

Texas Historical Commission staff (BB), 6/24/2008, rev 7/1/08
RTHL Medallion and 16" x 12" plaque WITHOUT post, attach to MASONRY
Aransas County (Job #08AS01) Subject (Atlas) UTM
Location: Rockport, 406 S. Austin

SORENSEN-STAIR BUILDING

SIMON SORENSON, A NATIVE OF DENMARK, BOUGHT BRUNNER'S MERCANTILE AT THIS SITE IN 1886. THE BUILDING WAS ORIGINALLY TWO STORIES, REBUILT AFTER AN 1895 FIRE. THE SORENSONS RECEIVED WEATHER REPORTS BY TELEGRAPH, POSTED UPDATES IN THE DISPLAY WINDOWS AND RAISED WARNING FLAGS AS NECESSARY. HURRICANE CELIA DAMAGED THE BUILDING AND STOCK IN 1970. IN 1978 THE ESTELLE STAIR GALLERY AND THE ROCKPORT ART ASSOCIATION WERE HOUSED HERE. STAIR NURTURED THE GROWING ART COMMUNITY. THE LOAD-BEARING MASONRY BUILDING FEATURES A DISTINCTIVE FIVE-BAY BRICK FAÇADE, WITH BRICK ENTRY ARCHES AND PILASTERS CAPPED ALONG THE STEPPED PARAPET.

RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK – 2008

MARKER IS PROPERTY OF THE STATE OF TEXAS

**RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK MARKERS:
2008 Official Texas Historical Marker
Sponsorship Application Form**

Valid November 1, 2007 to January 15, 2008 only

This form constitutes a public request for the Texas Historical Commission (THC) to consider approval of an Official Texas Historical Marker for the topic noted in this application. The THC will review the request and make its determination based on rules and procedures of the program. Filing of the application for sponsorship is for the purpose of providing basic information to be used in the evaluation process. The final determination of eligibility and therefore approval for a state marker will be made by the THC. This form is to be used for Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (building marker) requests only. Please see separate forms for either Historic Texas Cemeteries or subject markers.

Proposed marker topic (official title will be determined by the THC): **SORENSEN-STAIR BUILDING**

County: ARANSAS

Town (nearest county town on current state highway map): **ROCKPORT TX 78382**

Street address of marker site or directions from town noted above: **406 SOUTH AUSTIN**

NOTE: Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers must be placed at the structure being marked.

Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers definition: Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL) markers are awarded to structures deemed worthy of preservation for their historical associations and architectural significance. RTHL is a legal designation and comes with a measure of protection; it is the highest honor the state can bestow on a historic structure, and the designation is required for this type of marker. The RTHL designation becomes effective upon approval by the THC. Official Texas Historical Markers signify the RTHL designation, which comes only through application to and approval by the THC and must include public display of an Official Texas Historical Marker. Owners of RTHL-designated structures must give the THC 60 days written notice before any alterations are made to the exterior of the structure. RTHL status is a permanent designation and is not to be removed from the property in the event of a transfer of ownership. Only the THC can remove the designation or recall the marker. The marker must remain with the structure and may not be removed or displayed elsewhere until or unless the THC gives express approval in writing for such action. Once designated as RTHL, properties are subject to provisions of Texas Government Code, Section 442.006(f).

Criteria:

1. **Age:** Structures eligible for the RTHL designation and marker must be at least 50 years old.
2. **Historical significance:** Architectural significance alone is not enough to qualify a structure for the RTHL designation. It must have an equally significant historical association, and that association can come from an event that occurred at the site; through individuals who owned or lived on the property; or, in the case of bridges, industrial plants, schoolhouses and other non-residential properties, through documented significance to the larger community.
3. **Architectural significance:** Structures deemed architecturally significant are outstanding examples of architectural history through design, materials, structural type or construction methods. In all cases,

eligible architectural properties must display integrity; that is, the structure should be in a good state of repair, maintain its appearance from its period of significance and be considered an exemplary model of preservation. Architectural significance is often best determined by the relevance of the property to broader contexts, including geography. Any changes over the years should be compatible with original design and reflect compliance with accepted preservation practices, e.g., the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.

4. **Good state of repair:** Structures not considered by the THC to be in a good state of repair are ineligible for RTHL designation. The THC reserves the sole right to make that determination relative to eligibility for RTHL markers.

Special National Register considerations for RTHL marker applications: If a structure has been individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under either Criterion A or B and Criterion C (Architecture), the historical text compiled as part of the National Register nomination process may be submitted as part of the marker process, provided it includes the required reference notes and other documentation. Acceptance of the National Register information for the purposes of the marker process will be up to the sole determination of the THC. Listing in the NRHP does not guarantee approval for an RTHL marker. See the THC web site at <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/markerdesigns/madnrcrit.html> for National Register criteria.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Any individual, group or county historical commission (CHC) may apply to the THC to request an Official Texas Historical Marker for what it deems a worthy topic. Only complete marker applications that contain all the required elements and are submitted online as required can be accepted or processed by the THC. For RTHL markers, the required elements are: sponsorship application form; narrative history; documentation; online map (see details below); site plan; floorplan; historic photograph; and current photographs clearly showing each side of the structure.

- Completed applications must be duly reviewed, verified and approved by the county historical commission (CHC) in the county in which the marker will be placed.
- The sponsorship application form, narrative history and documentation must be submitted as Microsoft Word or Word-compatible documents and sent via email attachments to the THC by no later than January 15, 2008.
- Required font style and type size are a Times variant and 12-point.
- Narrative histories must be typed in a double-spaced (or 1.5-spaced) format and include separate sections on context, overview, significance and documentation.
- The narrative history must include documentation in the form of reference notes, which can be either footnotes or endnotes. Documentation associated with applications should be broad-based and demonstrate a survey of all available resources, both primary and secondary.
- Applications for RTHL markers must include a current city or county map through TopoZone.com that clearly denotes the proposed marker location. Instructions for using TopoZone.com are available on the THC web site.
- Upon notification of the successful preliminary review of required elements by the THC, a non-refundable application fee of \$100 is required. The fee shall be submitted to the THC within ten working days of application receipt notification.

APPROVAL BY COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The duly appointed marker representative (chair or marker chair) noted below for the county historical commission will be the sole contact with the THC for this marker application. To ensure accuracy, consistency and efficiency, all information from and to the THC relative to the application—and throughout the review and production processes—will be via direct communication with the CHC representative. All other inquiries (calls, emails, letters) to the THC will be referred to the CHC

representative for response. By filling out the information below and filing the application with the THC, the CHC representative is providing the THC with notice that the application and documentation have been reviewed and verified by the CHC and that the material meets all current requirements of the Official Texas Historical Marker program.

As chair or duly appointed marker chair, I certify the following:

- Representatives of the CHC have met or talked with the potential marker sponsor and discussed the marker program policies as outlined on the THC web site. CHC members have reviewed the history and documentation for accuracy and made corrections or notes as necessary. It is the determination of the CHC that the topic, history and documentation meet criteria for eligibility.

CHC comments or concerns about this application, if any:

Name of CHC contact (chair or marker chair): DIANA KIRBY

Mailing address: PO BOX 706 **City, Zip:** FULTON TX 78358

Daytime phone (with area code): 361 729-0386 X 21B **Email address** (required):

fmdir@dbstech.com; diana.kirby@thc.state.tx.us

PERMISSION OF PROPERTY OWNER FOR MARKER PLACEMENT

Property owner: LISA B. BAER

Address: P.O. Box 2342 **City, state, zip:** ROCKPORT TX 78381

Phone: 361 463-1059 **Email address:** lisa406@mac.com

Legal Description of the property (metes and bounds, lot and block, etc.): LOT 6, BLOCK 8, DOUGHTY & MATHIS

Upon receipt of the application, the THC will provide the owner with a letter that outlines the legal responsibility of ownership under the Recorded Texas Historic Landmark statute. The letter must be signed by the owner and returned to the THC before the evaluation can be completed.

NOTE: The property owner will not receive any additional copies of correspondence from the THC. [All other correspondence—notice of receipt, request for additional information, payment notice, inscription, shipping notice, etc.—will be sent via email to the CHC representative, who is encouraged to share the information with all interested parties as necessary.] Given the large volume of applications processed annually and the need for centralized communication, all inquiries about applications in process will be referred to the CHC for response. The CHC is the sole liaison to the THC on all marker application matters.

SPONSORSHIP PAYMENT INFORMATION

Prospective sponsors please note the following:

- Payment must be received in full within 45 days of the official approval notice and must be accompanied by the THC payment form. The THC is unable to process partial payments or to delay payment due to processing procedures of the sponsor. Applications not paid in the time frame required may, at the sole discretion of the THC, be cancelled or postponed.
- Payment does not constitute ownership of a marker; Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers and other Official Texas Historical Markers are the property of the State of Texas.

- If, at any time during the marker process, sponsorship is withdrawn, a refund can be processed, but the THC will retain the application fee of \$100.
- The Official Texas Historical Marker Program provides no means of recognizing sponsors or property owners through marker text, incising or supplemental plaques.

Marker sponsor (may be individual or organization): LISA B. BAER

Contact person (if applicable): above

Mailing address: P.O.Box 2342 **City, zip:** ROCKPORT TX 78381

Email address (required): lisa406@mac.com **Phone:** 361 463-1059

SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS

In order to facilitate delivery of the marker, neither post office box numbers nor rural route numbers can be accepted. To avoid additional shipping charges or delays, use a business street address (open 8 a.m.—5 p.m., Monday through Friday).

Name: LISA BAER

Street address: 406 SOUTH AUSTIN **City, zip:** ROCKPORT TX 78382

Daytime phone (required): 361 463-1059 **Email** (required): lisa406@mac.com

TYPE AND SIZE OF RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK MARKERS

As part of its review process, the THC will determine the appropriate size marker and provide options, if any, for the approved topic based on its own review criteria, including, but not exclusive of, historical significance, replication of information in other THC markers, relevance to the Statewide Preservation Plan and the amount of available documented information provided in the application narrative. In making its determination, however, the THC will also take into account the preference of the CHC, as noted below.

The sponsor/CHC prefers the following size marker:

- 27" x 42" RTHL marker with post (\$1500)
- 27" X 42" RTHL marker without post* (\$1500)
- 18" x 28" RTHL marker with post (\$1000)
- 18" x 28" RTHL marker without post* (\$1000)
- RTHL medallion and 16" x 12" plaque with post (\$750)
- RTHL medallion and 16" x 12" plaque without post* (\$750)

*For an RTHL marker without post, indicate to what surface material it will be mounted:

- wood
- masonry
- metal
- other (specify)

SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION (via email required)

When the CHC has determined the application is complete, the history has been verified and the topic meets the requirements of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program, the materials should be forwarded to the THC via email at the following address: markerapplication@thc.state.tx.us.

- The CHC or marker chair should send an email containing the following attachments (see attachment function under file menu or toolbox on your computer):
 - This application form
 - A TopoZone.com map of the proposed marker location
 - The narrative history (including documentation)

RECORDS RETENTION BY CHC: The CHC must retain hard copies of the application as well as an online version, at least for the duration of the marker process. The THC is not responsible for lost applications, for incomplete applications or for applications not properly filed according to the program requirements. For additional information about any aspect of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program, see the Markers page on the THC web site (<http://www.thc.state.tx.us/markerdesigs/madmark.html>).



**Narrative History for
Recorded Texas Historical Landmark**

SORENSEN- STAIR BUILDING - grocery/ship chandlery then art gallery

406 South Austin Street, Rockport Texas 78382

LOT 6, BLOCK 8, DOUGHTY & MATHIS SURVEY

I. CONTEXT

The SORENSON-STAIR building was in the center of Rockport economic growth and development for 100 years as a mercantile (1870s - 1970). During the most recent thirty years, it housed the premier art gallery in the downtown heritage district (1978-2004).

This building is one of the few structures along the coast to survive numerous hurricanes. The early grocery, hardware and ship's chandlery served the cattle and shipping industries with a wharf and weather station. During the era of destination railroad, hotels and tourism, it supplied vital groceries. The store was significant as Rockport slowly rebuilt after the devastating 1919 hurricane. It also served the new tourists when the Hug the Coast Highway brought automobile tourists and artists to enjoy the coast and small town atmosphere.

In the 1970s the building served the growing art community as the Estelle Stair Gallery (pronounced "star") and home for the Rockport Art Association, now the Rockport Center for the Arts. A 1987 article in Texas Highways states, "Art people banded together to restore downtown buildings with their own hands for the first studios and galleries.... Stair organized the local art association in 1967, and its growth since has been impressive. 'Art has done much for Rockport,' says Stair. 'Broadway was once a rat's nest of abandoned building. Now it's all shops and restaurants. The Rockport Art Association started fixing up old buildings to use for its headquarters, and the interest in art gave the economy a real boast.'" (Hodge, 27, 30)

Local history

Cattle exporting and packeries 1865 - 1875

Rockport was identified as an important landing in the 1860s when James Doughty and Richard H. Wood, ranchers looking for a means to market their cattle, built the first cattle pens in 1866. (Huson,

History of Refugio County, 2:157) When the cattle shipping business was extended by Coleman, Mathis and Fulton, the "Big Wharf" was built on Rocky Point (the natural harbor). It stretched 1,100 feet in to the bay and was forty feet wide. (Guthrie, 91) Initially the cattle were shipped on the hoof but this changed as packeries (hide and tallow factories) grew. The 1871 Texas almanac stated: "Rockport and Fulton are but two or three years old; but the former is now doing most of the trade of this and several other counties, and promises to become one of the most important marts of West Texas." (Texas Alamanc 1871, 144) As many as a dozen large packeries were doing business in the Rockport-Fulton area with six or so smaller concerns. (Guthrie, 93)

Resorts and shipping 1888 - 1919

The coming of the San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railroad started a new era for the coastal town. Several resort hotels were built and as many as four trains a day brought tourists to Rockport. Bailey's Pavilion was one of several bathhouses that also featured entertainment. The community began to gain an infrastructure. Sacred Heart Church was built in 1889 and First National Bank in 1890. Electric lights, telephone and streetcars came to Rockport during this era. (Wood, 122)

Ships docked at Rockport with lighters (shallow draft vessels) carrying goods to other coastal towns and freighters hauling goods overland to Mexico. The 1919 Hurricane destroyed many landmarks along the waterfront and wrecked the cattle industry. Recovery was slow. Rockport civic leaders sought a deepwater port to sustain the economy, but their efforts were unsuccessful as Corpus Christi gained the deepwater port in 1922.

Shipbuilding and commercial fishing 1900 - 2007

The first boat yard was started by Bludworth Company followed Frandolig. (Wood, 127,133) The Heldenfels Brothers shipyard was built in 1917 from where the *Baychester* and *Zuniga* were launched in 1919. During World War II the US Navy took over the Rockport Yacht and Supply Company and in another shipyard Rob Roy Rice built wooden submarine chasers.

The Jacksons built vessels and maintained a seafood company until the 1970s. Commercial fishing flourished in the Rockport area as early as the 1890s and continued to expand. The seafood industry, including shrimp and oysters, developed in the 1930s and continues to be an important facet of the economy today.

Artists' Community

Over the years artists came to Rockport for the good weather and coastal atmosphere. In 1948 Simon Michaels moved to the coast and established the Fulton School of Painting. He patterned it after the

Cape Cod art colony. Painters traveled to the coast to study with Michaels and he held classes in nearby towns as well. In 1950 he purchased five acres on King Street in Rockport and built a home. His workshops attracted many young women and their works were displayed in exhibitions.

Estelle Stair (1910-1988) studied with Simon Michaels and made Rockport her home. In 1967 Estelle joined Jan Wendell and other local artists to organize the Rockport Art Association. (Allen, 377-380)

The Art Association exhibited in several galleries around town then moved into the Sorenson building with Estelle Stair from 1978 until 1984. (Allen, 379)

II. OVERVIEW

The Sorenson-Stair building site was used continuously as a mercantile from the 1870s to 1970. This mercantile served as the central exchange for goods - groceries and hardware - and supplied ships as a chandlery with a wharf into Aransas Bay. Beginning in 1901 the Sorensens also served as weathermen (displaymen) who received the weather report by the Western Union and posted it in the store windows then raised warning flags as needed.

The building housed the Estelle Stair Art Gallery from 1978 to 2004. Stair's warmth, talent and appreciation of art made her a major force in the Rockport Art Community. She taught and encouraged artists of all ages and interests. ("Center for Arts exhibition..." *Rockport Pilot*, 2007)

Chronology of building

1870s Brunner store. There was a mercantile at this location as early as the 1870s. Mr. Brunner owned it. When he died in 1886, Mrs. Agnes Inselmen Brunner called Simon Sorenson (1850-1916) into the store and said, "Simon Sorenson, I want to sell this store to you." (Pearson, Spencer...) She sold it to Simon on credit. (Deed records - WDVL E/72)

1886 Sorenson. The wooden frame store burned in 1890 and Sorenson rebuilt the store of brick. An 1894 Sanborn map shows the grocery on the first floor and the Masonic Lodge on the second. (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1894) This brick building was damaged by fire in 1895 but was rebuilt as a one-story mercantile. The markings "1895, Simon Sorenson" can be seen on top of the building on the south most parapet today (2007). This structure built in 1895 stands at 406 South Austin Street today (2007).

John C. Sorenson (1877-1952), eldest son of Simon, managed the store after his father's death on March 18, 1916. In 1935 the Simon B. Sorenson Estate was divided and the operation continued as Jno. C.

Sorenson Sr. & Sons. In the 1930s Judy Sorenson Collier had a lending library that was the forerunner of the Aransas County Library in the adjacent building. (Allen, 375)

At John's death in 1952, his son Paul C. Sorenson ran the store until Hurricane Celia (1970) damaged the building and stock. The building was leased to several different businesses during the 1970s.

1978 - 2004 Stair. In 1978 the building was leased to Estelle Stair for her art gallery. From 1978 to 1983 it also served as the headquarters for the Rockport Art Association in which Estelle played an important role. (Allen, 379) Hershall R. Stair (daughter of Estelle) purchased the building from the heirs of Sorenson in 1984. (Deed records WD 133345) At Stair's death in 1988 the building was held in a trust with Mary L. Bouldin (Jimmie) inheriting it. Jimmie Bouldin ran the Estelle Stair Gallery where she taught classes, hosted openings and guest artists as Estelle had done. When Jimmie moved to Gonzales in 1997 Estelle's niece, Lisa Baer, took over management of the gallery and continued the traditional activities initiated by Estelle Stair. While operating an art gallery, Baer began renovation of the building. The floor was replaced and air conditioning installed. She later added a coffee bar. Baer received the building as a gift from the estate of Estelle Stair in 2002. (Deed records -Warranty Gift Deeds 244736 & 244737 and WGD 266832) In 2004 it was closed for extensive repairs. The building is currently being restored and made structurally sound to maintain the historic character of the 1895 structure.

Architectural details

The Sorenson-Stair building is commercial style with a slightly sloped roof. The parapet has capped pilasters. The storefront has two openings with three bays. The central entry is framed with four pilasters. A marquee breaks up the pilasters. The cornice is detailed with angled brick.

The building is solid brick with windows that fit the original openings. The configuration of transoms is still defined. The stepped brick to accommodate an awning is still in place. Three penetrations for awning supports can be located on the sidewalks (an awning is visible in early photographs).

III. HISTORICAL/CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Cultural significance

The Sorenson-Stair building site was used continuously as a mercantile from the 1870s to 1970. Simon Sorenson built the current structure in 1895 after a fire damaged the earlier brick building. This mercantile served as the central exchange for goods - groceries and hardware - and supplied ships as a chandlery with a wharf into Aransas Bay. (Allen 183, 215) Beginning in 1901 the Sorensens also served as weathermen "displaymen" who received the weather report by the Western Union telegraph and posted it in the store windows then raised warning flags as needed. It continued to serve as a grocery through 1970.

From the late 1970s to the present, it housed a gallery for artists, Estelle Stair Gallery. Stair conducted informal classes - Paint Alongs - that encouraged many artists to paint and exhibit. The building served the growing art community as a gallery and home for the Rockport Art Association. The Gallery continued to be an exhibit space for local and out-of-town artists until it was closed for renovation.

Who were the owners

Simon B. Sorenson (1850-1916) was born in Ringkjobing, Denmark, in 1850 and went to sea at the age of 14. He became a citizen of the United States in 1870. After coming to the Texas coast, he carried the mail from Indianola to Aransas City, the first settlement on Live Oak Peninsula. ("Simon B Sorenson Came...") Later Simon was mate to Captain Charlie Hughes on the *Alfred and Sammy*. Captain Hughes fell overboard from his schooner and was drowned. Sorenson thereafter quit the sea and settled in Rockport. (Huson, II, 174) He was pen master at the Coleman Fulton cattle pens when Mrs. Brunner proposed that he buy the mercantile. Simon married Josephine Paul, who was born on St. Joseph's Island. They had eleven children. Simon became weather displayman in 1901. He hoisted weather flags on a tower (50 feet tall with a 25 foot mast atop that) in back of the store on Austin Street. In 1910 Simon bought the Del Mar Hotel (formerly known as the Aransas Hotel). (Allen, 429) It burned in the spring of 1919.

John C. Sorenson (1877-1952) served as display man beginning in 1912. A story from the 1919 hurricane relates "He <Ford Jackson> was home by the time John Sorenson had hoisted the red flags indicating hurricane force winds" (Allen & Taylor, 248) (also Brown) Sorenson was a member of the Episcopal Church, Masonic Lodge, the Order of the Eastern Star, and Knights of Pythias. ("John

Sorenson, Rockport Weatherman, Dies...") His wife was Lola Herring Sorenson. His children were John Laurits Sorenson, Paul Clark Sorenson, Mabel Urania (Judy) Sorenson Collier (Mrs. Albert) and Miss Iris Herring Sorenson.

After attending Texas A & M College and serving in World War II, Paul Clark Sorenson (1908-1992) (POA 175/418) ran the store until 1970 when it closed due to damage from hurricane Celia.

Hershall R. Stair (daughter of Estelle Stair) bought the property for her mother in 1984 although Estelle had leased it since 1978. (Deed records - WD 133345) Estelle Stair was an artist who taught painting classes and hosted the art association in the building from 1978 to 1984 when the Art Association got its own building. (Allen & Taylor, 379) "An avid supporter of the association, Stair assumed the organization's debt when it was struggling, and told said <sic> the group would always have a home within her gallery. " (Center for Arts...) Stair's style of teaching was very informal. "Each Friday, Mrs. Stair conducts a class for those who would like to learn a little more about the art of painting. She is widely known for her famous padre scenes and this is the main theme of her teaching sessions. Mrs. Stair said, "I am not a teacher. What I do on Fridays is not an academic class. I like to call it sharing.'" (Brock)

At Estelle's death in 1988, her sister, Jimmie Bouldin, continued to operate the gallery with exhibits and classes. "The zest for living Stair projected to those who knew her will continue. Bouldin plans to keep the gallery in operation. 'We are going to go forward,' she says." (Rockport's Grand Dame...)

In 2002 Lisa B. Baer received the property as a gift from the estate of Estelle Stair. She operated the gallery with an increased stock of art supplies and added a coffee bar to offer refreshments to those interested in the art. Estelle Stair Gallery closed in 2004 for extensive renovation.

The Sorenson-Stair building housed businesses vital to the community of Rockport. The grocery, hardware and ship's chandlery provided important supplies to early settlers. The gallery drew artists and patrons to the downtown arts district. This building at 406 South Austin Street, Rockport, merits an historical marker.

IV. Documentation

Allen, William and Sue Hastings Taylor. *Aransas: The Life of a Texas Coastal County*. Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 1977.

Brock, Kathy. "Sharing Painting Techniques Is Artist's Teaching Method," *The Rockport Pilot*, January 21, 1979, p.3.

Brown, Johnnie, For 35 Years, Sorenson Has Warned Rockport of 'Blows', *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 4, 1947

"Center for the Arts exhibition features major retrospective of Frary, Stair," *The Rockport Pilot*, April 17, 2007, p.13.

Deed records - WDVL E/72 recorded 2-25-1887 Aransas County

Deed records - WD 13345, 05-15-84, Aransas County

Deed records - Warranty Gift Deeds 244736 & 244737 1-15-02, Aransas County

Deed records - WGD 266832 8-25-04, Aransas County

Guthrie, Keith. *Texas Forgotten Ports: Mid-Gulf Coast Ports From Corpus Christi to Matagorda Bay*. Austin TX: Eakin Press, 1988.

Hodge, Larry D. "Rockport," *Texas Highways*, November 1987, pp. 20-31.

Huson, Hobert, *Refugio: A Comprehensive History of Refugio County From Aboriginal Times to 1955*. Woodsboro, Tx: The Rooke Foundation, Inc. 1955, copyright 1956. Volume II, Secession to 1955.

"John Sorenson Burial Today" article, November 1952. Copy in Aransas County Historical Society files.

"John Sorenson, Rockport Weatherman, Dies at 75," 1952 Obituary in Aransas County Historical Society files

Pearson, Spencer. "One-time weather watcher knows his Rockport" *Corpus Christi Caller*, May 12, 1986, 2B. Interview with Paul Sorenson in front of Estelle Stair art gallery. Copy in ACHS files.

Rockport, Texas: The New Deep Water Harbor on the Gulf of Mexico. Gulf Coast Immigration Company, Cover letter dated 1910.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1894 from Environmental Data Resources via www.tsl.state.tx.us/texshare copy in ACHS files from www.tsl.state.tx.us, Environmental Data Resources.

"Simon B. Sorenson Came to This Country in 1860s." Article from Aransas County Historical Society files

Simon Sorenson Obituary in Aransas County Historical Society files

Steward, Charles R. "Rockport's Grand Dame of Art Community Dies," *The Herald, Coastal Bend News*, January 14, 1988, p.1.

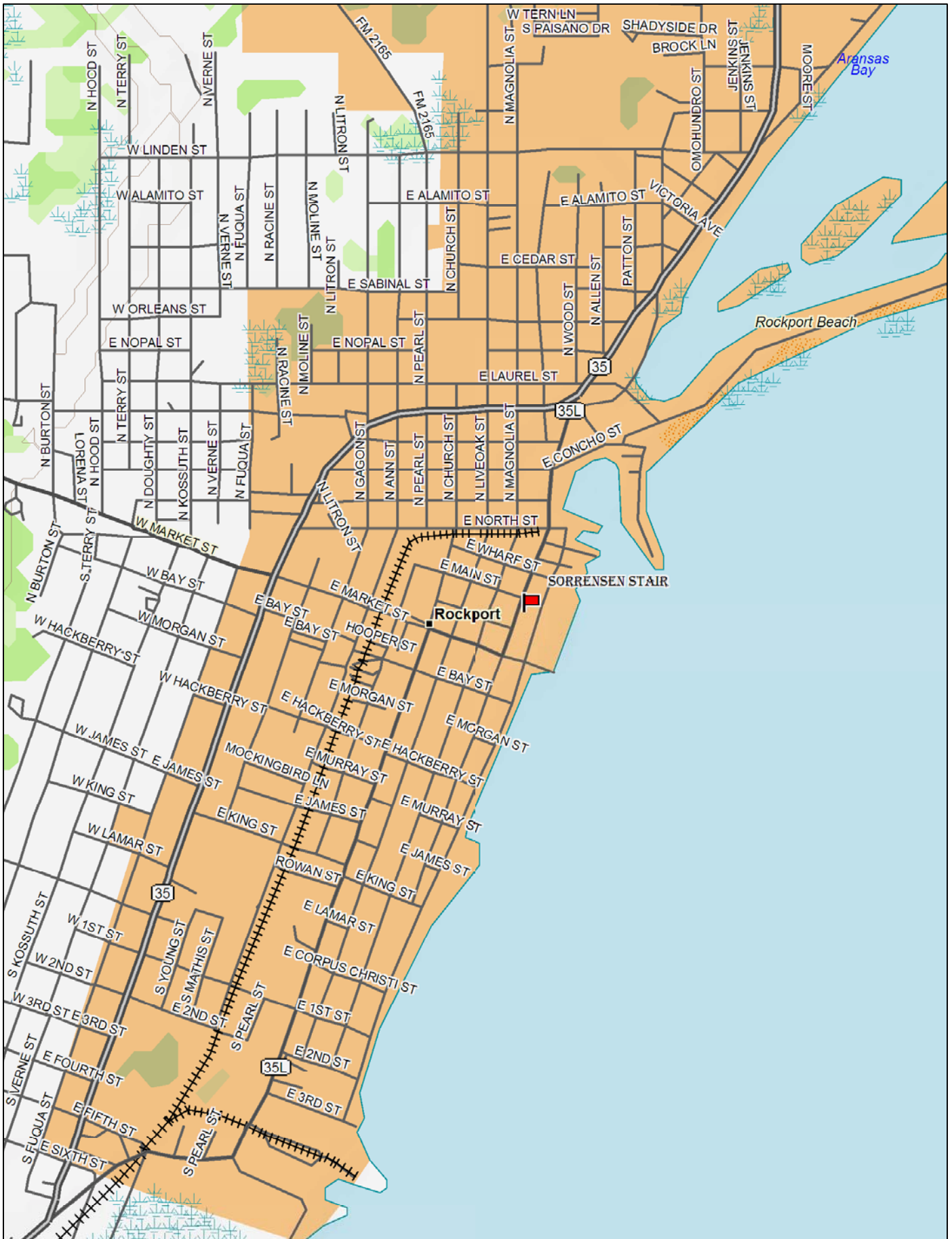
Texas Almanac 1871, p. 144.

Title Abstract, Feb. 29, 1868 - July 13, 2007. Copy in Aransas County Historical Society files.

Wood, Alpha Kennedy. *Texas Coastal Bend: People and Places*. Second Edition, copyright 1979 by Kathryn Holmes Wood. Printed in the United States of America.

V. Attachments - photographs and documents

1. Topo Zone
2. County tax record
3. Letterhead
4. The Sorenson Store before 1919
5. Sorenson Wharf Scene (Postcard)
6. Sanborn map
7. Austin Street ca. 1930
8. Paint Along with Stair 1979
9. Stair in 1987
10. Grand Dame Dies 1988
11. 406 s austin side (2007)
12. rear 406 s austin (2007)
13. s austin street 400 block (2007)
14. sorenson stair 2007 front



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Scale 1 : 47,500
4" = 1470 ft



117

118

5.

SHUTTERS BADLY WARPED FROM RECENT FIRE HOJOINING.

Sorenson Building
1894

GRV.

Sauvigny Fire Ins. Mch. P.

MASONIC HALL 2nd

6.

1
x Feed.

1
x

2
Barber.

x Vsc.

TUB
CIST.

7.

1/2

x Sal.

1
x

1
x

461

460

459

458

457

455

7°

R17652 Tax Year: 2008
1575-008-006-000

BAER, LISA B (083731)

10/28/2007 (KJ)

\$103,440

10/29/2007

1

A-2

DOUGHTY & MATHIS, BLOCK 8, LOT 6

P O BOX 2342
ROCKPORT, TX 78381-2342

Next Inspection/Reason

Assessed Value

Comments

\$103,440

BUILDING PLANS LOCATED IN BOX MARKED
COMMERCIAL PLANS. ORDER ADMITTING
PROBATED WILL & LETTER OF TESTIMONY FILE

Property Site Address

ESTELLE STAIRS ART GALLERY, 406 S AUSTIN ST,
ROCKPORT, TX 78382

Match ID

Neighborhood

Exemptions/Spec. Val.

Taxing Unit Information

CRO.SAR.GAR.XSP.NVD

Topography

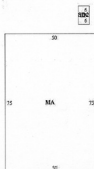
Utilities

Access

Other

Status History
Attributes

| Const Style | Foundation | Est. Finish | Int. Finish | Roof Style | Flooring |
|-------------|------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|----------|
| | PIER-B | BRICK | SHETRK | CS-F | WOOD |
| Heat/AC | Plumbing | Fireplace | Rooms | Bedrooms | |
| NONE | 1 | | | | |
| Date | Price | Seller | | Book / Instrument | Page |
| | | BAER, LISA B ETAL | | 266832 | |
| | | BOULDIN, MARY L | | 244736;244737 | |
| | | BOULDIN, MARY L | | | |



Improvements

| Type | Description | St Cd, HS, Type | Class | Area | Area Factor | Adjusted Area | Perimeter | Unit Price | Yr. BH / Act-Eff | Cond | % Gd | Ph % | Eco % | Fin % | % Comp | Value |
|-------|------------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-------------|---------------|-----------|------------|------------------|------|------|------|-------|-------|--------|--------|
| MA | Main Area | F1 N C | SBCL+ | 3,750 | | 3,750 | 250 | 36.76 | 1935-1955 | | 35 | 100 | 100 | 100 | | 53,070 |
| SD2 | Def'd Storage-2 single | F1 N R | | 60 | | 60 | | 8.00 | 1998-1998 | | 77 | 100 | 100 | 100 | | 370 |
| TOTAL | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 53,440 |

NBH% 100

Land Information

| Type | Description | Table | ST Cd | HS | Meth | Area | Unit Price | Func % | Econ % | Adj % | Market Value | Ag Tbl | Meth | Ag Unit Pr | Ag Value |
|-------|-------------|--------------|-------|----|------|------------|------------|--------|--------|-------|--------------|--------|-------|------------|----------|
| C | Commercial | SFT-S1575-AU | F1 | | SFT | 5,000.0000 | 10.00 | 100 | 100 | | 50,000 | | | 0.00 | 0 |
| TOTAL | | | | | | | | | | | | 50,000 | TOTAL | | |

NBH% 0

EFF. ACRES 0.1148

TOTAL

5,000.0000

TOTAL

50,000

TOTAL



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The Sorenson Store

SORENSEN WHARF SCENE,
ROCKPORT, TEXAS.



Postcard from the Judy Sorenson collier family collection. All rights reserved.

Sorenson's Wharf About 1900



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Downtown Rockport Circa 1930

Sharing Pain

Is Artist's Te

By Kathy Brock
 Estelle Stair and her husband transferred their business in Luling, Texas in 1964 and moved to Rockport so that Mr. Stair could

fish. He is known for his location. It has become a premier Texas fishing spot. Mrs. Stair is under the direction of Mrs. Stair. She is very successful. She still has her own business along with her husband. Stair is a well-known conductor who has a little more painting known. She sees the main thing in her session. "I am not do on academi it shares. Estelle headqu port A has been this gning. I small come present rately



Art Class Hard At "Work"



Estelle Stair

The Wednesday was we ering th hope.

Estelle Stair

Rockport's Grand Dame Of Art Com



Estelle Stair as most remember her

Jno. C. Sorenson Sr. & Sons

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ROCKPORT, TEXAS

2007 side view of Sorenson-Stair Bldg (Estelle Stair Gallery)







2007 front view Sorenson Stair bldg





Artist Estelle Stair, in front of her gallery/studio on Austin Street, organized the Rockport Art Association in 1967. The group sparked renovation of downtown buildings, and now claims 500 members.

Service in the 1930s and '40s, evoked disbelief. No one thought it possible to see that many birds in an unknown little town on the Texas coast. The doubters came to see for themselves, and converted. One, grilling Hagar at her dining room table, doubted that she had seen a certain bird. She calmly replied that by shifting his chair, he could see a pair building their nest just outside her kitchen window.

Quantity and variety still describe birding in Rockport. Birder Hilde Kaigler recalls spending many New Year's Days birding with her husband. "We would go out in the morning and stay out until we had sighted 100 species," Hilde says. "Then we'd celebrate the new year. We fell short only once in eight years. Usually, we'd be done by midafternoon."

Millions of birds converge on the Rockport area twice annually as though being squeezed through a funnel, known as the central flyway. The flyway forms one of the major migratory routes of birds bound from nesting grounds as far north as the Arctic Circle to wintering grounds in Central and South America.

During her lifetime, Hagar trav-



eled an estimated 100,000 miles while birdwatching—all within a four-by-seven-mile area around Rockport. Her daily records of observations over more than 35 years fill 25 volumes now in the Texas A&M University archives.

A host of resident birders carry on Connie Hagar's tradition. Like her, many of them chose to live in Rock-

The Fulton Mansion, overlooking Aransas Bay, was built in 1877 for rancher and businessman George Fulton. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department restored this historic structure and now conducts guided tours.

port because of the birds. The American Birding Association birder of the year for 1986, Charlie Clark, moved to Rockport after his retirement in 1976.