



# *Columbia-Brazoria*



## **HISTORICAL ARCHIVES**

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# Columbia-Brazoria



## HISTORICAL ARCHIVES

### Brazoria

**“Brazoria, “I know of no other like it in the world”  
Stephen F. Austin**

“Brother James lives in a new town we laid off on the Brazos river, 15 miles from its mouth, called Brassoria – a name I gave it for the single reason that I know of no other like it in the world,” wrote Stephen F. Austin to W. C. Carr on March 4, 1829. Brazoria’s place in Texas history is as unique as its name. Brazoria, more than any other place, was the “hotbed of discontent” from which the Texas Revolution was born. Founded by John Austin in 1829 to serve as a port and trading center for the colony of his friend, Stephen F. Austin, the rich bottomlands of the Brazos produced splendid crops of cotton and sugar cane and quickly secured Brazoria’s status as a cultural and economic center, as well as political “hotbed”. By the early 1830’s it was the busiest port west of new Orleans.

Six Masons met in March 1835 under a giant oak in the town, the "Masonic Oak," to organize what was reportedly the first Masonic lodge in Texas. Brazoria was virtually deserted in the Runaway Scrape. H. M. Shaw opened a school at the community in April 1838. A post office was established there in 1846, and by 1884 Brazoria was described as a "stirring village" of 800.

It had several steam cotton gins and grist and sugar mills, twelve general stores, three hotels, five churches, and "excellent schools." Area farmers shipped crops on the river. By 1890 Brazoria had 900 residents and was the county seat of Brazoria County. By 1892 the *Velasco World*, a weekly newspaper, had been established there, and by 1914, the *Banner*.

After the railroad bypassed Brazoria, it began to decline as its neighbor, Angleton, grew. Angleton became county seat in 1897. The local school at Brazoria had three teachers and an enrollment of 142 in 1906. The population was 633 in 1904 and 1,050 in 1929. By 1939 the discovery of oil and a

sulfur field nearby and the building of a traffic bridge began to revive the town. Its population reached 1,291 by 1962 and 3,025 by 1987, when Brazoria had some fifty businesses. The Clemens Unit, a prison where inmates raise livestock and crops, is on 8,116 acres of land just south of the townsite. Each October Brazoria hosts a Bluegrass and Gospel Fall Festival, and its old town area is of historic interest. In 1990 the community reported a population of 2,717. In 2000 the population was 2,787.



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### **Brazoria Residents in History**

Many Brazoria residents played prominent roles in Texas history. Jane Long is referred to as “The Mother of Texas”. Henry Smith served as alcalde in 1833 and became the first governor of the provisional government of the Republic of Texas and the Republic’s first secretary of the treasury. Anson Jones practiced medicine and held many offices in the Republic’s government, including president. James W. Fannin, who with his troops was massacred at Goliad, lived about four miles west on the San Bernard River. Legendary Brit Bailey lived about six miles to the north. Other noted Brazorians were John A. Wharton, Robert J. Calder, Branch T. Archer, William H. Wharton and Governor Elisha M. Pease.



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### Columbia & Brazoria Schools Unite

West Columbia organized as an independent school district in 1924. By the late 1950's a good relationship had been developed between Brazoria and West Columbia schools. In Early 1958, there was considerable discussion about consolidation between West Columbia, Brazoria, and Damon districts. A survey was taken in each of the three districts in October of 1958 by the University of Houston. The firm associated with U of H had been retained by the West Columbia Board of Trustees to determine recommendations for future planning.

Results of the survey were received by the Board on November 8, 1958 to determine the feasibility of conducting a consolidation election. The firm recommended that the WCISD board proceed early in 1959 with the election since transfer students from Brazoria would need to seek transfer to another district if the election failed. Damon residents indicated that they were not in favor of a consolidation and students would have to transfer to West Columbia or Needville for grades 9-12.

The big issue between West Columbia and Brazoria was based on the fact that a larger number of Brazoria students were transferring to West Columbia and the additional students from Brazoria plus the students from Wild peach and West Columbia was creating a real facility problem. The West Columbia Board did not feel comfortable with a bond election for added facilities to house Brazoria and Damon transfers without some guarantee of a permanent arrangement.

A letter was addressed to the Brazoria Board from the West Columbia Board on November 18, 1958 outlining its position on the expansion of facilities due to student population projections from the survey. The letter suggested a meeting of the two boards to call for a consolidation election which would permit the citizens from both districts to express their desires on consolidation.

A notice was published following the January 26, 1959 West Columbia Board meeting requesting a consolidation election be held immediately in order to expedite plans for the 1959-60 school year. It further stated that if the election failed no other transfers would be accepted unless they were transfers in the 1958-59 school year.

To further complicate the issue, a fire destroyed the West Columbia High School on February 3, 1959, and a special meeting was held on February 10, 1959 to call the consolidation election order. The election was held on February 28, 1959 and votes were canvassed in a special Board meeting on that same date. The results were:

West Columbia = For 559, Against 13  
Brazoria = For 568, Against 59

At the same special meeting March 3, 1959 an election order was issued to call a school board election on April 4, 1959.

Sixteen names were on the ballot which called for the Board to be comprised of 3 members from West Columbia, 2 members from Brazoria, and 2 at large positions. elected to the new Board were: T. M. smith, Clyde Lee, and Clyde Harper for 1 year terms; Cecil Powell and Henry Flowers for 2 year terms; and Lee Hellums and Joe Brigance for 3 year terms. The terms of office were established by an official drawing of those elected.

Officers were elected as follows: President: Lee Hellums, WC, Dow Chemical; Vice President: Clyde Harper, WC, Texas Pipeline; Secretary: Clyde V. Lee, WC, Former UH Coach, Auto Dealer; Members: T. M. Smith, WC At Large, Real Estate, Oil, Cattle; J. H. Brigance, BZ, Rancher & Oil Leasing; Cecil Powell, WC At large, Texas Gulf Sulphur; Henry Flowers, BZ, Dow Chemical.

J. C. Rogers was superintendent of West Columbia schools during consolidation and M. B. Barrow was superintendent of Brazoria schools. Rogers was named superintendent and Barrow appointed assistant superintendent of the new District. 1959 – 60 was the first official year of the consolidated Columbia-Brazoria Independent School District.



# Columbia-Brazoria



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### East Columbia

East Columbia, on the Brazos River nine miles west of Angleton in west central Brazoria County, was founded by Josiah Hughes Bell in 1823. Bell's plantation landing on the Brazos, which served as a supply depot for settlements on the river above, was first known as Bell's Landing, but in 1824 Bell laid out the new town and named it Marion. He advertised the sale of lots in 1829, but the promotion did not succeed. By 1831 the community had only two or three cabins, a country store, and the frame house of Bell's plantation.

As large sugar and cotton plantations were established in the area, however, mercantile establishments, saloons, wharves, warehouses, and large homes grew up around the Bell home, and trading schooners carried goods from the riverport to New Orleans. Bell sold the townsite of what was to become East Columbia to Walter C. White on October 1, 1827, but the name "Bell's Landing" remained in use until at least 1840. By 1842, when Bell's settlement on the prairie was known as West Columbia, the community had been renamed East Columbia.

The town, situated near the head of navigation on the Brazos River, grew rapidly for a time after the capital of Texas was moved to Houston. The Houston Tap and Brazoria Railroad was built to East Columbia from Houston in 1859, but the Civil War caused the town to decline. In 1884 the community was on a division of the Missouri Pacific Railroad and had two hotels, steam-driven corn and saw mills, a cotton gin, and a population of 800.

By 1890 the population had more than doubled to 1,500, and a weekly newspaper, the *Old Capitol*, was in publication. Planing and grist mills, special and general stores, a sugar mill, and several churches and schools were built between 1894 and 1914, though the population dwindled from 1,200 to 150. A post office, established in 1846 as Columbia,

was renamed East Columbia in 1927. The population grew from 200 in 1929 to 400 in 1933, but declined after World War II to a low of eighty-nine in 1972 and remained at ninety-five from 1974 through 2000.



# Columbia-Brazoria



## HISTORICAL ARCHIVES

### Historical Points of Interest

1) **FIRST CAPITOL** - Site of the First Capitol of the Republic of Texas, 1836-1837. The First Congress convened in October 1836 and Sam Houston was inaugurated First President of the Republic of Texas. In April 1837, the capitol was moved to Houston. Located on Brazos Avenue in West Columbia, Highway 35, beneath the flag pole.



**1<sup>st</sup> Capitol of Texas, West Columbia**

2) **VARNER HOGG PLANTATION** – Originally the Patton Place. When it became the property of James Stephen Hogg, then Governor of Texas, he made his home here. Miss Ima Hogg, his daughter, gave the plantation to the State of Texas for a state park. Turn north at the historical marker, beside the Civic Center on Highway 35, and follow the road to the park.



**Varner Hogg Plantation House**

3) **HOMESITE OF GEORGE B. MCKINSTRY, 1802-1837** – Member of Austin’s colony in 1829, soldier in the Battle of Velasco, delegate to the General Convention 1832, Chief Justice of Brazoria County, 1836. Stephen F. Austin died here on December 27, 1836. Located near the Varner Hogg Plantation.

4) **HOMESITE OF JOSIAH HUGHES BELL, 1791-1836** – Bell was one of the Old Three Hundred who first came to Texas with Stephen F. Austin. On this tract of 6,642 acres granted to him in 1824 was later built the town of West Columbia.



**Josiah Bell Marker**

5) **THE MASONIC OAK** – Under this tree in March 1835, five masons met to organize the first Masonic lodge in Texas. In December of the same year the lodge was organized and in the following year its records were destroyed by General Urea, when Santa Anna’s troops entered this area. Located in Brazoria.





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## HISTORICAL ARCHIVES



**Masonic Oak, Brazoria, TX**

**6) HOMESITE OF JOHN AUSTIN** – Member of Long’s Expedition in 1819, pioneer settler of Austin’s colony, commander at the Battle of Velasco, died in 1833. Continue on blacktop road .25 miles past the Masonic Oak to homesite monument.

**7) STATUE OF HENRY SMITH** – Henry Smith was born in 1788 in Kentucky and came to Texas in 1827. He settled in what is now Brazoria County. Severely wounded at the Battle of Velasco on June 26, 1832. 1<sup>st</sup> Secretary of the Treasury of the Republic of Texas 1836-38, and a member of the Congress of the Republic 1840-41. Located in Brazoria off Highway 36.



**Henry Smith, 1<sup>st</sup> Governor of Texas**

**8) HOMESITE OF JAMES WALKER FANNIN** – Site of the plantation home established in 1834 by James Walker Fannin (1805-36), who with his troops was massacred at Goliad on March 27, 1836. Go south on Highway 36 to FM 524 and go 2.65 miles across San Bernard River. Monument is to the left.



**James Walker Fannin**

**9) HOMESITE OF EMILY M. AUSTIN PERRY, SISTER OF STEPHEN F. AUSTIN** – Emily M. Perry (1795-1851), only sister of Stephen F. Austin, who regarded her home as his home in Texas. After San Felipe was burned, the home was known as Peach Point. Was the 1<sup>st</sup> burial place of Stephen F. Austin. Located near Gulf Prairie Church and cemetery.



**Emily Austin Perry**



# Columbia-Brazoria

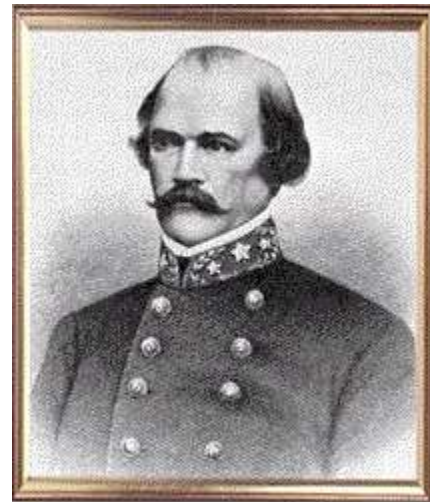


## HISTORICAL ARCHIVES

**10) MONUMENT TO COLONEL ROBERT M. COLEMAN** – Erected by the State of Texas in memory of Colonel Coleman, a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence and Aide De Camp to General Sam Houston at the Battle of San Jacinto. Located off Highway 288 in Brazoria County.

**11) COAST GUARD STATION OLD LIFE BOAT** – The first vessel bearing citizens of Austin’s colony landed here on December 23, 1821. The Battle of Velasco was fought here on June 25, 1832. Several treaties of peace between the Republic of Texas and Santa Anna were signed here May 14, 1836. Located at the mouth of the Brazos River.

**12) HOMESITE OF GENERAL ALBERT SIDNEY JOHNSON** – Texas Patriot and Confederate hero (1803-62). At the beginning of the Civil War it was almost universally agreed that the finest soldier, North or South, was Albert Sidney Johnston. But his Civil War career was a definite disappointment to the Confederacy. The Kentucky-born Johnston was appointed to West Point from Louisiana and graduated eighth in the class of 1826. After eight years of service he resigned to care for his terminally ill wife. A failure at farming, he went to Texas and joined the revolutionary forces as a private. He rose to the forces' chief command as senior brigadier the next year. He served as secretary of war in the Republic of Texas and commanded the 1st Texas Rifles in the Mexican War. Monument erected by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas on west side of Highway 288 near Bonney.



**Albert Sidney Johnson**

**13) EAGLE ISLAND PLANTATION** – site of the home of Sarah and Ann Groce Wharton (1810-77) and William W. Wharton (1806-39), who served as minister to the United States (1836-37). a gathering place for distinguished people

**14) MONUMENT TO DR. JAMES AENEAS PHELPS** – (1794?-1847). James Aeneas Phelps, one of the Old 300 colonists and hospital surgeon of the Texas army at San Jacinto, was born around 1794 in Mississippi and was educated as a doctor. Stephen F. Austin persuaded him to come to Texas where he provided invaluable medical treatment to soldiers at the Battle of San Jacinto. Historical marker is located along the Brazos river off Highway 35.

**15) SITE OF OROZIMBO** – Home of James A. Phelps, where Santa Anna was detained as a prisoner from July to November 1836 after his capture at the Battle of San Jacinto.

**16) BURIAL SITE OF CHARLIE BROWN** – Charlie and Isabella Brown are buried in the family cemetery not far from the original homestead. Charlie Brown was an ex slave, businessman and benefactor who gave his name to the school in West Columbia.





# Columbia-Brazoria



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**Charlie Brown, Businessman/Benefactor**

### 17) STATUE OF STEPHEN F. AUSTIN –

Located on Highway 288 just south of the intersection with Highway 35, honoring the Father of Texas. This 60-foot replica stands on a 12-foot base in the 10-acre Henry William Munson Park. It recognizes the importance of Brazoria County's history to Texas and the shaping of the U.S. A Texas-shaped one-acre lake is the focal point for the 900-foot "Walk of Honor," which pays tribute to residents who have made a significant impact on the county



**Statue of Stephen F. Austin**



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## HISTORICAL ARCHIVES

### The Masonic Oak

On March 1, 1835, a group of Freemasons met under an oak in a wild peach grove outside of Brazoria. They had chosen a secluded place because the Masonic Order was prohibited under Mexican law and the purpose of their meeting was to establish the first Masonic Lodge in Texas. The group prepared a petition for a charter and dispatched a messenger to deliver it to the Grand Lodge of Louisiana.



**Masonic Oak, Brazoria, TX**

Even before the charter arrived, they secured a meeting room in the building used for the courthouse, and on December 27, 1835, officers were elected. Dr. Anson Jones, who would later be elected President of the Republic of Texas, was selected to serve as Worshipful Master.

When Mexican forces marched through Brazoria, they destroyed all records, books, and jewels of the order. Only the charter, which was delivered to Dr. Anson Jones as he was on his way to fight at the Battle of San Jacinto, was saved.

The Masonic Oak is revered by Texas masons. It has been nursed through two lightning strikes and is propped up and protected. The Masons maintain a lovely park across from the oak.



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## HISTORICAL ARCHIVES

### West Columbia: 1<sup>st</sup> Capitol of Texas

West Columbia, an incorporated town on State highways 35 and 36 between the Brazos and San Bernard rivers in west central Brazoria County, was founded as Columbia in 1826 by Josiah Hughes Bell, who laid out the town two miles west of Marion (now East Columbia). It was known as Columbia during the Texas Revolution and when it served as the capital of the Republic of Texas from September to December 1836. There the First Congress of the Republic of Texas convened, and Sam Houston was inaugurated president on October 22, 1836. The House of Representatives met in a two-story frame house and the Senate in a smaller house, at the site of which a state historical marker was later placed.



**1<sup>st</sup> Capitol of Texas, West Columbia**

On November 30, 1836, Congress met in joint session and decided to move the seat of government to Houston because Columbia did not have adequate accommodations for government personnel. Stephen F. Austin, then secretary of state, died on December 27, 1836, in Columbia at the home of George B. McKinstry. With removal of the seat of government, Columbia, now known as West Columbia, declined as a commercial center.

A post office was established in 1905, but further growth awaited the discovery of the twenty-square-

mile West Columbia oilfield in 1918. West Columbia again became a trade center for the surrounding area, with an economy based on agriculture (largely rice and cotton), oil, and sulfur. The population reached 2,500 in 1928, but declined to 1,000 with the onset of the Great Depression. In 1932 forty businesses operated in the community. By 1940 the population had risen to 1,573, and there were fifty businesses. In the subsequent decade the population rose to a high of 2,100. In the 1960s many major oil companies had producing wells in or near West Columbia, and the area boasted the largest cattle population in Texas.

Recreational opportunities included hunting, fishing, and swimming. A replica of the first capitol was built in 1977, and the Varner-Hogg Plantation was restored. The city celebrates a San Jacinto Festival and Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historical Park Plantation Days in April. The population reached 2,947 in 1960 and 3,335 in 1970 as workers were drawn to employment in area industry. In the 1990s the community published the *Brazoria County News*, and the population numbered 4,372. The population dropped slightly in 2000 to 4,255.



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## HISTORICAL ARCHIVES

### Dr. Sofie Herzog



### First Woman Surgeon in Texas

“Dr. Sofie Herzog, the first woman surgeon in Texas, came to Brazoria in February of 1895 and soon became known for her ability to remove bullets. She addressed the December meeting of the South Texas medical Society on her method of removing bullets. In the address she stated that she has been in Brazoria for 22 months and had removed 15 bullets and 2 buckshots. She save the bullets and had them made into a necklace.

When the railroad came to Brazoria, she was hired as the railroad surgeon. Officials at the home office learned that a woman had been hired and requested her resignation. Dr. Sofie refused, stating that if she ever failed to do her job they could fire her. She kept the position until just a few months before her death at age 79 in July of 1925. Her body rests in the Pioneer Cemetery of Old Town Brazoria. At her request she was buried wearing her bullet necklace.



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## HISTORICAL ARCHIVES

### Superintendents

#### Brazoria ISD

1922-23 John Montgomery Williams

1934-59 Melvin B. Barrow

#### West Columbia ISD

1920-24 W. B. Killebrew

1924-38 Asa Griggs

1938-46 Charles M. Kelso

1946-59 John C. Jake Rogers

#### Columbia-Brazoria ISD

1959-63 John C. Jake Rogers

1963-79 Kenneth C. Welsch

1979-89 Howard Pickle

1989-95 Dr. Virgil Tiemann

1995-98 Bill Branum

1998-02 Dr. Cole Pugh

2002-11 Carol Bertholf

2011–Present Steven Galloway

### Head Football Coaches

#### Columbia-Brazoria ISD

1922-24 Red Herndon

1925-27 Fount Bright

1928-32 D. E. Grandstaff

1933 B. Z. Cooper

1934-35 Richard Van Viebig

1936 Johnnie Renfro

1938-40 John C. Jake Rogers

1941-44 Baker Wright

1945 John C. Jake Rogers

1946 Gordon Burke

1948-51 Flash Walker

1952-54 Harold Pool

1955-62 Elston Golson

1963-64 Tex Kassan

1965-68 Carman Bonner

1969-79 Jack Hayes

1980-93 Ed Derrich

1994-97 Leonard Villareal

1998-00 Dean Deatley

2001-06 Brian Lane

2007-11 Leland Surovik

2012-Present – Randy Lynch



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## HISTORICAL ARCHIVES

### Varner Hogg Plantation

Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historical Park is on Farm Road 2852 off State Highway 35, two miles north of West Columbia in Brazoria County. Varner Creek runs through the 65.66-acre park site, which features a refurbished two-story Greek Revival plantation house built around 1835. Donated to the state in 1958 by philanthropist Ima Hogg, the park is named for its first and last owners. With its antebellum home and other historical buildings, it provides a view of plantation life in Texas between 1835 and 1850, the time of the plantation's greatest productivity. This period is also reflected in its furnishings.



**Varner Hogg Plantation House**

Varner-Hogg was named to the National Register of Historic Places on April 9, 1980. The property was originally owned by Martin Varner, a member of Stephen F. Austin's Old Three Hundred and a veteran of the Texas Revolution. Varner and his family moved there in 1824 and lived in a cabin he built on the creek bank. Varner farmed corn and raised livestock and probably some sugar cane. He was thanked in 1829 by Austin for a gift of rum, which Austin called the first "ardent spirits" made in the colony, and possibly in Texas.

On April 4, 1834, Varner sold his holdings in Brazoria County for \$13,000 to Columbus R. Patton who, as the family's eldest son, represented his father, John D. Patton, in the purchase. From this

time through the remainder of the nineteenth century, the plantation was known simply as the Patton place. A large contingent of the Patton family settled in Brazoria County and developed the site into a successful sugar plantation. They built a barn, stables, a smokehouse, slave quarters, and a sugar house. Several of the Patton men were active in politics prior to the Texas Revolution, and three, Columbus, St. Clair, and William H. Patton, served in the army. The latter two were in the battle of San Jacinto. William, who was Sam Houston's aide-de-camp, was part of the group that guarded Antonio López de Santa Anna after his capture and escorted him to Orozimbo Plantation in Brazoria County. During this time Santa Anna was held briefly at the Patton place. Prior to the Civil War Columbus Patton had a racetrack on the plantation.

Of the twenty-three sugar producers in Brazoria County, the Patton plantation was the fifth most productive in 1849, producing 275,000 pounds of sugar and 22,000 gallons of molasses. Columbus Patton continued to operate the plantation until November 1854, when he was declared insane by a Brazoria County court and placed in an asylum in South Carolina. John Adriance, a Brazoria County merchant and plantation owner, was named to administer the Patton estate. Columbus Patton's death on September 29, 1856, placed his estate in probate court again. His family attempted to overturn the will, and after partial settlement Adriance continued to manage the plantation through 1869, when the land, equipment, livestock, and improvements were sold.

The property continued to produce sugar, operating in part through the convict lease system of the Texas prison system. The Galveston hurricane of 1900 blew down the sugar house and many other buildings at the plantation, but the house survived, and in 1901 the property was sold for \$30,000 to former Governor Hogg. Although he had bought the place as an investment, Hogg began thinking of it as a second home for his children. He became convinced that great quantities of oil lay beneath its surface and stipulated in his will that the mineral





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rights could not be sold for fifteen years after his death.

Before that time had expired, the West Columbia oilfield was brought in, and the family's proceeds from oil production on the plantation land became the foundation for its wealth. Some changes in the plantation house were made in 1920 by the Hogg family, but the interior of the main structure remained much as it was when it was purchased. The house's entrance was changed, a second-floor gallery on what is now the front of the home was removed, and six large pillars were installed from ground to roof. A breezeway was built to connect the parlor and the enlarged dining room, which adjoins the rebuilt kitchen. A stucco covering was added to protect the exterior bricks, which slaves made from clay from the bed of the nearby Brazos River and fired on the plantation. Other points of interest include the Patton family cemetery, foundation ruins of the sugar mill, and several slave cabins.



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## HISTORICAL ARCHIVES

### Where the Texas Revolution Began

Unpopular changes to the 1824 Constitution on April 6, 1830 caused dissatisfaction among colonists. Brazoria became the center of a group called the “War Dogs” or “Crazeorians” who openly advocated war with Mexico. Among this group of rebels were such leaders as John Austin, William Wharton, Henry Smith and other prominent Brazorians. At a meeting of June, 1832, 103 men signed up “to become a part of the military of Austin’s colony and to hold themselves in readiness to march at any point on the shortest notice”. In May of 1832 Mexican officials arrested 17 men in Anahuac. Around midnight the Battle of Velasco began. By 11 am on June 26 the fort’s defenders raised a white flag, and on June 29, 1832, they were allowed to return to Mexico. Eight Mexican soldiers who were too badly injured to be moved were left in the attentive care of John Austin.

Amazingly, a letter written by John Austin citing the “despotic and arbitrary acts” of Juan Bradburn coupled with the Turtle Bayou Resolutions resulted in the Texians being treated as allies instead of traitors by Santa Anna’s representative, Colonel Mexia.



**Santa Anna**

At a gala Santa Anna Ball at Jane Long’s Tavern, Mexia proposed a toast – “Brazoria – the gallant defender of the constitution and the laws”.

Brazoria was at this time the capital of the municipality of Brazoria. Alcalde John Austin called for a convention that met in San Felipe on October 1, 1832. A petition for separate statehood was among the resolutions passed, but it was never delivered. A second convention met on April 1, 1833 that covered the same ground as the first, but added a proposal for a State Constitution based on the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780. Stephen F. Austin set out to deliver this petition, setting in motion a series of events that resulted in his being imprisoned in Mexico from February 15 until late December of 1834.

While he was gone Brazoria had her own troubles. The town was struck with a cholera epidemic that killed 80 people including John Austin. The colonists experienced their first Brazos River flood. Captain William B. Travis attacked the fort at Anahuac on June 29, 1835 to obtain the release of Adam Briscoe. Just as S. F. Austin’s ship returned from Mexico, the first naval battle of the Texas Revolution was fought off the coast of Velasco.

On September 8, 1835 Brazoria gave a public dinner to celebrate Austin’s return. Austin proposed a toast, “The constitutional right and the security and peace of Texas – they ought to be maintained; and jeopardized as they are no, they demand a general consultation of the people.” The listeners broke into applause. S. F. Austin – the peacemaker – had cast his vote for revolution!

Four companies of volunteers were organized in Brazoria County. Skirmishes broke out even before the Consultation met at San Felipe on November 3-10. At the Consultation, Henry Smith was elected governor of the provisional government. The Consultation also voted to return the capital of the Municipality of Brazoria back to Brazoria. Columbia had been the capital since April 1834. Municipalities elected delegates to a convention at Washington on the Brazos. In every instance they elected candidates that favored complete independence from Mexico. On March 6, 1836, the Alamo fell. Word reached Washington on the Brazos on March 16. By 2 am of March 17, David



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G. Burnet and the other officials had been inaugurated and the convention adjourned.

On March 19-20 the Texians lost the Battle of Coleto. This resulted in the Goliad Massacre on March 27. The Texians' battle cry became "Remember the Alamo! Remember Goliad!" While Sam Houston and his army seemed to retreat, the women and children of Brazoria joined those of surrounding areas in the Runaway Scrape. Finally, on April 26 Sam Houston and his men faced Santa Anna's army at San Jacinto. Texas is free! On October 3, 1836 President Sam Houston and the First Congress met in Columbia and on October 28 a great ball was held at Jane Long's in Brazoria to celebrate.



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### **Wild Peach**

Wild Peach is located off State Highway 36 about four miles northwest of Brazoria in western Brazoria County. The town is named for the color of the dominant soil in the area, which resembles the skin of the wild peach. The town began as a residential development in the early 1950s. By 1958 citizens had constructed a community center, church, and several businesses. The residents also organized a volunteer fire department. Wild Peach appeared on county highway maps in the early 1960s, but no population figures were available until the 1990 census reported 2,440 residents. At that time the town still had its community center, a church, and grain elevators. In 2000 Wild Peach remained a residential area with a population of 2,498.



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