being, it appeared that these skeptics were right. McFaddin No. 2 still pumped between 150 to 200 barrels of crude each day, but otherwise, Spindletop was quiet. Drilling on McFaddin No. 3 started on December 14, and by January 2, 1926, word spread that the well, located about 300 feet south of McFaddin No. 2, was at a depth of 2,540 feet. Newspaper reports indicated that oil was expected at any time.[8]

McFaddin No. 3 gushered in around 8 o'clock on the night of January 13, 1926. It flowed from 2,900 feet at approximately 5,000 barrels a day. The crew, caught off guard, did not have time to remove the drill stem. The hectic scene

7. BE, Nov. 19, 25, and 28, 1925.

8. BE, Nov. 26, 1925, Jan. 3 and 5, 1926.

was almost a repeat of the events that had occurred only 300 feet away on the previous November 14. Yount was working on the rig as usual. He excused himself and called his wife and the two Beaumont newspapers. Shortly afterwards, crowds flocked to the hill. As before, they confronted the elements and were forced to wade through the mud for a closer inspection. Averaging between 4,500 and 6,000 barrels each day, McFaddin No. 3 produced about 120,000 barrels of grade A crude from January 13 to February 5. Because Gulf Coast petroleum commonly contains salt water, Yount-Lee ushered in a new process to correct the problem in the field. Specially designed equipment, consisting of two 10-by-12-feet steel tanks, was fitted with electric plates. When the crude was forced through the barrels and into contact with the plates, the salt water separated from the oil, making the product more marketable.[9]

On March 5, Yount-Lee discontinued its second attempt on Gladys City property. With this decision, the company confined its Spindletop operations to McFaddin No. 4, located just 300 feet from both the No. 2 and No. 3 wells. Again, the skeptics saw the Gladys City dry hole as proof positive that the wells on McFaddin land had struck an isolated pool.[10]

McFaddin No. 4 reached 3,500 feet by April 7, and two days later, it hit oil. The well flowed between 5,000 and 6,000 barrels from 3,550 feet, its pressure being held in check by two choker valves, one measuring one-half inch and the other, three-fourths. This latest discovery also called attention to an important piece of information that indicated good things to come: although the wells were located only 300 feet apart, the gravity weight of McFaddin No. 4's crude was 29 and that of the No. 3 was 24. The gravity weight of oil is defined as its measurement at a given temperature, and since the two were different, speculation arose that each well drew from separate sources, giving credence to the idea that a new stratum of oil had been discovered. Frank Yount commented upon what he believed to be the bright future of Spindletop, stating that "as much oil remains there as was ever taken out."[11]

Not easily discouraged, Yount-Lee made a third effort on a Gladys City tract, and on April 11, 1926, at 7 o'clock in the evening, the persistence paid off. From a depth of 3,000 feet, Gladys City No. 3 came in with a stream that was estimated to be approximately 6,000 barrels a day. After this strike, Yount-Lee did not throw every drilling rig it could muster into all areas of the field under

9. BE, Jan. 14, 24 and Feb. 6, 1926; BJ, Jan. 14, 1926.

10. BE, Feb. 6, 1926.

11. BE, April 8, 10, and 11, 1926.

its control, and the new discovery did not set off a frenzy of competition among the other companies for the small acreage that remained. Yount and Rothwell were conservative in their approach. Since Yount-Lee dominated the hill, there was no real advantage to hurried production. These soundly laid plans, although suspect at the moment, proved their worth as time progressed. The competition waited, still believing that Yount-Lee would ultimately fail in its bid to revive Spindletop.[12]

By May 13, those who wanted to lease or buy available Spindletop acreage were in a quandary because it was apparent that the landowners had banded together to hold out for profitable lease arrangements that included healthy bonus payments. Operators were not ready to meet those requirements until they received more data about the field's productivity. When Yount-Lee brought in its Gladys City No. 4 on May 16 from a depth of 3,000 feet, however, their attitude changed. Ironically, this well was located on Gladys City Square No. 12, where Marrs McLean had intended to drill years before.

From a practical standpoint, Gladys City No. 4 represented the turning point of the field's emergence as New Spindletop. Figures for the week ending May 22 indicated that the field was back in the limelight, as it rebounded into second place in Gulf Coast daily production with 12,100 barrels. Yount-Lee, with its six producers, accounted for most of that volume, and the company's future prospects looked even brighter.[13]

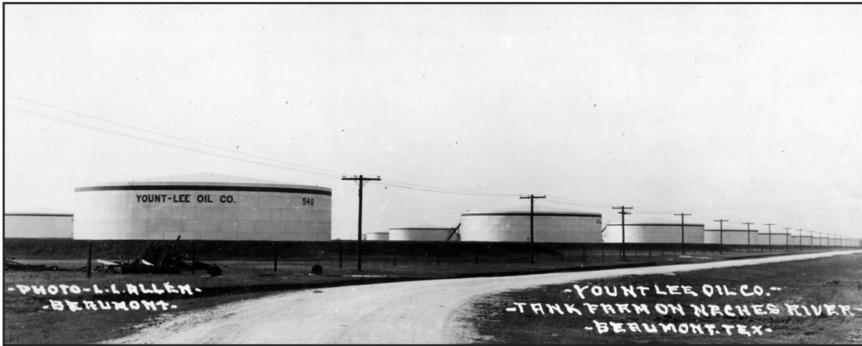
After completing Gladys City No. 4, Yount-Lee increased the number of drilling rigs at Spindletop to three. Gulf was actively drilling, as was Unity Oil. On June 3, Unity brought in a small well on the older section, which led to speculation that perhaps even the original areas of the field were not yet depleted. Altogether, there were at that time at least 150 men at work on various drilling projects at Spindletop, representing a substantial increase over the number employed there less than three weeks previously. The new production also brought a renewed interest in leasing activities.[14] Since Yount-Lee held most of the valuable leases, however, it could afford a conservative approach to the millions of undiscovered barrels of crude.

Yount-Lee continued to bring in wells at a record pace. With an output of upwards of 40,000 barrels a day, the company faced storage problems, and its

12. BE, April 12, 1926.

13. BE, May 14, 17, and 23, 1926.

14. BE, June 4, 1926, Aug. 1, 1926; Clark and Halbouty, *Spindletop*, 227.



L. L. Allen, photographer. "Yount Lee [*sic*] Oil Co. Tank Farm on Neches River, Beaumont, Tex." (detail, c. 1927). *Courtesy of the Lamar University Archives and Special Collections, Beaumont, TX.*

officers also worried about how the volume would effect prices. Clearly, no one wanted to contribute to a repeat of the conditions created by the 1901 boom, when prices plunged to 18 cents per barrel. To avoid depressing the market, Yount-Lee decided to construct a tank farm, the like of which the world had never seen. On August 2, Frank Yount confirmed that he had concluded a $475,000 real-estate deal with Perry McFaddin and Wesley Kyle for 1,800 acres that extended from the current lease holdings on McFaddin property all the way to the Neches River. When questioned about the possibility that his company contemplated the construction of a refinery, Yount was vague, but he did indicate that immediate plans called for the erection of 100 steel tanks with a cumulative storage capacity of 5.5 million barrels of crude, a pumping station, and dock facilities along the river. This bold maneuver was proclaimed as the first major step taken by Yount-Lee to place itself among the leading producers in the oil industry.

The impact of overproduction became apparent on August 6 and 7, when both the Gulf Pipe Line Company and Magnolia joined in a price reduction. Grade A crude fell from $1.60 a barrel to $1.25 and grade B from $1.50 to $1.15. The effect of an almost 100,000-barrel daily production at Spindletop was taking its toll already.[15]

Yount-Lee's production record was spectacular. Within the first year after its original discovery at Spindletop on November 14, 1925, the company possessed 33 active wells and was in the process of drilling at least 12 others. Of course,

15. BE, Aug. 3, 4, 7, and 8, 1926.

there were other companies in operation at Spindletop, but Yount-Lee was responsible for almost half of the 78 producers and their daily output of 100,840 barrels. Within that same year, more than 14 million barrels of crude oil flowed from the new discovery areas, whose foundation rested on Marrs McLean's prophecy and Yount-Lee confidence. By December 31, 1926, Yount-Lee's assets amounted to over $9 million. By the end of January 1927, the company led all Gulf Coast producers, and two months later, it became not only the largest operator at Spindletop but second in Texas.[16]

With all of the recent developments, it was easy to overlook the fact that Spindletop's daily output was declining, and the cause was not from a lack of drilling effort. Wells were being put down in record numbers; however, the longevity of the older ones was of concern. The 1901 boom had deflated very quickly when the gas pressure of the cap rock declined, and the same thing was happening again, only at the lower stratum. Even so, as late as August 5, 1927, the field retained its lead in Gulf Coast production with 54,138 barrels a day, of which Yount-Lee accounted for 41,766 (77.2 percent).[17]

With the close of 1927, figures confirmed that Spindletop's yearly output topped 21,555,935 barrels. This was the largest volume that the field ever produced, surpassing even the 1902 banner year when it had yielded 17,420,949 barrels. Drilling during 1927 had been brisk; 121 wells were brought in at Spindletop, 76 of those, with a production of 13,240,000 barrels, belonging to Yount-Lee. With oil selling at an average of $1.25 per barrel, Yount-Lee's 1927 gross income from Spindletop alone exceeded $16.5 million. Although Gulf commanded the Texas production lead, Yount-Lee retained second place with 14,720,228 barrels, which yielded a gross revenue of approximately $18.5 million.[18]

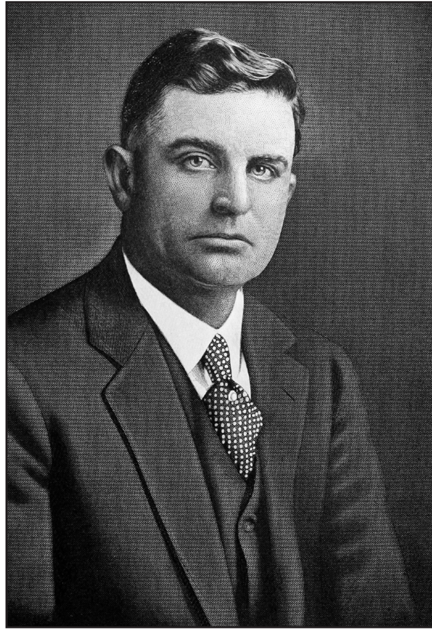
The year 1929 was the last year that Spindletop produced in excess of 10 million barrels of crude oil. Yount-Lee's daily output at the field dropped to 30,100 barrels by January 13, and the company's ranking among Texas oil producers dropped to third.[19] The Barber's Hill field in Chambers County moved into the top spot in Texas production on November 27, 1929, and Spindletop never

16. BE, Oct. 30, Nov. 7, 1926, Jan. 13, and March 3, 1927; Charter Records, no. 28005, March 23, 1927, Vol. 2, TXSS.

17. BE, Aug. 2 and 5, 1927.

18. BE, Dec. 23, 1927, and March 18, 1928; Warner, *Texas Oil and Gas*, 375-376; Marcellus E. Foster and Alfred Jones. eds., *South and Southeast Texas* (n.p.: Texas Biographical Association, 1928), 135.

19. BE, Sept. 9, 1928, and Jan. 14, 1929; Warner, *Texas Oil and Gas*, 275-276.



Talbot F. Rothwell. Engraving by E. G. Williams & Bro. From Ellis A. Davis and Edwin H. Grobe, *The New Encyclopedia of Texas* (c. 1925).

again regained the lead. At that time, only 13 rigs operated at the old field. Spindletop lost its glamour as new fields, such as those in East Texas and High Island, opened with greater potential.[20]

The Beaumont region was extremely kind to Frank Yount, T. F. Rothwell, Harry Phelan, and the rest of the Yount-Lee Company officials. Although the firm had been worth over $2.5 million when it relocated to Beaumont in 1923, Spindletop became the catalyst for a rapid increase in the company's assets. By the end of 1926, Yount-Lee was valued at approximately $9.5 million. As the company prospered, it contributed to the overall economic progress of Beaumont and the surrounding area.[21]

The population of Beaumont proper varied greatly over the years. There were 3,296 inhabitants in 1890, but 10 years later, the number had increased to 9,427. The surge of 50,000 residents created by the Great Boom of 1901 dissipated proportionately as Spindletop's volume decreased, and the 1910 census indicated that the population had settled at 20,640. As Beaumont's economy

20. BE, Nov. 28, 1929.

21. Charter Records, no. 28005, Dec. 29, 1922, Vol. 3; March 23, 1927, Vol. 2, TXSS.

John H. Phelan. From Marcellius Elliott Foster, *South and Southeast Texas: A Work for Newspaper and Library Reference* (1928). *Courtesy of the Lamar University Archives and Special Collections, Beaumont, TX.*

diversified, the next decade saw an almost 100-percent increase; in 1920, the citizen count stood at 40,422.[22]

With Yount-Lee's discovery in November 1925 and the subsequent development of Second Spindletop, property values as well as the tax rolls of both Jefferson County and the city of Beaumont rose considerably. The entire area felt the effect of the boom as hundreds of men went to work in the oil field. There had been about 150 men at Spindletop in June 1926, but within a three-week period, that number increased by 700. At that time, Spindletop's weekly payroll amounted to over $35,000. Yount-Lee also grew from 20 employees the previous year to 500 by November 24, 1926, with a daily payroll of $2,500. The total number employed by petroleum-related industries expanded by 20 percent that same year, and merchants prospered as oil provided the impetus for more jobs and greater income.[23]

Compared with the earlier boom, Second Spindletop was more orderly and businesslike. There were no excursion trains that brought hoards of "get-rich-

22. U.S. Bureau of the Census, including, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910* (11 vols., GPO, 1913), 3: 795; and *Fourteenth Census of the United States,* 1920 (12 vols., GPO, 1921), 1: 85.

23. BE, June 2, 4, July 17, Nov. 25, 1926, July 19 and Nov. 16, 1930.

quick" seekers, and there were none of the rowdy, "rough-and-tumble" dealings that were associated with the 1901 event. Marrs McLean was most responsible for this new order. When he offered his extensive Spindletop lease holdings to Yount, the Beaumont independent held a virtual monopoly on the choice property; there was simply no basis for widespread speculation. In addition, the oil industry had grown into big business, and Beaumont itself was maturing. Local surveys conducted at the beginning of 1926 placed the city's population at 54,569, and within a year, another estimate established it at 57,963. This growth attracted a dependable, future-building working class that contrasted with the previous undesirable transients.[24]

On December 7, 1926, the Beaumont Real Estate Board, seeking to recognize McLean, Yount, and Yount-Lee officials for their positive economic impact on the city, held an appreciation banquet at Hotel Beaumont. Over 2,000 invitations were mailed, and the hotel's dining room capacity was stretched to the limit as Beaumont's officials, dignitaries, and top businessmen paid $2.50 a plate to hear speeches praising the accomplishments of the honored guests. This dinner was only the beginning. Throughout the years, all these individuals received other awards for their business and civic contributions; however, only the Yount-Lee Company was given the title, "Financial Gibraltar of Beaumont."[25]

As a result of Second Spindletop, Beaumont's building and banking activities soared between 1926 and 1936. The five local banks reported a $4.5 million increase in 1927 deposits over those of the previous year. A record was set in 1926 with 12.5 million in construction permits, and the figure for 1927 doubled that amount. Announcements were made concerning large projects, such as the Jefferson Theatre, the Goodhue Building, the American National Bank Building, the new City Hall and Auditorium, the Jefferson County Courthouse, the St. Therese Hospital, the Edson Hotel, the La Salle Hotel, the Y.M.C.A. building, the Post Office and Federal Building, and a new Beaumont High School building, with numerous improvements at other schools. Churches and apartment houses sprang up all over town, and at least 2,500 residences were completed during those 10 years. The city also built a new central fire station, a new jail and police station, and spent thousands on street and park improvements. Jack Hott, the general secretary for the Beaumont Chamber of Commerce, revealed in January 1928, that the prior year's building activity was the largest in the

24. BE, Dec. 9, 1925, Nov. 6, 1927; *Beaumont City Directory, 1925-1926*, 7; Federal Writers' Project, *Beaumont: A Guide to the City and Its Environs,* (Houston: Anson Jones, 1939), 118.

25. BE, Nov. 14, 1926; BJ, Dec. 8, 1926; *Houston Post*, Nov. 15, 1933; Clark, *Marrs McLean*, 67-69.

city's history. Approximately $20 million in new construction was in progress, and all facets of commercial, industrial, and residential development were affected. The building boom continued into 1929, when at least 18 apartment projects and 16 commercial buildings were begun.[26]

When the Great Depression hit, however, even the strong oil economy could not sustain the fantastic growth that Beaumont had experienced. Yount-Lee assisted Beaumont and the surrounding vicinity indirectly by the development of major oil fields. But there were other instances when both the company and its officers gave direct aid to several worthwhile causes. Unfortunately, many of these deeds were not made public, but the few that were gave valuable insight into the organization's moral character. In 1928, when a $350,000 fund drive for a new Beaumont Masonic Temple experienced difficulty, the Yount-Lee Oil Company gave $25,000 to the effort, even though Frank Yount was not a Mason. In November 1931, the company and its principal officers gave $17,500 to the Beaumont Community Chest. Yount-Lee contributed $10,000; Yount, $4,000; Rothwell, $1,500; and Phelan, $2,000.[27]

The most celebrated demonstration of Yount-Lee community involvement occurred when the city of Beaumont, hard-hit by the Depression and loss of tax revenues, could not pay approximately 200 employees of the General Department, which consisted of city officials, clerks, policemen, and firemen. These individuals had not only taken a 30-percent salary cut over the past several months but were also receiving pay on an irregular basis, because the city was attempting to maintain a repayment schedule at the local banks on previously borrowed funds. Beaumont mayor E. A. Fletcher tried to borrow more capital, as was the usual practice. This time, however, he learned that the city was no longer credit worthy because of over $900,000 in delinquent taxes that had accumulated over the past 15 years. The banks indicated that the current economic crisis made it impossible for anyone to forecast the percentage of current revenue collections that would be available for repayment of outstanding loans. Fletcher and Paul H. Millard, Beaumont city manager, were encouraged to collect the required funds from the delinquent tax base instead of trying to borrow more money.

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26. BE, Jan. 1, 2, Feb. 6, 26, April 12, Dec. 13, 1927, Jan. 13, 1928, March 24, 1929, Jan. 2, 1932, and Dec. 28, 1933; Federal Writers' Project, *Beaumont*, 119-134; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930* (6 vols., GPO, 1932), vol. 3, part 2, 972; *Beaumont City Directory, 1933* (Houston: Morrison & Fourmy, 1933), 11.

27. BE, June 21, 1928, Nov. 13, 1931; Virginia Rothwell Birdwell (granddaughter of T. F. Rothwell) interview with the author, Aug. 25, 1987.

In desperation, Fletcher went on August 6, 1932, to see Frank Yount. After hearing the mayor's case, the oil man agreed to loan the city $60,000. The simple arrangement called for repayment when tax revenues for the current year were received. Yount-Lee would earn 6-percent interest, the same as the banks, and the city would furnish deficiency warrants as the only collateral. On August 9, the Beaumont City Commission, represented by Mayor Fletcher and Commissioners Sam Z. Powell and George A. Wells, passed the ordinance required for the issuance of the deficiency warrants. That same day, the City Council voiced its approval. Subsequently, the Yount-Lee loan was finalized.[28]

Tragically, the loan proceeds did not last long. When paychecks were issued for distribution on October 31, 1932, the general fund was depleted once more, and from November 14 to December 15, the General Department employees went without pay entirely. On December 21, Yount, saddened by these events, made an unsolicited call to city officials, inquiring about how much money was needed to pay the workers for a month. The answer was $22,000. A check was drawn in that amount, and Yount delivered it personally to Fletcher and Millard. The same type of agreement was struck as before, relative to interest earned and deficiency warrants. However, this time Yount added the stipulation that the paychecks must be distributed prior to Christmas. The City Commission met in special session on December 21, as did the City Council. Both parties approved the issuance of $22,000 in deficiency warrants. Consequently, the city obtained the additional loan, and its employees were paid before December 25. Beaumont was now indebted to Yount-Lee in the amount of $82,000 plus 6-percent interest. On February 1, 1933, after the receipt of tax revenues, the city repaid the full amount and $1,508.16 in interest.[29]

On January 31, 1933, the day before the city repaid the loan, Frank Yount celebrated his 53rd birthday. During those years, he had risen from humble beginnings to president and major stockholder of a multimillion dollar oil empire, and stood now at the zenith of his career. Because the corporation was privately owned, Yount-Lee's exact worth was and still remains a mystery; financial details of that nature were privy only to a select few. Even though Yount as its chief executive was extremely wealthy, he attempted, with some degree of success, to maintain a confidential private life. But he was news, and Beaumont, the

28. BJ, Aug. 6, 1932; BE, Aug. 7, 1932; Minutes of City Commission and City Council, 9: 557, and Minutes of Ordinances, 6: 971, Office of City Clerk, Beaumont, TX.

29. BE, Oct. 29, Nov. 14, Dec. 22, 1932, and Feb. 2, 1933; BJ, Dec. 21, 1932; Minutes of the City Commission and City Council, 9: 612, and Minutes of Ordinances, 6: 1005, Office of City Clerk.

L. L. Allen, photographer. Presumably Frank Yount in white inspecting the wreckage of McFaddin No. 29 (detail, 1927). *Courtesy of the Lamar University Archives and Special Collections, Beaumont, TX.*

city that profited most by his good fortune, portrayed him as "larger than life." Yount, his wife Pansy, and daughter Mildred (born on May 2, 1920, and adopted by the couple while they lived at Sour Lake), were the subject of several Beaumont newspaper articles. Even so, all attempts to gain an accurate insight into the oil man's personality always seemed to fall short of expectations. Perhaps too much was anticipated from this self-made man who disliked being the center of attention.[30]

At the age of 53, Yount received one of the highest honors that his city could bestow. On June 15, 1933, the Rotary Club named him as the most outstanding citizen of Beaumont. Yet, regardless of his wealth, which was estimated at over $8 million, and the vast personal recognition that he had received, the oil man remained modest. The term often applied to him, "the Godfather of Beaumont," was most appropriate, as he and the Yount-Lee Oil Company were remarkably unaffected by the Depression. Subsequently, both helped the city overcome its economic crisis.[31]

30. BE, June 15, 1933.

31. BE, Jun 15, 1933; *Houston Post,* Nov. 15, 1933, Probate Records, 55: 295, Jefferson County Clerk, Beaumont, TX.

On November 13, 1933, without warning, Frank Yount died of a heart attack. His death sent shockwaves through the financial structure of Beaumont, and citizens mourned his passing as if they had lost a member of their immediate family. Yount had become an institution. After the City Council's regular session on November 15, Mayor Fletcher proclaimed that city offices would close at noon the next day in remembrance of their benefactor.

The day of the funeral, November 16, some 3,000 people gathered outside the Yount home. Cars lined the streets for blocks. Since all Yount-Lee operations had come to a standstill, over 800 employees came to pay their respects to their fallen leader. Although Yount's family attempted to limit the size of the service, the large assemblage was inevitable because of his community stature. Temporary facilities at Beaumont's Magnolia Cemetery were utilized until Pansy Yount decided to construct a $100,000 combination mausoleum and chapel of greenstone from the Yount-owned quarry at Manitou, Colorado. This edifice was completed by April 30, 1937; however, sometime after World War II, the structure suffered hurricane wind damage. According to Mrs. Yount's wishes, the mausoleum was torn down, and Yount was buried at the original site.[32]

After Yount's death, the company, with Rothwell as president, carried on normal operations in the field; however, there were no real developments and very little enthusiasm. By November of the following year, the stockholders, recognizing that the company was not the same without its founder, decided to sell while the stock value remained reasonably high. After lengthy negotiations concluded on July 31, 1935, the Stanolind Oil and Gas Company, a subsidiary of the Standard Oil Company, paid $41,803,030.48 to Houston attorney Wright Morrow for specific Yount-Lee assets rather than the company itself. This transaction was the third largest that had taken place in the United States to that time.[33]

When the transaction was completed, Stanolind had acquired Yount-Lee assets including approximately 680 wells (production was almost at a standstill) in both Texas and Louisiana that produced a net of between 18,942 to 20,000 barrels daily, the Spindletop tank farm, the Neches River dock and storage facilities, over 5 million barrels of oil in storage, the Yount-Lee interest in the East Texas pipeline, and full interest in the pipeline that connected Beaumont to High Island. Yount-Lee also turned over leases and fee land involving approxi-

32. BE, Nov. 14, 1933.

33. BE, Nov. 14, 1933, and Aug. 1, 1935; *New York Times*, Aug. 1, 1935; *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 1, 1935; Clark and Halbouty, *Spindletop*, 243-247; William A. Kirkland, *Old Bank-New Bank, The First National Bank of Houston, 1866-1956* (Houston: Pacesetter, 1975), 85-88.

mately 283,000 acres, of which 280,000 were undeveloped. Morrow, who acted as intermediary between Yount-Lee and Stanolind, received all other company assets, which included real estate. The Beaumont properties were valued at over $900,000. The company's sale price to the Yount-Lee stockholders was approximately $48 million (Stanolind's $41.8 million plus another $6 million raised by Morrow). The total amount was distributed as follows: the Yount estate, $15 million; E. F. Woodward, a partner, $11.5 million; T. F. Rothwell and his wife, Mabel, $5.7 million; Harry Phelan and family, $7.5 million; Bill Lee (brother of T. P. Lee), $3.4 million; and the gentleman who had put up the original $25,000 that had made it all possible, T. P. Lee himself (who had since given away much of his stock), $3.4 million. Three other officers who owned non-voting stock received about $300,000 each.[34]

Stanolind took over Yount-Lee's field operations effective August 1, 1935. Immediately, the public raised questions that concerned several key issues, among them the future of Yount-Lee employees and the community's relationship with the new owners and the local office, if there was to be one. Acting quickly, Stanolind initiated a physical examination program that was required of all prospective employees. Speculation was that about 80 percent of Yount-Lee field personnel would be switched from one company payroll to the other; however, the prospects of the corporate office employees were not as good. On August 1, they were greeted by two memorandums, posted outside the office entrance. Each stated that all former Yount-Lee employees were terminated until further notice. This must have been a very sobering experience for the 25 to 30 office employees who had remained loyal to the company all those years. Over the next few days, however, things settled down. On August 2, W. Gilbert Prince, a former Yount-Lee supervisor, was named as Stanolind's superintendent for the new Beaumont district office. Some of the office personnel remained with the local operation, some were transferred to Stanolind's Tulsa office, while others left the company altogether.[35]

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34. BE, Aug. 1, 1935; *New York Times,* Aug. 1, 1935; *Wall Street Journal,* Aug. 1, 1935; Paul H. Giddens, *Standard Oil Company (Indiana), Oil Pioneer of the Middle West* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1955), 560-561; Emmett Dedmon, *Challenge and Response, A Modern History of Standard Oil Company (Indiana)* (Chicago: Mobium, 1984), 45.

35. M. W. McClendon, former assistant secretary-treasurer and last surviving officer of the Yount-Lee Oil Company, interview with the author, Sept. 9, 1987; Marjorie Gibson Giles, former receptionist-secretary of the Yount-Lee Oil Company, telephone interview with the author, Sept. 24, 1987; BE, Aug. 3 and 4, 1935; BJ, Aug. 1, 1935.

Wright Morrow began dismantling Yount-Lee immediately. On September 2, 1935, he changed the company's place of business from Beaumont to Houston. The capital stock amount was decreased to $420,000, or 4,200 shares at $100 each, on December 24, 1936. Again on July 22, 1937, the amount was reduced to $1,000, or 10 shares at $100 par value. The officers and the board of directors, which consisted of Morrow, president; Roger Guthrie, vice president; George P. Murrin, secretary; Harry C. Weeks, director; and H. I. Wilhelm, director, filed a corporate dissolution request with the Texas Secretary of State on November 4, 1943, and when the state complied on December 6, the liquidation was complete. What did Morrow receive for all his effort? The Houston attorney acknowledged that as of 1944, he had made about $500,000 profit on the deal.[36]

With Stanolind's purchase of its oil and oil-producing and related properties, Yount-Lee, for all practical purposes, ceased to exist on July 31, 1935. But it receded into the pages of history with dignity, and the remaining former stockholders and officers continued to generate strong leadership in their respective cities. Yount-Lee's economic and civic contributions to Beaumont and the entire Gulf Coast were immeasurable. The region had beamed with pride because it was home to the largest independent oil operator on the coast and probably the most successful in the entire country. When searching for heroes among contemporaries, one usually returns to bygone days for examples. So it is with the Yount-Lee Oil Company, a true hero among the oil greats of its day.

36. Charter Records, no. 28005, Sept. 1, 1935, vol. 15, Dec. 31, 1936, vol. 17, July 27, 1937, vol. 19, Dec. 6, 1943, vols. 21-22, TXSS; Clark and Halbouty, *Spindletop*, 246-247.

Born of Discord

The Origins and Early Years of Central Baptist Church of Port Arthur

John W. Storey

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By 1912, when Central Baptist Church was founded, Arthur Stilwell's dream of Port Arthur as a tropical paradise nestled beside the clear waters of Sabine Lake had long since faded, forever altered by the Spindletop gusher just south of Beaumont on January 10, 1901. Spindletop revolutionized the petroleum industry. Major oil companies quickly emerged, pipelines soon tied Port Arthur to the giant gusher and by 1901 Gulf and by 1902 Texaco had bustling refineries in the city. From a sleepy community of about 900 in 1900, Port Arthur was a thriving port of 7,663 by 1910 and 50,902 by 1930, its future secured by an expanding petroleum industry.[1]

A surging population composed in part of tough roughnecks and roustabouts and slick promoters looking to make a quick buck presented a mighty challenge to the godly, who saw in the proliferation of local saloons and brothels proof of

In 2011, John W. Storey retired from the History Department at Lamar University after 43 years, 19 of which he served as chair. He is a distinguished scholar of American religious history, having written or edited numerous, award-winning books, including *Texas Baptist Leadership and Social Christianity, 1900-1980* (1986), *Southern Baptists of Southeast Texas, 1888-1988* (Co-author, 1988), *The Religious Right* (Co-author, 1995), *Religion and Politics* (Co-author, 2001), and *Twentieth-Century Texas: A Social and Cultural History* (Co-editor, 2008). He edited the *Record* for 2011. The East Texas Historical Association named Storey Educator of the Year for 2007, and he received the Regents Merit Award and named Regents Professor and Distinguished Faculty Lecturer.

1. NHT, 5: 271-272; Judith Walker Linsley, Ellen Walker Rienstra, and Jo Ann Stiles, *Giant under the Hill: A History of the Spindletop Oil Discovery at Beaumont, Texas in 1901* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 2002), 104; Sallye Sheppeard, "Southeast Texas Heritage," in Sheppeard, ed., *Texas in the Twenty-First Century: The Cultural and Historical Background of Southeast Texas* ([Beaumont:] Texas Committee for the Humanities, 1988), 36-43.

Satan's power. The need for spiritual nurture was obvious, and the faithful of numerous denominations responded. Sizeable numbers of Catholics, Baptists, and Methodists, both blacks and whites, and smaller groups of Mormons, Jews, and Lutherans resided in southeast Texas by 1900. Established in 1897, the first worship facility in Port Arthur was non-denominational and welcomed all comers. On September 21, 1902, First Baptist Church was officially constituted, and from that body Central Baptist emerged a decade later, the result of internal discord.[2]

Congregational autonomy has been a hallmark of the Baptist faith for centuries. Unlike Catholic, or Episcopal, or Presbyterian bodies, Baptists have no hierarchical centralized authority. Every local congregation is an independent and democratically self-governing entity, selecting its own officers and calling its own pastor. Democracy can be messy, of course, and often is in Baptist fellowships. Differences of opinion over such matters as authority (who runs the church?), leadership style, declining attendance, theology, and even "poor" sermons (definitely a subjective judgment) can get a preacher fired, or precipitate a disruptive split in the congregation itself. Facilitating this latter prospect is the ease of establishing a new Baptist church, as exemplified by the formation and early years of Central Baptist Church. Born of discord, Central Baptist also endured discord, a pattern common in Baptist life.

While splits in Baptist congregations are routine, breakups led by the pastor himself are somewhat more exceptional. Such was Central's origins. Joseph Warren Bates became the pastor of Port Arthur's First Baptist congregation just before Christmas 1911. Ten months later, October 1912, he and 14 other malcontents bolted from the fold, moved two blocks to Procter Street, and established Central Baptist Church. In the words of one of Central's future pastors, "there was no justification for" doing this, certainly no justification for planting a new church so close to an existing one. So why did they do it? Central Baptist records offer no explanation, but minutes of the local Southeast Texas Baptist Association (SETBA) disclose that a controversy of some sort definitely existed.

2. W. T. Block, "The Progress of the Roman Catholic Church in the Golden Triangle to 1988," and "Progress and the Present state of Jews and Judaism in the Golden Triangle of Texas, 1876-1988" in Sheppeard, ed., *Texas in the Twenty-First Century*, 118-20, 131-35; Port Arthur's First Baptist Church, Ninety-seventh Anniversary (pamphlet), 6-7, Port Arthur First Baptist Church Archives, Port Arthur, TX.

The Rev. Joseph Warren Bates. Some of his contemporaries thought he bore a slight resemblance to former President Thodore Roosevelt. *Courtesy of Central Baptist Church Archives, Port Arthur, TX.*

Unfortunately, associational records shed no light on the nature of the conflict, leaving one to speculate, to draw tentative conclusions from suggestive clues.[3]

Perhaps the problem was nothing more than personality. In the four years immediately prior to coming to Port Arthur, Bates had pastored three other congregations for relatively brief periods, a hint perhaps, of a man difficult to get along with. It seems unlikely the association would have addressed a personality dispute in a local church, however, and brief tenures were rather common in an age when many Baptist congregations still extended "annual calls," the practice of hiring a preacher for one year, then on the anniversary date each year thereafter deciding whether to extend the call or find a more suitable preacher. It was a practice that not only enhanced congregational control over the preach-

3. Travis Edwin Cannedy, "Fifty Years in the Ministry" (ThD diss., Pikes Peak Bible Seminary, 1942), 61; CBCM, Oct. 14 and Dec. 11, 1912; John W. Storey and Ronald C. Ellison, *Southern Baptists of Southeast Texas: A Centennial History, 1888-1988* (Beaumont: Golden Triangle Baptist Association, 1988), 79.

er, but also made for brief pastorates. Without entirely dismissing personality, theology most probably was the cause of the rift at First Baptist. A New Yorker schooled at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, the well-educated Bates was no doubt familiar with John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) and Cyrus I. Scofield (1843-1921), two erstwhile lawyers who had left the bar for the cloth. Both men popularized dispensational premillennialism, a gloomy, apocalyptic scenario in which history was divided into a series of epochs, or dispensations, leading to such end-time matters as the Second Coming and the Battle of Armageddon.

In post-Civil War America, the Age of Charles Darwin, Darby found a receptive audience, particularly among Presbyterians and Baptists of a fundamentalists bent who took refuge in his literalism and certitude. From 1882-1895 and again from 1902-1907 Scofield pastored First Congregational Church of Dallas, and in 1909 he published *The Scofield Reference Bible*, which became one of the most influential sources of dispensational premillennialism in the twentieth century. J. Frank Norris, the controversial pastor of First Baptist Church, Fort Worth, whose views on the subject evolved in the early twentieth century, was probably the best known proponent of dispensational premillennialism in Texas.[4]

Although no evidence links Bates to either Darby or Scofield, or, for that matter, Norris, it is nonetheless a plausible assumption that he was familiar with them, for he was fascinated with biblical prophecy and eschatology, or things pertaining to the end of time. Involving conflicting interpretations of the Book of Revelation, as well as sharp disagreements over the Rapture and the exact number of dispensations, dispensational premillennialism could be divisive. In January 1916, for instance, a letter to the SETBA accused Bates and Central Baptist of not being "in accord with Baptist teachings" and of promoting practices "contrary to the New Testament." Since the letter offered no specifics, the association refused to investigate, which suggests it placed no stock in the charges. Even so, at least some fellow Baptists apparently took exception to

4. Glenn H. Utter and Storey, *The Religious Right: A Reference Handbook* (Third Edition, Millerton, NY: Grey House Publishing, Inc., 2007), 37, 86, 131-132. See also, Barry Hankins, *God's Rascal: J. Frank Norris and the Beginnings of Southern Fundamentalism* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1996), 22, 24, 74-79, 89, 173; Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1992), 87-89, 98-99, 148, 226, 315-316.

Bates's teachings, and in all likelihood such was the case in October 1912 when he and his small band abandoned First Baptist.[5]

Regardless of the precise cause of the split, the new congregation got off to a good start. Harmony prevailed, at least for the moment. They agreed on immediate organizational needs as well as long-term religious objectives, notably a commitment to advance the Good News. The church acquired property on Procter Street and constructed of a simple, 30-by-40-feet wooden structure. The membership quickly grew to 40. A fellowship born of discord, however, was soon overtaken by discord. The controversy centered around the pastor and the church clerk Russell H. Dunn, a charter member from whom the group had purchased the Procter Street property. In October 1913, to help pay Bates's annual salary of $600.00, Central appealed to the SETBA for financial help, a common practice for fledgling congregations. The association responded favorably, but, for some reason, Dunn objected, and in January 1914 he forwarded a message to the association's executive board asserting "that in his opinion our church needed a new pastor more than financial aid."[6]

A stunned congregation demanded an explanation. Why did Dunn oppose financial help from the association? Why would he make such a remark about Bates? Dunn's only answer was hardly satisfactory. It was in the best interest of the church, declared he, not to seek financial aid. Events swiftly spiraled downward. On Sunday morning, February 15, 1914, after touting the progress made by the group under his leadership, Bates resigned, declaring recent developments had made it "unwise" for him "to continue as pastor." In April 1914 Dunn and his wife withdrew from Central, along with several others, including a number of charter members. The association attempted to calm the waters at Central, but its effort failed.[7]

With its survival in question by mid-1914, the struggling congregation turned once again to Bates, who had retained the confidence of a majority of the faithful. Thus, in February 1915 he resumed his pastorate at Central, and a number of charter members returned. In March the congregation relocated to a more promising residential neighborhood near the center of the city. By 1919 the membership numbered about 60 and was steadily growing. Now fully staffed,

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5. Storey and Ellison, *Southern Baptists*, 81-83; Slayden Yarbrough, "Premillennialism Among Baptist Groups," *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* (4 vols., Nashville: Broadman Press, 1982), 4: 2424.

6. CBCM, Oct. 14 and Dec. 11, 1912, Oct. 1, 8 and Nov. 30, 1913, Feb. 11, 1914.

7. CBCM, Feb. 15, April 8, 18, May 6 and 24, 1914; Storey and Ellison, *Southern Baptists*, 81-83.

including a pianist, the church boasted solid Sunday School, Training Union, and Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) programs.[8]

By the usual material standard, Bates's second stint as Central's pastor was a success. Bates certainly thought it had been. With obvious pride, in July 1919 he recounted his achievements: Central's total membership had quadrupled; it occupied "a corner lot in a most desirable location;" it had paid the mortgage on its main structure; and its financial condition was good. Yet, for all that, Bates was never far, it seems, from a certain amount of discord. . In July 1919 one of his deacons informed him "that members of another Baptist church of this city" wanted to unite with Central "upon a change in the pastorate, satisfactory to them." In light of that, Bates decided "it best to tender" his "resignation as pastor of the Central Baptist Church of this city." Whether salary had anything to do with this second resignation is unclear, but it must have grated on Bates somewhat, for another achievement to which he wryly alluded in July 1919 was that the membership was now "able to support a pastor." That remark obviously was intended to chide a congregation that had often failed to pay Bates's salary on time, or even to pay the full amount he had coming. At the time of his resignation Bates was owed $749.00 in back pay, roughly a year's salary. With customary nonchalance, the congregation voted to pay toward that amount "any sum" it "had to spare." In other words, certain financial obligations had to be met, such as utility bills and mortgage payments, but the preacher's salary could wait. Within weeks of leaving Central the 42-year-old Bates received a unanimous call to a Baptist congregation in Beeville, near Corpus Christi.[9]

To be near two daughters teaching in the local high school, the elderly Daniel I. Smyth moved from Grandview, Texas to Port Arthur in October 1919. Almost 79 years old, he was a distinguished educator-preacher who counted among his friends such notable Texas Baptists as Dr. James B. Gambrell, who had held several positions of responsibility in the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT), Dr. J. B. Tidwell, head of the Bible Department at Baylor University, and Dr. George W. Truett, the renown pastor of First Baptist, Dallas. Baylor University had acknowledged Smyth's long service to Baptist life in Texas by awarding him an honorary doctorate in July 1916. Arriving in Port Arthur not long after Bates's departure, Smyth appeared to be heaven sent. In any event, the opportunity was too good to let slip away, and in December 1919 Central

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8. CBCM, Feb. 7, March 10 and 17, 1915, Jan. 9, 1918, March 5, 9, 17, April 2, 20 and July 30, 1919.

9. CBCM, July 30, Aug. 6, 10, 27, Sept. 3 and 17, 1919.

The Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Travis Edwin (T. E.) Cannedy and daughter Kathryn. *Courtesy of Central Baptist Church Archives, Port Arthur, TX.*

called the elderly preacher as its interim pastor. Six months later he accepted the position fulltime. Although illness forced his resignation in December 1921, he had restored calm and purpose to the troubled fellowship. Membership had grown, totaling almost 90 by May 1920 and requiring an enlargement to the congregation's building. Smyth's successor, Cornelius Bowles, dubbed "the boy preacher" in the local newspaper, was in his early twenties. Lasting only from May 1922 to October 1922, his brief stay was significant primarily for initiating a fundraising drive for a new building.[10]

In January 1923, the Rev. Travis Edwin (T. E.) Cannedy, the longest serving of all Central's pastors, took the helm and navigated the congregation through some of the more tumultuous times in American life—the boom-and-bust '20s, the Great Depression, and World War II. Of Scotch-Irish ancestry and the oldest of 13 children, Cannedy was born on March 4, 1872, in rural Hunt County

10. CBCM, Sep. 10, Oct. 29, Nov. 19 and Dec 10, 1919, May 5 and 30, 1920, Feb. 5, 9 and March 12, 1921, Jan. 2, March 17, April 12, May 5, July 12 and Sept. 22, 1922; *Port Arthur Daily News*, April 26, June 2 and Oct. 20, 1922; PAN, Feb. 10, 1931.

in northeast Texas. Quite young when his mother died, he was raised by "the best of stepmothers." Unlike the Apostle Paul, his conversion was anything but a Damascus-road experience. He could "never . . . tell exactly when and where," but nonetheless was "persuaded" in his "mind" of his change of heart. Accordingly, he joined the Elm Creek Missionary Baptist Church on Wednesday night, September 11, 1889, was baptized a month later, enrolled in Baylor University in 1891, preached his first sermon at a Waco jail, and was licensed to preach on January 1, 1892. Perhaps because of the undramatic nature of his conversion, Cannedy was soon engulfed by profound doubt. Was his salvation real? Had he been saved? Unable to answer such questions unequivocally, he refused to be ordained, surrendered his license, set aside the Bible, dropped out of Baylor, turned to skepticism, and even contemplated suicide. But the storm lifted. Further reading of the Scriptures satisfied him that not everyone had to have a Paul-like experience. For some, the change came gradually, but was no less genuine than Paul's. Moreover, Cannedy concluded that to doubt one's conversion was actually evidence of conversion, for if one had not been converted there would be nothing to doubt.[11]

Assurance regained, Cannedy returned to the fold, and ordination followed on Sunday, June 3, 1894. For six years he pastored small rural congregations and taught school, then headed to Louisville, Kentucky, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In September 1905, armed now with bachelors and masters degrees in theology, he returned to Texas and for the next 12 years pastored congregations in Dallas, Graham, Fort Worth, Wichita Falls, and Seymour, and one in Oklahoma City. In November 1917 he was called to Magnolia Avenue Baptist Church in Beaumont, a discouraged congregation that had been pastorless for quite a while. He rejuvenated that body, gave it a renewed sense of mission, and in so doing established himself as a leader in the SETBA. It was no surprise, therefore, when the association selected him as its missionary in November 1920, a position that enabled him to preach in every church in the association and to thoroughly familiarize himself with southeast Texas. At almost 49 years of age, Cannedy was a man in his full maturity, and he was bringing that experience to Central Baptist Church. It was he who put the church on solid ground and made it one of the leading fellowships in southeast Texas.[12]

In Cannedy, Central got a pastor of definite and strong opinions. Remembered more as a teacher than a preacher, not particularly dynamic but informative,

11. CBCM, Jan. 10 and 14, 1923; Cannedy, "Fifty Years," 1-9; Cannedy, *Experiences of a Young Minister* (Caddo Mills, TX: [n.p.], 1901), pamphlet, CBCA.

12. Cannedy, "Fifty Years," 37-35, 38-39, 46-54.

Cannedy regarded "the pulpit" as the "preacher's throne" and the worship service as a "sacred hour." His messages were not intended to make people feel good, or to assure them that prosperity awaited the righteous, *ala* many contemporary ministers such as Joel Osteen who attract throngs with a prosperity gospel. In Cannedy's opinion, preachers who sought to entertain by telling "dog stories" and "sweet little essays of flowery bouquets" reduced their congregations to little more than "Admiration Societies." That did not happen at Central. Cannedy's sermons focused on the "fundamentals of God's Holy Work," matters of repentance, grace, regeneration, and justification. Among his sermons were "Jesus, The World's Teacher," dealing with a practical application of the Sermon on the Mount in a modern world; "Loving and Forgiving," focusing on the benefits of forgiveness; and "Gratitude and Courage," calling attention to "the comforts and enjoyments His church has afforded us. "This no nonsense demeanor in the pulpit did not mean Cannedy lacked a sense of humor. On the contrary, his weekly columns in the church newsletter disclosed a playful wit. In early 1941, for example, he diagnosed an "illness" afflicting all church goers at one time or another, Morbus Sabbaticus. It came on suddenly just before church time, never lasted more than 24 hours, usually going away quickly once the worship services ended.[13]

In the structure of a Baptist church the deaconry has considerable responsibility. As Cannedy put it, "the pastor and the deacons" were "related as mutual helpers," and the "right kind of deacon" was "often the pastor's best friend, as well as an honor to his church." But what was the "right kind of deacon"? On that Cannedy had strong feelings, for he was convinced many church problems resulted from deacons overstepping their authority. With the election of a slate of deacons scheduled for the spring 1929, Cannedy offered advice to the congregation. "These men should be sound in Baptist doctrine," said the preacher, and to ensure that outcome he pointed the members to Acts 6 and I Timothy 3. Culture as much as scripture shaped Cannedy's view, however, for he elaborated that men who had "the habitual habit of swearing ('cussing'), drinking whiskey, beer or home brew, card playing, dancing, attending Sunday picture shows, hunting and fishing on Sundays, or otherwise unnecessarily desecrating the Lord's day" should not be ordained. And do not overlook "the suitability of their wives," he added.[14]

13. Cannedy, "Fifty Years," 17. See also, Cannedy Radio Sermon, CBCA; *Tidings from Central Baptist Church*, Feb. 2, 1941, newsletter, CBCA; Oscar Travis and Frances Travis interview, Aug. 8, 2011.

14. Cannedy, "Fifty Years," 19; *Tidings*, April 21, 1929.

In May 1929 the Central Baptist leadership adopted a lengthy resolution outlining what they expected of deacons. Cannedy's influence is unmistakable. Acknowledging that only the pastor and deacons could serve as "Scriptural officers of a New Testament Church," it declared that the deaconry should "reinforce the pastor, . . . relieving him of much service," that deacons, as officers and servants, were deserving of respect but should not "arrogate to themselves more authority than . . . justified by the Scriptures," and that any deacon who became "so out of harmony with the pastor or the Church as to obstruct the Church's work," thus becoming "a vexation and hindrance rather than help," should resign.[15]

Absent from this policy statement was any suggestion that the deaconry was open to either women or divorced men. Though not surprising, this is revealing. Enormous social changes regarding women, sexual attitudes, and divorce were occurring in the 1920s, changes for the most part that Cannedy and his congregation found unappealing. In the later twentieth century many Baptist congregations would open the deaconry to both women and divorced men, but in the age of flappers and soaring divorce rates, Cannedy and Centralites stood adamant against such changes in tradition.. Cannedy and most members of the fellowship were religious fundamentalists, Christians at odds with much of the intellectual and social ferment of that era. But fundamentalists were not all the same. Years ago historian Richard Hofstadter drew a useful distinction between "militant" and "serene" fundamentalists. Whereas the former endeavored to root out dissent and impose upon all a narrow, rigid orthodoxy, the latter were comfortable in their beliefs and had no quarrel with people of opposing views. Cannedy and most Centralites were serene fundamentalists, or, to use a term with less pejorative baggage, they were evangelical conservatives. Cannedy said as much in 1936 radio sermon. Central Baptist was an "old-fashioned" church, he declared, and there was "no modernism in her pulpit." Neither women nor divorced men would be allowed to become deacons at Central Baptist, but the congregation was on no crusade to make that the standard for all churches.[16]

Music was another subject on which Cannedy minced no words. "The pastor in his pulpit is responsible for the direction of the entire service, including the singing," he asserted, adding, "This part of the service should never be surrendered to irresponsible choirs." Even "the choice of the hymns should rest with the pastor" so as to ensure that "the service of song" harmonized "with all

15. Cannedy, "Fifty Years," 19; *Tidings*, April 28, 1929; CBCM, May 1929.

16. Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), 117-136; Cannedy, radio sermons, KFD, Port Arthur, Jan. 12, 1936, CBCA.

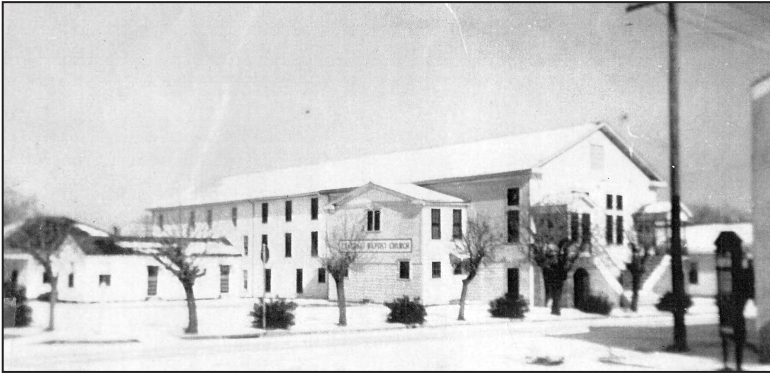
other parts of the service." Too many worship services, Cannedy insisted, had been marred by "improper . . . introductory hymns" and "inappropriate invitation" selections. In short, music should enhance the sermon, which Cannedy considered the focal point of worship. Central always had someone to lead congregational singing, play the instruments, and conduct choir rehearsal, but during Cannedy's tenure the congregation never had a music program as such headed by a professional whose sole responsibility was music. The closest the congregation came to that was with the arrival of S. W. Cowles in January 1928, but even he was a combination education/music leader. By every indication, Cannedy and Cowles got along fine, although the latter stayed only 10 months. The *Minutes* of October 1928 recorded that Cowles' "services with us" had been "quite satisfactory and harmonious," noting that he had "organized and built up a most splendid and efficient choir." One can only wonder if that laudatory declaration told the whole story.[17]

While local congregational autonomy was always paramount with Cannedy, he was also a man of broad denominational vision, one who always looked outward from the congregation to the world at large. This became apparent as soon as he arrived in Port Arthur. "The policy of this church and pastor," he announced, was "to have a part in every single thing the denomination stands for." Accordingly, he not only attended local associational meetings, statewide gatherings of the BGCT, and national conclaves of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), he constantly encouraged members to do the same. And he often boasted that Central had been better represented at this or that gathering than any other congregation in the association. Commenting on an area-wide meeting of the WMU, for instance, he proudly noted that Central's "report comparred [*sic*] favorably with that of other *progressive* churches." Cannedy's observation was justified, for abundant evidence confirms that Central certainly was a *progressive* church in terms of contributions to missions, evidenced by support of the new Cooperative Program.[18]

Begun in 1925, the Cooperative Program was an arrangement whereby the state conventions cooperated with the SBC in funding all denominational causes, those of the states as well as the national body. Central generously supported the program, and according to the pastor "usually" led "in denominational gifts, in proportion to its numerical and financial ability." Typical was the church's 1928 budget. Aside from salaries of the pastor ($2,400.00) and the educational direc-

17. Cannedy, "Fifty Years," 44; CBCM, March 18, May 2, Aug. 1, Sept. 23 and Oct. 28, 1928.

18. Italics not original to quote. Cannedy, "Fifty Years," 62-63; *Tidings*, March 23, 1924, Oct. 16, 1932, Sept. 24, 1933, April 18, 1943.



Built in 1924 on the corner of 9th Street and DeQueen Boulevard, this was home to Central Baptist Church during the Cannedy era. *Courtesy of Central Baptist Church Archives, Port Arthur, TX.*

tor ($1,800.00), the greatest amount—$800.00—went to the Cooperative Program. On top of this, Central routinely gave additional amounts for local and state causes, enabling Cannedy to remark in early 1943 that his congregation "led most of the churches of the association in their Home mission offerings." To be sure, the wealthier flocks at First Baptist, Port Arthur, and First Baptist, Beaumont, gave more in total dollar amounts, but none was more generous than Central in proportion to its financial resources.[19]

Central Baptist, however, was the undisputed leader in the Vacation Bible School (VBS) movement. The roots of this summer program for children ages three to 16 extend to the late nineteenth century, but not until 1910 or so did it gain much momentum. Seeing the schools as an arm of missions, Presbyterians and Northern Baptists led the way. The SBC embraced the movement in September 1924, and in 1925 some 300 Baptist churches across the South held VBS. While the primary purpose was Bible study and worship, VBS also allowed time for recreation, handcrafts, and refreshments in order to draw the youngsters in and hold their attention. Central was the only church in the SETBA, and one of only three statewide, to hold a school in 1925. Mrs. Annie Gee Cannedy, the preacher's wife, was instrumental in getting it started, to the delight of her husband, who was convinced kids learned more about the Bible in a two-week VBS than in the rest of the Sunday School year. Attendance waxed and waned,

19. Cannedy, "Fifty Years," 62-63; *Tidings*, Nov. (no. 49), 1927, April 18, 1943.

but an average of about 200 youngsters usually enrolled. With understandable pride, Cannedy boasted in 1942 that Central was "the only church in Texas" which had "sponsored eighteen successive vacation schools, according to the denominational Sunday School Board's Plan."[20] He was correct.

Of all groups during the Cannedy era, the WMU was the most vigorous and the most involved in every aspect of church life.. From supporting missionaries and assisting the poor to ministering to children and promoting stewardship, the ladies were not just involved they were often in the lead. Organized support of missionary endeavors by Baptist women dates from the early 1800s, as local groups in South Carolina and other states raised money for missions and other worthy causes. By the mid-1880s Texas Baptist women were similarly engaged, and in 1888 the SBC established the WMU as an auxiliary. Quite a few men at the time had serious qualms about these women's groups, fearing they would embolden the sisters to encroach upon the brothers' prerogatives. But many other men, pastors and laity, welcomed the ladies. Cannedy, whose wife was a prominent statewide leader in the Texas WMU, was among this latter group. Lamenting the poor attendance "of the brethren" at a prayer and missions service in 1940, he observed: "How the Lord's work would suffer, but for the good women." How right he was![21]

While their fundraising efforts are well known, the ladies did far more than that. Motivated by the belief that Christian *involvement* flowed from Christian *understanding*, the WMU devoted considerable attention to education, an endeavor Cannedy heartily supported. Over the years the women offered hundreds of study courses for the congregation on such topics as "Winning to Christ," "Teaching Methods in the New Graded Literature," "You Can Learn to Teach," "What Baptists Believe," "The Churches of the New Testament," and "Old Testament Studies" The Home Mission Board, or the Sunday School Board of the SBC, usually provided the literature, and members of Central who had already completed a certain number of courses, local pastors, missionaries on furlough, and leaders from the state office in Dallas generally did the teaching. Central Baptist definitely had one of the stronger WMU educational programs in the

20. Charles F. Treadway, "Vacation Bible School," *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, 2: 1440; Cannedy, "Fifty Years," 62; Mrs. Cannedy typescript, Sept. 13, 1955, CBCA; *Tidings*, June 29, 1930, June 21, 1931, June 9, 1934, June 7 and 21, 1942, June 17, 1945; Ellison, *Texas and Baptist Sunday Schools, 1829-1996* (Dallas: BGCT, 1997), 67.

21. Juliette Mather, "Woman's Missionary Union," *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, 2: 1509; Leon McBeth, *Texas Baptists: A Sesquicentennial History* (Dallas: Baptistway Press, 1998), 81, 86, 127; *Tidings*, Mar. 3, 1940.

SETBA, and it bothered the pastor that more members did not take advantage of the opportunities afforded them. The pastor's own personal quest for education had led him to obtain a doctorate from Pike's Peak Bible Seminary in Colorado in 1942. Toward the end of his ministry at Central it worried Cannedy that too many Centralites knew little about the Old Testament and the Prophets and even less about "our peculiarities as Baptists." Israel had perished for lack of knowledge, Cannedy asserted, and "so it is . . . today that so many of our people . . . are perishing (drying up) religiously and denominationally for lack of knowledge, or vision." If true, it certainly was no fault of the WMU.[22]

His many accomplishments notwithstanding, even Cannedy encountered discord. In 1928-1929 Central Baptist endured an unhappy split. Some members had come to believe that the pastor, then in his mid-50s, was too old. A younger man was needed. There was "talk" behind the pastor's back. Aware of this, a weeping Cannedy called out his detractors in an emotional Sunday morning worship service on December 9, 1928. He asked for a vote of confidence, whereupon the entire choir and a good many in the congregation—74 in all—walked out of the building. But the vast majority stood with the pastor. According to CBC *Minutes*, "a large . . . and representative" cross section of the membership "was called in special conference, and a motion carried, with none voting to the contrary, expressing the church's satisfaction with the pastor's leadership and desiring a continuation of his services as pastor." In early 1929 an additional 30 or so members withdrew and joined the previous group in the newly established Fourth Avenue Baptist.[23]

Considering that the choir figured prominently in this matter, and that former music director Cowles later became pastor of Fourth Avenue, one has to wonder if something more than the pastor's age was behind this division. The episode obviously bothered Cannedy for a long time thereafter. On the occasion of his tenth anniversary at Central in January 1933, he reflected that the decade had brought "trials and discouragements," adding: "The enemy hath sown tares among us," but "we" have been "triumphant" through "our Lord Jesus Christ." One of those tares no doubt was the split of 1928-1929. And as late as 1942 Cannedy wrote that "the large majority" of the "white Baptist churches" in Port

22. *Tidings*, Feb. 6 and Nov. 6, 1927, Feb. 22 and March 22, 1931, Feb. 14, 1932, March 4, 1934, April 21, 1940; Mather, "Woman's Missionary Union," 1515-1516.

23. Travis and Travis interview; R. E. Steward to Rev. T. E. Cannedy, Dec. 14, 1928, April 18, 1929, CBCA; CBCM, Dec. 9 and Dec. 16, 1928.

Arthur had been "constituted in a wrong spirit." Was he thinking of Fourth Avenue Baptist?[24]

Popular mythology notwithstanding, the Great Depression took its toll in southeast Texas. Many old-timers whose memories have grown fainter insist the region escaped the harshness of the depression because of the petro-chemical industry. Facts tell a different story. Across the area prices and wages slumped, unemployment rose, working hours decreased, businesses went under, farmers' profits evaporated, and relief agencies proved inadequate to the needs of the destitute. The closing of Kirby Lumber Company in late 1930 created a desperate economic situation in the northern reaches of the SETBA, and in Port Arthur the Texaco and Gulf refineries, which employed many of Central's men, managed to save jobs only by reducing workers' hours and wages. Declining property values and tax delinquencies forced local municipalities to slash budgets and cut expenditures, and even with that Port Arthur could not meet its payroll in April 1932.[25]

Religious institutions nationwide felt the pain. Congregations chopped budgets, curtailed programs, released preachers, and struggled to stay alive. The SETBA mirrored the national condition, as did Central Baptist. Effects of the depression on the church abounded. In 1931 it cut its contribution to the Cooperative Program by $500.00 and to associational missions by $75.00. By 1932 many members had left the area "seeking employment," and that same year "financial matters were so close" that publication of Cannedy's weekly newsletter had to be temporarily suspended and probably would not be printed regularly "until conditions are better." In March 1933 the pastor cancelled $300.00 of the amount owed him and reduced his salary by 12.5 percent, "with the understanding it be advanced again in the future." In November 1936, and once more in December 1938, Cannedy again wrote off a portion of the amount owed in salary. In July 1936 Church Treasurer and Deacon W. A. Lea made a fervent appeal to the membership. He reported that the church was falling behind financially. "It is rather embarrassing [sic] for me to say," Lea announced, "BUT we are not receiving enough cash each month to pay our monthly bills in full." He pleaded with the faithful to "take stock and see, if we can't have for our Slogan, 'KEEP

24. *Tidings*, Tenth Anniversary Edition, Jan. 1933, Cannedy, "Fifty Years," 63.

25. Paul Isaac, "Beaumont, Texas, and the Great Depression, 1929-1933," TGHBR, 14: 15-17, 28-29. [Reprinted in this volume—ed.]

OLD CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH' at the front, and we will not let her lag behind."[26]

Cannedy had always believed in tithing, which he insisted was sanctioned in the Old Testament and "definitely approved" by Jesus in the New Testament. In the face of the economic downturn, he steadily turned up the pressure on his congregation to tithe. He exhorted, implored, shamed his flock. In early 1932 he acknowledged that the depression was "working a hardship on many and hindering the Lord's work," but nonetheless asserted that if the godly would "only give their tithes . . . and make free-will offerings" the work of the Lord would "gloriously go on." More than once the preacher reminded the fellowship that "our gifts" were "a measure of our love for Christ" and that "a blessing" awaited the tithers. Central launched a Tithing Campaign in October 1935, and the pastor promised to print the names of tithers for all to see in his weekly newsletter. "Of course," Cannedy added hastily, humble Christians should not "use a megaphone to announce to all around" that they were tithers, but they "should seek to enlist others in tithing, both by precept and example." The irony here is inescapable. There was no need for "humble Christians" to use a megaphone; the preacher would use it for them. Central's wage earners were paid once, perhaps twice, a month, and Cannedy repeatedly reminded them that their pay day was the Lord's pay day, as in: pay day was last week, "Don't forget the Lord's part of your check"; or it was pay day, "Did you remember the Lord's tithe?"; or "You have had another 'payday' this week. Don't fail to remember the Lord with His part." Low attendance was another worry for Cannedy, for it adversely affected the offering plate. So anyone who was going to be out, perhaps on vacation, was asked to leave a check. In the midst of such persistent pleas for money one cannot help but notice that in May 1936 the men of the church raised enough cash to give the pastor a new 1936 Chevrolet Sedan.[27]

As with so many religious leaders and church goers of all faiths nationwide, Cannedy had little or no comprehension of the underlying causes of the Great Depression, the basic structural problems within the economy that had been

26. Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 919-22; Storey, *Texas Baptist Leadership and Social Christianity, 1900-1980* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1986), 70-71; Storey and Ellison, *Southern Baptists*, 119-122; CBCM, Aug. 5, 1931, March 1933, Nov. 1936, Dec. 1938; *Tidings*, June 19, 1932, July 26, 1936.

27. *Tidings*, Dec. 5, 1926, Nov. and Dec. 11, 1927, April 21, 1929, Feb. 14, June 19 and Oct. 16, 1932, April 9, 1933, June 23 and Oct. 20, 1935, Feb. 9, 16 and May 24, 1936; Fifteenth Anniversary Edition, 1938, Jan. 26, 1941; CBCM, Aug. 5, 1931, March 1933, Nov. 1936, Dec. 1938.

developing since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He understood the depression as essentially a spiritual crisis. People had turned away from God, and God had "withdrawn his favor," leaving them "to discover their own inability to cope with the commonest and simplest problems of life." The solution—return to Him "humbly and penitently." Tragically, the cure for the Great Depression turned out to be another global calamity, World War II. It was preparation for warfare that put Americans back to work and revived a languishing economy.[28]

Embarrassed and sobered by the blatant militarism of so many of the churches in World War I, Texas Baptists and religionists elsewhere urged caution as events in Europe and the Far East edged toward war in the late 1930s. Texas Baptist ethicist T. B. Maston, a longtime professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, gave expression to such sentiment a year prior to Pearl Harbor. Maston believed it had been a "tragic mistake" to use the pulpit during World War I "to whip up patriotism . . . and to encourage young men to enlist in the army." Thus, in October 1940 Maston urged Baptist preachers "to keep cool" lest they again become ensnared by war hysteria and "the spirit of intolerance" currently "so rampant in the world." Although the martial spirit took hold after the surprise attack at Pearl Harbor, the churches did not succumb to the kind of unrestrained fervor in which they indulged during World War I.[29]

At Central Baptist, Cannedy said nothing about international developments before Pearl Harbor. Afterwards, in early 1942, he told his flock that everyone would "be called on" to make sacrifices, and he frequently called attention to the service in distant lands of "our soldier boys" and girls. He exhorted those on the home front to do their part by buying "a bond, or at least stamps," and added, "Cut out a pleasure ride, a picture show or cold drink. 'Remember Pearl Harbor.'" In addition to rationing, fuel and tire shortages, and occasional blackouts, the war also brought some economic improvement. The signs were evident at Central by the early 1940s, reflected in raises in the salaries of the pastor and the housekeeper and increased contributions to home missions, the Cooperative Program, and other worthy causes. Of course, the war also brought death. Some of Central's young men died in combat. It did not happen often, but when it did the grief was shared by the church family. Sgt. C. J. Reed, Jr., the only son of the C. J. Reed family, was killed over Belgium on December 12, 1944. "Mrs. Reed has been confined to her bed from the shock for the past week." Sgt. John

28. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History*, 919-922; Cannedy, radio sermon, June 19, 1932, CBCA.

29. Storey, *Texas Baptist Leadership*, 86-88; Ahlstrom, *A Religious History*, 930-931.

E. Dodson was killed on Iwo Jima on March 21, 1945. He had been baptized at Central in August 1938 and had married Lula Mae Baynard on April 1, 1940. In addition to his wife, he left behind a "son and a daughter, who are yet too young to understand the meaning of this awful tragedy."[30]

By mid-1945 Cannedy's health had begun to fail. He had wanted to remain in the pulpit until January 1946, the twenty-third anniversary of his arrival. On doctor's orders, however, he retired in September 1945, quoting verse from *The Preacher's Farewell*:

> How swiftly the years of our pilgrimage fly,
> As weeks, months and seasons roll silently by.
> Our days are soon numbered and death sounds our knell,
> We scarce know our friends tell we bid them farewell.

Cannedy died a few months later, in February 1946, one month shy of his 74th birthday.[31]

The Cannedy years had been good years for Central Baptist Church. There had been steady growth and advancement. In 1923 it had been the weakest of Port Arthur's three white Baptist churches. Its 185 members assembled in a "poorly equipped makeshift of a building" on a small corner lot at 6th Street and St. Augustine. By 1945 the congregation numbered a healthy 700 and averaged about 250 weekly in Sunday School, soaring on one occasion to 572, and it worshipped in a thriving residential section on the corner of 9th Street and DeQueen Boulevard. Of the city's seven white Baptist churches in 1945, Central was surpassed in membership only by First Baptist, with over 2,000 members, and Memorial Baptist, slightly over 1,500. Its VBS set the standard for the state, its WMU was second to none, and its Men's Brotherhood was one of the stronger ones in the SETBA.[32]

Looking back, one is impressed by the wealth of activities offered by the church for members of all ages. A typical week in the mid-1930s, or 1940s, left little time to do anything outside the church: Sunday, morning and evening services, plus Sunday School; Tuesday, an all-day meeting of the WMU, starting at 9:45am; Wednesday, evening prayer meeting starting at 7pm and a meeting of

30. CBCM, Oct. and Dec. 1942, April 1945; Proposed budget plan, 1946, CBCA; *Tidings*, May 3, June 7 and 21, 1942, Jan. 14, April 29, and May 13, 1945.

31. *Tidings*, Sept. 9. 1945.

32. *Tidings*, April 15, 1928, Jan. 6, 1929, April 9, 1933. See also, CBCM, Nov. 7, 1938; Cannedy, "Fifty Years," 62-65; Storey and Ellison, *Southern Baptists*, 233-235.

the Workers' Council; Thursday, choir rehearsal; Friday, a meeting of the Men's Brotherhood at 7:30pm. And there were always social functions of some sort for the young people, or the WMU, or the Brotherhood in a member's home or at a nearby park, in addition to two revivals annually, which in those days lasted two to three weeks, and two weeks of VBS in the summer. While the primary objective of all this activity obviously was to grow in understanding of the Word and to share the message of Good News, there was another dimension. Central Baptist was not only the religious but also the social hub for its members. Cannedy understood that, recalling that in earlier times "the greatest social attraction" for a community had been the protracted revival meeting, an occasion for friends to congregate, share news, perhaps gossip, and enjoy one another's company. That is what Central was for its membership. It nourished not only the soul, but also satisfied the basic need for companionship. Cannedy left Central Baptist on solid ground and free of discord.[33]

33. Cannedy, "Fifty Years," 3; *Tidings*, Sept. 9, 1945.

Jefferson Theatre soon after completion (c. 1928), showing *The Magic Flame* (1927), starring Ronald Colman and Vilma Banky, and the short film *Dead Easy* (1927), starring Bobby Vernon. *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

The Jefferson Theatre

The Design and Construction of Beaumont's Movie Palace

Ara Ryherd Roden

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Too often, communities do not realize the value their historical structures until they are long gone. Too often, these cultural assets lie in ruins, victimized by the ravages of time, human predators, or remodeling projects that attempt to "modernize" them. Little or nothing can be done once we have lost these pieces of our history, except perhaps hear about how wonderful and grand they were. We might see an old photograph, but never could we experience the structure firsthand as our parents, grandparents, or great grandparents had in years past. When there is an exception to this sad rule, however, the building, with proper care, can become a public treasure and a tribute to the culture of a city, a state, and a nation. Such is the story of the Jefferson Theatre, designed and constructed with enormous expense, forethought, and pride.

From the time of the earliest development of the motion picture in the 1890s until the Golden Age of Hollywood in the 1940s, the facilities used to present this modern marvel of celluloid and light underwent a rapid and dramatic evolution. The first public "theaters" were makeshift, storefront creations composed of little more than a sheet, a row of benches, and a piano to drown out the roar of the loud projector. These were the "Nickelodeons," or the "poor man's shows," which between 1904 and 1909 dramatically rose in number from 25 to 8,000.

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Makeshift or not, this new form of entertainment generated an appeal that businessmen could harness and extend to the vast middle class of America. But, in order to deliver their product to a more demanding clientele, they had to make some changes. By 1912, exhibiters introduced the "made-over theater." These were infinitely more respectable or "legitimate" establishments in which patrons could "enjoy not only movies but the trappings of theatrical entertainment as well." During the 1910s and 1920s with the increasing popularity of the motion picture, the next stage in the evolution of the movie house would be its most dramatic. The movie palace was born. Through elaborate architecture and decoration, these entertainment meccas combined the elements of luxury, mystery, and illusion with an overwhelming, exotic style drawn from a wide variety of foreign cultures. During the peak period between 1915 and 1945, more than 4,000 of these palaces were built. Almost every major city in the United States had at least one grand motion picture theater to call its own. Beaumont, Texas, was no exception.[1]

As the industrial center of Southeast Texas and the site of one of the largest oil discoveries in the world, Beaumont's history was as dramatic as the movies themselves. Both lumber in the late nineteenth century and oil in the early twentieth century contributed to the city's rapid and steady population increases through the 1920s. Two peak years in this expansion were 1926 and 1927. These years not only saw the discovery and development of deep oil at Spindletop, but also the passing of a $1.25 million bond issue for civic improvements, the completion of the first unit of the Gulf States Utilities power plant, the addition of several residential neighborhoods, and the construction of several major structures within the city.[2]

For the residents of Beaumont and Southeast Texas, the future must have seemed bright indeed. What better way was there to celebrate prosperity than to spend the extra money on luxuries? What better luxury was there than entertainment, more specifically, the movies? Thus, the contemporary expansions of a young industry and young town were set on a convergent course that would result in the construction of what would soon become a credit to both industry and town alike, the Jefferson Theatre.

The story of the Jefferson Theatre itself began with the firm that first conceived and eventually carried out the idea of Beaumont's own million-dollar movie pal-

1. John Margolies and Emily Gwathmey, *Ticket to Paradise: American Movie Theaters and How We Had Fun* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1991), 9-13.

2. "Beaumont's 1926 Expansion Outlined," BJ, Jan. 1, 1927.

Construction of the Jefferson Theatre, Jan. 1, 1927. *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

ace. The Jefferson Amusement Company, incorporated on June 17, 1918, by Sol Gordon and Joe Clemmons, began modestly with $50,000 in capital and the ownership of the Tivoli and Crystal movie houses. The construction of a third house, the Liberty, was under way.[3] Even though growth seemed promising at first, real success would not come to the young business immediately. In 1920 after two years of operation, the Jefferson Amusement Company dissolved its corporation, and in the three years that followed, Gordon and Clemmons acted in a partnership, leasing two of their properties in Beaumont to Southern Enterprises of Texas. This change was short-lived. When the Southern Enterprises lease expired, the two men immediately reincorporated their firm. Afterwards, they entered into their most successful period. The company first purchased Beaumont's most popular theater, the Kyle Opera House, and followed with the acquisition other venues in Beaumont and Southeast Texas, including the Palace (1924), and the People's (1926).[4]

3. "Organization is Operating Many Houses," BJ, Nov. 12, 1927. The *Beaumont Journal* of this date included a special "Theater Section" to celebrate the opening of the Jefferson.

4. From a description of the Jefferson Amusement Company Records, prepared by Caroline M. Allen, Darenda Jackson, and Joe Walker, 1994, JACR.

In 1925, however, the Jefferson Amusement Company sold 50 percent of its stock to Saenger Theatres, Inc., of New Orleans. With the new affiliation came even more prosperity for Gordon and Clemmons and their business. The combined capital of the two firms allowed more than just the purchase of previously established movie houses, it also provided the means by which to implement a long-held goal of constructing of a movie palace.[5]

Within a few months of its new affiliation with the Jefferson Amusement Company, Saenger employed architect Emile Weil and sent him to Beaumont to select sites and make sketches for the new theater. Weil was no stranger to the architectural style popular in the design of theaters in those days. Not only had he traveled extensively in Europe and the United States in order to observe and study theatrical architecture, but he had used his studies in the design of a string of venues along the Gulf Coast, including the New Saenger Theatre in New Orleans, completed in 1927, the same year as the Jefferson.[6]

Chief among Weil's influences was an architectural style developed by world-renowned architect John Eberson. Through the design and construction of the 1923 Houston Majestic, Eberson had invented the "atmospheric theater," a style that soon became the standard for movie palaces all across the United States. The atmospheric theater drew its motifs from the romantic and rich periods of centuries past. Each of Eberson's theaters had a theme—maybe an Italian garden or a Spanish patio, perhaps an Egyptian temple, or Persian court. Eberson would reference any culture as long as it was luxurious, beautiful, and exotic. "The atmospheric theaters," architectural historian David Naylor observed, "were extremely conducive to hosting the fantasy worlds that the film makers sought to create for theater patrons." This style inspired budding architect Weil, and he applied Eberson's designs to his own work.

In February 1925, Weil arrived in Beaumont. Drawing from the historical blend of Texas cultures, he chose a Spanish motif, a popular choice for atmospheric theaters in both Texas and Florida. With the theme in mind and a pencil in hand, Weil made his designs for what was to become the Jefferson Theatre. He left nothing to chance, planning almost every detail, no matter how minute, with close adherence to the Spanish motif.[7]

5. "Organization," BJ, Nov. 12, 1927.

6. "Architect Who Built Theater Here Talented," BJ, Nov. 12, 1927.

7. David Naylor, *American Movie Palaces: The Architecture of Fantasy* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1981), 69, 73-74, 78.

Construction of the Jefferson Theatre, March 1, 1927. *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

This attention to detail is particularly apparent in the architectural specifications for the Jefferson Theatre compiled by Weil's firm. Ninety-two pages long, it provided extensive instructions and requirements on almost every feature of the building to potential contractors or subcontractors. In it, he specified what he did and did not want for the Jefferson. For example, he stipulated, "All structural steel must be capable, when cold, of bending through 180 degrees flat on itself for material [three fourths inches] in thickness and under, and over [three fourths inches] and including [one and one half inches] around a pin, the diameter of which is equal to the thickness of the pieces tested without sign of fracture on the convex surface of [the] bend." Obviously, Weil felt there should be no margin for mistake in the carrying out of his plan for the theater, and not just for the all-important structural frame. Similarly demanding remarks fill each page in the specifications. He insisted on "perfectly made" welds and rivets on the "artistic" wrought iron. For the plain concrete, he ordered gravel "clean washed, not less than [one fourth inches] in diameter." Weil also required photographs taken every 15 days by the contractor for "progress records." The closing paragraph of the specifications perhaps best portrays Weil's stern demands and expectations of the best. "The entire work must be done in a first

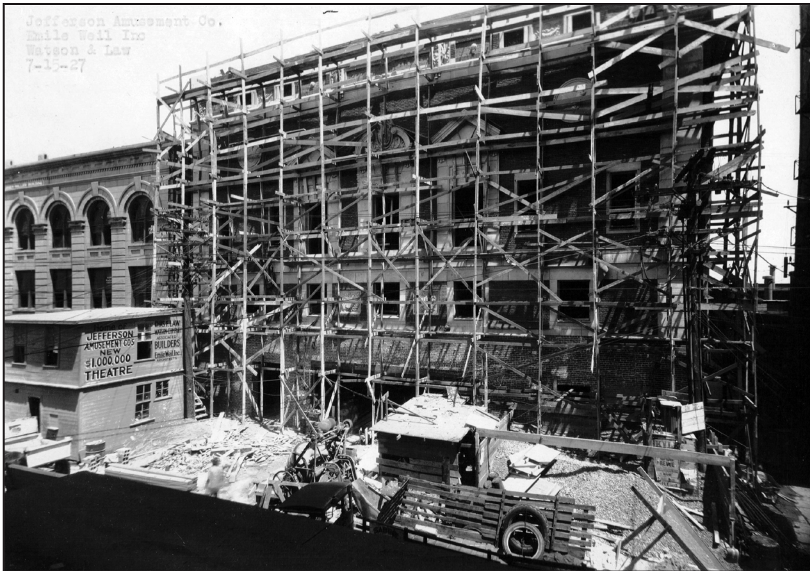
class and workman-like manner to the true intent and meaning of the plans and specifications," he insisted, "and on completion shall be free of all rubbish, finger marks, etc., and entire turned over in complete, proper, and satisfactory workman-like manner." Weil may have issued his specifications, but the company had yet to secure the purchase of a suitable plot of land in a prime location.[8]

After the dismissal of several sites as "inadequate," the Jefferson Amusement Company settled on a lot fronting Fannin Street. On December 2, 1925, about 10 months after Weil had arrived, the company purchased the land from Alice L. Keith and two concerns owned by R. C. Miller, the Beaumont Hotel Company, and the Beaumont Realty Company. In addition to the $65,000 cost, the purchase terms provided that the Jefferson Amusement Company begin construction of the new theater within one year of the date of the contract and that they complete the structure on or before three years after that deadline at a cost of no less than $250,000.[9]

Although there is no evidence that any of these terms were actually broken, the construction on the theater did not commence at a steady pace until early in 1927. The Jefferson Amusement Company hired two firms, the Watson Company of Dallas and Charles P. Law of Beaumont, as the main constructional contractors. Both were experienced firms, ranging from 15 to 22 years in the business, and had constructed, in the words of the *Beaumont Journal,* "everything from hostelries to bank structures and magnificent theaters." The Jefferson company commissioned other firms of varying size from all across the country for the more specialized tasks. Although the subcontractors changed from detail to detail, they adhered to Weil's demanding architectural specifications. A crew of 15 steel workers, including one who drove rivets into the Brooklyn Bridge, constructed the skeleton of the structure so that it could stand without its masonry. Contractors guaranteed the Barrett "specification roof" for 20 years. Crews installed an expensive air conditioning system that the *Beaumont Journal* described as "the finest refrigerating and ventilating plant in the south, and one of the finest in the world." This system was furnished by the Carrier Engineering Corporation of New Jersey at a cost of nearly $57,000. Builders also used the finest quality marbles from around the world, including white Italian, black and gold Italian, *verde* from France, black and white from New York, and Belgium black. These marbles were used throughout the structure, including the stairs,

8. Emile Weil, Architectural Specifications, 10, 16, 24, 33, 92, JACR.

9. "Organization," BJ, Nov. 12, 1927; Contract, purchase of Fannin Street property, 7, 46-54, JACR.



Jefferson Theatre under scaffolding, July 15, 1927. *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

the elaborate ticket booth, and the three expensive fountains, each of which reputedly cost as much as a 1927 model Ford car.[10]

The huge chandelier and the organ, however, far surpassed the fountains in cost and effect. Hand-engraved and measuring 18 feet in diameter, the Jefferson's chandelier weighed over 16,000 pounds and cost the company more than $30,000. However impressive it was, the chandelier did stray slightly from the Spanish motif of the rest of the theater. An influence from across the Pyrenees Mountains, the enormous fixture was an exact replica of one of the chandeliers in a set hanging in the Chamber of Mirrors at Versailles.[11]

10. "Beaumont and Dallas Firms Build Theater," "Expensive Materials From Five Nations Used in Construction of Jefferson: Stability is Basis of New Picture Home" and "Costly Air Conditioning Plant Insures Comfort for Jefferson Patrons," BJ, Nov. 12, 1927; Receipt #7214, Emile Weil to Jefferson Amusement Company, April 10, 1928, JACR.

11. "Historical Chandelier to Illuminate New Playhouse with Romantic Brilliance," BJ, Nov. 12, 1927. The writer of this article apparently believed erroneously that the chandelier was the authentic piece from Versailles. An architectural preservation plan of 1980 documents that the piece was only a replica. See Taft Architects, Architectural Preservation Plan, 1980, 9, JACR.

Equally imposing was the Robert Morton Wonder organ. Boasting 778 pipes, the instrument was custom designed and voiced for the theater. It could imitate a cello, a car horn, and other sound effects important in the days of silent films. The huge organ was installed near the orchestra pit on a "disappearing platform" that could be raised and lowered, driven by a 10-horsepower engine that had enough wiring inside to "construct a fence [75] miles long."[12]

The screen and stage also reflected the technological advances of the period. According to the *Beaumont Journal*, the 18.5-by-24.5-foot screen was "the largest in the United States," and was exceeded in dimensions by only two other screens in the entire world (one in Rome, Italy, and the other in Manchester, England). Since vaudeville was still popular at this time, a stage was still very important, and accordingly, no expense was spared in obtaining a first-class stage and appointments. The 32-by-65-foot stage could accommodate almost any play or act its patrons wished to see. To complement its size, crews installed a system of over 4,000 lights, including a three-color combination, coordinated by the "Major Remote Control" switchboard. Likewise, the rigging for the curtains on the stage was the "most modern and most scientific," using a Peter Clark "'counterweight"' system that required only one man to operate, a feature rivaled by only a few stages in Texas and none in Jefferson County.[13]

Although the finest quality structural and entertainment features were important, it was actually the finishing details of the Jefferson Theatre that transformed it from a movie house into the "atmospheric" movie palace that Weil and his employers envisioned. In addition to the imported marbles, the hand-painted plaster brought in from Houston was reportedly "the best money could buy," and the Spanish tile used in the theater was custom designed especially for the Jefferson. In keeping with the Spanish motif, a warm color scheme of red and orange embellished the theater. For example, the curtains throughout the structure were burnt orange velour, red brocade damask, and silk awnings with fringe trimming, all supplied by the Oklahoma City Scenic Company at a cost of approximately $7,000. Complementing the rich curtains were the 1,891 leather seats obtained from a firm in Chicago at a cost of around $15,000. Other adornments included exterior medallions, two statues from P. P. Caproni and

12. "Morton Builds Unique Organ for Jefferson," BJ, Nov. 12, 1927; Architectural Preservation Plan, 1980, 8, JACR.

13. "Jefferson Screen among Largest in the World" and "Stage of the Jefferson Equipped with Most Modern Mechanical Devices," BJ, Nov. 12, 1927.

Brothers of Boston, and a swan statuette created by a Mrs. B. Settle. An Illinois firm completed the final interior decorating.[14]

The design, effort, and expenditure that went into the Jefferson Theatre produced an architectural, technological, and cultural achievement. Emile Weil and the Jefferson Amusement Company contributed to the sense of pride in Beaumont. The community could boast of its own million-dollar movie palace comparable to those in larger cities around the nation. As for the "atmospheric" Spanish motif, if the raves it received during its own time and even today are any indication, it had been executed beautifully.

This year (1997), the Jefferson Theatre turns seventy years old. For seven decades it has stood on Fannin Street as Beaumont and the world around it have changed. Surprisingly, however, the Jefferson does not share the fate of so many other movie palaces built between 1915 and 1945. It has not been demolished or completely remodeled. It is, and has been, undergoing restoration for over 20 years. Thanks to the efforts of the Jefferson Theatre Preservation Society and other organizations, the Jefferson has come closer to the return of its former glory. Hence, much of the great detail and quality Emile Weil insured in its design and construction remains to this day. The Jefferson Theatre still stands, a reminder of the prosperity and excitement that characterized Beaumont during the 1920s, a monument upon which our local, state, and national cultures can look with great pride.[15]

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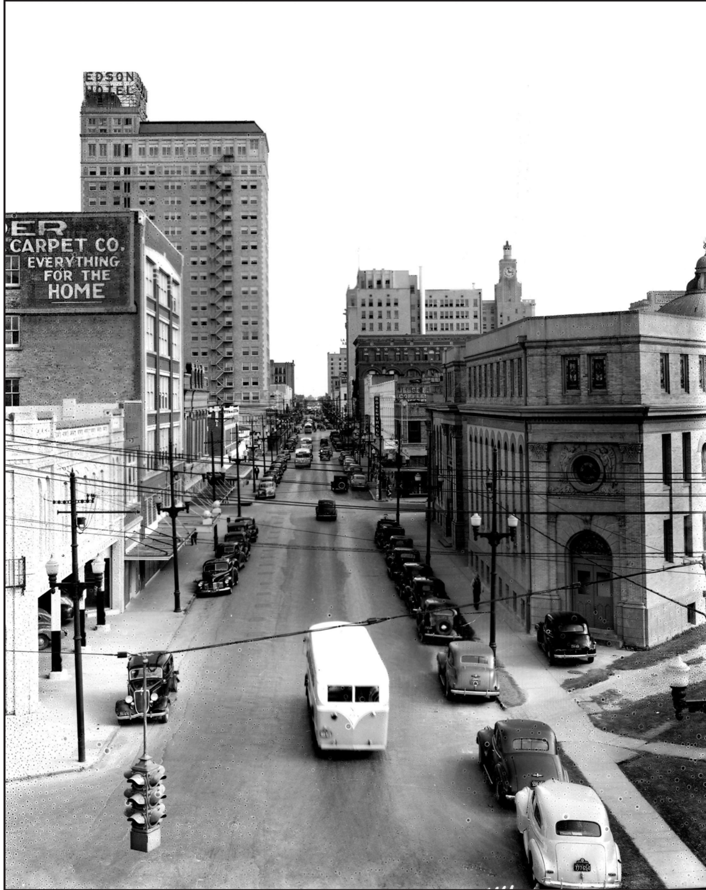
14. "Expensive Materials," BJ, Nov. 12, 1927; Supplement to specifications and contract for scenery and draperies, 1927, 2, Invoice from American Seating Company, Sept. 11, 1927, Letter, Weil to Jefferson Amusement Company, Sept. 30, 1927, Original contract to Jefferson Amusement Company from Interstate Decorating Company, July 28, 1927, JACR.

15. On November 7, 2003, the Jefferson reopened after undergoing a $6.5 million renovation. BE, Nov 10, 2003—ed.



Downtown Beaumont, Pearl Street, at the time of the Great Depression (digitally retouched, c. 1935). *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

Beaumont, Texas, and the Great Depression, 1929-1933

Paul E. Isaac

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In in the fall of 1929, the people of Beaumont found it difficult to accept that an era of growth and expansion had come to an end. As was true of most people in the United States, Beaumonters had no premonition of economic collapse until the stock market crashed, and initially, they did not see that event as the beginning of a general depression. On October 26, 1929, the *Beaumont Enterprise* reported that the best economic leaders had declared the economy sound, and on the 31st, an edition announced that "American citizens who lead normal lives, invest their money wisely and do not speculate have nothing to fear from the worst flurries in Wall Street." Late in December, the editor expressed confidence that the measures undertaken by Herbert Hoover's administration would be more than sufficient to deal with any problems caused by the crash and predicted that 1930 would be a good year "since there is no factor at present discernible that might cause economic disaster."[1]

On the last day of 1929, a spokesman for the Chamber of Commerce envisioned a decade of growth for Beaumont. By 1940, he predicted, the city would have 125,000 people, new warehouses and railroad yards would develop the east bank of the Neches River, exporting a million bales of cotton, regular cruise ships would call at the port, a major airport would handle coast-to-coast traffic, High Island would be a year-round resort, a large union rail terminal would replace the old stations, elevated railroad tracks would eliminate the gradecrossing

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1. BE, Oct. 26, 31, Nov. 28, and Dec, 30, 1929.

problem, an expanded Pennsylvania Shipyard would employ 2,000 people, and Beaumont would have a park system second to none in the South.[2] Considering the experience of the 1920s, these predictions were not wildly optimistic, but the conditions of the Great Depression prevented the fulfilment of these predictions. Beaumont achieved some of the milestones by the 1960s and 1970s.

Many people in Beaumont have always believed that somehow their city escaped the worst effects of the Great Depression. While it is true that other areas probably suffered more, it is also true that the region's trade was too closely tied to that of the nation and the world for the city to pass unscathed through the most severe economic crisis in the twentieth century. Beaumont boomed in the 1920s, and it descended into depression in the 1930s. As in the rest of the nation, the first year, 1930, was not too bad, 1931 was worse, 1932 was disastrous, and 1933 was tragic until new national programs brought hope of recovery. During these years of decline, Beaumont shared in the national experience: price and wage levels fell, people lost their jobs, working hours decreased, businesses closed, banks ceased operation, relief agencies failed to keep up with needs, private and public agencies abandoned projects, farmers could not market their crops for a profit, and local government almost went bankrupt.

One of the most obvious effects of the Depression was unemployment. Area workers first felt its effects in 1930, but it grew worse. In 1933, unemployment reached its lowest levels. Even though the total number of employees at the refineries remained high in 1930, the Gulf and Texaco plants at Port Arthur and the Magnolia Refinery at Beaumont reduced their work week from 48 to 44 hours in September and October. This action was taken after the Secretary of Commerce requested all oil refineries in the United States to operate only six days a week because of an oversupply of fuel. More serious was the plight of men not fortunate enough to have jobs at the refineries. After a series of mass meetings of the unemployed in Port Arthur, the Commercial Association of that city in mid-October offered to set up a bureau to help locate work. In early November, the Beaumont City Commission established a similar bureau to register job seekers and list employment opportunities. On the first day that the bureau opened, 244 people applied for positions. In a special effort to find jobs for the unemployed before Christmas, the *Enterprise* carried a blank form to be filled out by people needing workers.[3]

2. BE, Dec. 31, 1929.

3. BE, Mar 7, Sept. 28, Oct. 16-18, 21, 25, Nov. 2, 4, 5, 9, 13, 20, and 21, 1930.

At the same time, the newspaper made an appeal for contributions to the Community Chest, which had a goal of $129,189. "An emergency need exists in Beaumont," the *Enterprise* declared. "There is not as much suffering here, or as much unemployment, as there is in other cities, but quite enough to warrant the charitable people of Beaumont in straining a point to make their community chest subscriptions as large as possible." The Community Chest drive surpassed its goal by about $10,000, but the employment bureau did not do as well.[4]

The bureau stopped taking applications in early December because there were many more seekers than jobs. Some hopefuls applied more than once, and other applicants were drifters, not residents of Beaumont. The bureau continued to refer people who had already registered to prospective employers, and it distributed the proceeds of a special benefit performance by the Little Theater, which amounted to about $1,000. On January 18, 1931, after some two and one-half months of operation, the city closed the bureau, which had registered over 1,100 persons and had found work for over 400. Apparently, most of the jobs were temporary, merely odd jobs rather than substantial employment. The bureau did not cease operation because it had solved the unemployment problem but because it faced a lack of response from employers.[5]

A particularly serious crisis developed in the sawmill towns to the north of Beaumont when the Kirby Lumber Company shut down its operations in the latter part of 1930. In December and January after the mill closed, the press reported that about 500 people at Call, Texas, were destitute and in immediate need of food. The Red Cross undertook the task of distributing food. The American Rice Growers' Association offered broken rice at $1.40 per 100 pounds, farmers at Raymondville, Texas, donated a carload of turnips, and Hardin County distributed rice at Village Mills and Honey Island. On January 31, 1931, the Kirby Lumber Company announced that it would reopen some of its mills and logging camps in February, promising some relief in that area.[6]

In general, the unemployed in Beaumont endured their hardship peacefully, without violence, threats, or significant public outcry. On January 21, 1931, a crowd of about 100 gathered in Wiess Park to organize a parade through the downtown section on behalf of the unemployed. The Chief of Police persuaded them to disband because they did not have a permit. The Chief, however, was sympathetic to their concerns. "It was only a meeting of the unemployed," he

4. BE, Nov. 13, 23, Dec. 6, and 9, 1930.

5. BE, Nov. 22, 23, 25, 29, Dec. 4, 11, 13, 19, 21, 25, 1930, Jan. 1, 15, 16, and 18, 1931.

6. BE, Dec, 7, 1930, Jan. 12, 16, 18, 23, and 31, 1931.

explained. "Something really needs to be done for some of them. It was not a demonstration of communism." After obtaining the necessary permits three days later, some 200 to 300 men, a majority of whom were black, marched down Pearl Street carrying signs saying, "We Want Work—Not Charity." The demonstrations were orderly, and their leaders carefully emphasized that they were not anarchists, Bolshevists, or socialists.[7]

In August 1931, the Beaumont schools superintendent reported on the difficulty of securing work. Some 7,000 people had applied for less than a dozen vacancies in the city school system. He recommended the raising of certification requirements for teachers and a three-year moratorium on the awarding of new certificates. Port Arthur was planning to reduce its teaching staff by about 40 as an economy measure.[8]

Many workers who kept jobs experienced reductions in their pay. In October 1931, the Magnolia Refinery reduced its work week from 44 hours to 40 hours. In July 1932, the refinery lowered the work week to 35 hours. In October of that year, other Beaumont businesses agreed to cooperate in the National Share the Work Plan, a program recommended by President Hoover to give more people jobs by reducing the work week to 40 hours.[9]

In September 1931, the Beaumont Chamber of Commerce asked the U.S. Department of Labor to set up an employment office in the city. The local community agreed to furnish the necessary space and a stenographer. Opened in November, the federal employment bureau registered about a 1,000 job seekers during its first week of operation. In February 1932, Beaumont civic and labor organizations participated in a national campaign to find work for the unemployed. The Young Men's Business League (YMBL) assumed the leadership of the drive in the city and enlisted over 1,700 volunteers to request businesses and individuals to hire people. By early April, the campaign had turned up about 400 jobs, most of which were temporary. Such voluntary efforts demonstrated a laudable sense of civic responsibility in Beaumont in the early 1930s, but they also showed the futility of purely local attempts to solve a problem that was national, or international, in its origin.[10]

7. BE, Jan. 22 and 25, 1931.

8. BE, Aug. 23, and 27, 1931.

9. BE, July 1, Oct. 9, 1931, July 14, Oct. 6, 12, and 28, 1932.

10. BE, Sept. 2, 5, 9, Nov. 29, 1931, Feb. 12, 17, 20, 26, 28, March 4, 5, 8, 12, 16, 23, and April 12, 1932.

In 1933, before the inauguration Franklin D. Roosevelt as president and before the implantation of his New Deal programs, Jefferson County and the Family Welfare Bureau (FWB) of the Community Chest represented the two main agencies providing relief for the unemployed. The county, which traditionally cared for the indigent, was simply not able to deal with the crisis of the early 1930s because of declining tax revenues. The FWB made a valiant effort but found itself overwhelmed by ever-increasing numbers of applicants for assistance. In August 1931, the group announced that it was aiding 233 white and 293 black dependents. Because of increasing demands and the consequent depletion of its funds, the FWB said that it could help only families with illnesses and small children, and that it had to limit its aid to people who had lived in the city for at least six months. In addition, it operated small vegetable gardens or donated land where able-bodied men could work in exchange for food. In January 1932, a committee of civic leaders worked out a plan whereby applicants for assistance could work in city parks and receive help from the FWB. Later in 1932, the group distributed several thousand small sacks of flour furnished by the Red Cross and established a shop where the unemployed could sell items that they had made.[11]

But the demands upon the FWB grew to more than it could handle. It reported that twice as many people were applying for help in January 1932 as in the previous January, and it proposed a reduction in expenses by more thorough investigations, cutting some clients off, and by decreasing grocery orders. Of its total $40,000 budget for 1932, the FWB spent almost $9,500 in January alone. Not only was the organization spending more than had been allotted to it, but the Community Chest, which financed it, experienced difficulty in collecting pledges. In 1932 promised donations amounted to about $160,000, several thousand dollars above the stated goal, but almost $30,000 remained unfulfilled. At this juncture, private welfare in Beaumont, as well as the nation, could not keep pace with the relief problem.[12]

During the early Depression years, many Americans drifted away from the cities and back to rural areas. In various parts of the United States, local groups organized campaigns to encourage and aid the jobless to leave the cities, where they could not get relief, and go back to the farms. In Beaumont, the very boosters

11. BE, June 27, Aug. 12, 22, 23, Sept. 9, 23, 1931, Jan. 6, 13, May 12, 29, June 1, 2, and Oct. 8, 1932.

12. BE, Oct. 31, Nov. 11, Dec. 4, 5, 1931, Jan. 19, 20, Feb. 2, 19, June 4, Oct. 15, 1932. The Beaumont Community Chest collected about 81 percent of pledges in 1932. In previous years it had averaged about 92 percent. BE, Feb. 10, 1933.

who had previously worked so hard to stimulate population growth supported a similar program. Early in January 1933 when the economic situation was at its worst, J. L. Mapes, the publisher of the *Beaumont Enterprise* and the *Journal,* suggested to the YMBL that they should persuade many of Beaumont's unemployed to move back to the country. Mapes estimated that 90 percent of the jobless had come from farms and would be glad to get back. Others believed that for about $200 a family could be established on a farm and become self-supporting within a year. The YMBL solicited and received assurances of support for a back-to-the-farm project from many individuals and organizations, including the general manager of the Magnolia Refinery, the chairman of the Port Commission, real estate and oil men, the local state senator, the county agricultural agent, the Lions Club, the Chamber of Commerce, the First National Bank, and the American Legion. One of the principal spokesmen for the project, County Agent Joe F. Combs, wrote, "The farm has always been the last place to go, especially when you are hungry, and always a good place to stay for health and happiness." Combs did not think that the movement would increase from surpluses which were already driving the prices of farm commodities down to ridiculously low levels. He believed that only about 200 families in Beaumont were qualified to make the move. He blamed the surpluses, in part, upon the replacement of work animals by machinery, which reduced the need for livestock feed. The back-to-the-farm movement would help reduce the surpluses because it would necessitate the use of more work animals.[13]

Editorials in the *Enterprise* supported the movement. These writers described it as permanent relief and as a way to provide for the needs of the unemployed and lighten the burdens of the welfare agencies. Return to the land was not for everyone. The struggle to survive would be hard, so the editorialists argued, but those who made it would be better off than people on relief. Even if they would not have much money, they would have plenty of food and a roof over their heads and be free from the humiliation and insecurity of the people dependent upon charity. The editor of the *Enterprise* called those who returned to the farm the new pioneers. "Such people exhibit the qualities that enabled America to reach the peak of productive power and creative wealth in 1929, and will enable this nation to rise to greater heights in the future." Along with his idealization of farm life, the editor recognized that many people who had always lived on farms were not happy, but he thought that those who moved from the cities would be different. For them, the stay in the country would not be a "permanent exile from the bright lights and the movies, but a period of retirement, an econom-

13. BE, Jan. 6-10, 12, 13-16, and 18, 1933.

The Beaumont Fire Department Christmas basket drive represented one of several local community relief programs implemented during the Great Depression. (c. 1932). *Courtesy of the Tyrrell Historical Library, Beaumont, TX.*

ic interlude, from which the amateur farmers will emerge with better health, stronger muscles and a keener appetite for city pleasures."[14]

The YMBL, which had started the local back-to-the-farm movement, appealed to the Community Chest to set up machinery to administer the project. That agency replied that it did not have the funds to carry out such work and urged the YMBL to assume the leadership. At the suggestion of the YMBL, the mayor of Beaumont then requested 21 civic leaders to serve as a committee to aid the YMBL in initiating the program. Together they approved a plan and sent it to the Chamber of Commerce, which then appointed a seven-man executive committee to be in charge of the back-to-the-farm movement, including chairman T. H. Nees, president of the Security State Bank, and secretary Ray Gill, of the Chamber of Commerce. After much publicity and maneuvering, the movement amounted to very little. Many people applied for help to move to a farm, but the agencies did not have the funds to help them. By February 21, 1933, the

14. BE, Jan. 8, 11, 13, 16, 22, 30, and Feb. 1, 1933.

YMBL only relocated 10 families, having restricted aid to those who had the means to establish a farm. The assistance amounted to putting would-be farmers in contact with people who had land to rent. The back-to-the-farm committee considered more ambitious plans for relocating larger numbers of people and appealed to the public for $1,500 in donations to finance the plans. Insignificant as this amount was, in view of the vast need, only half of it was raised by May 1, 1933. The idea of converting unemployed urban workers into subsistence farmers persisted, but such plans offered no real solution to the problem of unemployment in Beaumont.[15]

Unemployment and the need for relief were the most obvious results of the decrease in business activity that followed the stock market crash. All of the major areas of Beaumont's economy were affected by the national crisis. The city's prosperity was closely tied to the oil industry, the lumber business, rice growing, cattle raising, and ocean transportation. In addition, Beaumont was the leading wholesale, retail and banking center for Southeast Texas and part of Louisiana. As the Depression worsened between 1929 and 1933, the businesses and industries of Beaumont experienced increasing difficulties.

The oil industry probably held up better than other local businesses. In 1930 and 1931, the largest locally owned producing company, Yount-Lee, drilled new wells in its Spindletop field, secured control of most of the High Island field, bought a substantial interest in the new East Texas field, and participated in pipeline construction from that field to Beaumont. This productivity, however, exacerbated falling oil prices.[16]

This situation gradually led to the realization in Beaumont that some government regulation of the oil industry was necessary. Local business leaders strongly objected to some regulatory moves. They united in condemning a 1931 anti-trust suit brought by Texas Attorney General James V. Allred against the major oil companies operating in the state. This ill-timed suit, they declared, would paralyze the petroleum industry in Texas if the prosecution were suc-

15. BE, Jan. 20, 25, 28, 31, Feb. 1, 3-5, 8, 10-12, 14, 17-19, 21, March 8, 9, 22, 23, 31, April 1, May 2, and July 17, 1933. Port Arthur's back-to-the-farm program may have been more successful than Beaumont's. The *Enterprise* reported that 40 Port Arthur families had been placed on farms. The Chamber of Commerce there supplied food, clothing and seed, and paid for moving the families. BE, Feb. 19, 1933.

16. BE, Feb. 9, 1930, March 1, 17, April 10, 19, 23, May 13, July 12, Nov. 20, 1931, May 14, Sept. 1, 14, 1932, and April 30, 1933. The *Enterprise* reported in October 1932 that wildcatters drilled over 20 wells in the Beaumont area, the greatest amount of drilling in four or five years. BE, Oct. 4, 1932.

cessful. Beaumont oil men and business leaders also voiced opposition to a new graduated gross production tax proposed by Gov. Miriam A. Ferguson. Chamber of Commerce officials estimated that the new tax would result in the shutting down of 1,500 producing wells in the Beaumont area. After it was amended to make it more acceptable to the oil industry, the tax bill was passed by the legislature. One form of regulation that Beaumont's business leaders did welcome was proration by the Texas Railroad Commission, a policy that would not substantially reduce production in the area. By early 1933, the *Enterprise,* which consistently supported the petroleum interests, came out in favor of not only state proration, but also federal control of oil production to stabilize prices. That illustrates how the Depression crisis affected the normally *laissez-faire* mind.[17]

Some other businesses in Beaumont survived the Depression in reasonably good shape. The Gulf States Utilities Company experienced only a temporary decline in revenues, but others did not do so well. In 1930, the Kirby Lumber Company shut down all its mills. The company reopened a year later but did not restart the mill at Voth on the edge of Beaumont until 1933. Local banks also experienced great difficulty. Though none of Beaumont's five banks actually failed, two of them were forced to merge with stronger institutions in 1932. The three surviving banks weathered the crisis of 1933. The San Jacinto Life Insurance Company in 1932 was sold to a Houston company, further reducing the financial establishment in Beaumont. That same year, two of the city's leading hotels went into receivership, and the third was reorganized. In November 1932, a receiver was appointed for the Eastern Texas Electric Company, which operated the street car lines in Beaumont and Port Arthur and the interurban between the two cities. The appearance of 10-cent taxis and jitneys had cut deeply into the street car company's business. The Clyde-Mallory Lines announced in April 1931 that it would not send cruise ships to Beaumont that year because of bad business conditions. Another clear indication of hard times came in the complaint by the Beaumont fire chief that suspected cases of arson had greatly increased in 1931 and 1932.[18]

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17. BE, April 8, July 12, Nov. 18, 21, Dec. 11, 16, 1931, March 30, April 4, 6, 7, 9, 20, 23, May 3, 15, 16, 20, 21, 31, June 19, July 17, 19, and 25, 1933.

18. Howard Ricks Fussell, "A History of the Gulf States Utilities Company, 1912-1947" (MA thesis, Lamar State College of Technology, 1966), 95-120; William F. Baker, "The Growth and Development of the First Security National Bank of Beaumont, Texas" (MA thesis, Lamar State College of Technology, 1971), 37-48; BE, Jan. 12, 16, 23, 31, April 4, Aug. 9, 18, 1931, Jan. 29, May 9, 14, 18, 26, June 8, 15, Aug. 7, Sept. 3, Oct. 7, Nov. 5, 1932, March 3, 22, and July 18, 1933.

One of the major props of Beaumont's economy was its port, which experienced only a temporary decline in overall business during the early part of the Depression. Most of the business at the port, which included the Neches River from Beaumont to Port Arthur, was in petroleum products shipped in the coastwise trade. From 1929 to 1930, there was a slight decline in total tonnage handled at the Port of Beaumont but a small increase in the value of cargo. By 1932, the total tonnage was back above what it had been in 1929.[19]

The municipally owned docks, located at the turning basin in Beaumont, had been experiencing a decline in general cargo tonnage, due in part to a decrease in exports of lumber. Plans for improvement and expansion of facilities were being developed and a bond issue providing the funds had been passed before the Depression. The stock market crash did not cause the immediate abandonment of these plans. Late in December 1929, a Chamber of Commerce report pointed out that the decline in business was due to inadequate facilities and high dockage charges. It urged various improvements and the appointment of a new port director and argued that business leaders should not consider the docks as a profit-making utility, but rather a stimulus for industrial growth. In January 1930, the city wharf and dock commission suspended the dockage charge. In March, the board appointed J. Russell Wait as the new director, and he devised a long-range plan for the expansion of the port.[20]

Discussion of plans for port expansion continued through 1930. Federal money was necessary for deepening and widening of the ship channel and for extending the Intracoastal Canal, but the proposals to utilize Harbor Island and build docks on the east bank of the Neches River generated controversy. Wait did not stay in Beaumont to deal with these matters. In December 1930, he resigned to become director of the Port of Houston. W. Scott Hammond, who succeeded him, actually began the implementation of the expansion plan with the sale of some bonds and the purchase of land along the west bank of the Neches, above the turning basin.[21]

The increasing severity of the Depression was, however, to have an adverse effect upon plans for port expansion. By mid-1932, a crisis in municipal finances

19. BE, May 1, 1931, and April 20, 1933.

20. BE, Dec. 5, 27, 1929, Jan. 14, 17, March 7, and May 8, 1930.

21. BE, Sept. 17, Oct. 17, Nov. 25, Dec. 17, 21, 23, 1930, Jan. 21, Feb. 21, March 26, May 10, June 13, 27, July 1, 20, Aug. 18, Sept. 26, Oct. 10, Nov. 6, 7, Dec. 18, 27, 28, 1931, Feb. 5, May 8, and 15, 1932; Marilyn McAdams Sibley, *The Port of Houston: A History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 173-175.

compelled the city to make major reductions in all of its expenditures. The port commission, which had been operating at a deficit for some time, adopted a budget of only about $46,000, far below the $85,000 budget of 1931. This serious curtailment of funds became a factor in the commission's dismissal of Hammond in the spring of 1933, the reorganization of the commission, and the appointment of F. C. Dezendorf as the new director. When the commission fired Hammond, it cited his failure to solicit business, cooperate with the cotton interests, maintain close contact with shippers, carry out mandates of the commission, and harmonize the economy program. Hammond was an engineer, but Dezendorf was experienced in soliciting business for the Port of Houston. The worst of the Depression, however, was over. By 1933 before the changes were made, general cargo and overall tonnage had increased from the previous year.[22]

During the Depression years, the local business community tried to make Beaumont a leading cotton port. The decline in the lumber trade in the late 1920s led to a campaign to increase cotton exports. Although a compress had been built in 1927, the city lagged far behind Galveston in cotton shipments. Beaumont's business leaders believed that they could attract East Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas cotton if they could obtain more favorable railroad rates to the city. In September 1930, they organized the Beaumont Cotton Commission, which attempted to pressure the railroads by encouraging the transportation of cotton to the port by trucks. In 1931, the port commission employed a cotton solicitor, and the Chamber of Commerce organized a cotton concentration bureau to assist in securing transportation. The resulting increase in cotton moving through Beaumont, most of it brought to the port by trucks, led the port commission to build additional warehouse facilities and to talk about building a new compress.[23]

The development of Beaumont as a cotton port depended upon preferential railroad rates. New state legislation in 1931 regulating trucks almost wrecked the Beaumont plan. Repeated appeals to the Texas Railroad Commission, the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), and the railroad companies resulted

22. BE, July 26, 1930, May 26, June 17, 1932, March 5, 23, 24, April 2, 4, 6, 20, 21, May 2, 12, June 6, 7, 13, July 8, and 12, 1933.

23. BE, July 30, Sept. 26-28, 1930, Jan. 22, April 10, 11, 16, May 15, June 4, 5, 12, 19, July 7, 8, 30, 31, Sept. 2, 10, 18, 22, Oct. 3, 4, 6, 11, 14, Nov. 19, and Dec. 11, 1931.

in some rate reductions but not the tariffs that they sought. Only the Kansas City Southern gave Beaumont an advantage over Houston and Galveston.[24]

In April 1932, discouraged by the failure to secure favorable transportation rates on cotton, the Beaumont port commission decided to close the office of cotton solicitor as part of the city's effort to reduce expenditures. The Chamber of Commerce and various business leaders, however, continued to meet with representatives of the railroads and to petition the railroad commission for better rates. In September, the port commission decided to rehire the cotton solicitor, provided that half his salary was paid by private interests. Finally in February 1933, the Texas Railroad Commission granted the ports of Beaumont and Corpus Christi what they had long sought, preferential rates within specified zones. Beaumont's zone was in East Texas, an area that produced about 700,000 bales of cotton a year. The *Enterprise* estimated that from 200,000 to 400,000 bales might be exported through Beaumont. The railroads opposed the new rate structure and obtained an injunction to prevent its going into effect, but in June, gave in and accepted the Commission's decision. Despite this partial success after a long fight for preferential rates, Beaumont did not become a major cotton port.[25]

On the eve of the Depression, proposals were still being made to open new rail lines in the Beaumont area. In 1930, the Missouri Pacific and the Santa Fe had an application before the ICC to purchase the right-of-way of the Eastern Texas Electric Company's interurban line from Beaumont to Port Arthur. Eastern Texas Electric wanted to sell because its business had been declining for several years and could now be handled by busses alone. The Chambers of Commerce of Beaumont, Port Arthur, and Port Neches urged that the application be granted so that a new rail connection could be established.[26]

Opposition came from the Kansas City Southern and Southern Pacific, which already operated between Beaumont and Port Arthur, and from Col. R. C. Duff, president of the Waco, Beaumont, Trinity and Sabine Railway, sometimes called the Duff Line or the "Wobblety, Bobblety, Turnover and Stop." Duff dreamed of expanding this short line, serving several small towns in East Texas,

24. BE, Sept. 11, 17, 22, 27, Oct. 10, 11, 14-16, 20, 22, 23, 27, 28, Nov. 3, 6, 10-12, 14, 24, 26, 27, Dec. 4, 11, 18, and 30, 1931.

25. BE, April 15, May 15, 18, 26, June 21, 22, July 19, 28, 29, Aug. 4, 17, Sept. 1, 27, Oct. 10, Nov. 24, 25, 1932, Feb. 26, 28, March 5, 9, 14, 18, April 6, 21, May 5, 25, 27, June 14, and 15, 1933.

26. BE, April 15, 17, 18, and July 13, 1930.

into a major carrier from Waco to the Gulf Coast. He received ICC approval to extend his road to Port Arthur in 1927 and established general offices there in 1928 after a quarrel with Beaumont over the route of entry into that city. Always in shaky financial condition, the Duff Line went into receivership in early 1930 when the Depression hit the lumber industry in East Texas. Nevertheless, Duff still believed he could complete his road. The ICC examiner who heard the Missouri Pacific-Santa Fe case rejected their application on the ground that the Kansas City Southern, Southern Pacific, and Waco, Beaumont, Trinity and Sabine would be able to handle all the traffic. Though Duff continued to promote his line (he sought a nine-million-dollar RFC loan in 1932), he was never able to get it out of receivership or to extend its tracks to the Gulf Coast. While it is true that the Duff Line was always more of a vision than a reality, the Depression destroyed even the dreams of further railroad expansion in the Beaumont area.[27]

One of the major public projects to go down in defeat during the early years of the Depression was the effort to elevate the railroad tracks that crossed through the business district. From the latter part of the nineteenth century, when the railroads first came to Beaumont, up to the present (1978), the problems of grade crossings and tracks in the middle of streets have plagued the city. By the early part of the twentieth century, four major railroad lines crossed through Beaumont, hemming in much of the downtown section. The increased automobile traffic led to demands for either the removal or elevation of the tracks in order to permit the free flow of traffic. In 1925, a bond issue to finance a track-elevation scheme was proposed but rejected by the voters. Then in late 1927, the city commission appointed a committee of seven leading citizens to draw up another plan.[28]

In July 1930, as the Depression worsened, the committee issued its plan. The proposal included the rerouting of the Kansas City Southern and Missouri Pacific over the Southern Pacific tracks and the elevation of the tracks in the downtown section to a height of about 15 feet above ground level so that cross streets could pass under them. Negotiations between the city and the Southern Pacific consumed almost an entire year, reaching an agreement in June 1931.

27. BE, Nov. 27, Dec. 4, 6-9, 11-13, 19-22, 27, 28, 1928, April 15, 18, 19, Sept. 26, 1930, May 3, Aug. 15, 1931, Jan. 24, 26, March 10, 1932, June 11, 1933; Robert S. Maxwell, *Whistle in the Piney Woods: Paul Bremond and the Houston, East and West Texas Railway* ([Houston]: Texas Gulf Coast Historical Association, 1963), 52-54.

28. BE, March 23, 1919, Nov. 3, 16, Dec. 28, 1929, Jan. 29, 30, March 12, 27, 28, May 16, July 6, 1930, July 23, 26, and 29, 1931.

The railroad consented to spend over $3 million and the city promised about $900,000, but to meet its obligation, the citizens would have to pass a bond, set for election on July 28. Some of Beaumont's wealthiest and most influential figures, such as W. P. H. McFaddin, Sol E. Gordon, H. A. Perlstein, Chenault O'Brien, and W. L. Pondrom, opposed the bond issue, while business leaders J. Cooke Wilson, B. A. Steinhagen, J. L. Mapes, Frank Yount, and Tom P. Walker supported it. After a month of vigorous campaigning, the proponents of the plan won by a vote of 3,069 to 2,076, the largest turnout in a bond election in the city's history up to that time. The financial and psychological impact of the Depression was not yet so pervasive that it would prevent the citizens of Beaumont from passing a municipal bond.[29]

The opponents of the railroad elevation plan next moved to challenge the bond issue in the courts. A few days after the election, McFaddin and a group of other property owners petitioned the Fifty-Eighth District Court for an injunction to restrain the city from issuing or selling the bonds approved in the election. Their petition alleged that the city had agreed to pay for right-of-way to be used by the Southern Pacific, an action forbidden by the state constitution. The court proceedings that followed took about two years. The court granted the injunction and the city appealed the decision to the Ninth Court of Civil Appeals. The case was then transferred to the Third Court of Civil Appeals in Austin, where on July 26, 1933, the injunction was upheld. By that time the whole economic situation had changed and the city's financial condition had deteriorated greatly, making it doubtful that its bonds could be sold. The case was not appealed to the State Supreme Court and, except for the removal in 1932 of the Southern Pacific switching tracks from Main Street, the railroad elevation and relocation project came to naught.[30]

The Depression had profound effect upon municipal finances in Beaumont. As was true of the local economy generally, the municipal government held up reasonably well in 1930, experienced serious difficulty in 1931, and plunged into deep crisis in 1932 and 1933. The budget adopted for 1930-1931 was higher

29. BE, March 28, April 2, 18, May 16, 21, 27, June 5, 14, July 6, 9-11, 13, 24, 29, 30, Nov. 19-21, 1930, Jan. 2, 28, Feb. 4, 13, 27, March 8, Apri1 3, 4, 29, May 10, 15, 21, 23, 24, June 5, 6, 10, 21, 24, 28, July 9, 10, 12, 15, and 17-29, 1931. A county bond issue for $150,000 to pay for a sub-courthouse at Port Arthur passed on August 1, 1931, by a vote of 5,531 to 589. Port Arthur voted overwhelmingly for it. Of the few Beaumonters who voted, most opposed it. BE, Aug. 2, 1931.

30. BE, July 29, 30, Aug. 11, 12, Nov. 29, Dec. 1, 2, 17, 1931, Feb. 23-25, 27, March 3, 15, April 10, May 19, Aug. 19, Sept. 1, 3, Oct. 1, 5, 15, Nov. 18, Dec. 20, 1932, Feb. 3, 4, 16, June 20, July 27, and 28, 1933.

than that for the previous year but tax collections were somewhat lower. As the budget for 1931-1932 was being prepared, a group of prominent businessmen, including McFaddin, Perlstein, John H. Phelan, and Talbot F. Rothwell, petitioned the city to lower taxes and expenditures. The chairman of the property owners division of the Beaumont Real Estate Board proposed that a committee of businessmen meet with the various municipal and county departments to help them reduce expenditures. The city commission rejected this demand. One of its members suggested that if anyone wanted to help the city, he should run for office. Nevertheless, the budget for 1931-1932 was substantially lower than that for 1930-1931.[31]

Early in 1932, tax collections were running about 30 percent below the levy, and it was obvious that the budget could not be met. The city administration began to reduce expenditures but not enough to satisfy the property owners division of the Real Estate Board, which singled out "leeches upon the body politic, being those persons in public service who ordinarily enjoy easy hours of service and unnecessary help." Complainants before the tax equalization board suggested closing the parks and library because they did "not feed anybody." The city manager, Paul Millard, replied that if a small wealthy group would submit their bonds, notes, jewelry, and personal property for taxation, there would be no financial crisis. Condemning those who hid their valuables while calling for lower taxes, Millard defended the small home owners who were taxed on all they owned and were thus forced to carry a part of the rich man's burden. Some people, Millard said, were trying to maintain their economic position at the expense of others who wanted only a living and an education for their children.[32]

For the 1932-1933 budget, fund expenditures were cut by almost 30 percent, but tax delinquency almost bankrupted the city. By June 1932, Beaumont could not pay it $210,000 debt. In August, the Yount-Lee Oil Company provided the city a $60,000 loan until tax revenues started coming in at the end of the year. But tax collections were slow. In November, city employees on salary could not be paid. The Yount-Lee Company agreed to another loan of $22,000 in December to pay November salaries, but salaries for December had to be deferred.[33]

31. BE, Feb. 9, 18, April 9, 11, July 4, 30, Sept. 10, 24, 25, Dec. 27, 1930, Jan. 23, Feb. 8, 12, May 19, July 15, Sept. 3, 16, 22-24, Oct. 1, 7, 21, and 27, 1931.

32. BE, Feb. 2, March 16, 24, April 7, 20, May 6, 11, 13, 18, and 19, 1932. Port Arthur was experiencing more serious problems than Beaumont at this time. In April 1932, the city could not meet its payroll. BE, March 17, 30, and April 5, 1932.

33. BE, May 20, 21, 25, 26, 28, June 1, 4, 15, 23, 24, 29, 30, July 6, 8, 9, 13, 23, Aug. 7, 12, Oct. 6, 20, 26, Nov. 15, and Dec. 22, 1932.

Tax collections improved enough at the end of the year for the city to repay the $210,000 owed to the banks and the $82,000 owed to Yount-Lee, but not enough to pay current bills or back wages. By January 31, 1933, the last day on which taxes could be paid without penalty, only about 50 percent of the total assessment had been collected. In March, the city administration finally agreed to allow a committee of businessmen to supervise further reduction of expenditures. At a joint conference of city officials and business leaders, a committee of five (E. L. Boykin, E. E. Plumly, T. H. Nees, Will E. Orgain, and J. L. Mapes) was named to examine the budgets of all the city departments and recommend reductions. One of its members stated that the city had been spending money "like a drunken sailor," reflecting the general attitude of the committee. Beaumont, he maintained, could not default on its bonds even if the school term had to be cut to seven or eight months. The committee recommended that general fund expenditures be reduced 46.6 percent, the library 77.2 percent, and the city schools 44.7 percent below the amounts budgeted for 1932-1933. The report made no provision for street lights, which had been cut off anyway. The city administration agreed to abide by the recommendations.[34]

The committee also demanded a waiver for penalties on delinquent taxes for 1932-1933 until July 1, 1933. After the committee's report was adopted, some of the city's largest property owners paid their taxes, thus providing the city with some operating funds. They had held back on paying until they forced the city to cut back municipal services to the barest minimum. Had they paid up earlier, some of the reductions would not have been so drastic. Beaumont had experienced what in later years would be called a taxpayer's revolt. The banks also agreed to lend the city $25,000 while it collected the revenue. As a result in July 1933, the city paid its salaried employees their wages, which had been one or two months behind since the previous November.[35]

For 1933-1934, Beaumont adopted a much leaner budget, generally in line with the committee's recommendations. Some items, such as debt service, were higher than ever, but major reductions were made in school and library expenditures and such general fund items as streets and parks. With the adoption of this budget, the City of Beaumont had made it through the worst of the Depression without bankruptcy.[36]

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34. BE, Nov. 29, 30, Dec. 10, 1932, Jan. 17, 28, 31, Feb. 2, March 2, 3, 9, 11, 15, and 26, 1933.

35. BE, March 17, 19, 26, 29, 31, April 1, 4, 5, 7, 13, May 2, 10, 16, June 16, July 1, 7, 26, and Aug. 1, 1933.

36. BE, July 11, 12, 26, 1933.

Between 1929 and 1933, private and public institutions in Beaumont experienced the similar economic setbacks as the rest of the country. Business declined, a large number of people were unemployed, local relief agencies could not cope with the demand for help, private and public projects were abandoned, and tax delinquency almost forced the municipal government into bankruptcy. These problems had their origin in what happened somewhere else, and they had no local cure. Retrenchment was almost the only solution offered at the community level during the first three years of the Depression. Fortunately, by the time the crisis was at its worst, outside help from New Deal programs was on its way, and regardless of how business leaders opposed federal interference, many of them by 1933 eagerly welcomed both aid and regulation from Washington.

If the poor suffered the most from the Depression, they did not rise up in Beaumont to overthrow the establishment. There were few demonstrations by the unemployed. Blacks, of course, had practically no voice in politics, and the general white citizenry showed very little interest in municipal elections in 1930 and 1932. Since the city government was financed in the main by property taxes, it was the property owners, principally big ones, who, by refusing to pay their taxes, forced a severe reduction in municipal expenditures. If anything, the business establishment was more firmly in control of local affairs in 1933 than it had been before the Depression. The crisis produced no new local leadership with inspired solutions.

It might be true that Beaumont did not suffer as great an economic decline during the early part of the Depression as did some other cities, but it also seems apparent that the long-range impact of the Depression was more profound in Beaumont than other locales. The downturn crushed the civic expansiveness so characteristic of Beaumont in the 1920s. The public library, one of Beaumont's proudest possessions, suffered more than almost any other public service, and its neglect continued for 30 years. The dream of railroad relocation, so essential to the survival of the central business district, and much of the port expansion envisioned in 1930 were only partially fulfilled by the 1960s. Other projects were never revived. There is no question but that the Depression deeply affected Beaumont psychologically as well as economically. The confident spirit of the 1920s never really returned. And, while population growth and economic development resumed by the 1940s, Beaumont never regained its pre-Depression position relative to such cities as Austin, Dallas, Houston, Corpus Christi, and Baton Rouge.

"Somebody Else Let a Genie Out of a Bottle Once Too." (c. 1943). *Courtesy of the Lamar University Archives and Special Collections.*

Beaumont Women during World War II

Charlotte A. Holliman

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On December 7, 1941, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, sweeping the United States into World War II. Beaumonters heard the news about the bombing around noon. It had only been a little over 20 years since World War I, and the memories and impressions of those years were still vivid in the minds of most Americans. The citizens of Beaumont, however, concentrated their energies to do their part to help the war effort at the front and at home.

World War II changed the old order of society and widely expanded women's roles. As "Uncle Sam" drafted men into the armed forces, a labor shortage developed not only in the rapidly advancing defense industries but also in private industries. To meet the demand for workers, the government turned to women and encouraged them to take wartime jobs, become nurses, or perform volunteer work. Beaumont women responded to the call by taking jobs in the shipyards, oil refineries, and other employments that were traditionally male oriented.[1] In their response to the war effort, women faced choices between working in defense industry, volunteering with aid groups, or tending their homes. Many women chose a combination of all three.

Prior to the United States entering the war, 12 million women worked outside the home, representing 25 percent of the labor force. After 1943, their numbers increased dramatically. The recruitment of women involved both national and local promotional efforts. In 1942, the first nationwide campaign targeted both

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1. "Beaumont Women Taking Places of Men in Defense Works Number Thousands," LSB, 1942-1943, n.d.

men and women for war industry, and in 1943, a subsequent drive recruited women for civilian services such as retail, laundries, and restaurants. In March 1944, the last national campaign focused on women who were aware of the need but were reluctant to take defense jobs.[2]

In Beaumont, recruiters did not need an extensive campaign. Instead, they relied on wages offered by local industry. Edith Smith, an employee of Shepherd's Laundry, left her position as a sock presser to go into defense work. She recalled that the maximum pay at Shepherd's was $0.77 an hour while the pay for a tool checker at the Pennsylvania Shipyard ranged from $1.17 to $1.25 an hour.[3]

The *Beaumont Enterprise* and the *Beaumont Journal*, nevertheless, carried articles and advertisements encouraging women to aid in the war effort by taking defense jobs or by working in the service industries. These appeals used a variety of arguments, such as suggesting that defense jobs could save lives and help to win the war sooner. An advertising campaign in 1943 used the themes of good wages and patriotism but added a negative element by stating that women who did not take jobs were prolonging the war and were guilty of being "slackers." An article in the *Beaumont Journal* of October 15, 1942, encouraged women to "fight the war on the homefront" by training to alleviate the shortage of personnel in the retail industries that were created by the war. The storeowners established classes to prepare inexperienced women to take the place of employees who left to pursue defense work. This article roughly corresponded with the national drive underway at the same time. In addition to local jobs, employers from other cities placed classified advertisements in the *Enterprise* calling for women between the ages of 18 and 40 to work in aircraft factories.[4]

In May of 1943, John W. Howard, area director of the War Manpower Commission (WMC), stated that the region needed 5,000 more women workers before the end of the year. He pointed out that the present number was inadequate and he urged women to get training and qualify themselves to fill war jobs that were vacated by men who were taken by the armed forces. Such efforts encouraged women to step out of their traditional roles as wives, mothers, and homemakers and become war workers for the duration. Evoking the popular

2. Sherna Berger Gluck, *Rosie the Riveter Revisited: Women the War, and Social Change* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987), 21.

3. Edith Smith, former employee of Pennsylvania Shipyard, interview with author, Aug. 18, 1990.

4. "Women to Be Offered Jobs in Emergency," BJ, Oct. 15, 1942; BE, April 3, 1942; Leila J. Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda. 1939-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 96-97.

image of Rosie the Riveter as the patriotic female industrial worker, historian Leila J. Rupp stated that women workers "were meant by the government and understood by the public, to be temporary . . . . Rosie was still primarily a wife and mother, and her . . . job could be viewed as an extension of these duties."[5]

In July, the local office of Civil Defense under the auspices of the WMC conducted a block survey to determine the number of Beaumont women who were available for war work. Howard was very pleased at the results. It revealed that more and more women realized that this was their war, too, and they had to do their part to help end it. The survey showed some 374 women willing to report to work, and of this number, 285 indicated their preference for working in the war industry.[6]

The training of women for defense work was also important. Lamar College played a major role in equipping men and women with the needed skills. In 1941, John E. Gray, president of the school, submitted a plan to establish a training program to the National Defense Advisory Council. After its approval, Lamar established a temporary campus at the South Texas State Fairgrounds with equipment provided by the State Department of Vocational Education. It was initially set up to train men for defense work, but as the labor shortage increased, they opened their doors to women.[7]

By September 17, 1942, Lamar College, under the auspices of the State Department of Vocational Education, offered classes exclusively to train women for the war industries. In this early example, the school specifically sought women for a machine tool class, and 20 women enrolled. But this was only the beginning. As the shortage of workers became more severe, Lamar College increased the number of classes. By October 11, the school had started six new courses which included "welding, burning, pipe fitting, machine shop, marine electricity and shipfitting." The classes were free of charge and open to women over the age of 18. Later that month, a report circulated that Pennsylvania Shipyard Incorporated (PSY) of Beaumont would, for the "first time in its history," use women in positions that had been reserved exclusively for men. This development led to new classes in welding, burning, and layout work with standards set up by

5. "5000 More Women Workers Will Be Needed in Industry of Area WMC Director Says," BE, May 2, 1943; Rupp, *Mobilizing Women*, 138.

6. "374 Women Report Willing to Work and 285 Indicate Preference for War Jobs," BE, July 23, 1943.

7. Joe Ben Welch, "A History of the Growth and Development of Lamar University from 1949 to 1973" (PhD diss., McNeese State University, 1974), 21.

Arthur (Pop) Forster, "It May Reach This Stage." (digitally retouched, c. 1943). *Courtesy of the Lamar University Archives and Special Collections, Beaumont, TX.*

PSY, and the women who satisfactorily completed the courses received jobs there. Until this announcement, the shipyard was an entirely male-dominated workplace, although some women worked in the offices.[8]

Lamar College cooperated with Texas A&M College and sponsored free defense courses in engineering, science, and management for both men and women under the direction of the U.S. Department of Education. The 15 courses varied and included structural drafting, industrial safety, and advanced engineering drawing. The partnership also offered classes in ship hull drafting and engineering held at South Park High School.[9]

As the labor shortage increased, Lamar College opened night classes to try to alleviate the need for war workers. The school initially offered six classes in advanced engineering, piping and pressure fittings, and sheet metal and template layout work. Although Lamar specifically sought women for advance work or to better equip themselves for their present jobs, it permitted men to enroll.[10]

Beaumonters could not complain that training classes were unavailable to them. The Lamar College Department of Vocational Education in cooperation with the U.S. Employment Service offered daily, three-hour defense training courses for women who could not take six hours out of their day but who still wanted training for vital defense work. The courses, held "around the clock," included arc welding, layout work, machine tool operation, pipe fitting, sheet metal work, acetylene burning, and marine electricity. Training courses were available for almost everyone and were offered to satisfy the growing need for workers.[11]

Beaumont women took advantage of these training courses offered by Lamar College. Between late 1942 and March 1943, 645 women had enrolled, and of that number, 400 worked in defense in the city and surrounding areas. C. H. McKennon, Director of Vocational Education at Lamar, believed "that women were as efficient as men in machine shop work, welding and other shipyard and factory activities which heretofore had been the recognized province of men only." Female trainees soon outnumbered their male counterparts and took jobs

8. "War Industry Classes Will Train Women," "Free Lamar Courses Teach Beaumont Wives to Take Their Husbands' Places in War Plants of This Area," and "Pennsylvania to Use Women Welders and Burners after Lamar Course Trains Them," LSB, 1942-1943, Sept. 17, Oct. 11, and 15, 1942.

9. "Lamar College to Start Engineering and Science Defense Work in October" and "Ship Drafting and Engineer Classes Boom," LSB, 1942-1943, Sept. 27 and Nov. 3, 1942.

10. "Lamar to Open Night Classes," LSB, 1942-1943, n.d.

11. "Short Training Course Offered," LSB, 1942-1943, April 13, 1943.

in various Southeast Texas industries such as Consolidated Shipyard in Orange, International Derrick and Equipment Company, Texas Steel Corporation, and other vital war production plants. By September 1943, the number of women who had taken training and gone to defense industries in this area had risen to 1,010. President Gray of Lamar College predicted that "in the near future the trainees would be almost 100 percent women."[12]

The demand created by war industries led to an acute shortage of employees for service jobs. An advertisement in the local newspaper urged, "We have a job to do, YOU have a job to do! . . . What . . . can [you] do to help win the war? . . . You can help IF YOU WILL WORK—full or part time" for Beaumont merchants. Women who had previously worked in retail left for the more lucrative pay. For a remedy, Lamar College provided courses in merchandizing and graduated 108 students from its first two offerings.[13]

In total, the Lamar College War Training Division instructed nearly 17,000 war-industry workers since it began in 1941. At times, the program ran on a 24-hour basis with different shifts, so each group of students could utilize the equipment. The largest number of the workers were trained for the shipbuilding industries in this area. The welding classes graduated thousands of women in a field that had been the domain of men.[14]

In 1939, according to women's labor historian Susan Estabrook Kennedy, only 36 women in the United States worked shipyards, but by 1943, women represented 4 percent of that workforce. In Beaumont, PSY employed the largest number of women defense workers. They built ships, tankers, and minesweepers, and they performed other vital jobs. The Magnolia Petroleum Company, Gulf States Utilities, and United Gas also employed women, fulfilling traditionally male jobs vacated by those who were called into the armed services.[15]

As early as November 1942, PSY began employing women. The company initially hired 16 welders and three loftman helpers. The pioneer female shipbuilders at PSY included Audrey Ainsworth, Mary Asaro, Sue Becker, Harris

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12. "Women's Part in War Work Told to Lions" and "Lamar Places 156 in War Work," LSB, 1942-1943, March 4, 1943, and n.d.; "Women Seen before Club as Labor Hope," BJ, Feb. 16, 1943; "Lamar Schools 3000 for War Work," BE, March 7, 1943; "Lamar Sends 5848 to War Industry Jobs," LSB, 1943-1944, n.d.

13. "We Have a Job to Do," LSB, 1942-1943, n.d.

14. "17,000 War Workers Trained in Lamar College Program," LSB, 1944-1945, n.d.

15. Susan Estabrook Kennedy, *If All We Did Was to Weep at Home: A History of White Working-Class Women in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979). 189.

From the *Pennship Log*, July 15, 1943 (digitally retouched). *Courtesy of the Lamar University Archives and Special Collections, Beaumont, TX.*

May Boudoin, Betty Breaux, Thelma Brooks, Norma Bush, Mildred Crawford, Blanche Dennis, Emma Fream, Maggie M. Harper, Obie Lee Johnson, Allit P. Modawell, Alta May Propst, Lillian Peebles, Leona Swearingen, Joyce Irene Thompson, Thelma E. Williams, and Eleanor M. Wolf. That was only the start, and the shipyard continued to hire women for jobs in all areas of the facility. One woman worker commented that the work was "harder than school," but she liked it and "planned to bring more lunch" because "the sandwich and apple that [was] the stock lunch of women looked like bird food after a morning behind a welding arc."[16]

In January 1943, Mrs. Cleo Lyon became the first female employee at the Pennsylvania Iron Works (PIW). As a division of PSY, the company did all of the structural work for the yard and also overhauled railroad cars. The women employees were very serious about their work and requested an increase in their

16. "Girls Join PSY Lower Yard Force," PSL, Dec. 1, 1942.

work from eight to nine hours. The women worked from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. with a 30-minute break at noon. On Saturdays, they worked from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.[17]

By February 1943, PSY employed 87 female welders. They were a novelty because welding was hard, uncomfortable work and was regarded as a male position, but they took up their torches and did their part just like males to help build ships. At that time, Helen Castille and Fanny Whatley hired on as special apprentices in the PSY Machine Shop. Other women worked as tool checkers, packers, burners, and layout workers. Lillie May Rainey came to PSY as a burner but moved out of the yards and into the Machine Shop when the need arose for a blacksmith there. In early 1944, to lessen a labor shortage within the shipyard, women checkers took advantage of welding courses offered by the PSY welding school on Pearl Street. As women became more adept at their craft, they set many firsts for the company. The *Pennship Log*, the shipyard's semi-monthly newspaper, recorded events such as when burners Zelma Thompson and Ruby Baker went to work on Hull 291. In February 1943, women burners took their first night shift. Some women achieved leadership status, but the number was very small. Willie Mae Beaumont of Beaumont was a "typical" defense worker. She was supervisor of women in the PIW Drum Plant, and according to the *Log*, she still maintained a home, kept a daughter in school, and purchased war bonds. Because of the mistaken idea that marriage and career did not mix, many viewed Mrs. Beaumont as an unusual example that warranted the headline, "Good 'Mom' and Loyal Worker Too."[18]

Although public pronouncements such as those found in the *Pennship Log* lauded women as effective and productive workers, not all men shared that view. Floyd F. Smith, a wartime employee of PSY, expressed a contrary view when he recalled that "some [women] worked but all some did was keep the men from working."[19] Smith's view may not have been representative, and it stands to reason that if a woman had not done her work then she would have been fired,

17. "First Feminine Employe [*sic*] Goes into PIW Storeroom" and "Women Workers on Nine-Hour Day," PSL, Jan. 1 and Feb. 15, 1943.

18. "Now Gal Machinist," "Good 'Mom' and Loyal Worker Too," "First Feminine Burners Sent to Work on Boats," "Women Checkers Switch to Welding Machines," and "Woman Smithy Lends Hand in Forging Parts for Ships," PSL, Feb. 15, Apr. 15, Nov. 15, 1943, Jan. 15, and Feb. 1, 1944.

19. Floyd F. Smith, 43-year employee of PSY, later Bethlehem Steel, interview with author, July 15, 1990.

Garret Price for the U.S. Office of War Information. From the *Pennship Log*, August 15, 1944 (digitally retouched). *Courtesy of the Lamar University Archives and Special Collections, Beaumont, TX.*

because PSY was engaged in the serious business of turning out ships to aid the war effort.

Magnolia Petroleum Company in Beaumont also hired women to fill positions that men had vacated. Prior to 1942, women worked in the company's offices, and before they turned to women, supervisors unsuccessfully tried a 48-hour work week to compensate for the deficiency in manpower. By 1943, the company employed "55 women working in what formerly was known at the refinery as 'no woman's land'—the yards." Women were utilized in all areas of the refinery. At one point, 102 worked as "helpers in the Boiler Shop, Barrel and Grease Plant, Electrical Shop, Instrument Shop, Machine Shop where they operated cranes, the Power Plant and Storehouse." In the Magnolia Refinery laboratory, female chemists ran tests and served as trainees.[20]

20. "Beaumont Women Taking Places of Men in Defense Works Number Thousands," LSB, 1942-1943, n.d; Mobil Oil Corporation, *History of the Refining Division, Magnolia Petroleum Company, Beaumont, Texas* (Beaumont: Magnolia Petroleum Company, n.d.), 102.

Although not directly a part of defense work, Gulf States Utilities also hired women to fill the vacancies left by 250 men called into the armed services or lost to higher paying defense jobs. Women worked as meter readers and assistant department heads. United Gas also reported an increase in the number of women, replacing men who left the accounting and engineering departments.[21]

On the average, the women who made up the defense workforce in Beaumont were more likely to be married than single, and most of their husbands served in the military. The *Pennship Log* carried human interest stories about female employees. Alma Cayson was a married schoolteacher and the mother of two daughters but decided she wanted to do some kind of war work, fulfilling this goal as a burner at PSY. Stella Groves, also a burner, left her job as a supervisor of a cleaning crew to go to the shipyard but realized that her job was "only for the duration," and that she would return to her old job when the time came. Grace Herrin was a widow who decided that she was tired of working in a cleaning and alteration shop in San Angelo and came to Beaumont to work in the shipyard as a wire checker. Ann Segal, a native of Hungary, got her welder's training in New York, came to Beaumont to live with her younger sister, and hired on at PSY. Edith Smith lived with her parents but left her job at Shepherd's Laundry for better pay at PSY as a tool checker. Female defense workers varied in size, shape, age and social background.[22]

The reasons for going to work in war industry were as varied as the women. Patriotism and the desire to do their part to help win the war sooner were top priorities. The chance to earn a real wage also figured prominently in the decision. In an article entitled "Women Feel War Duty," Clara Cole expressed the idea that women felt the duty and responsibility of the nation upon their shoulders and that they were "in this thing to WIN." Other women such as Ila Martin wanted to make sure that they did their part to assure that their sons returned. She stated, "I am not satisfied to sit at home and brood over my boy's being gone from me, and I feel like I am of a little service to my country when I am out here doing what I can." Angel Lance, a burner at PSY, faced different circumstances. She worked out of necessity and also out of a deep-seated interest because her husband died in 1942 as a Merchant Marine in Cuba. She had to provide for a son and also finish paying for a house she and her husband had been buying. Edith Smith, a tool checker, carne to the shipyard because the wages were better than they had been at her previous job. She was able to save

21. "Beaumont Women Taking Places of Men in Defense Works Number Thousands," LSB, 1942-1943, n.d.

22. PSL, July 15, Aug. 15, Dec. 15, 1943, and Sept. 1, 1944.

Denim Replaces Glamor

Women on the yards at PSY have discarded all foolish feminine frills from their work costume and approved garb is modeled by the three girls above, left to right, Willie May Savoy, welder checker, in coveralls; Evelyn Winn, welder marker, overalls and shirt, and Helen Scott, welder, two-piece khaki. The order went into effect Monday, June 7.

From the *Pennship Log*, June 15, 1943 (digitally retouched). *Courtesy of the Lamar University Archives and Special Collections, Beaumont, TX.*

enough money to buy a house by the end of the war. These are only a sampling of the reasons women went into defense work.[23]

Women in defense work also faced problems. Some companies hired counselors. Iris Dunn, the coordinator of women at PSY from October 1942 to March 1944, had the "distinction of bringing the first group of women" to the yards. The editors of the *Pennship Log* devoted columns to the concerns that women confronted. The issue of March 15, 1943, carried a picture of a woman dressed

23. "Fair Burner Toils for Son and Home," "Mother and Daughter Team as Welders," and Clara Cole, "Women Feel War Duty," PSL, June 15, July 1, and Sept. 1, 1943.

properly for shipyard work, so that the other employees could emulate her. By June 1943, they had a choice of overalls and shirts, slacks and shirts or coveralls, and their hairdos had to be simple and covered by a bandanna. In June 1944, some of the women had slipped back to their previous style of dressing. They were once again ordered to give up their "Hollywood sweaters, peek-a-boo blouses, boardwalk slacks and barefoot sandals" for sensible work clothes.[24]

Another area that caused problems for women was child care. The American Women's Volunteer Services undertook to provide a nursery school for children of women defense workers, but by January 1943, the agency could not find suitable quarters. Without a school, mothers would have to quit their vital defense jobs and take care of their children. By March 1943, a nursery opened at Multimax Village, a Beaumont housing project for war workers.[25]

Many companies feared absenteeism. In October 1943, male and female employees of PSY achieved an "excellent low absence record of 5.3 percent." The *Pennship Log* carried a quarterly honor roll of women who had not missed a day of work since they were hired. The editors applauded women because they realized how difficult it was to maintain a home and do their job. Beaumont women entered the work force for various reasons and had to adapt to new circumstances that arose from their becoming defense workers. Employers, if they were reluctant at first to hire women, changed their minds when they realized that they could tap a large pool of workers with only a few minor changes. At first men were reluctant to accept women in their workplace. For example, a few of the old-time shipbuilders at PSY likened women in the shipyard to the Disney animated film *Dumbo*, "when they saw the elephant fly for the first time, 'I thought I'd seen most everything, but I never saw an elephant fly.'" They had seen most things around a shipyard but never a woman working in one. As the women proved themselves able and reliable workers, the men had to accept them as co-workers.[26]

In conclusion, the war years brought about changes in the perception of women and also in the economy. The lack of manpower opened the door to women and allowed them to expand their roles and earn real wages. The changes and the

24. "Gals' Boss Resigns" and "Girls are Ordered into Safe Clothes," PSL, March 15 and June 15, 1944.

25. "Multirnax Gets Nursery School," PSL, April 1, 1943. Two of the nursery school teachers were Sally Gary and Elsie Mae Hedge.

26. "Mold Loft Gang Gives Welcome Sign to Girls" and "Low Absence Rate Laudable," PSL, Dec. 15, 1942, and Oct. 15, 1943.

new experiences affected different women in different ways. They discovered wider job opportunities and demonstrated their value as a source of labor. The war also ended the Great Depression and paved the way for postwar economic development. Beaumont women definitely contributed to the war effort by taking part in defense work. In the face of labor shortages, employers hired women and found them to be productive workers. Many women who were employed in Beaumont industries still regarded themselves first as wives and mothers, and the brief period during which they assumed unaccustomed roles did not bring about marked changes in their status.

Texaco Strike, June 2, 1950. View of the striking workers from the Main Gate looking south down Houston Avenue. *Courtesy of Elton N. Gish, Lumberton, TX.*

"Frankly, Joe, What's in This Strike for You and Me"

The 114-day Texaco Strike of 1950 and How It Is Remembered

John R. Tisdale

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While the nation emerged from two decades of an economic depression and a world war, industrial unionism attempted to find a footing in the marketplace by representing the working class. Few places in America would be more affected than Port Arthur, Texas, where the oil giants of Texaco, Gulf, and Mobil produced the fuel that kept the country running. In a post-World War II environment that resulted in the unparalleled growth of the United States and specifically Southeast Texas, the 114-day strike at Texaco in 1950 represented the struggle between a company and a union over how to divide the spoils of an expanding economy.

The Texaco strike of 1950 has thus far been an underrepresented footnote in labor history. This paper, which uses oral histories and analyzes newspaper coverage, will attempt to fill that void. Few oral histories exist and the majority of participants in the 1950 strike are no longer with us. The few workers left from that era remember last names, but often not the first names. They remember dates, but not the specific day. They remember events, but not the place. The inability to recall specific names, dates, and events of a half-century earlier, however, does not negate the swell of emotional responses to the 114-day strike. This paper utilizes oral history interviews with union and non-union participants, and the spouses and children of those affected by the strike along with an

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analysis of the *Port Arthur News*. The letters to the editor provide the best source for assessing how the workers and their families dealt with the work stoppage. The number of letters—at times filling a full page—provided evidence of the struggle between union workers who believed the strike necessary and those who thought the strike unnecessary, but more importantly who felt the pressure to pay mortgages, car notes, and buy groceries to feed their children. Also, both the union and Texaco management used full-page newspaper advertisements to inform Port Arthur residents of their positions on the issues, which included the cost of health and life insurance, retirement benefits, safety concerns, and of course, wages. Letters to the editor were particularly important because that section routinely published the views expressed by the wives of workers who chided the company for not being fair or who wanted their husbands to return to work—a particular concern as the strike moved into the summer months. It is also important to note that most histories of labor strife focus almost exclusively on the "us versus them" perspective that inadvertently overlooks the social and cultural tensions that occur outside the gates of the refinery. This paper attempts to focus attention on how the families of workers were affected by the strike without the myopic focus on the strike alone.

In the 1930s with the help of federal legislation and particularly the National Industry Recovery Act of 1933, unions gained incredible bargaining leverage. Between 1935 and 1945, membership increased from 3.4 million to 14.8 million, a number that represented 35.5 percent of all non-agricultural workers in the United States. Despite those exponential gains, the year 1946 would represent the most contentious in labor-management relations of the twentieth century as 4.6 million workers participated in 4,985 strikes.[1]

In contrast to the tension between labor and management nationwide, Texaco and Port Arthur had weathered—and prospered—as the Texas Company and Arthur E. Stilwell's city built amid the marsh and mosquitoes came to life at the beginning of the twentieth century. Union members at Texaco gained bargaining recognition in the mid-1940s as the Gulf Coast became the refining epicenter of the country. By 1941, the region processed more than a quarter of the nation's crude oil. World War II only enhanced that influence as the government turned to Southeast Texas refineries to produce aviation fuel and artificial rubber feedstock. Texaco benefited from its government contracts during the war to the extent that 88.2 percent of its aviation fuel, 42.9 percent of its lubricating oil, 12.1 percent of its gasoline, and 45.3 percent of its fuel oil went to

1. James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 40-43.

the government. By the mid-1950s, Gulf Coast refining accounted for almost one-third the capacity in the United States.[2]

Increased production during World War II created an environment for the growth of unions and produced for workers unprecedented income. The most significant variable in assessing why the number of the strikes reached a record level in 1946 can be attributed to a reduction in overtime pay. In fact, take-home pay fell 30 percent as the nation adjusted its production to a post-war level.[3]

Labor reached its bargaining zenith in 1948, but a series of events the following year would temper those gains. A recession contributed to a downturn in employment and technological innovations resulted in the need for fewer workers. The unprecedented growth—compared to the malaise of the 1930s—resulted in unprecedented U.S. consumption. In 1939, the nation imported fewer than 50,000 barrels of oil, a figure that would increase to 588,000 barrels by 1950. That same year, the United States exported more than 388,000 barrels, and that figure rose to 1.5 million by 1950. The number of barrels refined and exported would continue to rise until 1954 before production in the Middle East began to outstrip that of the United States, which by 1950, had become a net importer of oil.[4] The unions, which had benefited from a sympathetic federal government in the 1930s and a wartime economy in the 1940s, quickly found the 1950s a decade of struggle. The 114-day strike at Texaco, which began April 4, produced a level of enmity and violence that would mark the 1950 strike as one of the most acrimonious in the company's history.

Chartered by the American Federation of Labor (AFL) in 1918, the Oil Workers' International Union (OWIU) met with resistance in attempting to organize workers at Texaco in Port Arthur. The transient nature of the oil business, along with relatively high wages, a stable workforce, concentration in the industry, and company-created unions prevented its growth, particularly in Southeast Texas. Although the AFL first chartered the OWIU in 1918, the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) challenged the AFL on representation of trade unions. The AFL traditionally represented the craft unions and the CIO, which

2. Joseph A. Pratt, *The Growth of a Refining Region* (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1980) 65-95; Marquis James, *The Texaco Story: The First Fifty Years, 1902-1952* (New York: Conde Nast Press, 1953), 73.

3. Patterson, *Grand Expectations*, 43.

4. Melvin Rothbaum, *The Government of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1962), 27.

started in 1935, traditionally represented the trade unions. The oil industry unions did not begin to grow at a significant rate until after Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the National Labor Relations Act, or Wagner Act, of 1935. On January 14 and 15, 1942, the OWIU, under the umbrella of the CIO, won recognition at Texaco. The OWIU won 1,351 votes, the AFL 67, and 781 voted for neither. The Oil Workers' union Local 23 would make its greatest membership gains during World War II, when the government contracts greatly increased its need for workers. And despite the internecine struggle between the two unions over craft and union designation, the growth of Local 23 in Port Arthur would exceed all expectations. By 1950, Local 23 was the largest local affiliated with the CIO.[5]

The contract between the union and Texaco was scheduled to expire at 12:01 a.m., March 30, 1950. The two sides had met in early March, and both continued to voice their willingness to meet on the possibility of a new agreement. One week before the contract expired, plant manager Frank L. Wallace sent two letters to employees outlining the company's proposal to the union. In the first, dated March 18, Wallace stated, "The company recently made proposals for substantial changes in the existing contract, particularly with reference to improvement in some of the benefits plan. The union has rejected these proposals in their entirety." The *Port Arthur News* opted to print the March 20 letter, which consisted of more than 1,000 words. In it, Wallace outlined nine proposals, which included the elimination of the 16-hour notice clause for changing work schedules, a "liberalization" for leaves of absence for union business, a safety hearing for employees who believed they were being asked to perform an unsafe task, extending the 'death-in-the-family' absence to include an employee's brother or sister, and purchasing pensions for years of service before July 1, 1937, when Texaco first established a pension plan. Other proposals included increasing life insurance 50 percent with no cost to the worker and an increase in retirement benefits for those not receiving more than $75 per month. Under the eighth proposal, the company would increase the allow-

5. Walter Galenson, *The CIO Challenge to the AFL: A History of the American Labor Movement, 1935-1941* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 411-413; William J. Puette, *Through Jaundiced Eyes: How the Media View Organized Labor* (Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 1992), 62. Numerous labor histories are written from a particular point of view. As labor historian Robert H. Zieger points out, union histories are often void of "archival grounding." Although Harvey Connor's history lacks that archival grounding, it is valuable because many of the records from Local 23 no longer exist and his description of the formation of Local 23 is relatively unequaled in its chronological narrative. Zieger, *The CIO: 1935-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 229; Connor, *History of Oil Workers' International Union (CIO)* (Denver: Oil Workers' International Union, 1950), 90.

Picket line at the Main Gate on north end of Houston Street, April 29, 1950. Note the tents used as temporary shelter to the left. *Courtesy of Elton N. Gish, Lumberton, TX.*

ance for a hospital room from $4 daily to $7 daily and increase the allowance for surgical procedures from $150 to $250. Workers paid 50 cents per month for this insurance, and in the letter, Wallace assured workers that their portion of the cost would not increase. The final proposal included assurances that the company, which previously had been able to cancel, change, or modify at any time without notice, would honor the accident and sick benefit plan, the total disability plan, and the group hospitalization and surgical benefits plan for the duration of the contract.[6]

Wallace would not use the editorial pages of the local newspaper to communicate the company's position during the strike. He chose, instead, to use full-page advertisements in the *Port Arthur News* with the fictional characters of Joe and Mary. Joe worked at the refinery and defended the union position rather sheepishly near the end of the dialogic portion. Mary represented the inquisitive wife

6. PAN, Mar 23, 1950, 2.

who disagrees with the union and repeatedly asks, in some form, "Frankly, Joe, what's in this strike for you and me?"[7]

Those not affiliated with Texaco learned of the strike in detail in the April 5 edition of the *Port Arthur News*. Besides the banner headline on the front page, which signaled the shutdown of both the Port Arthur and Port Neches plants, the newspaper also offered its opinion in what would become a regular feature for the duration of the strike—the front-page editorial. "A strike," the newspaper warned, "would send a negative signal to businesses looking to move into the Beaumont-Port Arthur region. Settlement is up to only two groups—the Oil Workers' union on one hand and the Texas Company management on the other . . . . The rest of us are helpless with the very existence of our town at stake. To those who can find a way to end this mass idleness, Port Arthur appeals: Find it."[8]

The strike began quietly enough, but quickly the letters to the editor filled the columns with epistles signed from "Home-maker" and "Housewife." On April 13, Home-maker wrote, "Right now men can't go to their jobs just because some one man gave them the word 'walkout' and a free man that really wants to work can't go on his job."[9] Housewife, in a letter to the editor published in the April 16, 1950, issue, asked, "Why should a refinery as large as the Texas Company's be idle when the men are making better money than they ever made in their lives?" In that same issue, "Union Man's Wife," responding to the Home-maker letter published three days earlier, wrote that the strike "wasn't called by one man. It was voted for by a great majority of the men. That was their desire. When I want something bad enough I fight for it, too." In a letter published April 20, the Union Man's Wife retorted that the dictators were the supporters of the Taft-Hartley Act, not the unions. "Now is the time to

7. PAN, May 2, 1950, 11.

8. "The Sooner It's Settled, the Better for Everybody," PAN, April 4, 1950, 1.

9. "Home-Maker's View," in "The Letter Box" column, PAN, April 13, 1950, 9. Unlike today where newspapers place letters to the editor either on the editorial page or the op-ed page, "The Letter Box" was "floated" throughout the paper. As the strike continued and the number of letters increased, editors decided to place a 200-word limit on letters. A substantial number of letters carried the label of "Home-Maker" or "Housewife" because the writers feared reprisals from people with the opposite view. In the same editor's note restricting length, the editors referred to the policy on publishing anonymous letters. "Incidentally, let us repeat—again—that anonymous letters are NEVER published in this space. If a writer doesn't care to have his signature appear, he should so state, and it won't be printed. However, *The News* MUST KNOW THE NAME AND ADDRESS of every writer, as an evidence of good faith. It might be pointed out that a letter over the signature of the writer is always more effective and convincing."

make an important decision—shall we go back to the dark days of yesterday, or are we going to build a better tomorrow? I believe we will build that better tomorrow."[10]

Other letter writers questioned whether an actual majority had voted to strike. The union did not publish the specific results of the vote because "it might hurt our cause if the company stirred up trouble by trying to divide us by playing a few weak members against the strong ones who are interested in the future of this city, this country and indeed, the world," wrote J. R. Holloman of Groves in response to whether the vote should be published. The union never publicized those figures, but the refinery workers were numerous enough to account for 50 percent of the money spent in Port Arthur in 1950. Not all of those who worked in the refineries were union workers. Specifically, the engineers and supervisors operated the plant while the union walked the picket lines. Unless the strike affected other Texaco facilities, managers often transferred "company men" from other Texaco refineries to work for the duration of the strike.[11]

O. H. "Pat" and Martha "Mimi" Higgs moved to Port Arthur in 1949 after the husband completed mechanical engineering studies at Texas A&M in College Station. In 1950, Pat's father, Artie Higgs, served as superintendent at the Texaco refinery in Casper, Wyoming, but previously worked at the Port Arthur facility. Artie's brother held a union position at Texaco, and Pat remembered the uncle telling him that "because your dad is a superintendent, the word is out that they are going to try to put the pressure on you to keep you from coming in the plant." Pat Higgs worked more than 30 years for Texaco and the overwhelming majority of his memories are pleasant, but he disliked two aspects of the strikes—his union friends suffered from loss of income and, especially during his early years as an engineer, the sheer boredom of draining and mapping steam lines in the power department. Initially, Port Arthur did not impress Mimi although Pat's $305 monthly salary provided a better standard of living than the GI Bill provided while the pair lived in College Station. Mimi remembers the mosquitoes, oyster shell roads, the humidity, the lack of air conditioning, and the tin screens covering the windows.[12]

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10. "From Union Wife" PAN, April 16, 1950, 5; "Union Wife's View," PAN, April 20, 1950, 17.

11. J. R. Holloman signed his letter, one of numerous he would write during the strike. Holloman, "As to Strike Vote," PAN, April 23, 1950, 20; NHT, 5:271-272.

12. O. H. "Pat" Higgs interview by author, tape recording, Groves, TX, March 4, 2001, 3, and Martha "Mimi" Higgs interview by author, tape recording, Groves, TX, March 5, 2001, 1, Institute for Oral History, Baylor University, Waco, TX.

Mimi also remembers life during the strikes. Texaco hired Pat in September 1949, and the family had little time for adjustment before the 1950 strike. She does remember hang-up telephone calls during the strike, which caused Pat, who worked the graveyard shift, to ask a fellow A&M graduate to stay overnight for protection. Mimi's singular and distinct memory of the 1950 strike involved someone in a car following Pat as he left the plant. "I got very peeved and I think it was because we were—we had just moved in."[13]

Many other young couples experienced the Higgs's plight of unfamiliarity and newness in post-World War II Port Arthur. Texaco boomed despite the end of the government-sponsored contracts, and numerous young men moved from the sandy hills of southern Mississippi and the marshy bayous of Louisiana—all in search of a better life. As the strike stretched into late April, however, union workers reached an unsettling conclusion—this strike was different, and the financial ramifications posed a significant hardship for a young family. In the letters to the editor, the "Striker's Daughter" referred to the tightening of family finances. "Have some of the gentlemen spending so much of their leisure time (and they have plenty of it now) writing letters cussing out the Texas Company, ever used a few spare moments to figure out how long it will take the 'benefits' they are striking for to make up for the wages they are deliberately losing now?"[14] On April 26, employees at the Port Arthur and Port Neches plants reported for work at the main gates only to be turned away by company officials, who wanted reassurances that the return to work would not be short-lived and result in another union-led walkout. The union would not make that promise. After being turned away, however, "hundreds of the men went to offices of the Texas Employment Commission here and filed claims for unemployment compensation." That same afternoon, Texaco officials bought a full-page advertisement in the *News*:

> The strike was called by the Union, not by the Company. The Company cannot be expected to spend thousands of dollars putting the plant back in operation without these reasonable assurances, particularly in view of the Company's experience as late as yesterday at its Casper, Wyoming, refinery. Employes [*sic*] at Casper, after going on strike on April 4th, returned to work on April 20th and the Company at great expense reopened the Casper plant on that date without any assurance

13. Martha "Mimi" Higgs interview, 8-13.

14. "How Long Will It Take?" in "The Letter Box," PAN, April 26, 1950, 20.

Picket line at the entrance of the Port Arthur Terminal (docks and canning plant), May 2, 1950, bearing signs claiming that Texaco "locked out" its workers. *Courtesy of Elton N. Gish, Lumberton, TX*

> from the Union that the employes [*sic*] would not again be called out on strike. Five days later the Union again called the employes [*sic*] out and the Casper plant is now idle for the second time.[15]

Despite the strike, Texaco announced on April 27 that it paid group life and hospital insurance premiums for that month and would again for May. Union workers waited patiently for the employment commission to process the first claim on whether the filing met state requirements. According to the union, the "strike" became a "lockout" when the company declined to allow the workers to return to work on the 26th. The union's decision to have workers sign up for unemployment backfired when the Texas Employment Commission ruled on May 8 to deny the petition of the 3,000 workers at the Port Arthur and Port Neches plants. After six weeks, the financial pressure mounted. Company officials had

15. "NOTICE: To Employees and Others Affected by the Strike at the Texas Company's Port Arthur Works and Terminal," PAN, April 26, 1950, 19.

argued that the union did not make arrangements for an orderly resumption of work and thus defined what had occurred as a "strike." Each side quickly cried foul, and as the strike moved into May, the two sides were no closer to a resolution than when the strike commenced on April 4.

In the May 7 issue of the *News*, the debate continued unabated. In one letter to the editor, "Texaco Loyalist" wrote that union members should not "bite the hand that's feeding you" while another writer suggested that Pres. Harry Truman seize any plant on strike for more than 30 days. Marie M. Roy wrote that she prayed for peace.[16]

In that same edition, the management of the Port Arthur newspaper offered more than a prayer. It offered a plan to settle the strike. The editors outlined their concerns prominently on the front page. "In a sincere endeavor to get the ball off dead-center and start it rolling toward a settlement, *The News* took the liberty of suggesting that a committee of reasonable-minded citizens—connected neither with the company nor the union—accept the responsibility of conferring with spokesmen for both sides and of trying to find a middle ground on which the two local refineries can be re-opened for the benefit of all concerned." The newspaper listed the names of suggested committee members, which included a Methodist minister, a physician, a filling station operator, an independent grocer, a construction contractor, two sporting-goods dealers, a Catholic monsignor, and a retired mediator for the U.S. Department of Labor. The newspaper management, according to the editorial, did not consult with the proposed committee members before publishing the list. Editors estimated the strike cost the economy of Port Arthur nearly three-quarters of a million dollars each week, a fact that could cause the city to "wither and shrivel and slump back to 30 years ago, dragging all of us back with it."[17]

Sheila Coleman Berwick, whose father Herbert B. Coleman tested aviation gasoline as a laboratory technician at Texaco, remembers well the 1950 strike. "I grew up with the word strike. It was a dirty word—a scary word." When union workers put up picket signs on April 4, the Coleman family drove to Key West, Florida, to visit Berwick's older sister and her husband. The family stayed for a month. Her father "saved for strikes," Berwick recalled. "He didn't want strikes. I sensed his fear of strikes. My dad was a person that when there was a strike, he wanted to pay his bills."

16. "The Letter Box," PAN, May 7, 1950, 22.

17. "A Plan Which Might Lead to a Settlement," PAN, May 7, 1950, 1.

Although a Texaco employee for more than 20 years, Coleman did not have a craft that he could parlay into work during a strike. The laboratory technicians and the refining operators were at a disadvantage compared to the brick masons, carpenters, electricians, painters, and welders. Although difficult to find stable work, the carpenter or welder might be able to find the odd job to pay the light bill and buy groceries. Despite the hardship of a four-month strike, Berwick's father never considered crossing the picket line "because of fear of what would happen to his family," his daughter remembered.

Her most vivid memory of the strike, however, occurred when a pregnant woman who lived in her neighborhood stood near the picket line and threw dead rats on people crossing the gate into the refinery. A "rat" is the symbolic name union loyalists label those workers, specifically union, who crossed a picket line during a strike. It is difficult to know the names and number of workers who crossed the picket line in 1950, but that number likely increased as the strike continued.[18]

In the meantime on May 7, two days after the front-page editorial, a citizens' committee met. It included 12 of the 16 persons whom the *News* had nominated. The group elected Monsignor James M. Kirwin as chair. The committee's first attempt at persuading the two sides to meet failed, but the issues were relatively clear after six weeks. The company would re-open the refinery if the union pledged to give 90-days advance notice of any further strike. The union declined to accept the no-strike stipulation because it "would rob the union of its most powerful weapon, the strike," the newspaper reported in a front-page editorial.[19]

Another editorial on the same day attested to the persistent number and frequency of letters to the editor. The newspaper reminded contributors of its 200-word limit and its policy that writers must identify themselves before the editors could consider the letter for publication. Apparently readers complained that the number and tone of the letters created an environment not conducive to ending the strike. The editors responded:

> As you're doubtless aware, the Letter Box is being pretty well filled these days with comments on the Texaco controversy, pro and con. Some expressions have been heated, others more moderate.

18. Sheila Berwick interview by author, tape recording, Beaumont, TX, May 28, 2002, Institute for Oral History.

19. "Citizens' Committee Not to Quit Texaco Peace Effort," editorial, PAN, May 14, 1950, 1.

> Some observers have suggested that these communications muddy up the water and agitate dissension. Frankly, we are hoping for the day when there'll be more pleasant things to write about than a labor-management dispute. But, dislike it as we may, such a row is the major topic of conversation in Port Arthur these days, and we don't know of a better soap-box to climb on and debate it from than the Letter Box. At least, it lets folks of contrary opinion blow off steam. And that's a good old American custom.[20]

Writers continued to mount the soap box well into May. Clyde Cordeau's letter mimicked the conversational format of Texaco management's Joe and Mary advertisements. In Cordeau's version of the "conversation," Joe convinces Mary that the permanent and total disability plan should extend from a limit of four years to lifetime benefits. The five "Mary and Joe" full-page advertisements began April 30 and ended May 11. Helen Petronio's letter lacked the creativity of Cordeau's, but the passionate plea for an end to the strike made it effective: "We are being hurt plenty right now and if it keeps up, a lot of us could lose plenty. We need unions, but we need an understanding between capital and labor and plenty of common sense."[21]

The two sides began negotiating May 18 but produced no tangible results in the month of May. The strain showed in a letter from "Worried," who wrote that he and his wife had spent their nest egg, had fallen behind a car payment, and were "getting broker every passing day."[22] To rally the troops, OWIU Pres. O. A. Knight visited Port Arthur. He told 5,000 persons crowded into the Pleasure Pier ballroom that the negotiators would demand a union shop and nationwide bargaining if the company "does not get down to real bargaining and soon." Knight refuted Texaco plant manager Frank L. Wallace's contention that the OWIU president was more interested in his power than in settling the strike. Knight called for a settlement, but his speech probably did not help matters. He claimed that one former Texaco president "collaborated with Nazi Germany before the war and with the fascist regimes in Spain and Italy." The OWIU pres-

20. "Letter Box Is a Good 'Soap-Box,'" editorial, PAN, May 14, 1950, 4.

21. "The Letter Box," PAN, May 15, 1950, 2.

22. "The Letter Box," PAN, May 28, 1950, 2.

ident believed that "there are a handful of men who are hell-bent on breaking this organization."[23]

Two days after Knight's speech, Texaco offered a two-year contract at the Port Arthur and Port Neches plants. Previous contracts lasted for one year. Management at the Port Neches asphalt plant used registered mail to invite the 400 workers to return to work. The union, however, voted to reject the offer. In May, the United Auto Workers signed a five-year contract in Detroit, and an editorial in the *News* wondered aloud whether a multi-year contract would be possible in Port Arthur. With the two-year offer, the "annual wrangles" over contracts would abate and stability would emerge.[24]

In a letter to employees, the company invited workers to report for work June 20. According to a *News* report, the Port Neches plant re-opened using supervisory employees and five workers who crossed the picket line. "Arthur Port," the pen name of one of the editors, urged the company and workers to negotiate. "After 74 days, it's rugged—and getting ruggeder [*sic*] every hour."[25] On that same day, the union called for a "standing vote" and, according to union officials, the workers voted overwhelmingly to stay out.[26]

On June 20, however, the 7 a.m. whistle suddenly sounded at the plant—silent for 77 days—as 700 to 800 men gathered near the main gate on Houston Avenue. The newspaper reported that 40 unionists were inside the plant and only

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23. "Knight Warns of New Union Demands 'If—,'" PAN, June 3, 1950, 1. Alice Wright, a *News* staff writer, received a byline on the Knight speech. Bylines were the exception for most stories in the newspaper. The *News* subscribed to the Associated Press, the United Press, and the International News Service with bylines crediting the service and only occasionally the reporter.

24. The editorial used all upper case letters for the words "STABILIZATION" and "STABILITY." "Two-Year Feature of Texaco Proposal, We Think, Would Be Boon to Stabilization," editorial, PAN, June 11, 1950, 4.

25. "Open Letter from Arthur Port," editorial, PAN, June 17, 1950, 4.

26. The "standing vote" produced the desired result for the union. Asking 3,000 members to stand in favor or against a resolution created an intimidating environment for those with the minority opinion. Letter writers who doubted the claims of union solidarity voiced their concerns. "If you are so sure that the men don't want to accept the company's last offer, why are you refusing to a secret vote? Many of the men are afraid to vote the way they really feel, in a standing vote. If a few do have the courage to say they want to go back to work, they are shouted down." "The Letter Box," PAN, June 28, 1950, 12. In another editorial, the *News* suggested that only the union could call for an "election" on whether to return to work. The writer did not call for a secret ballot, but the newspaper's use of quotation marks around "overwhelming majority" and "unanimously" hints at a lack of faith in the union reports on strike votes. "So the Strike," editorial, PAN, July 9, 1950, 4.

three "scabs" crossed the primary picket line, one man told the newspaper. The *News* reported that company officials used photographs and cameras to record activity outside the gate.[27]

The next day, violence erupted on the picket line. Police charged three union workers for assaulting Isaac Speyrer, aged 43. The next day, a car entering the plant struck union picket captain W. S. Sistrunk, who was taken to St. Mary Hospital with "multiple contusions." Other acts of violence included threatening phone calls to supervisory workers and reports of bricks tossed through the front windows of houses.[28]

The violence intensified as the strike dragged on into July. Two Texaco employees reported to police that a car followed the pair as they left the evening shift and fired a shotgun into the back of the car. Police made no arrests. In another incident, witnesses told police that someone in a speeding green automobile threw a brick through the window of the Texaco dredge office on 25th Street. The women who wrote letters to the editor moved onto the picket lines July 11. The newspaper reported that 200 to 300 women associated with the women's auxiliary of Local 23 walked the picket line in the rain. Picket signs reading, "Our Husbands Refuse to Work with Scabs" and "Supervisors, Don't Take Our Husbands' Jobs," surfaced at the gates on Houston and Savannah avenues. One woman carried a dead mouse on a string and dangled it at workers entering the plant. Despite company reports of increased levels of shouting and booing, the auxiliary picket line was free of violence.[29]

Violence, however, continued, not at the gate, but on the streets of Port Arthur. In early June, the newspaper reported that 100 members of the International Association of Electrical Workers, an AFL affiliate, were due back to work on orders from their international headquarters. More than five weeks later, AFL electrician E. L. McMahon rode his bicycle to work near the intersection of 18th Street and Stillwell Boulevard when four men jumped from an automobile and attacked him with a rubber hose. The *News* published two photographs of McMahon in his hospital bed. The photographs showed a severe cut above the left eye with abrasions on the nose and upper right portion of his forehead. The second photograph showed evidence of four lacerations on the electrician's

27. "Texaco Re-opens; Most Men Stay Out," PAN, June 20, 1950, 1.

28. "Two Pickets Struck by Car near Texaco Gate," PAN, June 24, 1950, 1.

29. "Women March for 2 Hours on Oil Workers' Picket Lines," PAN, July 11, 1950, 1.

back.[30] Police would later file felony assault charges against one man—the first such felony charge filed during the strike.

John McMahon, the son of the electrician, said his father lost sight in his left eye two years after the assault, although doctors could not definitively connect the assault to the loss of vision. He said his father, as a member of the AFL, had an obligation to follow his conscience and the order from the international to work. When the grand jury convened the next week, McMahon testified that he told the men, "Hey, I'm AFL." When W. J. Goodwin, assistant district attorney asked the electrician whether the men responded to his union identification, McMahon quoted one man as saying, "It doesn't make a damn who you are, you're going in the plant." C. M. Corley, a Texaco employee, testified that he saw three men beat McMahon in the middle of Stillwell Boulevard.[31]

Former, longtime state senator Carl Parker lived on the same street with the McMahons. He vividly remembered telling his father that a group of men attacking McMahon seemed more than unfair. "Son," Parker remembered his father saying, "They weren't wanting to fight with him, they were wanting to whip his ass." Union members viewed anyone who crossed a picket line as "somebody trying to take bread off their own table. They were real turncoats."[32]

Despite the possible retaliation and the derogatory labels of "scab" and "turncoat," some workers felt compelled to cross the picket line because they faced the real threat of having a home or automobile repossessed. In a city where 50 percent of the workforce claimed union membership, bankers and grocers worked diligently to extend credit. Most workers saved money, but few were prepared for a four-month strike.

Charles E. Smitherman crossed the picket three weeks before the strike ended because he needed money to pay hospital bills after his wife's two-week stay for a hysterectomy. Smitherman and his wife had two sons, ages four and seven. After he crossed the picket line, Smitherman moved his sons to the bedroom not facing the street, and his wife moved to the front bedroom. He feared the "goon squad" would drive past the house and throw bricks through the front windows. No one threw bricks, but his wife received harassing telephone calls where the caller would say, "Your husband went in the plant, and we're going

30. "AFL Electrician Beaten in Strike," photographs, PAN, July 16, 1950, 1.

31. John McMahon interview by author, Arlington, TX, April 1, 2001, Institute for Oral History; "Two CIO Men Are Held for Grand Jury in Strike Attacks," PAN, July 19, 1950, 13.

32. Carl Parker interview by author, tape recording, Port Arthur, TX, May 27, 2002, Institute for Oral History.

to make it rough for him." Smitherman opted to stay inside the plant, coming out only once a week. Several callers congratulated Smitherman for having the "nerve to go in."[33]

Once the strike ended, however, union workers shunned Smitherman. He worked in the chemical laboratory, which negotiated as a separate union. "Well, after we went back . . . , it was harder on me than it was during the strike." One evening, two men with rocks in their hands accosted Smitherman as he walked toward the main gate after working the 3-to-11 shift. They walked alongside Smitherman without saying a word, causing the laboratory technician to recount the episode as the most harrowing experience of his time at Texaco. Workplace harassment occurred after everyone returned to work. Smitherman recalled how his brother, a Texaco supervisor, also avoided him for fear of harassment. Another brother, a union technician working in the same laboratory, "was the only one that would come and talk to me." When asked whether he remained in the union after the 1950 strike, Smitherman pulled from his shirt pocket a folded piece of paper—the original letter dated July 15, 1950, that notified Smitherman of his trial for violating the constitution's bylaws in crossing the picket line. He never rejoined the union.[34]

In mid-July, Gov. Allen Shivers appointed two Texas Rangers to observe conditions in Port Arthur as a response to violence associated with the strike. At the same time, James O. Hubbard, a federal conciliator, began sitting in on negotiations between the company and union. On July 21, the *News* reported that a "'break' is believed close in the strike" after the company offered to allow workers to return to the plant if the union agreed to a 60-day no-strike clause while the two sides continued negotiations. Only one thing, according to the *News,* prevented a quick resolution to the dispute. Earlier in the strike, Texaco officials at the Port Neches plant fired two workers and suspended 11 others for

33. Charles E. Smitherman interview by author, tape recording, Port Arthur, TX, May 28, 2002, Institute for Oral History. "Goon squad" is a term familiar to labor historians. Both Smitherman and Berwick used the term in discussing groups of union men who harassed union members who crossed picket lines and management personnel. The editors of the *Port Arthur News* also used the phrase in a front page editorial. PAN, July 14, 1950.

34. The text of the letter reads: "Dear Sir: In accordance with Article 11, Section 2 and 4 of the international constitution and by-laws, charges have been preferred against you. You will be given a trial by the trial committee on July 26, 1950 at 10:00 A.M. This is to notify you that you have the right under the constitution and by-laws to defend yourself. Sincerely yours, Oil Workers International Union Local #23, D. Roy Harrington, Secretary." Smitherman could have rejoined the union, "but I would have (had) to apologize for what I did, and I wasn't going to apologize." Smitherman interview.

Late in the strike, picketers watch three men with lunch boxes enter the plant at the Main Gate, June 20, 1950 (detail). *Courtesy of Elton N. Gish, Lumberton, TX.*

failing to honor the OWIU-Texaco contract and for failing to safely shut down operations before leaving the plant. Local 228, which represented the workers, wanted Texaco to reinstate the 13 workers without discrimination before agreeing to the 60-day truce. The company acquiesced and promised to reinstate the workers. The union ratified the contract Thursday evening, July 27. The *News* reported that the first wave of workers would return for the 6 a.m. shift Saturday, July 29. Texaco announced that workers would receive their first paycheck on August 11, which would cover the period from when they returned to work until August 5. That pay period covered less than half of the regular paycheck period, but after almost four months without steady incomes, the workers returned to the refineries in Port Arthur and Port Neches "happy and cheerful," observers told the newspaper.[35]

In a front-page editorial three days after the two sides agreed to the 60-day truce, the *News* again asked that each side consider alternatives to strikes for the sake of economic stability. "Port Arthur's long record of labor peace, we are glad to say, far outweighs her few instances of upheaval. It will be to the advantage

35. "Return to Jobs at Texaco Plant Begins," PAN, July 29, 1950, 1.

of all if that record attains new luster and wider attention. What interests us are the four P's—Peace, Production, Payrolls, and Prosperity—for they add up to more pleasant living for everybody. We need them, we deserve them, and we can get them."[36]

The 1950 strike affected the Depression-era generation more than any other because of the length—114 days—and because many of those affected were returning World War II veterans with young families, mortgages, and car payments. The economic boom that so many today fondly remember temporarily ground to a halt during the strike. Other strikes would follow, but not one would eclipse the length of the 1950 stoppage until 1980. By then, most of that generation would be retired, or at least more financially secure, than in 1950. The union struck over benefits, including hospitalization contributions, company-paid life insurance, and increasing the supplemental pay benefits for those who retired from the company before 1937. Also, the union wanted hourly wage increases and safer working conditions, according to union officials quoted in the newspaper.

The other significant factor is the newspaper's involvement as mediator. It is exceptionally rare that a newspaper take the lead in resolving a labor strike. Thirty-three days into the strike, the management of the *Port Arthur News* suggested that a citizens' committee could mediate, and it nominated the community leaders who might serve. It is difficult to measure the impact of the mediation team headed by a Catholic priest and whether it played a role in ending the strike. Typically, however, newspaper coverage of strikes is negative, and most editors assign blame to the union.[37] The *News,* however, covered the strike fairly, although it is easy to sense the frustration of the editors as the strike continued into its second and third months. The 1950 strike defined a generation of men and women at Texaco who had survived both depression and a world war. The strike also defined the *Port Arthur News* as an instrument not only for disseminating information, but also for acknowledging its stake in the community.

36. "We Hope 'Truce' Paves Way for Industrial Peace," editorial, PAN, July 30, 1950, 1. Less than two years later, the strikes began anew on April 30, 1952, as employees at Gulf and Texaco joined the Pure Oil, Atlantic, and Magnolia plants in a nationwide strike over wages. Nationwide, the 90,000 oil workers wanted 25-cent hourly increases and a raise in shift differential pay. The federal Wage Stabilization Board, with the support of President Truman, however, mandated a 15-cent ceiling, which Texaco workers at the main plant accepted, along with 6 and 12-cent shift differentials. The contract also included retroactive pay of 4.2 cents per hour worked since January 1. Union workers at the Port Arthur plant were some of the last to return to work on May 25. See *New York Times*, May 6-Jun 5, 1952.

37. Puette, *Through Jaundiced Eyes*, 70.

Congressman Jack Brooks

The Struggle for the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Desegregation of Public Accomodations and Facilities in Southeast Texas

Robert J. Robertson

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In the early 1950s when Jack Brooks first won his seat in the U.S. Congress, African Americans in the South were trapped within the Jim Crow system of racial segregation. In his hometown of Beaumont, Texas, white Americans enforced this collection of laws and customs that denied black Americans access to most hotels, restaurants, libraries, parks, and golf courses. Less than 15 years later, the efforts of African-American activists and all three branches of the federal government demolished Jim Crow. Congress passed a series of civil rights laws, the most important coming in 1964. The Civil Rights Act, among other things, guaranteed African Americans access to all public accommodations and facilities from which they had been barred. Scholars have credited the NAACP and other civil rights groups, presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, and a small cadre of congressional leaders for the successful passage of the landmark legislation The principal congressmen included senators Hubert Humphrey (D-MN), Mike Mansfield (D-MT), Thomas H. Kuchel (R-CA), and Everett Dirksen (R-IL); and representatives William McCulloch (R-OH), Richard Bolling (D-MO), and Emanuel Celler (D-NY), who chaired the House Judiciary Subcommittee No. 5 that drafted the bill. Rep. Jack Brooks (D-TX)

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deserves inclusion in this discussion. He served on Celler's subcommittee and voted for the bill when most other Southern congressmen cast votes against it.[1]

Born in 1922 in Crowley, Louisiana, Brooks was reared and educated in Beaumont, Texas. He attended Lamar Junior College, transferring to the University of Texas at Austin where he earned a journalism degree in 1943. During World War II, Brooks joined the U.S. Marine Corps and spent almost two years in the Pacific. He won a commendation for service on Okinawa, and in 1946, he received his discharge with a commission as first lieutenant. Between 1946 and 1950, he served two terms in the state House of Representatives, making use of spare time to earn a law degree at the University of Texas in 1949. In the Texas House, he sponsored legislation that elevated the two-year Lamar Junior College to a four-year state college of technology.[2]

After completing his second term in the Texas House, Brooks returned to Beaumont to practice law. Within two years, however, he resumed his political career. In 1952, when Congressman Jesse M. Combs retired, Brooks ran for the position, surviving a 12-way Democratic primary and winning a runoff. In the general election, November 4, 1952, he defeated Republican Randolph C. Reed and thus began a 42-year career in the U.S. House of Representatives. During his long tenure, Brooks rose to the chairmanship of two committees—Government Operations and Judiciary. He also sponsored various development projects for his district, including B. A. Steinhagen and Sam Rayburn reservoirs.[3]

On January 3, 1953, Brooks began service in the 83rd Congress. At that time, the Texas delegation consisted of two senators and 22 representatives, all members of the Democratic Party. It was a prominent and powerful group with Lyndon

1. For the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, see Charles and Barbara Whalen, *The Longest Debate: A Legislative History of the 1964 Civil Rights Act* (Cabin John, MD: Seven Locks Press, 1985); Robert D. Loevy, *To End All Segregation: The Politics of the Passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 1990); Loevy, ed., *The Civil Rights Act of 1964: The Passage of the Law That Ended Racial Segregation* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997); and Georgianna F. Rathbun, ed., *Revolution in Civil Rights*, (Fourth edition, CQI, 1968), 53-65.

2. Theresa Wiersema Prince, "Jack Brooks and Impeachment Article Five" (MA thesis, Lamar University, 1985), 1-6; Michael Barone, ed., *The Almanac of American Politics—1972* (Washington, DC: Barone & Co., 1972).

3. Prince, "Jack Brooks," 1-6; Phil Duncan, ed., *Politics in America: 1990, The 101st Congress* (CQI, 1989), 1450-1453. Brooks retired in 1995. He passed away on December 4, 2012. For documents on Jack Brooks's 42-year congressional career, see the Jack Brooks Collection (JBC), acquired in 2008 by the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, from Lamar University Archives and Special Collections.

Johnson as Senate minority floor leader and Sam Rayburn as Democratic floor leader in the House. Two years later, when the Democrats won majorities in both houses, Johnson became Majority Leader and Rayburn reassumed the position of Speaker of the House, a post he had held in 1940–1947 and 1949–1953. Other influential Texans included Martin Dies of Lufkin, Albert Thomas of Houston, Clark Thompson of Galveston, Homer Thornberry of Austin, and Lloyd Bentsen Jr. of McAllen.[4]

Right away, Brooks became friends with Johnson, later enjoying a close, personal relationship when he and his wife Charlotte often dined with the senator and his wife Lady Bird. He also became a protégé of Rayburn, the legendary Texas Democrat who held sway in the House for more than 40 years. With Rayburn's help, Brooks was appointed to the Government Operations Committee in the 83rd Congress (1953-1954) and to the Judiciary Committee in the 84th Congress (1955-1956). Brooks was much influenced by Speaker Rayburn, learning from him the ways and workings of Congress. From the very first, Brooks recalled, Rayburn included him in meetings of his "Board of Education," an informal gathering in the Speaker's private office where a small, exclusive group enjoyed drinks and discussed congressional business. Also, Brooks was a regular at Rayburn's Wednesday luncheon for the Texas delegation. Later, after Rayburn's retirement, Brooks himself became chairman of the Texas delegation and hosted the Wednesday group.[5]

Under Rayburn's tutelage, Brooks learned to manage the dilemmas inherent in the congressman's job of casting votes, balancing various interests, loyalty to the Democratic Party, the sentiments of voters in his 2nd Congressional District, his own convictions, and myriad other considerations. Sometimes, to satisfy fellow Democrats, he had to "go along to get along," while other times, he followed Rayburn's admonition to "vote your district first," all the while trying to figure out what he wanted to do. It was a responsibility filled with many hard

4. *Congressional Directory* (GPO, 1953), 138-143, 169, 299, 303.

5. Duncan, *Politics in America 1990*, 1451-1453; Charles L. Clapp, *The Congressman: His Work As He Sees it* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1963), 41-42. Brooks recalled that he and his wife Charlotte often dined with the Johnsons and remained "close personal friends and political allies throughout the '64 effort and thereafter also." He also remembered the Texas delegation Wednesday luncheons, when he discussed legislative matters with Johnson who "stood for civil rights and was dedicated to equality for all." A September 1963 photograph documents this friendship, depicting then Vice President and Mrs. Johnson visiting the Brooks family farm in Jasper County, Texas. Jack Brooks interviews with the author, Aug. 21 and Dec. 9, 1998.

Congressman Jack Brooks and Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson (c. 1964). *Courtesy of the LBJ Library, Austin, TX.*

and complicated decisions. But as Brooks later said, "I never thought being a congressman was supposed to be an easy job."[6]

Early in his career, Brooks made progress in his committee work. He got along well with William L. Dawson (D-IL), the African-American congressman who chaired the Government Operations Committee, and who in 1955 appointed Brooks chairman of the Special Government Activities Subcommittee. The same year Celler, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, designated Brooks a member of the Patents, Trademarks, and Copyrights Subcommittee. Brooks's relationship with the New Yorker became critical later in civil rights matters. Celler, a prominent civil rights advocate, used his Judiciary Committee as a workshop to forge all the civil rights bills of the 1950s and 1960s.[7]

As a student of Rayburn and undoubtedly influenced by Senator Johnson, Brooks became a highly partisan Democrat. One observer described him as "an irascible, tough-talking Texan, a man of strong loyalties and fierce independence." Another saw him as "Congress' [*sic*] most partisan Democrat" who "simply by his presence can rile Republicans," and yet another described him as a Democrat "who thinks the G in GOP is an expletive." He steadfastly supported Democratic initiatives, compiling records in terms of loyalty to the party. In 1958, for example, he ranked among the most loyal of all Democratic congressmen, voting with his party on 95 percent of the roll call votes. By the same measure and compared with other Texas Democratic congressmen, Brooks ranked second in 1957 and 1958, and first in 1959. Other Texans noteworthy for party loyalty were Thompson of Galveston, Lindley Beckworth of Gladewater, Jim Wright of Fort Worth, and John Young of Corpus Christi.[8]

Brooks's opponents often castigated him as a "liberal Democrat." He denied the charge, saying, "I'm just like old man Rayburn, just a Democrat, no prefix or suffix." But he did have strong labor support in Jefferson and Orange counties, and he compiled a "liberal" record when voting on labor and business issues. During the 1960s, his voting record received high rankings from the AFL-CIO and correspondingly low marks from the Chamber of Commerce. But such

6. Alan Ehrenhalt, ed., *Politics in America: Members of Congress in Washington and at Home* (CQI, 1981), 1169-1171; Clapp, *Congressman,* 288, 378.

7. Brooks developed a close relationship with Dawson. On one occasion, he gave the Illinois congressman a jar of homemade mayhaw jelly. The gesture reminded Dawson of his boyhood days in Georgia and his immigration to Chicago "with nothing but a carpetbag." Brooks interviews.

8. Ehrenhalt, ed., *Politics in America,* 1169-1171; Duncan, ed., *Politics in America 1990,* 1450-1453; *Congressional Quarterly Fact Sheet 1958* (CQI, 1958), 122-125; *Congressional Quarterly Fact Sheet 1959* (CQI, 1959), 126-129.

rankings do not tell the whole story. Early in his career, Brooks supported Rayburn and Johnson in their legislative programs that favored the Texas oil and gas industry. Also, he did not team overtly with liberals of the party. He was not among the organizers in 1957 of the liberal Democratic Study Group, nor the same year did he sign the "Proposed Program for Democrats in the House of Representatives," a "liberal manifesto" of legislative proposals.[9]

Brooks, nevertheless, demonstrated a sympathy for civil rights causes early in his career. In 1954, he hired as his administrative assistant Davis B. Carter, a college friend and Episcopal rector, who had come under fire from conservative Anglicans for his outspoken views on the need to racially integrate the University of the South Seminary and other Episcopal facilities. In 1956, Brooks distanced himself from Southern segregationists when he declined to sign the "Southern Manifesto." Drafted by Sen. Sam Ervin of North Carolina, the notice was a declaration of white supremacy and state rights, clothed in constitutional arguments. It condemned the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* decision, pledging to use all lawful means to reverse the decision and resist its implementation.[10]

The Southern Manifesto had no official standing in Congress, but it circulated among delegations from the Southern states, where it drew broad support. Out of 128 Southern senators and congressmen, 101 signed the state rights declaration. Among the 27 Southerners who refused to sign, 15 were Texans, including Senator Johnson and congressmen Brooks, Rayburn, Thomas, Thompson, and Thornberry. Texans who did attach their signature included Sen. Price Daniel and representatives Wright Patman, Martin Dies, and John Dowdy.[11]

Brooks may have declined to sign the Southern Manifesto, but this did not mean that he would automatically support civil rights legislation. In fact, he voted against the first two civil rights laws passed in modem times. In 1957, he voted "nay" on a civil rights bill proposed by Dwight Eisenhower's Republican administration. Designed to protect and enlarge the voting of African Americans, the law created an executive Commission on Civil Rights, established a Civil

9. Duncan, ed., *Politics in America 1990*, 1450-1453; Ehrenhalt, ed., *Politics in America,* 1142-1144, 1169-1170.

10. Davis B. Carter telephone interview with author, Aug. 23, 1998; Duncan, *Politics in America 1990,* 1452.

11. *Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 84th Congress, 2nd Session* (CQI, 1956), 416-417; *Congressional Record, 81th Congress, 2nd Session* (CQI, 1956), 4515-4516, 4459-4464, 12760-12761.

Rights Division in the Department of Justice, and empowered the Attorney General to seek court injunctions against obstruction or deprivation of voting rights. By final vote taken June 18, 1957, the House largely divided along traditional lines, North and South. Congressmen from Massachusetts, for example, voted 100% in favor, while all the Texans, including Brooks, Dies, Thomas, Thornberry, and Wright cast their votes in opposition. Rayburn, then Speaker of the House, did not vote. Senators Johnson and Ralph Yarborough voted "yea."[12]

In 1960, Brooks voted against a second civil rights bill proposed by the Eisenhower Administration. The 1960 law bolstered voting provisions in the 1957 act. It authorized judges to appoint referees to help African Americans to register and vote. It also provided criminal penalties for bombings and bomb threats, and for mob action designed to obstruct court orders. Brooks cast several votes in opposition to this legislation, the last coming on April 21, 1960, when the bill won final approval in the House. He voted "nay" along with most of his fellow Texans. However, six Texans voted "aye," including Thomas, Thornberry, and Wright. Both senators Johnson and Yarborough supported this legislation.[13]

About 1961, Brooks apparently amended his position on civil rights legislation. That year, Speaker Rayburn died, and the following year, Celler, the New York liberal Democrat who chaired the Judiciary Committee, appointed Brooks to the House Judiciary Subcommittee No. 5. This appointment by Celler, who also chaired the subcommittee, strongly indicated that Brooks had adopted a liberal civil rights position and would support that legislative agenda.[14]

Civil rights was a critical issue in Brooks's 2nd Congressional District, an 11-county East Texas region where African Americans made up 21 percent of a total population of 480,000. Of the 103,000 black Texans in the district, 39,000 resided in nine rural counties, while 64,000 lived in Jefferson and Orange counties, an industrialized region. A majority (65%) of African Americans lived

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12. *Congress and the Nation, 1915-1961: A Review of Government and Politics in the Post War Years* (CQI, 1964), 1621-1624 , 76a-77a. Brooks remembered the Republican civil rights bills of 1957 and 1960 as "totally ineffectual with lots of verbal rhetoric and very little substance." Brooks interviews.

13. *Congressional Quarterly Almanac 1960* (CQI, 1960), 86-89, 185-203, 428-435, 1625-1630.

14. Brooks recalled that he and Celler "shared common goals [about] . . . major civil rights and other major judiciary legislation." Brooks interviews.

in larger towns, with 35,000 making their homes in Beaumont where they comprised 30 percent of the residents.[15]

In Beaumont, blacks congregated largely in their own neighborhoods such as Pine Street, Gladys Street, Pear Orchard, and Lower Woods. Most worked in manual labor or domestic service, but some had achieved middle-class status, at least within their segregated community. These individuals included physician Ed Sprott, lawyer Theodore Johns, lawyer Elmo Willard, dentist L. L. Melton, undertaker William Taft, undertaker Bessie Knighton, and high school principal James Jackson. Also, "colored" business districts operated on Washington Boulevard, Gladys Street, and Forsythe Street, boasting cafes, taverns, taxi services, pharmacies, barber shops, and insurance offices.[16]

In Beaumont, across the 2nd Congressional District, throughout Texas, and all the Southern states, African Americans were relegated to a second-class existence by a Jim Crow system of racial segregation. As a collection of customs and laws created and enforced by white Americans, Jim Crow represented a white supremacy system that prevented association of white and black Americans on terms of equality in virtually all aspects of life. "Persons of color" were denied access to public accommodations such as hotels, restaurants, and movie theaters, as well as public facilities such as libraries, swimming pools, and golf courses. Even drinking fountains and rest rooms were segregated, bearing signs "White" and "Colored." Cleveland Nisby, a local NAACP leader, remembers only two public rest rooms in downtown Beaumont available to black citizens—one at City Hall and the other at the Greyhound bus station.[17]

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15. In 1960, the 2nd Congressional District included Angelina, Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Liberty, Newton, Orange, Sabine, San Augustine, Shelby, and Tyler counties. For population, see *United States Census of Population 1960, Inhabitants, Texas* (GPO, 1961).

16. For African-American businesses on Forsythe Street, Gladys Street, and Washington Boulevard in Beaumont, see *Beaumont City Directory 1960* (Dallas: R. L. Polk & Co. 1960), 180, 192, 408.

17. Cleveland Nisby interview with author, Dec. 2, 1998. For discussions of Jim Crow, see C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), xvii, 5-10, 43-45, 65, 70-116; Stephan Thernstrom and Abigail Thernstrom, *America in Black and White: One Nation, Indivisible* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), 25-52; David R. Goldfield, *Black, White, and Southern: Race Relations and Southern Culture, 1940 to the Present* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 2-11. For Texas, see Alwyn Barr, *Black Texans: A History of Negroes in Texas, 1528-1971* (Austin: Jenkins Publishing Company, 1973), 140-143, 163-166; Lawrence D. Rice, *The Negro in Texas 1874-1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 140-150; NHT, 1:46-51, 5:965. See also, Steven F. Lawson, "Freedom Then Freedom Now: The Historiography of the Civil Rights Movement," *American Historical Review,* 96 (April 1991): 456-471. For a brief discussion of segregation in Beaumont, see Paul Isaac, "Municipal Reform in Beaumont, Texas, 1902-1909," SHQ, 78 (April 1975): 409-432.

Of course, in the eyes of African Americans, Jim Crow segregation was a gross violation of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. It was evil, humiliating, and completely unfair. In Beaumont, black citizens paid municipal property taxes, but were not permitted to borrow books at the Tyrrell Public Library or play a round on the Tyrrell Park city golf course. They spent money in the downtown Kress store, but could not sit at the lunch counter and have a Coca-Cola. Access was denied to all African Americans, regardless of education, wealth, or personal merit. In Beaumont, neither the laborer, the lawyer, nor the teacher could see a movie at the Jefferson Theatre or buy a hamburger at the Ramada Inn.[18]

Americans born after 1960 may wonder how earlier generations, both white and black, could have tolerated a segregation system that was so unfair and such a blatant contradiction to the democratic principles of the United States. The French historian Marguerite Yourcenar recounts the story of Louise of Lorraine, a sixteenth century French queen famous for her piety and her works of mercy and charity. In the company of her husband, Henri III, she attended the execution of the traitor Salceve, watching calmly as the man was chained hand and foot to four young stallions and ripped asunder. Apparently Louise found the horrific scene reasonable and natural. So utterly does custom govern our sentiments, Yourcenar remarked.[19]

In 1960, the plight of black Southerners was not completely static nor completely hopeless. Already, they had made some progress. Beginning in the 1940s, presidents Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and Dwight Eisenhower used executive powers to advance the interests of African Americans, integrating federal jobs, and desegregating the armed forces. In 1950, the Supreme Court, with *Sweatt v. Painter*, ordered the desegregation of the University of Texas Law School. Four years later, the court ruled in the case of *Brown v. the Topeka Board of Education* and outlawed segregation in public schools. In the 1950s, African-American leaders such as Roy Wilkins, John Lewis, Rosa Parks, Ralph Abernathy, James Farmer, Thurgood Marshall, and Martin Luther King and groups such as the NAACP and the Congress of Racial Equality spearheaded desegregation campaigns throughout the South. They orchestrated numerous non-violent demonstrations, including the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955,

18. Segregation of the races was common knowledge to Beaumonters, including the author, who was born in 1936.

19. Marguerite Yourcenar, "Ah, Mon Beau Chateau," in *The Dark Brain of Piranesi* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1984), 58-63.

integration of Little Rock schools in 1957, sit-ins at Greensboro lunch counters in 1960, Freedom Rides on bus lines in Alabama in 1961.[20]

Likewise in the Lone Star State, James Farmer and other African-American leaders made progress in breaking down the walls of segregation in public accommodations. Following the lead of protesters in Greensboro, North Carolina, black Texans carried out sit-ins in 1960 and 1961, forcing the desegregation of lunch counters, cafeterias, and cafes in Houston, Dallas, Austin, San Antonio, and other cities. In 1961, their campaigns in cafes and lunch counters produced a quiet and largely voluntary desegregation of many hotels and motels in larger cities. Many movie theaters in Austin and other cities were also desegregated, some in response to demonstrations, others voluntarily.[21]

In Beaumont, the NAACP and local African Americans such as O. C. Hebert, Cleveland Nisby, Dr. Ed Sprott, Collis Cannon, and Ed Moore led desegregation efforts. In 1955, Booker Fayson and five fellow African-American golfers teamed with NAACP lawyers Theodore Johns and Elmo Willard of Beaumont and U. Simpson Tate of Dallas to win the right to play at Tyrrell Park municipal golf course, obtaining a desegregation order in the court of U.S. District Judge Lamar Cecil. The next year Johns, Willard, and Tate returned to the federal court of Judge Cecil and won the admission of two black students, Versie Jackson and James Anthony Cormier, to the previously all-white Lamar State College of Technology. Between 1960 and 1962, local African Americans carried out peaceful demonstrations, desegregating some lunch counters, the Tyrrell Public Library, and the movie theaters of the Jefferson Amusement Company.[22]

By 1963, despite this progress, segregation persisted in Beaumont, across Texas, and throughout the South. Countless public and business facilities still did not welcome black Americans. To address this problem from the federal level, President Kennedy and his staff drafted a new civil rights bill, stronger than the one that had been languishing in Congress. Brooks and his administrative

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20. Rathbun, *Revolution in Civil Rights,* 2-6, 10-11; Steven F. Lawson, *Running for Freedom, Civil Rights and Black Politics in America since 1941* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), 66-75; John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom, A History of Negro Americans* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 476-481.

21. Artis Hill, "'Jim Crowism' in Several Areas of Twentieth Century Texas Life Relative to the Negro: Transportation, Eating and Lodging Places, Public Parks, and Movie Theaters" (MA thesis: Abilene Christian College, 1969), 2-6, 40-68.

22. Hill, "'Jim Crowism,'" 65-67, 82, 87; Nancy Dailey, "History of the Beaumont, Texas, Chapter of the National Association of Colored People, 1918-1970" (MA thesis, Lamar University, 1971), 47-72.

assistant Davis Carter both recall that the Congressman first heard about the new Kennedy bill late one afternoon while working out at the House of Representatives gymnasium. The bill would be sweeping, with provisions aimed at voting rights, integration of schools, fair and full employment, non-discrimination in federal programs, and desegregation of public accommodations.[23]

On June 19, 1963, Kennedy officially sent the bill to Congress. The action set off "the longest debate," a year-long legislative battle that featured intense lobbying by opponents, such as the Coordinating Committee for Fundamental American Freedoms and the Mississippi Sovereignty Commission, and by proponents, including the NAACP, National Council of Churches, and the AFL-CIO. The struggle in Congress was accompanied and indeed shaped by shocking national events such as the historic march in Washington, the murderous church bombing in Atlanta, and the assassination of President Kennedy that provided the final catalyst for passage.[24] On June 26, the House Judiciary Sulcommittee No. 5 received Kennedy's bill. Chaired by Celler, the subcommittee consisted of 11 congressmen, including in the minority four Republicans: William McCulloch (OH), William E. Miller (NY), George Meader (MI), and William C. Cramer (FL). According to historians, Celler had handpicked six left-leaning Democrats to assure a friendly reception to liberal causes. Those six included Peter Rodino (NJ), Byron Rogers (CO), Harold Donahue (MA), Herman Toll (PA), Robert Kastenmeier (WI), and Jack Brooks (TX), the last of whom scholars have described as "a lone Southern Democrat," "Celler's ally," "a longtime associate of Lyndon Johnson," and "a Texan favorable to civil rights."[25]

Brooks was indeed favorable to civil rights. In the coming months he helped Chairman Celler advance the Kennedy bill—first through Subcommittee No. 5—and later in the higher Judiciary Committee. He remembered one morning when Celler called him to his office. There the chairman and two Justice Department lawyers, including Nicholas Katzenbach, agonized over problems that might develop at the next meeting of the subcommittee. Here Brooks intervened, and bluntly reminded Celler, "Manny, you came to Congress the year I was born and you've been here for 41 years and I don't see why you worry

23. Brooks interviews; Carter interview.

24. Robert Weisbrot, *Freedom Bound: A History of America's Civil Rights Movement* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1990), 75-86; Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom,* 484-486; Rathbun, *Revolution in Civil Rights,* 10-11, 51, 56.

25. Hugh Davis Graham, *The Civil Rights Era: Origins and Development of National Policy, 1960-1972* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 87-89; Whalen and Whalen, *Longest Debate,* 1-6, 49, 59; Loevy, *To End All Segregation,* 46-49.

about criticism from people. Just go in there and gavel the meeting to order, recognize who you please, call for votes, announce the results and pass the bill and that's the end of it." Brooks recalled that Celler thought for a minute, and said "fine." Then he reached into his desk and pulled out a bottle of whiskey. He poured drinks for Brooks and himself, and they toasted their resolution to proceed. That was the way Celler and other "old school" lawyers used to do business and that was how the civil rights bill was moved forward. Brooks also remembered that Chairman Celler did not offer any libation to Katzenbach and the other Justice Department lawyer.[26]

When the bill finally reached the floor of the House of Representatives, it was subjected to nine days of heated debate and assaulted by Southerners who tried to weaken or defeat it. On February 10, 1964, it passed the House by a vote of 290 to 130. Congressman Brooks voted in the affirmative and helped to send the proposition to the Senate.[27]

From June 1963 to June 1964, as Congress debated the bill, Brooks was besieged by an avalanche of letters, telegrams, and petitions from almost 1,100 Southeast Texas citizens. Most came from Jefferson and Orange counties, with a scattering from the rest of the 2nd Congressional District. The overwhelming majority was opposed, about 17 to one. The opponents, apparently all white, came from all walks of life, such as refinery workers, mechanics, salesmen, stock brokers, insurance agents, car dealers, restaurant operators, hotel keepers, real estate agents, engineers, housewives, and retirees. Brooks and his staff answered all the mail promptly, except a few letters he judged too radical or too crude. Most were given a "standard reply" that was calm and reasoned and that showed his intentions to support the proposed legislation. He described the civil rights problems as "very serious in nature" and hoped that the proposed legislation would be "genuinely constructive" and "contribute to a sound and equitable solution to these problems." He reasoned that "legislation alone cannot provide a just solution to the problems concerning civil rights." Then he counseled with his fellow Texans. "The ultimate responsibility lies with each individual. The cornerstone of our Nation is the unqualified Christian concern for each

26. Brooks interviews. For proceedings of Celler's subcommittee, including attendance records and speeches, see *Hearings before Subcommittee No. 5 of the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, Eighty-Eighth Congress, First Session, Serial No. 4, Parts I, II, III, and IV* (GPO, 1963).

27. Rathbun, *Revolution in Civil Rights,* 53; Whalen and Whalen, *Longest Debate,* 1-101.

individual person. And so it is fundamental to our Democracy that we as individuals must . . . protect the rights and dignity of other individuals in order to preserve our own."[28]

Opponents to the legislation employed a wide range of reasons. Many blamed President Kennedy, condemning him and his brothers, Robert Kennedy, U.S. Attorney General, and Edward Kennedy, senator from Massachusetts, ridiculing them as "The Brothers Three," blasting them as "The Harvard Fabian clique," and predicting that the president had opened "Pandora's Box" from which all society's evils would escape.[29] Another group feared the concentration of new power in the hands of the federal government. One suggested that Congress "go very slow in extending Federal [*sic*] government powers in civil rights matters." Others judged the proposed law "a vicious dictatorial challenge to the freedom of the majority of American citizens" and "a violation of every right that our founding fathers fought for." The act was "degrading and morally disastrous," "beyond comprehension," "absurd," "un-American," and the "road to ruin."[30]

Motel operators, restaurateurs, and other business people protested the loss of "property rights," which many believed included the right to discriminate against African Americans. They thought the proposed legislation was "unfair to every businessman," "a step toward socialism," and "an extreme danger to free enterprise." The Beaumont Chamber of Commerce, which was working on a voluntary desegregation program, opposed the bill, finding the public accommodations section "particularly objectionable." The Beaumont Jaycees, composed of younger businessmen, were "unalterably opposed" to this "extreme, militant move on the part of our government."[31]

Many opponents of the bill expressed frankly racist attitudes. They believed in white supremacy and black inferiority. They feared the end of segregation and the beginning of integration. One expressed a common theme, declaring that "millions of white Americans will NEVER accept social equality with an

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28. For constituent letters received by Brooks and samples of his responses, see JBC.

29. Bill Howell letter, June 12, 1963; Earnest A. Cryer Jr. letter, June 14, 1963; Paul and Luri Robinson letter, June 10, 1963, JBC.

30. I. D. Robertson telegram, July 2, 1963; S. W. Marshall letter, June 13, 1964; James L. Crouch letter, June 3, 1964; Mrs. Clovis Medoza letter, May 27, 1964; Lee A. Jackson telegram, June 10, 1964; John R Robichaux letter, May 12, 1964; Mrs. E. O. Williams letter, Nov. 14, 1963; Mrs. Murray Ezzell letter, June 25, 1963, JBC.

31. Dixon L. Coulbourn letter, June 2, 1964; Valery Brown letter, Nov. 29, 1963; Charles J. Kainer letter, May 27, 1964; Howard Hicks, Beaumont Chamber of Commerce, letter, Sept.20, 1963; Jerry N. Boynton, Jaycees, letter, Sept. 18, 1963, JBC.

inferior race." Another wondered, "Why the Negroes want to force their way into the white man's life." Another employed inflammatory racism, referring to "negro problems" and declaring that "young buck negroes are taking liberties . . . , trying to flirt with white girles [*sic*]." Still another argued that the bill was "designed and intended to degrade the white people of the South."[32]

Others were frightened by the boldness of the civil rights workers and demonstrators. They condemned the NAACP as "a Communist backed organization," the civil rights movement as the work of "negro anarchists and non-Christian Zionists," and the demonstrators as "paid and professional integrationists." Many opposed any legislation passed under the threat of violence, one observing that "violence is no way to go about getting 'rights.'"[33]

Many longtime Democrats were also infuriated by Brooks's support of the bill. "We deplore your stand," said one. "This is hard to take," moaned another. Several predicted his defeat at the next election, one announcing that "we've decided not only to vote the GOP ticket but to contribute $100 to its cause." Another urged him to change his policies and stop being "a rubber-stamp Congressman of the extreme left wing and vote for the good of your own people."[34]

Despite intense opposition expressed by constituents, Brooks did not hide his support for the bill. In October 1963, he issued a press release to media outlets in Jefferson and Orange counties. He confirmed his approval of the legislation, then counseled with his fellow citizens concerning civil rights issues. "Problems concerning these Constitutional rights of American citizens call for new horizons of mutual understanding," he said. "I will continue . . . to support genuinely constructive legislation and to personally encourage my fellow Southeast Texans to support meaningful . . . progress toward the solution of these . . . difficult problems." On another occasion, Congressman Brooks further explained, "I sincerely hope and feel that Southeast Texans—while not all are happy with this new law—basically want to be fair and accept human relations as a problem we must face and solve, if our area is going to be happy, prosperous, and progressive, [and] where opportunity is extended to all our people."[35]

32. Mrs. Gertrude Stagg Carruth letter, Oct. 23, 1963; B. J. West letter, June 17, 1963; J. S. Arnold letter, July 12, 1963; Vivian Doucette letter, June 13, 1963, JBC.

33. Lee J. Coffee letter, Jan. 31, 1964; letter and petition with 54 names, Aug. 10, 1963; Basel Cassidy letter, July 22, 1963; Jacob Hansen [letter], Aug. 12, 1963, JBC

34. Mr. and Mrs. Calvin E. Turner letter, March 25, 1964; Sam Aquilina letter, June 24, 1964; J. P. Brackett telegram, June 24, 1963; E. J. Horn letter, Aug. 16, 1963, JBC

35. Brooks press release, Oct. 29, 1963, and letter to Elray W. Estes, June 3, 1964, JBC.

Brooks was not entirely alone in Southeast Texas. Of course, local African Americans favored the bill, but few sent letters of encouragement. A dozen black citizens did send telegrams on December 9, 1963, urging the congressman sign a discharge petition and thus keep the bill moving in the House. Some local white people approved the legislation, but only a handful openly expressed themselves—mostly ministers, teachers, students, and housewives. Urging passage of the bill, a college coed wanted "[e]qual rights for all," while another reasoned that "no one's rights are free unless the whole people are free." A woman suggested that "our country cannot maintain world leadership or even command world respect unless all our citizens are given their rights." Expressing a similar line, a group of local educators wanted approval of the bill so that the United States can be "the greatest national champion for justice and freedom of all men of all nations."[36]

In the Senate, the civil rights bill was debated for 83 days, including a 57-day filibuster led by Richard Russell of Georgia and John Tower of Texas. This was the first filibuster in history broken by a vote of cloture, a parliamentary move orchestrated by Everett Dirksen of Illinois. The bill passed the Senate on June 19 by a vote of 73 to 27, with the Texas senators splitting their votes, Senator Tower voting "no" and Yarborough voting "yes."[37]

The bill, amended in the Senate, was sent back to the House, and on July 2, 1964, given final approval by a roll-call vote of 289 to 126. The law drew negative votes from almost all Southern Democrats, including 19 Texas congressman, such as Wright Patman, Jim Wright, and Joe Kilgore. But 11 Southern Democrats voted "yes," including four Texans: Albert Thomas of Houston, Henry Gonzales of San Antonio, Jake Pickle of Austin, and Jack Brooks of Beaumont.[38]

For Brooks, the vote must have represented a classic dilemma, balancing conflicting interests. At the national level, he was voting with Democratic presidents Kennedy and Johnson, and with the national Democratic Party, but against most of his fellow Democratic Congressmen from Texas and the South. At home, he was voting against the wishes of most of his white constituents, but for the interests of 100,000 African Americans living in his district. Probably, it

36. Verlie Mitchell, Albert J. Price, Mary Bordelon, and others, telegrams, Dec. 9, 1963; Ronnie Anne Bishop letter, Dec. 12, 1963; Mary Alice Rodgers letter, Dec. 12, 1963; Mrs. Glenn C. McCombs letter, July 15, 1963; W. H. Graves Jr. letter, June 13, 1963, JBC. The *Beaumont Enterprise,* under the direction of Editor-in-Chief Robert W. Akers, editorialized in favor of the legislation on December 5, 1963.

37. Rathbun, *Revolution in Civil Rights,* 57-59; Whalen and Whalen, *Longest Debate,* 124-217.

38. Rathbun, *Revolution in Civil Rights,* 57-59.

was a difficult vote, but as Brooks always said, "I never thought it was supposed to be an easy job."[39]

On July 2, 1964, President Johnson signed the bill, thus enacting "the most far-reaching and comprehensive law in support of racial equality ever enacted by Congress." The outcome was a rapid and massive change. The Jim Crow system was broken, producing almost immediate desegregation of public accommodations and facilities throughout the South. In Jack Brooks's 2nd Congressional District, a new day dawned for 100,000 African Americans. For the first time they had access to all hotels, restaurants, bowling alleys, movie theaters, and libraries. For the first time in Beaumont, James Jackson, the Hebert High School principal, took his young son Craig to the Ramada Inn for a hamburger. Thirty years later, Craig Jackson, a law professor in Houston, remembered the momentous outing and the historic hamburger. "It tasted good," he recalled.[40]

39. Duncan, *Politics in America 1990,* 1450.

40. For the great significance of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, see Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom,* 487. Craig L. Jackson recorded his recollections about eating at the Ramada Inn in "Hebert High School and the Brown Aftermath—Good Intentions and Troubled Policy," *Thurgood Marshall Law Review*, 21 (No. 3, 1996): 45-97; Craig L Jackson telephone interview with author, Dec. 2, 1998.

Proceedings

Texas Gulf Historical Society Minutes

Ann Creswell

Fall Meeting
Tuesday, October 29, 2013

The Texas Gulf Historical Society met at the Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum. Pres. John Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He thanked Mark Osborne and the museum for the use of the facilities and welcomed members and guests. Chaplain Marilyn Adams offered an opening prayer.

Recording Secretary Ann Creswell read the minutes of the Annual Meeting, Thursday, April 16, 2013. Robert Robertson moved that the minutes be approved and Joe Fisher seconded. The motion carried.

President Nelson reported that the Cummings had moved out of the area and that he had sent them a thank-you gift for their years of dedication to the society. Suzanne Stafford is now Corresponding Secretary. He also stated that Sue Philp is not able to continue on the Social Committee, and we are looking for a volunteer. He announced that the Annual Meeting would be here in the Museum Meeting room in April 2014.

Treasurer Joe Fisher, Jr. stated that we were in good shape with about $15,000 in the bank and reminded us to pay our dues.

Lamar State College-Port Arthur president Dr. Sam Monroe introduced our speaker for the evening. Cynthia Beeman is a prolific writer of women's history and past president of the East Texas Historical Association. She was a member of the Spindletop Commission and worked with the historical marker program

until 2001. She worked at the Texas State Archives and the Texas Historical Commission and was present when the marker was placed on Janis Joplin's home in Port Arthur.

Ms. Beeman stated that while she was working at the Texas Historical Commission she began actually writing the markers. She told us that the application for the marker at Janis Joplin's home was the last one she wrote and the placement was the last she attended as a member of staff. She noted that the accompanying celebration was a contrast to Joplin's outcast status and an example of how reassessment of her has led to a change in Port Arthur's attitude. This reassessment began in the 1980s as gradual appreciation of her music overshadowed her life style. Ms. Beeman presented her research on Joplin's return to Port Arthur.

Ms. Beeman said her second book with Dan Utley, *History along the Way: Stories beyond the Texas Roadside Marker*, includes Janis Joplin, and Robert Robertson disclosed that an article by Ms Beeman about Joplin would be included in the newest *Record* [volume 49 (Nov. 2014): 3-22—ed.].

President Nelson thanked Ms. Beeman for her enlightening presentation, those in attendance for coming and reminded all to enjoy the refreshments provided by the Social Committee before leaving.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Annual Meeting
Tuesday, April 8, 2014

The Texas Gulf Historical Society held its Annual Meeting in the Spindletop-Gladys City Museum. Pres. John Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and Chaplain Marilyn Adams offered an opening prayer.

There were no new members present. Recording Secretary Ann Creswell read the minutes of the Fall Meeting, Tuesday, October 29, 2013. Penny Clark moved that the minutes be approved and Gilbert Adams Jr. seconded. The motion carried.

Corresponding Secretary Suzanne Stafford reported that there are 160 people on roll (some couples) with 68 paid members to date and reminded us to please pay dues if you have not. We are now requesting email addresses for future use in an effort to save postage costs. Suzanne also reported that there were extra copies of the *Record* available tonight for purchase. Treasurer Joe Fisher Jr. presented the Financial Report. Cash in Checking and Savings at Capital One is $14,634.00. Income from dues totaled $2,700. Expenses totaled $3,756.00 and included postal expenses for $574.00 and printing expenses for the *Record* for $3,182.00.

Robert Robertson reminded us that this year is the 50th anniversary of the organization and thus the *Record* might be a "greatest hits." He stated that some type of social event was being discussed.

Having no unfinished business, the meeting proceeded to new business.

Dr. Mary Sheer proposed commemorating the 50th anniversary by establishing an endowed scholarship in the Lamar University History Department to not only help a deserving history student but also establish a Texas Gulf Historical Society legacy. She stated that $15,000 was a typical minimum with the interest and investments going to fund the annual scholarship. Dr. Sheer explained that there are many variables and options to be considered but recommended we continue to explore the possibility. Penny Clark, Robert Robertson, and John Nelson volunteered to be the committee to pursue this and make recommendations.

Judith Linsley introduced our speaker for the evening, Dr. Mark Osborne, Director of Spindletop-Gladys City Museum. He has only been here since

March 2011 and has made great progress in moving the museum forward in this short period of time.

Dr. Osborne proceeded to explain how things have evolved since his arrival and how he is now tasked with creating a renewed vision for Gladys City. He described his extensive background that led him to the position of director and gave a brief background of Gladys City with pictures of the construction, opening, and the 2001 "Big Anniversary." Dr. Osborne admitted he arrived with expectations far exceeding what he found. Expectations included adequate staff and accreditation, but when he arrived he found only three part time employees and no accreditation. He explained that in addition, the effects of the several hurricanes were still evident. He was charged with developing a plan to accomplish several goals including raising the profile of the museum and increasing the level of professionalism. Events such as Wildcatter Weekends and Spookfest were great successes but some events were not. Plans now are to continue those successful events, create new ones such as the next anniversary celebration January 10, 2015, and partner with others to create events such as the Boomtown Film Festival.

The museum's relationship with Lamar University has increased, and there have been technology upgrades and major building and repairs since the museum was moved to the Office of Advancement under Camille Mouton in 2011. A new "openness" to variable uses developed including encouraging student films. The results are visible with increased attendance, a wider variety of visitors, and increased revenue.

Things done to uphold the standards of professionalism and stewardship included an inventory, a part time facilities assistant, contract handyman, building repairs, and preparation of Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Recovery Plans. A part time collections assistant was hired and various operational procedures were adopted. Progress has been made in object and artifact conservation, but it is among the challenges still facing the museum. Needs are as varied as increase funding, artifact storage with proper environmental controls, building maintenance, a curator and other staff, and new exhibits. A great need is to increase the museum's relevance in this digital age. The renewed vision for Spindletop-Gladys City Museum is just that—a renewal of the goals and a continuation of the progress to develop to its full potential this tremendous asset in our community.

Dr. Osborne provided a fascinating look at the progress made in the last few years and the development of the vision for the future of Gladys City. It will be

exciting as we watch it transfer from a resource to a facility much more worthy of museum status.

President Nelson thanked Dr. Osborne for his presentation, suggested he might take it to community clubs such as Lions and Rotary and encouraged everyone to do all possible to support his efforts. Dr. Nelson also thanked him for the use of the facility and those in attendance for coming. He reminded all to enjoy the refreshments provided by the Adams and the Staffords.

Joe Fisher moved that the meeting adjourn. Suzanne Stafford seconded. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

MEMBERS

*Gilbert T. Adams Jr.
Marilyn Thornton Adams
Kent Morrison Adams
Molly S. Adams
*Patricia Adams
*Dr Charles L. Allen
Hez Aubey
Rexine A. Aubey
Dr. Barbara D. Batty
Louis Henry Beard
Larry Beaulieu
Caliste Boykin Benckenstein
Don J. Benton
Francis Blair Bethea
Vida B Blair
Dr. Robert R. Birdwell
Susanne Brown Birdwell
Karla Schwartz Blum
Lawrence H. Blum
Faye Byer Blum
C. Kathleen Boudreaux
James Earl Brickhouse
James Blue Broussard
Paula Ann Comeaux Broussard
Joseph Eloi Broussard II
William Alex Broussard
Marie Martin Broussard
Jimmy L. Bryan Jr.
Elizabeth Ann Bryant
Barbara Ellen Buchanan
Marvin R. Bullard
Linda Birdwell Bullard
Marjorie Rembert Carroll
Dr. Lamar John Ryan Cecil Jr.
Stewart M. Chisum
Bessie F. Chisum
Penny L. Clark
Eugenia Coffin
Edwin Gerald Cordts Jr.
Grace Naquin Cordts
Regina Babin Cox
Mary Ann Snowden Crabbe
*Will Block Crenshaw
*Joy Hopkins Crenshaw
Elizabeth Ann Creswell
Kevin Bryan Cronin
Susannah McNeill Cronin
C. Cohron Crutchfield Jr.
Rosalie Woodhead Crutchfield
James Glenn Cummings
Linda Parmer Cummings
George Austin Dishman III
Phoebe Hambright Dishman
George Dishman
Judy Gay Dishman
Melanie Dishman
*James Dale Dowell
Dianne Duperier
Frank Allan Eastman
Kaye Eastman
Harold Eisen
James A. Elkins, III
Ronald D. Ellington
Ronald Coleman Ellison
Joseph Jefferson Fisher Jr.
Gerald R. Flatten
Carol K. Flatten
Charlotte P. Fontenot
Joanne Stedman Fulbright
Richard Michael Gachot
Jonathan Kirk Gerland
Patricia Gilbert
Mary Anna Glasgow
Charles D. Glass
Guy Neil Goodson
Kimberly White Goodson
Carroll Berly Gorham
*Madelon Douglas Graham
Edward H. Green
Margaret Phelan Green

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Hon Carl R. Griffith
Elizabeth Marion Logan Gwin
Dr. Howell Holmes Gwin Jr.
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John T. Halbert
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Cornelia Bozada Heartfield
J. Thad Heartfield
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Thomas K Lamb Jr.
Elizabeth Morgan Lamb
Wanda Cruise Landrey
Kathleen Lamont Leaf
Curtis W. Leister
Laurie Hall Leister
Judith Walker Linsley
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Gloria Swarts Locke
Dean Lovejoy
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Yvonne Lyle Osborne Moor
Theodoric Edwin Moor Jr.
Jerry J. Nathan
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Nancy Brooks Neild
*Dr. John Lockwood Nelson
*Anne Shepherd Nelson
Dr. Edward Alexander Neusel
Sharon Ruddy Neusel
*Lipscomb Norvell Jr.
*Cynthia Tate Norvell
James Rowland Old Jr.
Ann Clary Fancher Old
Dr. Sam Frank Parigi
Margaret Davis Parker
T. Michael Parrish

MEMBERS

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Roy Marvin Philp
Susan Phillips Philp
Gwili E Posey
Wiley Ken Poston II
Brenda Chance Poston
James Cornelius Potter Jr.
Lula Langham Potter
Ida McFaddin Pyle
William Reed Quilliam Jr.
Joyce Fergusson Richardson
Ellen Walker Rienstra
Stephen Christopher Roane
Rachael Ann Low Roane
Robert J. Robertson
June Peckham Robertson
Regina J. Rogers
Kenneth E. Ruddy
Billie Sain Russell
Christine Moor Sanders
Yasuko Sato
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Cecilia Gutierrez Venable
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Margaret Collier Wheelus
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Mary Clare Wilsford
Rosine McFaddin Wilson
Callie Mae Coe Wilson
Anne Fisher Winslow
Ben S. Woodhead Jr.
Sharon Compton Woodhead
Naaman Johnson Woodland Jr.
Mary Baldwin Woodland
Dr. Ralph Ancil Wooster

Life Members shown with *

Past Presidents

Lipscomb Norvell	1964-1968
Chilton O'Brien	1968-1970
Dr. Charles Walker	1970-1972
Gilbert T. Adams	1972-1974
Judge Joseph J. Fisher	1974-1976
W. Smythe Shepherd	1976-1978
Jack B. Osborne	1978-1980
Peter B. Wells	1980-1982
Fred Lock Benckenstin	1982-1984
Gilbert T. Adams Jr.	1984-1986
Judge Wendell Conn Radford	1986-1988
Dale Dowell	1988-1990
Don Kelly	1990-1992
Robert J. Robertson	1992-1994
Naaman J. Woodland Jr.	1994-1996
Joan Mayfield Hataway	1996-1998
Yvonne Osborne Moor	1998-1999
William B. Hataway	1999-2001
Alex Broussard	2002-2003
Penny Lousia Clark	2004-2006
Curtis Leister	2006-2008
James Earl Brickhouse	2009-2011
Gilbert T. Adams Jr.	2012-2013

Past Editors

Charlsie Berly, as managing editor	1965-1966
Alyce J. McWilliams	1966
Joseph F. Combs	1966-1967
Beatrice Burnaby	1968-1969
Alexine Crawford Howell	1970
J. Roger Omohundro	1971-1972
Charlsie Berly	1973, 1976, 1978-1985
W. T. Block	1974-1975, 1977
Ellen Rienstra and Judith Linsley	1986-1989
Marion Holt	1990-1995
Jonathon K. Gerland	1996-1999
Judith W. Linsley	1999-2002
Penny Lousia Clark	2004-2006
Robert Schott	2007-2008
Dr. Ralph Wooster	2009-2010
Dr. John Storey	2011

Institutional Members

Allen County Public Library	Fort Wayne, IN
American Antiquarian Society	Worcester, MA
Baylor University Libraries	Waco, TX
Beaumont Heritage Society	Beaumont, TX
Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library	San Antonio, TX
Ed Rachal Memorial Library	Falfurrias,TX
Fire Museum of Texas	Beaumont, TX
Galveston Texas History Center	Galveston, TX
Harvard College Library	Cambridge, MA
Houston Public Library	Houston, TX
Jefferson County Historical Commission	Beaumont, TX
Lamar University Library	Beaumont, TX
Lamar State College—Orange Library	Orange, TX
Lamar State College—Port Arthur Library	Port Arthur, TX
McFaddin Ward House	Beaumont, TX
New Orleans Public Library	New Orleans, LA
New York Historical Society Library	New York, NY
Orange Public Library	Orange, TX
Port Arthur Public Library	Port Arthur, TX
Sam Houston Regional Library	Liberty, TX
Southwest Collection	Lubbock, TX
Stephen F. Austin State University Library	Nacogdoches, TX
Sterling Municipal Library	Baytown, TX
Texas Christian University, Burnett Library	Fort Worth, TX
Texas A & M University, Evans Library	College Station, TX
Texas Energy Museum	Beaumont, TX
Texas Tech University Library	Lubbock, TX
History Center	Diboll, TX
Newberry Library	Chicago, IL
University of North Carolina Library	Chapel Hill, NC
University of North Texas Library	Denton, TX
University of Texas at Arlington Library	Arlington, TX