

Thesis
AS
36
.T46
N43

25
The Old Town of Saint Mary's...
Camille Yeamans Neighbors

THE OLD TOWN OF SAINT MARY'S ON COPANO BAY AND SOME
INTERESTING PEOPLE WHO ONCE LIVED THERE

Approved:

E. O. Wiley
J. L. Rogers

Approved:

J. L. Rogers
Executive Secretary, Graduate Council

THE OLD TOWN SAINT MARY'S ON COPANO BAY AND SOME
INTERESTING PEOPLE WHO ONCE LIVED THERE

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
Southwest Texas State Teachers College
In Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Camille Yeomans Neighbors, B.A.

(San Antonio, Texas)

San Marcos, Texas

August, 1942

Preface

Probably few aspirants to the Master's Degree have prepared their theses under as favorable and fortunate circumstances as has the writer. First of all, the preparation of the subject has been a labor of love, for the reason that the writer's mother, Mary Russell Yeamans, was born in Old St. Mary's, and the Russell family forms no insignificant part of any history of that place. Secondly, it has been a source of proud pleasure that a major part of the history of the town has been preserved by members of the writer's own family, principally her uncle, the late Judge Lyman Brightman Russell, of Comanche, Texas, and her aunt, Mrs. Sallie J. (Russell) Burmeister, of Pleasanton, Texas, now eighty years old, but of remarkable mental vitality. It is not often that a historian has at his or her hand a living primary source of material, but dear Aunt Sallie has been just that, and has been with the writer throughout the final formation of the thesis.

It is a pleasurable and profitable coincidence that Judge Lyman B. Russell gave Colonel Hobart Huson a mass of original documents, including hundreds of pages of his own recollections, all of which have been preserved by Colonel Huson at "Dawgwood". The writer has been extended the privilege, not only of using these documents, but of unrestricted access to the treasure trove of manuscript material and fine research library at "Dawgwood", for all of which the writer expresses her thanks.

San Antonio, Texas
August, 1942

Camille Yeamans Neighbors

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Chapter | Page |
|---|-------|
| I. EARLY LAND GRANTS | |
| Location of town of St. Mary's - Indians - Joseph Smith, land pirate - Colonel James Power's grants attacked - Milford P. Norton. Willard Richardson - Efforts to establish town at Black Point, 1840 - Border troubles. Smith in Mier expedition; imprisonment and release - General T. T. Williamson's First Texian Loan land scrip - Contract to found port town - Persecution of Irish colonists - Power's titles invalidated. Captain Marcy and Major Neighbors survey coast. Army influence for town project sought - "Saint Mary's of Aransas" laid off - General Williamson takes active interest in project - Williamson and Vineyard install first wharf. | 1-15 |
| II. EARLY SETTLERS OF BLACK POINT | |
| The Welder family - Major Cyrus W. Egery - Peter Doran - Major John Howland Wood - "Bonnie View Ranch" founded - the Aldretes and de Leons - Spanish grande rancheros - Captain Philip Dimmitt - the O'Driscolls and Doughtys - Clark brothers - Elisha Maxey - kidnaping of Jacob Kring - St. Mary's farm tracts platted and sold - Colonization of arcadian farmers - Later farm families - Settlement grows up at Black Point - Linneys and Curbelos - Given political recognition.. . . | 16-22 |
| III. THE PORT AND FIRST TOWNSPEOPLE | |
| Manner of platting town - the channel through Copano bay - Soundings by Smith and Captain Augustine - the Willett Wharf and warehouses - St. Mary's Wharf Company organized - the first settlers in the townsite - the Striblings - Joseph Smith's fine home - the Hobby family, Colonel A. M. Hobby and Judge E. E. Hobby - the Cottinghams - the Vineyards - Dr. R. A. Nott - Captain John Low - the Ellis family- | |

Chapter

Page

Early business enterprises - post office established - list of families who were at St. Mary's at time of Civil War. 22-32

IV. THE CIVIL WAR

Colonel Pryor Lea and The Aransas Road Company - Slaveholders at St. Mary's - Colonel Hobby delegate to Secession Convention - Castle of K.G.C. - Colonel L. B. Camp, unionist, comes to St. Mary's - organization of Home Guard Companies - Colonel Hobby organizes the 8th Texas Infantry Battalion - Activities of 8th Battalion - raised to regiment - defends Corpus Christi - subsequent campaigns - refugees from islands at St. Mary's - a Karankawa Indian girl - Federal fleet raids St. Mary's - Mrs. Dugat's account of raid - St. Mary's men who returned to home states for military service - John C. Campbell - Hardships of civilian population - Philip Power's account of the times - Cornelius K. Stribling quits Masonic lecturing to go to war. 33-44

V. RECONSTRUCTION

Colonel Camp emerges as powerful leader - Unionists take charge of Refugio county - election at St. Mary's in 1866 - St. Mary's holds mock presidential election 1868 - Old families seek new homes - the Hobbys leave St. Mary's - Joseph F. Smith and Youngs Coleman expatriate selves to Mexico. General Williamson's family move to St. Mary's, as does family of Dr. R. A. Nott - "Three-Legged Willie" - George Vineyard - Major Ratchford and Colonel Ratchford - Emile A. Perrenot - Captain Exum Luter - the Ezell family - Isaac Newton Mitchell - the Rev. William Baxter, who tried three denominations and finally "stuck" - Dr. Junius Nott, doctor and saint, arrives - the Beeman family - Colonel John Howard Allen founds the "Western Texas Institute". 45-56

Chapter

page

VI. THE RUSSELLS, TYPICAL PIONEER FAMILY

Charles Arden Russell comes to Texas with Taylor's army - discharge at Corpus Christi - Courtship and marriage - elected to public office - surveys the town of Helena, old seat of Karnes County, - activities with Knights of the Golden Circle - delegate to Secession Convention - military service - elected to legislature - Taylor-Sutton feud - Russells move to St. Mary's - Lyman B. Russell's account - leading lawyer at St. Mary's - represents Dr. James Hewetson and General Williamson - wins suit against Joseph F. Smith whereby latter loses his fine home at St. Mary's - originates photographic evidence - death at St. Mary's - his family - Biography of Judge Lyman B. Russell - his account of his courtship - admitted to the bar - subsequent career and death 57-70

VII. THE FIRST REFUGIO COUNTY NEWSPAPER

"The Vaquero" established at St. Mary's - proprietors establish "Transcript" at Rockport - Geraldo A. Beeman's account of removal to St. Mary's and founding of "Vaquero" - Emile A. Perrenot, mentioned. . . . 71-75

VIII. THE PHANTOM COUNTY SEAT

Smith envisions county seat for St. Mary's - dilapidated condition of town of Refugio in 1869 - the founding of Rockport - St. Mary's men help promote St. Mary's rival - Constitutional Convention changes county seat to St. Mary's - petitions to Twelfth Legislature favoring St. Mary's, Rockport and Copano - County seat removed to Rockport - division of Refugio county and creation of Aransas - St. Mary's loses county seat - Loses many citizens to Rockport. . . . 76-84

Chapter

page

IX. THE GOLDEN AGE

Lyman B. Russell describes period 1868-1875 as Golden Age of St. Mary's - description of town during that period - Major Wood's new mansion built - Viggo Kohler - Mrs. Burmeister's description of St. Mary's - Linneys, Welders, Driscolls, birthplace of Clara Driscoll - Dixon's "Dutch" windmill - Ratchfords - McCampbells - "Squire" Mapes - Ellis and Neel hotels - the gambling house and notorious habitues - description of wharves and warehouses - the telegraph office - old vessels and sea-captains - the schooner "Frances" - the wagon masters and cattle drivers - principal merchants, business and professional men - school-teachers - religious denominations - mail service and postmasters - mail carriers overland 85-99

X. THE END OF ST. MARY'S

Reasons for decline of St. Mary's - the storm of 1869 - Mrs. Burmeister's account. New business men - storm of 1875, at St. Mary's and Indianola - Mrs. Burmeister's account - losses and gains in commerce - the annual tournament - Judge Rea's visit in 1876 - horse racing - moonlight dances on decks of schooners - oyster bakes - the gambling house - Rockport's railroad projects - the building of S.A. & A.P. R.R. to Beeville - extension to Rockport - Projected branch to St. Mary's - Refugio County's first railroad - the storm of 1886, which destroyed Indianola and St. Mary's. Mrs. Burmeister's account - Exodus of population - last families to remain - St. Mary's in 1890 - The town in 1901 - The remains in 1942 - The Brightman "boys" last survivors 99-112

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 113 |
| APPENDIX | 118 |

THE OLD TOWN OF SAINT MARY'S ON COPANO BAY AND SOME
INTERESTING PEOPLE WHO ONCE LIVED THERE

CHAPTER I

EARLY LAND GRANTS

Introduction

The town of St. Mary's, - once the metropolis and one time titular county seat of Refugio County - is now but a memory. Of the many families which populated it in the heyday of its glory, only one remains, - the Brightmans, who live in what was once the proud Neel Hotel, and is now one of the last remaining buildings of the old town. The old town was situated on the northwestern shore of Copano Bay, which was from colonial times considered to be part of Aransas Bay, hence the name St. Mary's of Aransas.

The site of the town is a high bluff, equal in elevation to that at El Copano some eight miles northeasterly up the bay shore. Across the bay, some nine miles away, can be discerned Live Oak Point, where Colonel James Power lived and died. Sighting across Live Oak peninsula the Moorish turrets of the court house at Rockport can be discerned on a clear day. Southeast down the bay, two miles from the site of St. Mary's, is the modern village of Bayside, clustered about the imposing building which in the 1870's was the hospitable home of Major John Howland Wood.

The site of St. Mary's is in the heart of the Karankawa and Copano Indian country. Wedded to the sea as were these aborigines, the great shell reefs at Powers Point and in the Aransas river behind Black Point were among their favorite rendezvous, and the spade of the archaeologist constantly upturns relics and remains of these vanished races. The last survivor of the fierce Karankawa tribe to remain in Texas lived and died at old St. Mary's.¹

1 Power, Philip, Memoirs MSS
 Huson, Hobart, St. Mary's of Aransas MSS
 Huson, Hobart, El Copano, Refugio Timely Remarks, Refugio Timely Remarks, Refugio, Texas, 1935, pp. 3-5.

These Indians were quite in evidence during the early years of the Texan Republic, and during the period the first surveys of the St. Mary's townsite were being made, as appears from accounts of citizens then residing on Live Oak peninsular, just across the bay. Intriguing as the subject of these Indians may be, fidelity to the primary subject compels the foregoing of any detailed treatment thereof in this thesis. Fortunately, there has recently appeared a splendid and authoritative history dealing largely with these tribes written by the Very Reverend Father William H. Oberste.²

2 Oberste, William H., History of the Mission of Refugio, Refugio Timely Remarks, Refugio, Texas, 1942
 Willis Roberts to M. B. Lamar, March 3, 1838, Lamar Papers, Vol. 2, p. 41, J. C. Baldwin & Sons, Austin, Texas, 1922

The Town of St. Mary's was located on one of the twenty-two leagues of land privately purchased (eleven leagues each) by Colonel James Power and his partner, Dr. James Hewetson, from the State of Coahuila and Texas in 1829, the grants being actually issued in 1834.³

3 Grants from Coahuila and Texas to Power and Hewetson, Archives, General Land Office, Austin, Texas.

As is well known, Power and Hewetson were granted a concession by the Mexican Government, (April 21, 1830) to colonize the ten littoral leagues of Texas between the Guadalupe and Nueces rivers.⁴

4 Empresario Contract between Coahuila and Texas and Power Hewetson, dated June 11, 1826, and April 21, 1830, in Archives of General Land Office, and also recorded in Volume 45, page 637, Refugio County, Texas.

The colonization contract of these empresarios had received the consent of the Supreme Federal Executive of Mexico, as was required in cases of littoral lands, and was in all respects legal and effective. The twenty-two leagues privately purchased by the empresarios being within the bounds of their colonial concession, Power and Hewetson did not deem it necessary to obtain special Federal Executive consent to their purchase. This was held by the Supreme Court of Texas to be an error, and a most ruinous one so far as Colonel Power was concerned, as we shall presently see.

Power and Hewetson had judiciously located their privately purchased lands in advance of issuance of grants to their colonists, and the locations embraced the shorelines of Aransas and Copano bays, as well as the whole of the islands of St. Joseph and Matagorda, so that they included every site available for ports in Western Mexican Texas. Within these leagues were the sites of St. Mary's, Black Point, El Copano, Lamar, Aransas City, Port Preston, Rockport, Port Aransas and Saluria.

However, Power, who had acquired the interest of Hewetson, was fated never to reap the fruits of his foresight and opportunity. His Nemesis, and that of the Irish colonists in general, was Joseph F. Smith, a lawyer, soldier, promoter and dreamer, a strange man whose name is still detested by the descendants of the Irish colonists. Smith was a nephew of provisional governor Henry Smith, and had in Texas a numerous and influential family connection, all of which he skillfully used in furtherance of his business ventures.

Joseph F. Smith owned in his own right a number of unlocated land certificates, and the members of his family owned many others, which they entrusted to him to locate. Besides those belonging to himself and family, Smith had a contract with Tirzah Ann Williamson, wife of General Thomas Taylor Williamson, of Shreveport, Louisiana, to locate for her eighty certificates for 640 acres each. The Williamson certificates were part of those issued by the Republic of Texas in compromise of the "First Texian Loan",

floated during the revolution. It would seem that Smith and the Williamsons became acquainted when all of them lived in Washington, Arkansas Territory, several years before. It seems a strange circumstance that Smith should have conceived the idea of locating these certificates upon the ground already covered by the Power and Hewetson grants, referred to, in view of the fact that Colonel Power and Governor Smith had been firm personal and political friends during the dark days of the revolution, and the further fact that Colonel George W. Fulton, son-in-law of Governor Smith, was at the time associated with Colonel Power and Colonel Henry L. Kinney in the promotion of the townsite of Aransas City on one of the very leagues which Joseph F. Smith had in mind.

It would seem, however, that Power and Governor Smith had had some business dealings in 1837, 1838 and 1839, in which Smith had given Power his promissory notes in a considerable amount. These notes were never paid and Power later sued Smith. As revealed in several parts of our history,⁵ Smith was contentious and vindictive, as well as ruthless, in his methods. He no doubt became embittered with Power in the note transaction, which probably produced the inspiration and motive for his nephew's subsequent harsh conduct towards Power.

5 Power v. Smith, 14 Texas, 4

Howsoever, the idea occurred to Smith that because the special consent of the Mexican Federal Executive had not been obtained thereto, the privately purchased grants were void. The land covered by these grants was among the choicest and best located in the Republic; hence the game was well worth the candle.

Although an able lawyer himself, Smith surrounded himself with a galaxy of legal luminaries, including Abner Lipscomb, Alexander H. Phillips and Milford P. Norton. Lipscomb was shortly elevated to the Supreme Court. The reported cases show that he had to sue Smith for his earned fee.⁶

6 Smith v. Lipscomb, 13 Texas 532

Norton, who was then a law partner of Senator Phillips, went to Black Point in the winter of 1839, to look after Smith's interests. He was accompanied by his beautiful and talented wife, who kept a diary during their lonely sojourn of several months at that place.

7 Norton, Milford P., Papers, University of Texas Library
Huson, Hobart, St. Mary's of Aransas MSS.
Huson, Hobart, District Judges of Refugio County, Refugio
Timely Remarks, 1941, p. 69 (Biography)

In the spring of 1839, Willard Richardson, then deputy district surveyor, and later the renowned editor of the "Galveston News", commenced surveying locations for Smith in the area abutt-

ing the northwesterly shore of Copano (then called Aransas) bay. Among those surveyed that year were the Joseph F. Smith, W. W. Smith, Henry Smith and Elisha Maxey surveys, as well as numerous Williamson surveys. These were located across not only the Power and Hewetson grants but the Jesusa de Leon, Juan Pobedando, and Tomas Galan colonial grants as well. The surveys being completed, Smith filed the field notes together with his certificates in the General Land Office and demanded the issuance of patents. Then began a series of litigation which lasted for about fifteen years.

The first effort to establish a port town at Black Point, so far as there is any record, was in the Fall of 1840. On September 19th of that year, Smith entered into a contract with Joseph F. Armstrong, (the latter being represented by Willard Richardson, the surveyor). By its terms, Smith agreed to convey to Armstrong a fourth interest in 2,000 acres of land at Black Point, which had been surveyed by Richardson by virtue of land-scrip issued to Thomas Green, of Richmond, Virginia, (First Texian Loan) and for which patents were not yet issued. It was agreed that in case Smith failed to obtain patents, he should reimburse Armstrong for all improvements made by him under the contract.⁸

⁸ Refugio County Deed Records, Vol. E, p. 124, Contract between Joseph F. Smith and Joseph F. Armstrong, dated September 19, 1840.

Shortly thereafter Armstrong assigned an interest in his share to Benjamin F. Neal, then chief justice of Refugio County. Neal, incidently, is credited with having started Richardson on the latter's brilliant career as a journalist. Neal owned an interest in the Galveston "News", which he subsequently sold to Richardson.⁹

⁹ Huson, Hobart, Saint Mary's of Aransas, Refugio Timely Remarks, issues of March, 1937.

Galveston News, Centennial Edition, April 11, 1942

Huson, Hobart, District Judges of Refugio County, Refugio Timely Remarks, 1941, p. 81

What progress, if any, was made towards establishing the town is unknown. The western frontier was then in a state of turmoil and lawlessness. The Mexican Federalists had abandoned the field and raids across the Nueces by Mexican bands were frequent. The town of Refugio was sacked September 1, 1841, and some of its citizens murdered. The county officers moved to the Carlos ranch on the north side of the San Antonio River and transacted public business from that place. Then came the Vasquez invasion of March, 1842, and the Battle of the Nueces, in July of the same year. Smith and Neal were members of Cameron and Baker's ranger company and were in the saddle a great deal of the time, and fought in the battle of the Nueces.

¹⁰ Refugio Timely Remarks, Centennial Edition, December 14, 1934, p. 11.

Power, Philip, Memoirs, MSS.

Brown, John Henry, History of Texas, Vol. 2, pp. 215-218

In September, 1842, came news of General Woll's invasion of Texas, and Smith went to San Antonio with Cameron and Baker's company, which included Israil Canfield, Jr., the district clerk. Baker was sheriff of the county. These men went with Somervell to the Rio Grande and there left with the Mier expedition, all being captured at Mier. Smith remained in Perote prison until his release on September 16, 1844.¹¹

¹¹ Brown, John Henry, History of Texas, Vol. 2, p. 224
 Wade, Houston, Notes and Fragments of the Mier Expedition, Lagrange Journal, 1936, Vol. 1, p. 133.

While Smith languished in the dungeon of Perote the Black Point townsite also languished. He returned to Texas the latter part of 1844, and picked up where he had left off. Neal and Armstrong appear to have had no further connection with the project. After annexation Neal moved to Corpus Christi, where he became successively, legislator, first mayor, and district judge. What became of Armstrong is not known.

Soon after Smith's return to Texas, Colonel Power began to press for payment of the notes of Smith, which he held. In 1845, Power sued Smith in the district court of Brazoria County. Smith defeated the action by a plea of limitation.

On August 7, 1845, Smith entered into two contracts with the Williamsons. The first adjusted accounts with Mrs. Williamson relative to locations which Smith had had made for her. In

consideration of her agreeing to pay the expenses of obtaining patents to the eighty locations, Smith assigned to her twenty-nine located certificates covering lands "on the northwest shore of the bay of Aransas and between the Mission and Aransas rivers" and twenty-two "located on the island of Mustang" and "containing by estimation, 18,560 acres of land". The balance of the located certificates were retained by Smith for his services in making the locations of all certificates.¹²

12 Contract between Joseph F. Smith and Tirzah Ann Williamson and husband, dated August 7, 1845, recorded in Vol. K, page 167, Refugio County Deed Records. See also Bond dated April 13, 1854, recorded Vol. F, pp. 41-42, same records.

The second contract provided that the contracting parties should "pool their several interests in 2,460 acres of land at Black Point, and should bear equally the expense of establishing a town at Black Point on the survey owned by Smith, the town to be called "Aransas".¹³

13 Contract between Joseph F. Smith and Tirzah Ann Williamson and husband dated August 7, 1845, recorded in Volume K, page 170, Refugio County Deed Records.

The two contracts, although dated in 1845, were not filed for record until many years later, and meanwhile Smith appears to have ignored their existence for several years.

The Ninth and last Congress of the Republic of Texas, inspired no doubt by Smith enacted a law providing that "all persons owning lands in the counties of Refugio and San Patricio, by titles from the Mexican government, or government of Coahuila and Texas, the lines of which have not been correctly and permanently marked and designated, shall, within two years from the passage of this act, cause the same to be resurveyed, at their own expense, by the county surveyor of the county in which said land is situated, and shall cause permanent corners to be affixed to said surveys; provided, that nothing herein authorized to be done shall validate titles not otherwise valid." The act became effective February 1, 1845.¹⁴

14 Acts 9th Congress, 1845, pp. 77-78

This and other legislation calculated to unseat titles in the two counties aroused great indignation and apprehension on part of the original colonists thereof. Between 1847 and 1854 a number of "indignation meetings" were held at Refugio and San Patricio, and memorials were prepared and presented to the legislature, but to no avail.¹⁵

15 Proceedings of Meeting of Citizens of Refugio and San Patricio Counties held at Refugio October 10, 1853, with Petition to Legislature and Reply of Joseph F. Smith thereto, Archives, State Library, Austin.

By the year 1857 the litigation with Colonel Power came to an end, the Supreme Court holding Power's privately purchased grants to be void, thereby creating vacancies subject to location, and the Commissioner of the General Land Office issued patents under the Smith and Williamson certificates, as well as to others who had made like locations over the Power lands.¹⁶

16 Smith v. Power, 2 Texas, 57
 Egery v. Power, 5 Texas, 500
 Smith v. Power, 14 Texas, 146
 Smith v. Power, 23 Texas, 29
 Teague v. Egery, 65 U.S. 264, 16 L.Ed. 655
 Foote v. Egery, 65 U.S. 267, 16 L.Ed. 656. (This was Henry S. Foote, historian of Texas)

Thus was Colonel Power stripped of the fruits of his foresight and opportunity.

About this time the United States government had had a survey made of the Texas coast for the purpose of discovering the nearest deep water port to San Antonio. This survey was made by Captain Randolph B. Marcy, of the United States Army, assisted by Major Robert S. Neighbors, of the Texas Rangers. Marcy, who eventually became a general, had made a survey of the Red River and other Texas streams. His report declared that the site of St. Mary's was the best port in western Texas nearest not only to San Antonio but to Chihuahua, Mexico, as well.¹⁷

17 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections MSS

With his titles now secure, and having this favorable recommendation from an eminent military man, Smith saw an opportunity to make his projected town the principal port for the army establishment at San Antonio. At that time James Vance was contractor to the army stationed at Bexar; in fact, the headquarters of the department were located in the "Vance House" on Houston street. (This was long before the establishment of Fort Sam Houston on Government Hill). On February 10, 1857, Smith made a contract of partnership with Vance, wherein they "mutually agreed to build up a Town to be called the Town of Aransas * * * on the northwestern shore of the Bay of Aransas", (by which name Copano bay was then still called). Vance was to have a quarter interest in 1016.75 acres, including the site of the town and "promised to use his influence to make said Town a shipping port so far as his influence may extend for the upper section of the country". Later the same year a similar contract, also for a quarter interest, was made by Smith with A. C. Meyers, of New York City, who was also influential in army circles.¹⁸

¹⁸ Contract between Joseph F. Smith and James Vance, dated February 10, 1857, and recorded in Volume F, pages 496-497, Refugio County Deed Records.

Contract between Joseph F. Smith and A. C. Meyers, dated October 31, 1857 and recorded in Volume F, page 498, Refugio County Deed Records.

Nought appears to have resulted from these contracts, and in 1858, we find Smith reverting to his original contract of 1845 with the Williamsons. In the meantime, however, Smith had laid out a townsite, not at Black Point as he had agreed with the Williamsons, but at a site about two miles further up the bay, which townsite he had named "St. Mary's of Aransas". The town had been laid out, as Smith believed, entirely on the Elisha Maxey survey, which he owned, but due to misplacing of a decimal point actually extended on one of the T. T. Williamson surveys, owned by Mrs. Williamson. The error was not discovered until many years later - to Smith's sorrow (for once).

General Williamson was induced to take a more active interest in the project than he had evidenced theretofore. In 1857 Williamson agreed to build a wharf and warehouse "in front of the Town of Aransas" and on September 15th of that year Smith deeded him the land on which the wharf head was being laid; and on March 10, 1857, contracted that Williamson should have a fourth interest in 1016 acres, including the site of said town. Williamson agreed to pay Smith \$10,000 out of the first money coming to his share from the sale of town lots. The contract provided, "That the said parties to this contract agree to build up a town called St. Mary's of Aransas in said state and county of Refugio on the northwestern shore of the Bay of Aransas and between the mouths of the Aransas and Mission rivers." 19

19 Deed from Joseph F. Smith to T. T. Williamson, dated September 15, 1857, recorded in Volume F, pp. 234-235, Refugio County Deed Records.

Contract between Joseph F. Smith and T. T. Williamson dated March 10, 1858, and recorded in Volume F, pages 227-228, Refugio County Deed Records.

The wharf and warehouse were completed by Williamson during the first part of 1858. On March 22d Williamson sold a half interest in the wharfage property to John W. Vineyard, the founder of Ingleside, and who thereafter became active in the promotion of the town of St. Mary's.²⁰

20 Deed from T. T. Williamson to J. W. Vineyard, dated March 22, 1858, and recorded in Volume F, pp. 288-289, Refugio County Deed Records.

Thus, at last St. Mary's, with three live-wire promoters was finally on her way to success.

CHAPTER II

EARLY SETTLERS OF BLACK POINT

While Copano bay was undoubtedly visited by Spanish navigator explorers, the first known roundings of the bay were made by Captain Monroe, of the schooner "Amos Wright", in 1833, when he landed the Beale and Grant colony at El Copano.¹

¹ Yoakum, Henderson, History of Texas, Redfield, New York, 1856, vol. 1, page 317
Kennedy, William, History of Texas, vol. 21, page 57, and Map of Aransas bay.

Among the Beale and Grant colonists were Francis Welder, his wife and sons, John and Thomas. After the abandonment of Dolores, they went to Matamoras, where Mrs. Welder died. In May, 1836, the father and sons landed at Black Point, and after independence was won, obtained headrights in Refugio county. For a time they lived on Live Oak Peninsular, neighbors to Colonel Power, whose daughter, Dolores, John Welder married. Francis Welder died, and the sons and their families moved to Black Point.²

² Huson, Hobart, Saint Mary's of Aransas MSS

Another early settler near Black Point was Major Cyrus W. Egery, a Texian veteran, who established in 1837 a ranch on the island between Black Point and Live Oak Peninsular, now known as Egery's Island. About 1851 Egery bought 200 acres on

Black Point and built a home there. Subsequently he moved into the town of St. Mary's where he died. Egery was a prominent man of Refugio county, participating in many Indian and border fights, and being at one time chief justice of the county.³

³ Huson, Hobart, Directory of Officials of Refugio County, pages B, 2, 6, 7, 11, 16
 Russell, Lyman B., Memoirs MSS
 Burmeister, Sallie J., Recollections MSS

Who Peter Doran was, or where he came from, or where he went, is unknown, but he, perhaps, was the first white actual settler of Black Point itself. He remained there until 1849 when he sold his 14 acre tract to Major John Howland Wood, who moved upon it that year, and continued to reside upon it until his death. Major Wood came to Texas in 1836 with Morehouse's New York battalion. After San Jacinto he remained in the regular army of the Republic, and was, for several years, stationed at Victoria. There he became interested in the cattle business and resigned his commission to devote his full time to it. His purchase from Doran was the beginning of the famous "Bonnie View Ranch" which extended eighteen miles inland from Copano bay, and is immortalized in Dr. J. Frank Dobie's "A Vaquero of the Brush Country".⁴

⁴ Daniell, L. E., Personnel of the State Government, etc. Maverick Printing Co., San Antonio, Texas, 1892, pages 629-641
 Dobie, J. Frank, A Vaquero of the Brush Country, Southwest Press, Dallas, 1929, pages 12, et seq.

The Bonnie View ranch almost surrounded the town of St. Mary's in later years, and Dr. Dobie's "Vaquero" recollects having driven cattle to the old town for shipment by water.

In the hinterland at no great distance from the bay were the rancheros of some old Spanish grandee families, dating from the beginning of the Nineteenth Century. At the San Patricio crossing of the Aransas river was the ranch of Don Jose Miguel Aldrete, which had been founded in 1808 by Don Martin de Leon, the father-in-law of Don Jose.⁵

⁵ Victoria Advocate, Centennial Edition, September 28, 1934, Volume 88, No. 12, page 10

The Aldretes were most prominent and influential in public affairs. Jose Miguel had been alcalde of Goliad, and one of the Commissioners to the Power and Hewetson Colony, and one of the first justices of Refugio County. His son Trinidad was a captain in the Texian army, and a redoubtable Indian fighter. Another son, Rafael, was a captain in the Confederate army, and a prominent citizen of his time.

⁶ Huson, Hobart, Saint Mary's of Aransas, Refugio Timely Remarks, March, 1937

In addition to five and one quarter leagues of land originally granted to the Aldrete family, it also owned the league

grant to Jesusa de Leon, a daughter of the empresario, and sister-in-law of Don Jose Miguel. This was one of the old grants which Smith had attempted to cover with his own certificates, but in this instance without success.

The Castillos, Cobians, and Pobedandos, also had ranches in the vicinity.

In about 1840 Captain Philip Dimmit bought a small ranch from his friends the Aldretes, and settled on it. This ranchita was located on the Aransas river, and was Dimmit's home at the time of his capture near the present town of Calallen, July 4, 1841. During the time Dimmit lived in Refugio County, he was one of the justices of the county.⁷

⁷ Chabot, Frederick Charles, The Perote Prisoners, The Naylor Company, San Antonio, 1934, pages 41,142.
Huson, Hobart, Directory of Officials of Refugio County, A,B,D.

Among the earliest ranchers in this area was Daniel O'Driscoll, a Power colonist, sergeant at San Jacinto, public official, and ancestor of Clara and Robert Driscoll and Birdie Driscoll Rooke, Robert Driscoll, Sr., and Jeremiah O. Driscoll, sons of the old soldier, and Captain Daniel C. Doughty, are prominently mentioned in "A Vaquero of the Brush Country."⁸

⁸ Huson, Hobart, Iron Men, (privately published) 1940, p.57
Huson, Hobart, Directory of Officials of Refugio County, pp. 2, 3, 4.
Huson, Hobart, Saint Mary's of Aransas, Refugio Timely Remarks, March, April, May, 1937

The Clark brothers, Henry, John and William, settled at Black Point in the 1840s, and engaged in the cattle business. All of them saw service in the revolution and in the continuous border wars. Their sister, Nancy, was the wife of Major John H. Wood. Henry Clark became prominent in public affairs of the county.

Elisha Maxey, a wounded Texan veteran, on whose grant the Town of St. Mary's was built, was living at Black Point in 1845.

Jacob Kring, ancestor of the family of that name prominent in civic circles in South Texas, was an orphaned boy, reared by the Welder family. His capture at Black Point by Indians, and his rescue by a posse led by Major Wood is interestingly told in the biography of the latter contained in Daniell's Personnel of the Texas State Government, which has been hitherto referred to.

At or before the time Smith laid out the Town of St. Mary's he caused a subdivision to be made of ten acre farm tracts some distance to the west and northwest of the townsite. In making this survey an arroyo was encountered which had no name on established maps. Smith humorously named it Quo Warranto bayou, by which name it is still known.

These farm tracts were settled in advance of the settlement of the town. The farmers arrived between 1850 and 1855, while

no appreciable number of townsmen arrived until 1857. Among the earliest settlers of the farm tracts were the following families: John Addison Barber, Benjamin Barber, Joshua Barber, Basil Crow Brashier, William Brightman, John Chambliss, David Corsant, Theodore Monroe Dorsett, William J. Dorsett, Joseph L. Dugat, Peter Dugat, August A. Dunn, Thomas B. Kimball, Charles Frederick Leisering, James R. McCarthy, Benjamin Maley, George W. Maley, John Martin, John T. Maton, Charles Smith, Joseph Toups, Sevennes Toups, and Captain William T. Townsend.

Arriving about the same time were John and Henry Linney, who settled on Black Point at the shell reef of the Aransas river, and Pedro N. Curbelo, father-in-law to John Linney, who established a ranch a few miles interior.

Many of these families, Brashier, Corsant, Curbelo, Dugat, Linney, Maley, Maton and Toups, were originally colonial Louisianians, and their forebearers had fought in the American revolution in the Spanish army. Most of these families had moved to Liberty municipality in Texas prior to 1835. The Barbers and Dorsetts also lived in that municipality, Barber's Hill being named for this Barber family. Practically all the heads of these Liberty countians who came to Refugio County had served in the Texas revolution, some with distinction. The Maleys were connected with the notable Kokernot family.

It is very likely that these Louisiana rooted families were influenced by General Williamson to migrate to Refugio

County. The Dugats, however, were in Refugio County as early as 1850.

Later settlers of farm tracts included: Joseph A. Lomore, William Green Kelly, James Peeks, Augustus Peeks, Edwin Peets, Elias Rice, William G. Roark, David M. Rupe, J. A. Seward, and Colonel L. B. Camp.

The descendants of many of these pioneer settlers still live in Refugio County.⁹

⁹ Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections MSS
Huson, Hobart, Saint Mary's of Aransas, Refugio Timely
Remarks, April, May, June, 1937

By 1851 a scattered settlement had grown up on the peninsular. On February 17, 1852, Black Point was created an election precinct, of which Major Egery was appointed presiding officer. The polling place remained at Black Point until 1857 when it was removed to St. Mary's. A public school was established at Black Point in 1855, with Egery as presiding trustee. This school was later moved to St. Mary's.¹⁰

¹⁰ Minutes Commissioners' Court, Refugio County, Vol. 1
pp. 73, 98

In 1851, Major John H. Wood was elected justice or commissioner for the St. Mary's precinct, which office he held for about forty years.

CHAPTER III

THE PORT AND FIRST TOWNSPEOPLE

The plat of the Town of St. Mary's, dated August 1, 1857, shows the townsite to have contained ninety-one blocks, each 400 feet square, arranged in seven tiers of thirteen blocks each, the first thirteen being separated from the bay by a wide beach below the bluff, designated on the map as "The Strand". The streets paralleling the bay were, in order, Strand, First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Streets. At right angle to the bay extending the full depth of the town, and beginning between Blocks Seven and Eight was Center Street.

At the foot of Center Street, and below the bluff, were the wharf and warehouses, built by General Williamson in 1857. The wharf extended a distance of some 1200 feet to the deep channel, which wound serpent-like through the bay, making a bulge in front of El Copano, then twisting through the comb-like reefs, past Live Oak Point and Lamar into Aransas bay proper, and through that bay over "the bar" into gulf waters. This channel was navigable to ocean going vessels, but the "bar" was extremely dangerous to cross, which fact eventually spelled the doom of St. Mary's as a port.

The Aransas bar was the bane of shipping from earliest times, and the maritime history of the bay is filled with tales of disastrous shipwrecks at that place. Power's colony was wrecked there.¹

1 Linn, John J., Reminiscences of Fifty Years in Texas, D. & J. Sadler & Co., New York, 1883, pp. 30-32.

Huson, Hobart, El Copano, Ancient Port of Bexar and La Bahia, Timely Remarks, Refugio, 1935, pp. 6, 15, 30.

Huson, Hobart, Saint Mary's of Aransas, MSS.

Russell, Lyman Brightman, Reminiscences, MSS.

Smith had the advantage of Captain Monroe's soundings and Captain Marcy's explorations, but he caused further soundings to be made. Captain Frederick Augustine and his boat the "Waterloo" were employed to mark the channel. As part compensation Smith deeded the old sea dog some town lots in St. Mary's, the deed reciting that "Augustine furnished the boat 'Waterloo' and assisted me to sound out the channel of the Bay of Aransas to the town of Saint Mary's of Aransas".²

2 Deed from Joseph F. Smith to Frederick Augustine, dated August 7, 1858, recorded in Refugio County Deed Records.

Judge Lyman B. Russell says of Captain Augustine: "He was a bar and bay pilot. The first time I knew him (in 1868) he piloted an ocean schooner, the 'Captain Chesley' over the bar and to Saint Mary's loaded with Florida long leaf lumber. He had lost a leg sometime in life and seemed to be a typical one-legged tar. In later life he quit piloting and purchased a

cattle ranch in Duval County, near San Diego".³

3 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Reminiscences MSS
 Johnson, Louis Henry, Recollections, 1937 MSS
 Huson, Hobart, Saint Mary's of Aransas, Timely Remarks,
 Refugio, Texas, April - May, 1937.

Until he retired from the sea, Augustine was a licensed pilot with headquarters at St. Mary's.

In 1860 another wharf was projected at St. Mary's. On June 30, 1860, Smith made a deed to Gilbert Bee Willett to a wharf site 30 feet north of the Williamson-Vineyard warehouse, on consideration "that Gilbert Bee Willett * * * has promised me to build a warehouse in or near the Town of St. Mary's suitable for doing a forwarding and commission business and shall cause it to be done within twelve months from this date".⁴

4 Deed from Joseph F. Smith to Gilbert Bee Willett, dated June 30, 1860, recorded Volume F, page 595, Refugio County Deed Records.

This warehouse appears to have been built, but due perhaps to the Civil War which intervened, the second wharf was not completed.

Williamson and Vineyard conducted the wharf business until after the Civil War. On October 1, 1867, they executed a deed

to Charles F. Bailey, as Trustee for the Saint Mary's Wharf Company, pending its incorporation.⁵

5 Deed from T. T. Williamson and J. W. Vineyard to Charles F. Bailey, Trustee, dated October 1, 1867, recorded in Volume G, page 368, Refugio County Deed Records.

The incorporation seems not to have been completed, but the Saint Mary's Wharf Company conducted as a limited partnership or stock company. Among the stockholders were Williamson, John H. Wood, Trinidad Aldrete. The control eventually passed into the Cottingham family, and after they left St. Mary's, the properties came into the hands of Major Wood and some of his sons.

A third wharf was projected further down the bay. On June 23, 1858, Smith made a deal with Vineyard whereby the latter was to build a wharf and warehouse in front of a tract of 262.41 acres immediately adjoining the town on the southwest. Old time citizens say that they do not remember this wharf as having been built.⁶

6 Contract between Joseph F. Smith and John W. Vineyard, dated June 23, 1858, recorded in Volume F, page 127, Refugio County Deed Records.

The Williamson wharf, with its two warehouses (one of which may have been Willett's) and the palisaded stock pens

on Block Seven, became the heart of all business enterprise in the town, which in a few years became the leading lumber market for west Texas. From all accounts, as we shall later see, the wharf was well equipped and efficiently conducted until its destruction by the great storms.

Among the first settlers of the town of St. Mary's were Samuel S. Mapes, Thomas S. Tatum, Cornelius and Benjamin Stribling, J. M. Crandall, T. P. McNeill and Dr. Rufus A. Nott, who bought a tract outside the townsite. Thomas H. Stribling, a lawyer, and brother to Cornelius and Ben, thought of hanging out his shingle in the new town, and with this in view, bought some acreage near Dr. Nott's. Thomas H. Stribling, however, remained at San Antonio where he attained distinction and wealth. A sister of the Stribling brothers was the wife of Major Lieuen M. Rogers, a powerful figure in the politics of Refugio county.

In 1857 Smith built a three story concrete house on Block Four overlooking the bay. The same year J. M. Crandall began construction of a large two story concrete building at the opposite end of town. This building was generally known as the "opera house".

From the deed records it appears that Smith was willing to donate a lot to anyone who would actually build in the new town. Among those who received deeds for such consideration

were Thomas S. Tatum, Sarah Fant, Sarah Dumphy, Henry C. Bellows, a blacksmith, Willie A. Williamson, T. P. McNeill, and George Bell "of the Army of the U.S.". Deeds were also given to the several church denominations.

Also among the first arrivals were the three Hobby brothers, Alfred M., Edwin E. and Barney, and their widowed mother. Alfred Hobby had formed a partnership with a man named Post, of New Orleans, and in 1857 Post and Hobby built a two-story wooden building, facing the bay, in which they conducted a general mercantile store. Alfred M. Hobby was silver tongued orator, as well as a man of letters, and he was almost immediately elected to represent the Refugio district in the State legislature. Within a few short years he became one of the heroic figures of the county, as we shall see.

Shortly after the arrival of the Hobbys, the Cottingham family settled at St. Mary's. They included James I. Cottingham, a business man of outstanding ability, his brother, Gideon W. Cottingham, a Methodist minister, and another brother, James I. Cottingham shortly became the largest lumber importer and dealer in west Texas, and, as has been stated, the owner of the St. Mary's Wharf Company.

George W. and Samuel C. Vineyard, son of John W. Vineyard, established the mercantile firm of Vineyard & Son, prior to 1860. John W. Vineyard was an inactive partner of this firm,

which flourished until about 1873. According to Judge L. B. Russell, Vineyard & Son owned and operated its own schooner and imported lumber from Florida.

In 1857 or 1858 Dr. Rufus A. Nott built a two story wooden structure at the intersection of Center and Second streets and installed a drug store. Dr. E. F. Carpenter arrived at St. Mary's shortly after Dr. Nott. Dr. J. A. Throckmorton arrived a little later.

The original carpenter contractors of the town were John Shoemaker and Captain John F. Low. The latter had been a soldier of the Republic, and served with Hays rangers in the Mexican War. Upon organization of Nueces County he was elected treasurer. During the Civil War he was captain of a minute man company. Patrick Reynolds was a stone mason, and T. B. McNeill a brick maker. McNeill established a brick yard about 1858 at the west end of the town.

About 1858 Francis Marion Ellis and his brother Ben Ellis settled in the new town. They were related to the Egery family. As stated by Judge Lyman B. Russell, Francis M. Ellis "was one of the first business men to settle in St. Mary's and probably the last to leave". In 1858 he and Francis Loftin were partners in the mercantile business under style of Ellis & Loftin. The latter died in 1861. In 1867 Ellis engaged in the general mercantile business with R. H. Wood, son of Major John H. Wood, the firm being Ellis & Wood. Besides the mercan-

tile business, Ellis owned and operated the three-story Ellis Hotel.

The "Neel House" the other principal hotel, was established across the alley from the Ellis Hotel, about 1860. Its proprietors were Martin Neel and wife, Isabella. The Neel house is one of the few existing buildings of Old St. Mary's. It is now owned and occupied by the Brightman boys.

Other hotels and boarding houses of St. Mary's prior to the Civil War were those of James M. Doughty, Thomas J. Howard and John F. Low.

There was a "barrel house" or "quart shop" operated by George S. Sherman, one of the early settlers of the town. Judge Lyman B. Russell says of him: "I think he came from somewhere in Minnesota. He had a wife, but no children. * * * He had a sense of humor that made the old man as popular locally as Will Rogers was nationally".

✓ When the Civil War began, St. Mary's boasted a population of about 300.

A post office was established at St. Mary's, December 8, 1857. Major Egery was the first postmaster. Until the post office was established Smith provided a private mail service from Gray's ranch to the town. This he maintained for a year or two.

By the time the Civil War began, the following families were living in St. Mary's, or its suburbs:

John Adams, W. W. Arnett, Frederick Augustine, Mary Bailey, Charles F. Bailey, F. C. Bailey, George Bell, Henry C. Bellows, William Bonner, Lucinda Borick, William Bewell, L. B. Camp, William D. Campbell, John C. Campbell, Dr. E. F. Carpenter, John Cassidy, W. D. Colton, Stephan Cook, Gideon W. Cottingham, James I. Cottingham, J. C. Cottingham, W. S. Cummings, John Dart, Deweese, Doyle, Thomas Dulse, Richard Dumphy, Sylvanus Dunham, Robert Dunman, James M. Doughty, Drake, James Dunn, George W. Edgett, Cyrus W. Egery, Francis M. Ellis, John V. Ellis, Sarah E. Ellis, Dr. Theodore Fabian, Sarah Fant, Dr. M. W. C. Frazier, R. Goddard, Wm. S. Halsey, Charles Hess, John W. Hester, J. A. Hockett, Howells, Charles Hughes, A. J. Hitchings, Anna S. Hobby, Alfred M. Hobby, Barney Hobby, Edwin E. Hobby, Richard Jordan, Elisha Leonard, John Linney, Francis Loftin, John F. Low, Wm. H. Long, A. N. Lehan, James R. McCarthy, Archibald McNeill, T. B. McNeill, Mrs. C. F. W. McGrew, Samuel S. Mapes, James M. Martin, J. P. Mitchell, I. N. Mitchell, Berry Merchant, J. S. Morris, Martin Neel, Dr. R. A. Nott, Padgett, Charles M. Philips, H. F. Price, Oliver P. Reid, Patrick Reynolds, John A. Richmond, George S. Sherman, John Shoemaker, Joseph F. Smith, E. L. Snow, R. H. Spence, A. H. Stewart, Michael Stoner, Abel Stowe, Cornelius K. Stribling, Benjamin F. Stribling, Conde Sweeney, Thomas S. Tatum, Dr. J. A. Throckmorton, William T. Townsend, George W. Vineyard, Samuel C. Vineyard, J. C. Waldrop, Lyman H. Ward, Gil-

bert B. Willett, John Willett, T. T. Williamson, Morris Wilson,
Thomas H. Wilson, and John H. Wood.⁷

⁷ The foregoing is composite based on Minutes, Commissioners' Court, Refugio County;
Deed Records of Refugio County;
Scholastic Censi, Refugio County, 1856-1861
Huson, Hobart, Saint Mary's of Aransas
Rea, William L., Memoirs, MSS.
Russell, Lyman Brightman, Reminiscences, MSS

CHAPTER IV
THE CIVIL WAR

✓ Saint Mary's was firmly established and prosperous at the time the Civil War began. Her citizens were energetic and civic minded and engaged in expanding the potentialities of the port. At the time that unhappy conflict became inevitable, the promoters and business interests of the town had taken steps to make the interior accessible to the port by getting the town included in the route of the Aransas Road Company. This enterprise projected in 1852 by Colonel Pryor Lea and associates, envisaged a combination railroad and turnpike from Lamar, across Live Oak peninsular, through St. Mary's and Refugio to Goliad.

In 1856, the charter of the company was amended to permit it to improve navigation across Aransas bar and between it and Corpus Christi, and connect the improvements by road with a draw bridge across Aransas reef, at Black Point. The company had been incorporated, the right-of-way acquired, and sections of the road completed, prior to the outbreak of the war. The project remained dormant during the war and was attempted to be revived after the war, but without success.¹

¹ Articles of Incorporation, Aransas Road Company, Acts 4th Leg. approved Feb. 14, 1852; as amended by Acts 6th Leg. Deed Records, Refugio County, Volumes: G, 231, 341; H, 263; I, 126, 392; J, 271, 323, 338; M, 266, 426; Q, 150, 363.

Although there were ~~but~~ few slaves at St. Mary's (Major Wood and the Driscolls being the largest slave owners) the sentiment of the town was intensely Southern and pro-secession. The outstanding secession leader was Alfred Marmaduke Hobby, who represented the Refugio district in the state legislature and was its delegate to the Secession Convention. Colonel Hobby was a typical Southern fire-eater, an eloquent orator, an able leader, and moreover, a fighting man.²

² Huson, Hobart, Saint Mary's of Aransas, Refugio Timely Remarks, Refugio, 1937.

Dixon, Sam Houston, Poets and Poetry of Texas, (Biography of Alfred M. Hobby)

Journal of the Secession Convention of Texas, Austin Printing Company, Austin, Texas, 1912.

The Hobby family was the soul of the State's Rights faction, and Edwin E. Hobby was secretary of the St. Mary's Castle of the Knights of the Golden Circle. Among the Russell papers is a letter dated April 14, 1861, written in the cipher of the order by Edwin Hobby, from St. Mary's, to C. A. Russell, at Helena.³

³ Wharton, Clarence, Texas Under Many Flags, Vol. 2, pp. 78, et seq.

Bridges, C. A., The Knights of the Golden Circle, S.W. Hist. Quart. Vol. 44, p. 287; also note pp. 508-509

Hobby, Edwin, to C. A. Russell, Letter dated April 14, 1861, with L. B. Russell papers.

Although Texas was preponderately for Secession, a respectable number of her citizens were staunch Unionists. Among these was Colonel Little Berry Camp, who represented the Atascosa district in the last legislature before the state seceded. His pro-union speeches and addresses put him out of harmony with his constituents and upon expiration of his term he and his numerous family moved to St. Mary's where they lived quietly and unmolested throughout the war. In fact, despite his known sentiments, the colonel became popular with his new neighbors.⁴

⁴ Wharton, Clarence, Texas Under Many Flags, American Hist. Soc. 1930, Vol. 2, pp. 81 et seq.
 Camp, L. B., Papers, MSS.
 Elliott, Clarence, Leather Standard Printing Co.
 1938, pp. 41-96
Journal of the Secession Convention of Texas, Austin Printing Company, 1912

In anticipation of war several military companies were organized in Refugio County in the Spring of 1861. These included the "Refugio Guards" and "Doughty's Spy Company" at Refugio, Upton's Home Guard Company at Lamar, Peter Fagan's Minutemen on the San Antonio River, and three companies at St. Mary's. These were Captain William T. Townsend's "Home Guards", of which A. M. and E. E. Hobby were privates, Captain Rafael Aldrete's "Jeff Davis Home Guards", comprised mostly of Mexicans, and Captain John Low's "Rough and Ready Home Guard".⁵

5 Huson, Hobart, Saint Mary's of Aransas, Refugio Timely Remarks, May - June, 1937.

Rosters of Refugio County Companies, Archives, State Library, Austin, Texas.

Colonel Hobby's patriotism and military ardor did not stop with enlistment for home guard service. He immediately set about the organization of a regular unit for field service, and shortly had mustered for active duty the Eighth Texas Infantry Battalion, the nucleus of which were citizens of Refugio County. This battalion was composed of four infantry companies commanded respectively by Captain Edwin E. Hobby, William E. McCampbell, R. E. Jones and Rafael Aldrete. Alfred M. Hobby was commissioned major commanding the battalions. Attached to it were Captain Benjamin F. Neal's heavy artillery battery and Captain H. Willke's light artillery battery.

The Eighth Texas Infantry Battalion immediately took the field and was assigned to guard the Texas coast between Lamar and Corpus Christi. In time the latter place became headquarters of the unit. Various other units were concentrated at Corpus Christi, and in the winter of 1862, a regiment was formed of these several units, and designated as the Eighth Texas Infantry Regiment with Alfred M. Hobby, colonel, Daniel D. Shea, lieutenant-colonel, John Ireland and John A. Vernon, majors. Besides the original 8th battalion and Garrett's

battalion, the regiment had attached Neal's battery, Ware's mounted rifle company, and Maltby's company.⁶

⁶ Rosters of 8th Texas Infantry, War Department, Washington, D.C.

Huson, Hobart, Saint Mary's of Aransas, Refugio Timely Remarks, May - June, 1937.

Colonel Hobby's regiment left a brilliant record. It guarded the coast for three years, fought innumerable skirmishes on the islands and in and along the bays and inlets, fought two battles in defense of Corpus Christi, fought at the battle of Galveston Island, and fought in the Louisiana campaign. It and its commander covered themselves with glory and were cited for valor by the Legislature.⁷

⁷ Huson, Hobart, Saint Mary's of Aransas, Refugio Timely Remarks, June - July, 1937.

Sutherland, Mary A. The Story of Corpus Christi, Rein & Sons, Houston, Texas, 1916, pp. 19-31.

Writer's Project WPA, Corpus Christi, a History and Guide, Caller-Times, Corpus Christi, 1942, pp. 99-121.

In 1862 the Federal fleet became active in the Gulf of Mexico, and began raiding the islands and coastal settlements. The inhabitants of these exposed places fled to the mainland for safety and were cared for in the various towns.⁸

⁸ Johnson, Peter A., The Two Sea-Captains Johnson, MSS pp. 5-9

Huson, Hobart, El Copano, Ancient Port of Bexar and La Bahia, Refugio Timely Remarks, 1935, pp. 41-42

A number of refugees came to St. Mary's, as did also soldiers' families who had been living in unprotected spots. Among the latter were those of Joseph E. Plummer, Jr., and Charles Frederick Pathoff, who had been living near El Copano. Plummer returned from the war unscathed and took his family back to their Copano home. Pathoff appears to have been killed in the war, or at any rate, Mrs. Pathoff was a widow shortly after the war ended, and remained at St. Mary's until her death. According to Colonel Philip Power, Mrs. Pathoff was a Karankawa girl who was left an orphan when quite young. Major Wood became her guardian and she was reared by the Power family at El Copano. Mary Amarro Pathoff left a son, Tom, who also died at St. Mary's. She and her son were the last Karankawas known to have lived in Refugio County.⁹

⁹ Power, Philip, Memoirs, MSS
 Huson, Hobart, Saint Mary's of Aransas, Refugio Timely Remarks, 1937.
 Burmeister, Sallie J., Reminiscences MSS
 Brightman, Andrew and Mort, Recollections, MSS

In 1863 Copano bay was entered by vessels of the Federal fleet. Lamar was raided and bombarded, El Copano was passed up, and a landing was made at St. Mary's. This incident is related by Mrs. Clara Lemore Dugat, who at the time was a small girl. Mrs. Dugat says:

I have a vivid recollection of the landing of the Yankees at Saint Mary's during the Civil War. It happened during the last year of the war, but the exact date I do not now remember. I know only that my father, Joseph A. Lemore, was a prisoner at the time. He had taken his boat up to Matagorda to get supplies for the soldiers' families at Saint Mary's, without knowing that the federals were in possession at Matagorda. He and Captain Warren, who went with him, were captured and my father died in prison afterwards. Captain Warren did not live at Saint Mary's.

It was about noon, or perhaps a little after noon, when two federal sailing vessels unexpectedly made their appearance in the bay in front of the town. Practically all of the men of the town were away at the war and all who were left were women, children and old or disabled men and a few wounded soldiers who were at home on furlough. We had heard of federal raids all up and down the coast and, of course, expected that one day they would come to Saint Mary's, but their visit on this occasion was a surprise.

Before the people were aware of their presence the town was alive with Union soldiers. There were many of them--I do not know how many--but there were two warships full of them. They did not shell the town, but landed quietly and without resistance. The wounded soldiers went to the brush to avoid capture. Among these was Payton McNeill, whom I will mention later.

Our home at this time was in the town, on the bluff overlooking the bay. Every house in the town, including ours, was visited by a raiding party, which searched through the houses, but did so in an orderly manner, and did not harm the inhabitants. The soldiers took chickens and some provisions, but did steal much else.

The Union captain came with a party to our home. He was a courteous, pleasant gentleman. Our mother was much alarmed and appealed to the captain for protection. She told him of the captivity of our father and the fact that he was a Free Mason. The captain was also a Mason and gave strict orders to his men not to disturb us further. The party went on to other houses.

Shortly after the Yankees had landed, a horseman rode into town from the peninsular to warn the people that the federal fleet was headed for Saint Mary's. Not knowing that it had already arrived, he dashed up to the home of Dr. Carpenter and shouted: "The Yankees are coming!" At that particular moment a raiding party was searching the Carpenter home and it came out and took the horseman prisoner. They carried him away with them when they left Saint Mary's. I do not remember the name of the horseman, but he lived near Aransas Pass and had heard of the projected descent on Saint Mary's, and had hurried overland, thinking to beat them to our town.

Detachments of the invaders were detailed to destroy the warehouses, while others went out raiding into the country. Two large warehouses at the wharf were demolished by the federals. This was the only destruction which they wrought, however.

One of the raiding parties went down to Major Wood's home, at Black Point, a mile or so below Saint Mary's. The fences around the Wood place at that time were palisades, that is logs set upright in the ground and in the inclosure were some cattle moving around. This raiding party from a distance conceived the palisades to be men and soldiers and hurried back to Saint Mary's with the information that there was a large body of men coming up from Black Point to attack the federals.

At this instant, one of the federals claimed to the roof of the school house to take observations. Standing on the roof he was a good target. It so happened that Payton McNeill was hiding in the brush thicket near the school house. He had a gun and took a shot at the soldier on the roof. He was out of range, however, and the soldier was not hurt, but dropped off the building and came running to the business district, sounding the alarm.

Whether the federals feared an attack or whether they had finished their business at Saint Mary's, I do not know, but shortly afterwards, they took to their boats and left the place and never again returned. It is my recollection that the Yanks were at Saint Mary's about three or four hours, arriving a little after dinner and leaving about sun-down. It may have been that they spent the night there, but such is not my impression at this time.¹¹

11 Dugat, Clara Lemore, Recollections, MSS
 Huson, Hobart, Saint Mary's of Aransas, Refugio
 Timely Remarks, June-July, 1937.

Mrs. Dugat's brother-in-law, Charles E. Dugat, served in Colonel Hobby's regiment and was one of the party which captured Lieutenant Kitteridge of the Federal Navy, near Corpus Christi, which was one of the most noted of the regiment's exploits.

A number of St. Mary's men returned to the states of their origination for military service. Among these was General Thomas Taylor Williamson, who returned to Louisiana where he became a general staff officer. Dr. Rufus A. Nott also returned to Louisiana and became a ranking surgeon of the Confederate army, having charge of the hospitals at Vicksburg. His son, Thomas H. Nott, served in Hood's brigade.

Addison Barber, B. C. Brashear, James M. Doughty, Jeremiah O. Driscoll, Robert Driscoll, Joseph Lemore, Charles F. Leisering, Peyton McNeill, George Vineyard, Samuel C. Vineyard, were among many St. Marians who served in Texas regiments, other than the 8th Infantry regiment.

Among those who left to go to their old home states to volunteer was John C. Campbell, who with his wife, Eleanor N. (Shive) Campbell had taught the public school at St. Mary's during 1859, 1860 and 1861. This couple had been married but a few years and were very devoted to each other. When the war broke out Campbell completed his term, and took his wife back to Mississippi, to leave her with relatives while he was in the army. Campbell was killed in action. His widow remained in Mississippi until the war was over. There her son was born. After the war she returned to St. Mary's with her child and taught in the public school until her death several years later. Her son, Will, became a prominent business man of Southwest Texas.

The people of St. Mary's shared the hardships of war common to the people of the South. The Commissioners' Court of Refugio County saw to it that food and clothing were distributed among soldiers' families. Active in this work in the St. Mary's precinct were Major John H. Wood, Dr. E. F. Carpenter, Francis M. Ellis, Charles E. Dugat and James R. McCarthy. They also found time to do soldiering along the coast.¹¹

¹¹ Minutes of Commissioners' Court of Refugio County
Volume I, From May, 1862 to April 3, 1865.

With practically all of the able-bodied men in the mili-

tary service, the burden of civilian life was borne by the women and young boys. At the close of the war, Philip Power, youngest son of the Empresario, was only 16, and lived with his widowed mother at Copano. In his Memoirs he tells of living conditions during the war:-

Salt was a scarce article in the interior throughout the war, and was worth its weight in gold. It was accepted as money in exchange for most any other article that could be sold. * * * The Confederate government therefore, established salt works along the coast, where the sea water was run into pits and evaporated and the salt ground by mills. There was a large salt works at Lamar which the Federals destroyed. There was a salt works at St. Mary's. The one at Mission bay was operated by the Brightmans or by McCarthy.

I suppose we who lived on the coast fared better during the war than those who lived in the interior. We always had plenty of fish, oysters, wild game, and salt * * * As I have said, there was very little money that had any purchasing power. Confederate notes were soon worthless. Our best money was Mexican silver.

* * * *

During the war the Confederate States mails were carried from Lamar to St. Mary's by way of Copano. I don't remember who had carried the mails at first, but finally there got to be such a dearth of able-bodied men that Judge Lambert asked me to undertake the job, there being no one else. I was about 15 years old at the time, and a strong, sturdy lad. I was thrilled over the idea and the large salary that I was to get - eight dollars per month in Mexican silver, and not Confederate bills. I carried the mails for the Confederacy from that time until the end of the war.

The mails came into Copano by ship and overland from Refugio. I carried the mail sacks on my shoulders to the passes of Mission bay, where I had a skiff and rowed over to the west side, and walked down the beach to St. Mary's. Returning, I walked back to Mission Pass, rowed the skiff to the east shore and walked back to Copano. From Copano to Lamar I rode horseback

back and forth along the beach. Lyman H. Ward was postmaster at St. Mary's, and Mrs. Jane P. O'Connor was postmaster at Lamar. Judge Lambert, then James Power, Jr., was postmaster at Copano * * *¹²

¹² Power, Philip, Memoirs, MSS
Huson, Hobart, El Copano, Ancient Port of Bexar and La Bahia, Refugio Timely Remarks, Refugio, 1935, p. 42.

The Southern Confederacy had no more ardent supporter than Joseph F. Smith. Although a man of middle age, he joined the army and saw active service. As will be seen, he never surrendered when the Confederacy fell.

Another interesting character was Cornelius K. Stribling, brother to district judge Thomas H. Stribling of San Antonio. Cornelius was an active and ardent Mason, and a founder of Black Point Lodge, at St. Mary's. In 1860 he was elected Grand Lecturer of Western Masonic District of Texas. The district embraced the territory along the Gulf lying between the Brazos and Rio Grande rivers. Stribling was assiduous and energetic in discharge of his duties and his diary, which was minutely kept, shows that he was travelling constantly, visiting many lodges and towns. The last entry in the Diary is for February 24-25-26, 1862. It reads: "Lecturing. Heard the news of the fall of Fort Donelson and closed my lecturing to go to war".¹³

¹³ Stribling, Cornelius K. Diary (1860-1862) Original in possession of David B. Stribling of Eagle Nest, N.M. (This diary was printed in Texas Freemason, San Antonio, in early 1900s.)

CHAPTER V
RECONSTRUCTION

With the end of the Civil War came Reconstruction. In Refugio county the administration of public affairs passed into the hands of the military and the few Unionist citizens of the county. Colonel L. B. Camp emerged from retirement as one of the powerful political figures of the section. He became a member of the inner circle at Austin and was elected to represent the Refugio district in the Legislature. George S. Sherman replaced Lyman Ward as postmaster and was also appointed commissioner from the St. Mary's precinct (1866). Tomas Welder and other St. Mary's Unionists were prominent in public affairs.¹

¹ Huson, Hobart, Directory of Officials of Refugio County pp. 18-26.

There were not enough Union men in the county to hold all the public offices. Several offices were held by various members of the Upton family. Young Lyman B. Russell, of St. Mary's, a Democrat, was appointed hide inspector, but declined the office because he would not serve with "carpet-baggers".²

² Minutes, Commissioners' Court, Refugio County, Vol. 1, June 7, 1869.

At the election of October 12, 1866, less than thirty voted in the St. Mary's precinct, the electorate having been sadly reduced by the Reconstruction laws, which disenfranchised most of the southern white men.

Those who were permitted to vote for Joseph F. Smith, A. J. Martin, J. H. Wood, J. G. Maton, D. Talmon, S. P. Walker, H. Wadsworth, C. E. Dugat, R. L. Byrne, J. Martin, H. C. Ives, F. M. Ellis, M. Thomas, A. A. Dunn, H. Martin, C. F. Bailey, J. I. Cottingham, H. Clark, A. J. McCarty, A. Bailey, J. M. Martin, W. H. Long, M. W. C. Frazier, H. C. Tully, Williams Runnels, James Jones and William Allen.

Those voted for county officers were J. F. Smith, A. J. Martin, J. H. Wood, J. G. Maton, D. Talmon, H. Wadsworth, C. Dugat, R. L. Byrne, J. Martin, H. C. Ives, G. S. Sherman, Richard Dumphy, F. M. Ellis, M. Thomas, A. A. Dunn, H. Martin, L. B. Camp, C. F. Bailey, J. I. Cottingham, H. Clark, A. J. McCarty, A. Bailey, J. M. Martin, E. Peets, W. H. Long, H. C. Tully, F. A. Bailey, Thomas Webb and James Neel.³

³ Original Poll List of Election held in St. Mary's Precinct, at Election held October 12, 1866, in Office of County Clerk, Refugio County

Lyman B. Russell relates, "In 1868, the usual presidential election took place, but Texas had no vote. But the people of St. Mary's held an election anyway, and elected Seymour and

Blair, the Democratic nominees. I was not there but arrived December first, afterwards, and heard it spoken of with a great deal of amusement. I don't know who was the ringleader in the movement. * * * Of course, it was simply horseplay, to show their colors."⁴

4 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS

The Reconstruction period was not only political but personal in its effect upon the lives and fortunes of many hitherto substantial Southern families. In order to reconstruct their private fortunes, many families uprooted themselves from old home states and settled in new localities. Many of these fine old families moved to St. Mary's. Some few St. Mary's families moved elsewhere.

Among the latter was the Hobby family, which for a decade had occupied a prominent position in Refugio County. Colonel A. M. Hobby had remained a bachelor until the latter part of the war. After the capture of Galveston by the Confederates, in which he had a brilliant part, Colonel Hobby was stationed on the island. There he met, wooed and won, the attractive widow Menard, of the noted Texas family. After the war Colonel Hobby returned to St. Mary's and remained long enough to dispose of his holdings, then moved with his wife to other parts.

The store of Post & Hobby was sold to F. M. Ellis and Richard H. Wood, who in 1867 formed the firm of Ellis & Wood. Edwin E. Hobby and his mother moved to Polk County where the captain began the practice of law. He became a noted land lawyer and wrote "Hobby's Texas Land Law". He subsequently became judge of the Court of Appeals. He was the father of Governor William P. Hobby.⁵

5 Daniell, L. E. Personnel of the Texas State Government, etc., Maverick Printing Co., San Antonio, 1892, p. 93 (Biography of E. E. Hobby)

Speer, Ocie, Texas Jurists (portrait of E. E. Hobby)
Articles of Partnership Between F. M. Ellis and Richard H. Wood, January 21, 1867. Original owned by R. H. Wood, Esq. Refugio.

Joseph F. Smith and Youngs Coleman returned from the war as "unreconstructed rebels". Neither would take the "iron-clad oath". Just how Smith was permitted to vote in the 1866 election is not clear. The judges, knowing his belligerent character probably pursued the line of least resistance. So embittered were these two men that they decided to expatriate themselves to Mexico. This they did. Smith returned to St. Mary's on several occasions, once being in 1870 when he made his will. Coleman never did return. Both died in Mexico.⁶

6 Wharton, Clarence, Texas Under Many Flags, The American Hist. Soc., Chicago and New York, 1930, Vol. 4, p. 3-4
 Huson, Hobart, Saint Mary's of Aransas, Refugio Timely Remarks, March-April, 1937.

Although General Williamson had spent considerable of his time at St. Mary's before the war, his family had never lived there. A son, Dr. T. T. Williamson, had practiced there shortly before the war began, but had almost immediately left to join the army. Tirzah Ann Williamson, wife of the General, was of a distinguished Mississippi family, her brother, William McWillie, having been governor of that state. Five sons and two daughters of this couple lived at St. Mary's. Another son, George McWillie Williamson, remained in Louisiana, and in 1867 was elected United States Senator for that state, but was not permitted to take his seat in Congress. General and Mrs. Williamson built a cottage on the beach at the east end of town, and there both died. General Williamson was one of the promoters of the city of Shreveport, Louisiana.⁷

⁷ The Shreveport Times, (La.) Centennial Edition, June 28, 1935, First Section, p. 2, for account and photograph of General Williamson. Numerous mentions of him throughout the edition.

Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS
 Huson, Hobart, Saint Mary's of Aransas, Refugio Timely Remarks, Refugio, March - April, 1937

Dr. Rufus A. Nott also brought his family back to St. Mary's. Included was his new son-in-law, Willie Annexus Williamson, a son of the noted Texas judge, Robert M. Williamson, better known as "Three-Legged-Willie". Young Williamson

was a pharmacist and became a partner with his father-in-law in the drug business at St. Mary's, and later at Rockport. James Williamson, another son of "Three-Legged-Willie" also moved to St. Mary's.⁸

⁸ Huson, Hobart, St. Mary's of Aransas, Refugio Timely Remarks, Refugio, July-August, 1937
 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS
Letter from James Doughty Williamson (Waco, Texas)
 to Hobart Huson, dated May 17, 1937.

Dr. Thomas H. Nott, son of Dr. R. A., married Julia Robertson, a daughter of General Jerome B. Robertson, C.S.A., son of Sterling C. Robertson, empresario. Thomas H. Nott spent part of his boyhood at St. Mary's, but was away at medical school or in the army most of the time his parents lived at that place.

George Vineyard, who had been a lieutenant, returned and opened a small grocery store. A few months later Major James Wylie Ratchford, who had served with that rank on the staffs of Generals D. H. Hill, John B. Hood, and Stephen D. Lee, (which meant that he had seen plenty of action) landed at St. Mary's. He immediately formed a partnership with Vineyard. A few years later Vineyard withdrew and George Howard, another veteran, became a partner under the name of Ratchford & Howard. This firm operated one of the two largest general mercantile

stores in St. Mary's, which continued until about 1875, when Major Ratchford moved to Victoria County. In 1880, Howard became county clerk of Refugio County.

George Robinson Ratchford, bachelor uncle to Major Ratchford, arrived at St. Mary's shortly after his nephew, and opened a dry goods store. The elder Ratchford had been an officer in the Confederate army and was known as "Colonel" Ratchford.⁹

9 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections MSS
 Huson, Hobart, Saint Mary's of Aransas, MSS
 Burmeister, Sallie J., Reminiscences, MSS

Shortly after the close of the war, Emile A. Perrenot, who although in his 'teens, had seen four years service in the Confederate army, came to St. Mary's and opened a private school. Other members of his family settled at Rockport. The school was abandoned in favor of the newspaper business. Emile worked on the "Vaquero" at St. Mary's and the "Transcript" at Rockport. He came back to St. Mary's and engaged in the mercantile business a short while. In 1870 he moved back to Rockport and became a member of the mercantile firm of Baylor, Perrenot & Baylor. He married Martha Ellen Doughty, daughter of James M. Doughty. In the 1880s, he represented the Rockport district in the legislature.¹⁰

10 Daniell, L. E., Types of Successful Men in Texas
 (biography)

Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS
 Huson, Hobart, Saint Mary's of Aransas, MSS

Captain Exum Luter, who had been Confederate Collector of Revenue at Goliad during the war, and had figured in the noted "Confiscation Cases" decided by the "Semi-Colon Court", moved to St. Mary's about 1869, and died there a few years later. The captain was a prominent man of his time, having been district clerk of Refugio County, and was connected with the most influential families of the section, among which being the Atlees, Colemans and McCampbells. Lyman B. Russell relates that he was one of the young men who took turns about in "sitting up" with Captain Luter during his last illness, and was with him when he died.¹¹

11. Exum Luter v. Wm. L. Hunter, "The Sequestration Cases", 30 Texas, 688.
 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS

The Ezell family came to St. Mary's in 1866. Samuel D. Ezell was a brick contractor, and furnished the brick for the first courthouse of Grayson County. He and his oldest sons served in the Confederate army, Sam going back to his native state of Kentucky to join up. Among the battles he fought in was Shiloh. Samuel D. and his son, Robert A. were brick makers and layers at St. Mary's for about seven years. In 1873 they

removed to Refugio where both served on Town Council. From that point they operated a line of carts and wagons, hauling from St. Mary's to the interior.¹²

¹² Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS
 Huson, Hobart, Saint Mary's of Aransas, MSS
 Huson, Hobart, Directory of Officials of Refugio County, pp. 31, 39, 112, 113

Isaac Newton Mitchell, a noted lawyer of his day, came to St. Mary's with his widowed daughter, Mary E. Kay, who acquired a home in the town. Mitchell intended to practice law at St. Mary's, but does not appear to have opened an office. Mrs. Kay, who was the mother of John W. Kay, prominent cattleman, lived in St. Mary's for several years.

The Reverend William Baxter was a landmark at St. Mary's for many years. According to Mrs. Burmeister, he married more couples than any other officiant in the town. He was an Englishman and had been educated for the Anglican priesthood, but became dissatisfied and after going into two other denominations, became a minister of the Disciples of Christ, and "stuck" as Lyman Russell pithily expresses it. Baxter was a fighting parson. He came to Texas in 1828, and fought in the Texian army during the Revolution. His wife was Eleanor Yeamans, whose brothers were noted Texian soldiers, two of them having been massacred with Fannin's men. He re-

mained at St. Mary's until her decline, and moved to Bee County where he died, aged 92. His wife lived to about 100 years old.¹³

13 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS
Burmeister, Sallie J., Reminiscences, MSS

In 1868, Dr. H. J. (Junius) Nott landed at St. Mary's, having bought the drug store established by his cousin, Dr. Rufus. He remained at St. Mary's until after the decline, when he moved to Beeville, where he died. From all accounts, this old bachelor was one of the most saintly men ever to have lived in South Texas. His charities and good works were legion, and he is still remembered with affection by the old-timers. Dr. Junius had the finest library in St. Mary's and contributed many articles to the medical journals. He was also an expert chess player and for many years edited the "chess column" of a leading New Orleans newspaper.¹⁴

14 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS
Huson, Hobart, Saint Mary's of Aransas, Refugio Timely Remarks, July-August, 1937.

Geraldo Alonzo Beeman, with his bride of a few months, and her family, the Rupes, arrived at St. Mary's, in 1866. Beeman was 16 years old when the Civil War began, but he joined

the Confederate army and served the four years, seeing bloody fighting in the Louisiana campaign with the First Texas Cavalry, in which George Vineyard had also served. Beeman and Captain Charles F. Bailey, in 1867, founded the "Vaquero", the first newspaper ever published in Refugio County. In 1873, the Beeman family moved to Comanche, Texas, where, among other enterprises, Beeman founded the "Comanche Chief", a leading newspaper of that county.¹⁵

¹⁵ Beeman, Geraldo Alonzo, Fireside Talks With the Children, (an autobiography), MSS. lent by members of the Beeman family.

Russell, Lyman Brightman, Granddad's Autobiography, The Comanche Publishing Co., Comanche, Texas, 1930, pp. 16, et seq.

Russell, Lyman Brightman, Royal Line of the Beeman-Deming Family from William The Conqueror, privately printed 1931.

Colonel John Howard Allen and family came to St. Mary's in 1866 or 1867. In 1867 Colonel Allen founded the Western Texas Institute, a co-educational institution which flourished for several years, and attracted scholars from all parts of South Texas. Among them was the late W. W. (Bill) Jones, ranchman and capitalist of Corpus Christi. Colonel Allen was a graduate of West Point, and is said to have been a classmate of Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis. He graduated in 1833. He served in the army until 1836, and after being

construction engineer for the New York & Erie Railroad for two years, embarked upon a long and distinguished career as an educator. He was Collector of the Port of Oxford, Maryland, 1849-1853. The institute at St. Mary's seems to have had a hectic existence. According to Mrs. Burmeister, Colonel Allen was associated with Mrs. Case in her select boarding school for young ladies at Victoria, Texas, for several years, and also taught the public school at St. Mary's.

The daughter of Colonel Allen, Anna Elizabeth, married Jeremiah O. Driscoll, of St. Mary's.¹⁶

16 Russell, Luman Brightman, Recollections, MSS
 Burmeister, Sallie J., Reminiscences, MSS
Texas Almanac, 1867-1868, Refugio County, written by
 Judge Patrick Shelly.
 Wharton, Clarence, Texas Under Many Flags, American
 Hist. Soc., Chicago and New York, 1930, Vol. 3, p. 129,
 (Biography of Frank B. Rooke).

CHAPTER VI

THE RUSSELLS, TYPICAL PIONEER FAMILY

The Russell family was not the most important family which lived at St. Mary's, and is not singled out for such a reason, but rather because through it, the history of the old town has been preserved. Lyman Brightman Russell, his sister, Sallie J. Burmeister, and brother-in-law, Geraldo Alonzo Beeman, as well as their kinsmen, the Brightman "boys", have by their longevity, appreciation of facts and marvelously clear memories, made it possible for the past to live again, and for the reader to get a glimpse of the human interest which is too oft obscured by cold historical facts. The Russells are a representative family of the section in which they lived.

Charles Arden Russell, head of the family, was born of American parents in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, March 31, 1822. The family removed to New York state, where Charles was reared. In 1842 he enlisted in the United States army, and in August, 1845, came to Texas with General Taylor's army. He was honorably discharged at Corpus Christi, on January 2, 1846.

The young man had decided to return to New York, going by land to Galveston, thence to his destination by boat. En route he came to the old town of Goliad, and as chance would have it, the ferryman, George Claver Brightman, taking a liking to the young soldier, invited him to his home, where he was hospitably

entertained. The ferryman had been a soldier himself and was a veteran of the War of 1812, and since his migration to Texas in 1843 had been in many border fights.

The ferryman had a daughter named Emmeline. It was a case of love at first sight and the young soldier decided then and there to remain at Goliad. On February 25, 1847, the young couple were married at Goliad. The same year Russell became a candidate for the legislature from the Goliad-Refugio district. He was not elected to that office, but was elected instead to that of assessor-collector of Goliad County. He served in that capacity until 1848, when he was appointed postmaster of Goliad. In 1850 he moved to Lamar, but stayed there only a short time. He went back to Goliad and set himself up as a land surveyor.

Russell surveyed and platted the town of Helena, which two years later, in 1854, became the county seat of the newly created county of Karnes. The Russell family moved to the new county-seat and he was the first notary to be appointed in the county. He was admitted to the bar in 1855, and held several minor offices in Karnes County.

Although a northern man by birth, Russell became ardently southern in thought and action. He was a prominent member and officer of the Knights of the Golden Circle, and his daughter states that at the time of his death he had the paraphernalia of that order in a large iron chest, securely padlocked. It

was from his archives that the cipher of that mysterious organization was discovered.

Russell was delegate from Karnes County to the Secession Convention and signed the Ordinance of Secession. Thereafter he organized a company for the Confederate service and was elected its captain. In July, 1861, he drilled a battalion of cavalry which had been raised in Karnes County. His appointment as Enrolling Officer and Provost Marshal prevented his going to the front with either of his commands.

He was defeated for the legislature in 1861, but was elected in 1862. He served in this capacity to the end of the war. During recesses of the legislature he served in the army, in 1864 and 1865 being in Captain B. F. Fly's Company of General John S. (Rip) Ford's Expeditionary force.

In the Fall of 1868 Judge Russell decided to move his family to St. Mary's. The reasons and circumstances are related by Lyman B. Russell in his "Granddad's Autobiography", pages 13 to 15, as follows:

Things were getting pretty squally in Karnes County by that time. John Wesley Hardin and the Taylor connexion had begun to make a reputation for lawlessness, and Capt. John Littleton, who was sheriff of the county, decided that vigorous measures must be taken to control the situation. He and my father were strong friends, and Capt. Littleton's boys and I had grown up together. On the other hand, I had begun to take in the dances all over the county as a fiddler, and the two Taylor boys who were about grown at that time, especially Doughboy, the

elder, and I become intimate as fiddlers and dancers. We were at that time under military rule, as it was in the days of reconstruction after the civil war. Father, who saw the danger brewing, especially for me, his only son, had made arrangements during the summer to move away from the county to get me out of the evil associations. As I have already said once, I was unconscious of all this at the time. In November, father had already made arrangements with the late Lyman Brightman, my mother's brother, to come up with wagons and teams and move the household goods to old St. Mary's on the Bay in Refugio county, and had secured a house there. Just a few days before they came, Capt. Littleton proposed to my father to let me go on horseback to San Antonio, where the military headquarters and seat of government for the time was kept, and get warrants of arrest for the whole Taylor crowd. It was represented that I would not be under suspicion, and with my knowledge of the country, I could go one road and come back another, and that there would be virtually no danger in the trip whatever. It seemed plausible, and owing to to the friendship between them, father consented. But when he went home in the evening and told my mother what he had done, she put her foot down on it at once, saying "You are making arrangements to get that boy killed, and I'll never give my consent to it." I do not know of any other occasion during their family life when there was such an impasse between them, and I didn't know of this until afterwards.

It was true that Uncle Lyman Brightman was expected any day with the wagons and ox teams to move the household stuff. Mother suggested that there was the best excuse in the world to get out of the promise, for as the family did not expect to go with the wagons, and father had considerable business to wind up before going, it was actually necessary for somebody to go with the wagons, look after the things and see that they were unloaded properly. So, the next day, father explained the condition to Littleton, and the necessity of sending me with the things. The wagons arrived about the 18th of November, loaded up on the 19th, and we pulled out on the 20th, I on horseback. There were three wagons and teams, one driven by Uncle Lyman himself, one by Uncle Tom Howard, his father-in-law, and the third by an old bow-legged negro named Joe.

It was 36 miles from Helena to Goliad, and the first day they got a late start and only got about six miles from Helena, camping on the east side of Ecletto Creek. The next day, Friday, we camped about 12 miles further on, between what is now Charco and the Ojo de Agua. The third day, Saturday, we made it below the Cabeza, about nine miles from Goliad, but just about the time we struck camp and hobbled out the oxen, it began to rain; and it

rained heavily the whole livelong night. We had never a wagon-sheet, and slickers came into vogue many years afterward. The only protection we had was a blue army overcoat a-piece, and these were saturated in fifteen minutes and weighed about fifty pounds. We had camped in an oak grove of several acres, and there was lots of deadwood. We gathered together a lot of logs, built a huge fire, with enough of logs on hand to keep it going all night. The rain was cold, but Uncle Lyman and I sat by the log-heap all night. Uncle Tom Howard made him a pallet under one of the wagons, and although he didn't keep dry by a long shot, he at least got out of the falling rain. Old Joe made his pallet, negro-like by the fire, and picked out a sinkhole for it. Within a hour he was sleeping in water about three inches deep, but he snored all night, once in a while turning over and splashing the water like a porpus after a mullet. I was young and full of blood, and was used to being up all night frequently dances anyway, and so I never went to sleep at all. Uncle Lyman did sleep some, I know, for he sat on a cook pot most of the night, with three legs to it, and once in the small hours of the morning, he went so sound asleep that he nodded and fell over, turning the pot over with him. That was fun for me, and kept me awake and fresh the remainder of the night with laughing.

Well, it's a long lane that has no turn, and finally day broke, and with daylight the rain slacked up. It was about six miles further down to the old William L. Hunter Ranch, three miles from Goliad, and it was agreed that we should hitch up and drive down to that ranch and stop for the rest of the day to dry out and get a little sleep. We got down there in less than three hours drive before we turned our attention breakfast. The ranch house was vacant, wide open, with a good fireplace, the air was pretty chilly and we still more so from being soaked, and we stopped, took out the oxen for the day. Meantime, someone suggested that we needed something stimulating, and as we had none, and Goliad was only three miles off, I mounted my horse, rode to town, and although it was Sunday morning, I had no trouble whatever in getting a bottle of good whisky. I was back in about an hour, and meantime the others had got up a good square meal of old ned and biscuits, and the whisky just had time to give us all a splendid appetite..

We staid that day and the next morning hitched up and drove down to Goliad but the roads were soaked, and we didn't get to the San Antonio River until about noon or after. The River was about as high as it ever gets, but at the ferry, kept by old Tom Tally, the banks were high enough to prevent its running out into the valleys as it was almost everywhere else. His flat was only big enough to take one wagon and one yoke of oxen at a time, or two yoke of oxen, and by the time we got the wagons and oxen across it was late in the afternoon. We had, however, time to reach the edge of the prairie out beyond Old LaBahia before dark and camped there.

There were many funny things occured on this trip, and I never enjoyed a trip any better, despite the rain, the mud and the water. They had an old decrepit pony along to round up the oxen in the morning, and we called him Rosinante, he so strikingly resembled Don Quixote's steed, and one morning Uncle Tom Howard was sent out on the pony to round up the teams. He was one of the most awkward men I have ever known. He wore canvas trousers, as strongly made a leather, and this fact saved him one morning perhaps, from more serious injury. He was rounding up the steers, and about a hundred yards from the camp Rosinante stumbled, and fell to his knees; the old man went over his head, but his trousers caught on the pommel of the saddle by the waistband, and the old pony was too weak to rise to his feet and strong enough to hold himself in position, and there Uncle Tom hung, with his head down and his feet up in the air, unable to extricate himself until old Joe ran out to him and helped to turn him upright again. Uncle Tom was a jolly old man, however, always joking and seldom talking seriously and he laughed it off along with the rest of us.

The roads were so soggy that we bogged down time and again, and it was on one of these occasions that I heard my Uncle Lyman utter the only resemblance to profanity that I ever heard him use. The near lead steer of his team, which was always in front was named Davie. There was a place just ahead in the road that he knew would stick the wagon by its looks; he drove out of the road hoping to avoid miring down; but just as he got the wagon entirely clear of the beaten road it struck a black place, the wheels began to sink, and he tried to seesaw the wagon to keep it from miring. With his long old ox-whip and stock,

he touched Davie, saying in a low tone as he always did in his speaking, "Whoa, come here Davie!" Some how Davie didn't swing to the left quick enough to stop the sinking of the wheel, and as Uncle Lyman saw it, he cracked the wrip again, and repeated the command, and then, seeing the wheel sinking hopelessly he popped the old whip with all his might, and shouted: "D-n your infernal soul, Whoa, come here, Davie!" But the maneuver was too slow to work, and we had to dig a couple of hours to get out of the mud.

We arrived at old St. Mary's on the last day of November, a distance of not more than 80 miles by the road, and when I unloaded the stuff, it was soaked and much of the dry goods (what a misnomer!) was wet through and through and mildewed, and the furniture was all ruined. I am sure that the general damage incurred from getting caught in that rain could not have been less than \$500, and that was a big pile of money in those days. I did the best I could to spread it out and get it dry, and worked with it nearly three weeks before the family arrived although they started December 1. It continued to rain most of the time and they were laid up, on the road, part of the time weatherbound and part of the time waterbound, and really were delayed more on the trip than we were, although they came in a two horse hack.

Charles A. Russell had an established professional reputation before he came to St. Mary's. During the ten years he lived and practiced in the old town he had the reputation of being the most able lawyer in the county, and possessed the best law library in the county. He quickly accumulated a splendid clientele. One of his clients was Dr. James Hewetson. The Doctor died in 1870 and Russell was his administrator in Refugio County. Another client was General Williamson.

Among the notable cases in which Judge Russell appeared after establishing himself at St. Mary's, was the case of the

Heirs of T. T. Williamson against Joseph F. Smith. The litigation involved the true location of the northeasterly line of the Maxey survey, and the result was to fix it at so great a distance to the southwest as to throw about a quarter of the townsite of St. Mary's, including Smith's fine three story home, into the T. T. Williamson survey No. 100, thereby giving the Williamsons the title.¹

1 Smith v. Russell, 37 Texas 248.

It will be remembered that Smith in laying off the townsite intended it should lie wholly in the Maxey survey which he owned individually. Willard Richardson had correctly surveyed the Maxey, his field notes filed in the General Land Office, showing it to have a mesne width of 105.5 varas. The patent, however, showed a width of 1055 varas, the draftsman having failed to point off the decimal. Judge Russell, who was an experienced land surveyor, perceived that something was wrong. His son, Lyman B. Russell, comments on this case:

The general trend of the decisions in those days (1869) was to accept surveys as they were actually made on the ground; and the case was not so simple as it appears on its face, because the patent called for the line as Smith claimed it. My father conceived the idea of getting a photographed copy of the original field notes as filed in the General Land Office -- we would call it a photostat these days -- but it was a very new and original way of obtaining a true copy. When he got this photograph it showed very plainly that it was only

105.5 varas, and was conclusive proof that the transcribing clerk who wrote the patent had simply overlooked the decimal point. The result finally was that Smith lost the case, and with it his fine two-story house erected by him on what he had thought was the Maxey survey, but which the photograph proved to be on the Williamson survey. Smith always thereafter spoke of father as 'a damn rascal', an epithet which merely amused my father."²

2 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS

Charles A. Russell died at St. Mary's, March 4, 1878, but his family remained there until 1885, when the widow moved to Tilden, Texas. She died in McMullen County in August, 1910.³

3 Burmeister, Sallie J., Reminiscences, MSS

Judge and Mrs. Russell had seven children, the first of whom died in infancy. The only son and oldest surviving child was Lyman Brightman Russell, of whom more will be said later on. The other children were: Annette, who married Edward Spear Atkinson, who was Judge Russell's law partner; Florence, who married Floyd Carpenter, son of Dr. E. F. Carpenter; Nancy, who married Fred Perry Dickinson; Sarah Jane (Sallie) who married Frank H. Burmeister; and Mary, who married Dan Yeamans, and was the mother of the writer of this thesis.⁴

4 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS

Lyman Brightman Russell lived to be nearly 90 years old, and at the time of his death, May 6, 1940, had established a state-wide reputation for historical, genealogical, philosophical and humorous writings. His career was varied and colorful. According to his Autobiography, his first job at St. Mary's in 1868, was hauling wood for the townsmen at the age of eighteen; next, he is setting type on the "Vaquero", Refugio County's first newspaper; when that journal was consolidated with the "Transcript" he moved with it to Rockport and set type in the Transcript office. We then find him back in St. Mary's unloading lumber at the wharf and piling it in Cottinghams lumber yards, with the son of "Three Legged Willie" as his helper. A few months later he is back at Rockport working for Captain Bailey on the "Transcript". Then back to St. Mary's to manage a store of which his father was receiver. In 1872 he studied telegraphy and became a telegraph operator at St. Mary's and Rockport.

On July 4, 1872, he married at St. Mary's, Miss Sarah Alice Beeman, sister of Geraldo Alonzo Beeman. He thus relates the story of his courtship:

In October, 1871, Mr. Beeman had returned from a visit to his old home in Bell county. Our association in the printing business as well as my former acquaintance with his wife when I attended Ben Hunt's school in 1863 had made me as familiar in his home as in my own home. He had been gone on this visit about two months or such a matter. It was right about the first of the month, when,

after spending a day or so with Mrs. Beeman's father, D. M. Rupe, who lived out of St. Mary's a couple of miles or so, he and his wife came to town on a Sunday afternoon to visit with old neighbors, and also to resume housekeeping. They had brought with them his youngest and only unmarried sister. They staid at night with Major Egery. I was pretty seedy in my dress, being out of money and out of a job. After supper that Sunday night, clad in a coat that was out at the elbows, I strayed down into town a few blocks from home, and as the place was small, but a few of the boys were loafing around, but I fell in with George Vineyard, a boon companion who was at least ten years older than I. He remarked, "Lyman, there's a new young lady in town over at Major Egery's, suppose we go over and give her a welcome!" I asked, "who is she?" He replied, "Mr. Beeman has returned from up the country, and has brought a sister with him." This was the first I knew that Beeman had returned. So, ragged as I was, we went over there together, were received courteously and hospitably by Major Egery and his wife, whose home was always a social center for young people, and were seated. The sister was seated under the mantel board, the only light was a kerosene lamp on the mantel, and hence her face was in the dark, and she kept in the dark all the time I was there. I sized her up for an old maid about 50 to 35 years of age. As she didn't talk any, I devoted my attention to Major Egery, who was a good conversationalist, and always ready to talk, whether politics, religion, Masonry, or business. Vineyard drew the young lady out into a very spare conversation, while the Major, he about 70 and I just turned 21, talked of philosophy, politics, the Bible, etc. The Major was possessed of very little education at school, but he had read much, and among other things he had the discovery from his own reading and judgment that there are two distinct accounts of creation in Genesis. He had never heard of "higher criticism," which at that time had not filtered down to the minds of "hoi polloi" but it shows his natural strength of mind, that while he was not a member of any church, and I think his wife was a Presbyterian, though I am not quite sure of this, she may have been a Methodist, he had the analytical mind that with an education would have counted for a high degree of scholarship.

It was quite amusing in later years to hear of the impression that the young lady formed of me on that first meeting. I thought she was an old maid beyond the reach of my attention, and she thought I was about the

sorriest-looking specimen of humanity she had recently encountered. According to the general appearances, both of us were right. As I have said, Mrs. Beeman was a former schoolmate of mine, and hence, on the trip from Bell County to St. Mary's, which in those days had to be made with a horse-team, and took about ten or twelve days on the road, Mrs. Beeman frequently mentioned my name among the social celebrities of the town. My coat, out at the elbows, and my general makeup not having been given any attention before I started out for the evening loiter, I sure was a seedy-looking individual. So, the first time the young lady got a good chance to twit Mrs. Beeman, she remarked: "Well, I've seen your lion!" It was in just such a vein as slightly ruffled Mrs. B., but it passed off without further comment.

Later, however, I met the young lady, and discovered my mistake. I have sometimes thought during the more than 55 years since, while we have been living under the same roof, that maybe she never did discover hers. At any rate, in the course of a few months, indifference ripened into a feeling of positive interest on my part, and after I got the telegraph job, I began to think I had as good right to starve a woman to death as any other fellow, and I knew of lots of them who were doing it, especially as that \$90 a month began to make me think I was a millionaire. Without going too much into detail, because of lack of both time and space, on the 20th day of May, 1872, when I had had my job a little less than two months, our negotiations had crystalized into an engagement, and after some two or three weeks of palaver, we decided to get married on the coming July 4, and thereby have a celebration of the glorious fourth "what was a celebration!" When the matter had come to a head, and was made known to Mrs. Beeman, she had her inning, telling her sister-in-law: "Well, Alice, it seems you've been caught in the Lion's den!"

Mr. Beeman, in the meantime, had made arrangements to go into the mercantile business in Oakville, and but for the wedding, he would have been already moved from the community. He had the wagons all loaded except barely enough to fill the necessities of camp, ready to pull out on the morning of the fifth.

The wedding was the saddest I have ever attended,

although there was a house full of invited guests. I had arranged from the outset with George Egery, only son and child of Major and Mrs. Egery, to stand up with me, what is now called "the best man." He had been taken down three days before with a terrific brain fever and died on the morning of the fourth, just before daylight. But for Mr. Beeman's arrangements all being perfected to leave, we should have postponed the wedding for a time; but the circumstances were such that it was virtually impossible. George was a member of the "Friends of Temperance," an organization based upon abstinence from intoxication liquors, and I was at that time the presiding officer. The Society had a funeral ritual, and he was buried with honors of the Order, and I had to conduct the burial service. We got through late in the afternoon, and I just had time to return home and put on my wedding togs and go to the house. I had bought a pair of white kid gloves to be up to date in the simple conventionalities of the day, but it was the first pair I had ever owned, and I supposed they were to be pulled on like a pair of working mitts, so I began to pull and stretch at the job of getting them on when one of them tore in two at the thumb. Somebody then gave me the information, rather late for use that I should have worked the fingers on first, turning the glove inside out down to the fingers, but as it was too late, I pulled the torn glove together as well as I could, and walked in where the expectant bride was waiting and here endeth the first lesson.

Lyman B. Russell was admitted to the bar at Rockport in June, 1874. He served as postmaster at Rockport and at St. Mary's. Eventually he moved to the Town of Refugio, where he served as justice of the peace, county attorney, city attorney and town secretary. He also was for a time deputy county clerk. He wrote a fine hand and the records made by him are immediately recognizable. In the Fall of 1885 he and his family moved to Comanche, Texas, where for years he practiced

law and edited the "Comanche Chief".

Russell possessed a remarkable and accurate memory of personalities and events which he retained up to the time of his death. At the age of 89, his handwriting was as firm and beautiful as ever, and he kept up a wide correspondence. The several score letters which he wrote to Colonel Huson between 1932 and 1939, about the history and people of St. Mary's, Lamar and Rockport, form a basis for considerable of the material contained in this thesis.⁵

5 Neighbors, Alice Atkinson, Charles Arden Russell, Term Paper filed in connection with Master's degree, University of Texas, 1937.

Russell, Lyman Brightman, Granddad's Autobiography, The Comanche Publishing Co. 1930, 30 pages.

Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST REFUGIO COUNTY NEWSPAPER

"The Vaquero", the first newspaper known to have been published in Refugio County, was founded at St. Mary's, about November by Charles Francis Bailey, late captain C.S.A., and Geraldo Alonzo Beeman, late private, 1st Texas Cavalry, C.S.A. The paper was published until 1870. In 1869 Bailey and Beeman established the "Transcript" at Rockport, Bailey going to that place, and Beeman staying at St. Mary's. A few months later the partnership was dissolved, Bailey taking the "Transcript" and Beeman the "Vaquero". In 1870, Beeman sold the Vaquero plant to Bailey and it was moved to Rockport, and the periodicals were consolidated. In 1873 Beeman left St. Mary's and went to Comanche, Texas, where he founded the "Comanche Chief". Bailey continued to live in Rockport and became one of its most prominent citizens. During Cleveland's first administration he was Collector of Customs at Corpus Christi.¹

1 Huson, Hobart, Saint Mary's of Aransas, MSS
Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS
Russell, Lyman Brightman, Granddad's Autobiography,
The Comanche Publishing Co. 1930, p. 16
Beeman, Geraldo Alonzo, Fireside Talks With the
Children, MSS

Beeman has left the following account of "The Vaquero"-

Soon Mr. Rupe (his father-in-law) decided to move back to Southern Texas, and I was tempted to go with him.

Gathering up my possessions, I found I had a wagon, pair of horses, some little furniture and camp outfit, and a little money. We located at St. Mary's in Refugio County, on Copano bay. We found this section was even more destitute than the one we had left. There was no agriculture, no developments, nothing but cattle in all the country, and cattle was worth nothing. There was no market and but a poor one for the hides and tallow, while thousands of them were being slaughtered for this alone, the flesh being thrown away.

I went to work at any odd job that I could find, but jobs were scarce and remuneration poor. Still greater discouragement came by failure of your mother's health, she was not well for long at a time all the time we were in that section. For months she would require all my attentions day and night. I had not the means to hire a nurse, and under this condition I thought again of saddlery as something I could do and do the work at home where I could look after her. I had no money to buy material, but a comrade in the First Texas Cavalry, George Vineyard, had opened a small grocery store and I prevailed on him to order a small supply of material and take his pay from the profits. This helped some but the county was sparsely settled and sales were restricted.

Finally I bought an old livery stable and a few horses, I do not remember just how it was managed, but it was mostly on credit. Business was limited but I accumulated some, and I am sure I could have learned Old Ben Franklin something about saving the dimes. Misfortune still followed me. I got glanders among the horses, had to lead them out and shoot them, and the stable was ruined as a stable. I finally sold it to Dr. Nott, principally, if not all, on medical bill.

About this time Captain C. F. Bailey came to me to join him in the establishment of a newspaper. I knew about as much of the business as a hog does of astronomy, but ever ready for anything that had any promise in it, I consented to do so. We ordered a cheap press and a hat full of type and the VAQUERO was launched to enlighten the people of South Texas. But subscribers were few and advertising less, and the bank account refused to grow. Just now, Rockport, across the bay, began to loom as a prospective future port, and we decided to purchase

additional material and move to that point. We started the ROCK TRANSCRIPT. I was not much impressed by the outlook so sold to Bailey and returned to St. Mary's. As we had bought mostly on credit and there had been no profits, my returns were meager.

I went to clerking for Colonel Ratchford, who had opened a small general store at St. Mary's. This completed my five years residence at this place, for I soon left and moved to Oakville. How I lived thru that five years and was enable to leave out of debt, I shall never know, I with all my experience would not do it now. I have recently visited the site of that little town and "not one stone is left upon another", and the sad waves are murmuring a requiem over its desolation. This is the fourth town for which I may be charged for death by desertion. But this place is sacred to so many memories of my trials and misfortunes,² that it impresses me more with pathos than pleasantry.²

2 Beeman, Geraldo Alonzo, Fireside Talks with the Children, MSS

Lyman B. Russell, who was more inclined to see the more humorous side of a bad situation, gives the following version:

After getting settled down in St. Mary's, which to me was an experience as new as if we had moved into another State, for a few weeks I drove a wagon and horse-team my father had bought, and put in most of the hauling deadwood from the mesquite timber out about three miles from the village, for fuel for ourselves and such other families as needed it and could pay for it. But a printing office had been opened there, and a small four-page, five-column weekly paper started by G. A. Beeman and Charles Francis Bailey. They had from fifty to a hundred pounds of type and an army press for equipment. Bailey also did a little watch and clock repairing and occasionally a little rough engraving. Beeman also had a saddle shop. Between times they would set type and grind out the paper once a week. Between the watch repair shop and the saddle shop, probably Bailey and Beeman might have eked out a living, but it took all their surplus earnings to support the paper,

and while they were in this business, shortly after I went to St. Mary's, the idea occurred to me that I might learn to become a printer, and I went in, with volunteer work for a while for the privilege of learning the trade. The town of Rockport had just started up then, and had already taken the wind out of the sails of St. Mary's as a port for steamships--which St. Mary's never did have, but for many years thought she was going to get from "natural advantages." Bailey sold his interest in the VAQUERO--that was the name of the paper--and moving over to Rockport, started the Rockport Transcript. By this time I had learned to set type pretty well, and made an arrangement with Beeman to work with the paper for a share of the profits. I worked several months on that basis, and we figured up my share of the profits, which proved to be about \$9 a month, and my father had boarded me during the time. It seemed to me a mighty slow way of getting rich, and I decided to try my fortune at something else, so I left Beeman with the elephant on his hands alone. He shortly consolidated it with the Transcript and after a week or so, sold out to Bailey, and returned to his saddle shop.³

3 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Granddad's Autobiography, The Comanche Publishing Co. 1930, p. 16

In another account "Uncle Lyman" thus describes the printing plant: "The outfit consisted of an army press on which a five column paper was printed, - - - a single page at a time. The press was about the size of a rubber clothes wringer, and maybe they had 50 lbs. of type."

Emile A. Perrenot, already mentioned, learned the printer's trade in the "Vaquero" office.

Only one copy of the "Vaquero" is known to be in existence. Volume 2, No. 6, was preserved by L. B. Russell and presented

to the Library of the University of Texas by him.⁴

4 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS

CHAPTER VIII

THE PHANROM COUNTY SEAT

When Joseph F. Smith originally platted the town of St. Mary's in 1857, or prior thereto, he boldly marked on the block lying between Blocks xxxii and xxxiii the words, "COURT HOUSE SQUARE". While his idea of a capital building on that block was perhaps highly speculative, he probably never visualized it as being in the middle of a cotton field; as it is in this good year 1942.

When Texas became a republic the Villa of Refugio, although never made so by law, was considered the county seat of Refugio County. The town had been wrecked during the revolution and, in fact, never recovered until the oil boom of 1928. From 1836 1836 until 1906, when the railroad came through, it was a sleepy, inland cattle town, populated for the most part by a few families of Irish descent. All enterprise and civic development in the county (which then included Aransas) was centered along the coast and bays, and few newcomers went to Refugio town, or the "Mission of Refugio" as the town was called for many years.

Colonel James Power, who had founded the townsite of Aransas City at Live Oak Point in 1837, conceived the idea of a port town at the present site of Rockport, but his dream never materialized. Aransas City went into oblivion and St.

Mary's seemed destined to be the big port for west Texas. However, it was largely due to St. Mary's citizens that Rockport became an actuality, thereby sounding the doom of St. Mary's.

In 1866 the site of Rockport was selected as a shipping point for cattle.¹

¹ Johnson, Frank W., A History of Texas and Texans, The American Historical Society, Chicago and New York, 1914, Vol. II, pp. 628-630.

In 1867 the town of Rockport was founded by J. M. and T. H. Mathis.²

² Nims, Dorothy Louise, A History of the Village of Rockport, Master's Thesis, Southwest Texas State Teachers College, 1939, 90 pages.

Watson, May Mathis Green, and Lillico, Alex, Taft Ranch, privately printed, 1934.

Dobie, J. Frank, A Vaguer of the Brush County, The Southwest Press, Dallas, 1929, pp. 20-26.

Among the St. Mary's men who had part in the development of Rockport were James M. Doughty, Richard H. Wood, Daniel C. Doughty, Major John H. Wood, Berry Merchant, Dr. R. A. Nott, and Captain Charles F. Bailey.³

³ Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS

In 1868 a sustained effort was begun to remove the county seat from the town of Refugio. St. Mary's, Rockport and Copano were rivals for the capital honors. St. Mary's, however, had the edge, inasmuch as its townsman, Colonel L. B. Camp, was a member of the legislature and wielded great influence with delegates to the constitutional convention.

On January 18, 1869, the Constitutional Convention adopted an ordinance changing the county seat from Refugio to St. Mary's.⁴

⁴ Journal of Constitutional Convention of 1869, Gammel's Laws of Texas.

The Refugio Irish simply ignored the ordinance, and the Commissioners' Court ordered the courthouse at Refugio to be repaired. No attempt was ever made to actually move the seat of government to St. Mary's. The St. Mary's people realizing the fruitlessness of their first efforts, petitioned the Twelfth Legislature on the subject. The petition, which furnishes some idea as to the pretensions of St. Mary's and the identity of her citizenry in 1869, is as follows:

To the Hon. Legislature of the State of Texas

the undersigned your petitioners Citizens of the County of Refugio would Respectfully Represent that the County Seat of Refugio County is badly located being at the Town of Refugio, which is a place of Small business (sic) and but few inhabitants. That on this account is difficult to get suitable persons to reside at the Coun-

ty Seat to transact the official business of the County, That said place is near one Edge of the county and (deleted) being more than twelve miles from the Geographical centre and is not in the most populous portion of the county. That there are no county buildings except an Old Courthouse of small dimensions and far gone to decay. That there is no inducement at said Town of Refugio for any thing like permanent improvement and increasing prosperity such as ought to characterize a county seat.

And your petitioners would further (sic) represent, that the Geographical centre of the county of Refugio is in the praries (sic) at a point uninhabitable, that the only point of Business in the county which would be suitable for a county seat is the Town of St. Mary's on Aransas Bay, that said point is not more distant from the Geographical centre than Refugio and is fully as accessible to the people and much more so for a large portion of them, who live on the islands and bays. St. Mary's is a place of considerable trade and commerce is accessible by sail and steam from New Orleans and other seaports and is a growing and thriving town. It is surrounded by a thickly settled country of agricultural (sic) people and has every advantage which a county seat should possess. Your petitioners would Represent that the inhabitants of Refugio County are to a large extent residents upon the shores of the bays and the islands and that to all such a county seat upon the bay shore is a necessity, that the only other points within the county upon the bays at which shipping has ever been attempted are Lamar Copano and Rockport, that Lamar now has no wharf no trade and but a few scattered inhabitants raising stock. That Copano is in the same situation without population enough to support a common school or country store or post office. Neither of which are there, and that Rockport although a flourishing place is not desirable and does not desire to be the county seat of Refugio County for reasons which will doubtless be made known to your honorable body by the people of that place in their own behalf. It may be said however that it is not sufficiently accessible by land from the county of Refugio, and is on the Extreme verge of the county.

Your petitioners would further Represent that the citizens of Refugio County, appealed to the late conven-

tion to fix the county seat which they did at St. Mary's, that in doing so they were only instigated by a desire to have the county seat fixed at an early day so that the county would not be put to extra expense in Repairing the old court House at Refugio which had fallen into decay during the late war. The ordinance of the convention was disregarded by the existing authorities upon the ground that the convention had exceeded its authorities and the matter thus stands. Your petitioners are informed that attempts will be made by other points through party and private interests and they therefore pray that the Honorable legislature take the matter in hand and locate the county seat of Refugio county permanently at St. Mary's, and as in duty bound will ever pray.

The signers were: C. W. Egery, J. I. Cottingham, J. W. Ratchford, Geo. W. Vineyard, G. R. Ratchford, Jerry O. Driscoll, P. M. Neel, John Low, F. M. Ellis, R. A. Nott, J. H. McKenny, V. A. Dixon, John Madelen, B. F. Ellis, Thomas H. Howard, E. S. Howard, Moses Simpson, L. H. Ward, S. S. Mapes, Theophilis Dugat, Charles Peets, James McCuren, M. Thomas, James Smith, H. L. Clark, J. S. Carroll, James Power (Jr.) W. Johnson, Lyman B. Russell, Floyd Carpenter, R. H. Wood, J. W. Evans, Thomas Greer, W. G. Roark, John C. Chambless, O. J. Howard, S. E. Vineyard, Charles A. Russell, Charles F. Leisering, John Dugat, Alex Dugat, L. Nulty, C. E. Dugat, Sam McCuren, S. Unsworth, John H. Wood, Wm. S. Clark, W. Martin, John Weed and Thomas Webb.⁵

⁵ Petition to Legislature of Texas, by Citizens Favoring St. Mary's, 1869, Archives, State Library, Austin.
Camp, L. B. Papers, (in possession of his family)

Whether or not a petition in favor of Rockport was presented, is not known, but efforts were being made on behalf of that town, and the people of St. Mary's began to get apprehensive. Another petition was circulated and presented to the legislature urging it to "ratify and confirm the Declaration of the late convention declaring the Town of St. Mary's the County Seat of Refugio County". This petition was more numerously signed than the preceding. The residents of the St. Mary's section who signed same were: George S. Sherman, M. Thomas, Jr., F. M. Ellis, B. C. Ellis, J. A. Ellis, Isaac Holleman, M. H. Martin, Sr., J. W. Hampton, C. W. Egery, G. A. Beeman, Wm. G. Neel, O. J. Howard, John Ellis, H. G. Ezell, H. Wadsworth, J. M. Martin, Wm. Jay, Parket Peets, Tomas Scott, Jas. Edward, Thos. T. Williamson, Lyman B. Russell, Wm. Brightman, H. J. Nott, M. D., G. R. Ratchford, M. Thomas, J. T. Thomas, Wm. H. Long, E. B. Thomas, R. M. Ellis, Floyd Carpenter, J. D. Benham, Geo. Vineyard, P. M. Neel, Wm. G. Davis, Thomas J. Howard, R. A. Ezell, S. D. Ezell, W. A. L. Benham, M. Fox, A. J. Martin, Martin Neel, Edwin Peets, James R. McCarty, Chas. A. Russell, H. W. Williams, J. H. Wiginton, H. J. Lyman, Wm. S. Howard, J. I. Cottingham, E. F. Carpenter, J. W. Rathford, P. L. Gibson, Mick Fox, J. O. Woods, David Talman, Charles F. Leisering, Floyd Carpenter, Henry Linney, Jos. Toups, J. Mahavier, Jos. Dugat, L. Ballard, Geo. W. Child, J. O. Driscoll,

Manuel Aldrete, Frank Ellis, R. A. Ezell, S. S. Mapes, John Low, James Peaks, Robert Lott, J. R. McCarty, Andrew McCarty, S. C. Vineyard, John Maton, W. G. Roark, J. W. Evans, V. A. Dixon, George Egery, J. M. Martin, John Smith, Jesse Woods, John Simpson, T. M. Dorsett, Wm. Chambless, T. C. Wood, John Linney, G. Peaks, A. M. Gary, M. A. Mull, V. Smith, L. H. Ward, Jesse McCarty, Juan Ximines, W. H. Johnson, Nat. Williams, John C. Chambers, Lyman Brightman, Arthur Lott, John Lott, G. O. McCarty, J. B. Wood, J. C. Stewart, C. E. Dugat, H. Roark, J. H. McKenney, G. Green, Thos. Webb, J. Welder, George Howard, Lieuen M. Rogers, Anton Aldrete, M. Fernandez, Nathan Green, Charles Fraser, Henry Ezell, Andrew McConnelly, John Smith, Wm. Gilchrist, John Weed, Wm. Tullos, John Toups, George McCarty, Phil Lehey, Jeff McCarty, and J. M. Fraser.⁶

⁶ Petition to Legislature of Texas in Behalf of Town of St. Mary's, 1869, Archives, State Library, Austin
Petition to Legislature of Texas by Citizens of Fulton in favor of Rockport, 1869, Archives, State Library, Austin.
 Camp, L. B., Papers (In possession of his family)

The result of the fight was the removal of the county seat of Refugio County to Rockport.⁷

⁷ Refugio Timely Remarks, Centennial Edition, December 14, 1934, page 67.

1871. Acts of 1871, Twelfth Legislature, approved March 15,
Rea, William Louis, Memoirs, MSS

The Refugio Irish who had theretofore seemed quiescent began to fight, and although the archives were moved to Rockport and one or two terms of the county court held there, they raised so much fuss that a compromise was agreed upon. The county was divided, and the eastern portion was created in 1871 into Aransas County, with Rockport as its seat, and Refugio was declared to be the county seat of the remainder of the original county.⁸

⁸ Refugio Timely Remarks, Centennial Edition, December 14, 1934, page 67.
1871. Acts of 1871, Twelfth Legislature, approved September 18,
Rea, William Louis, Memoirs, MSS.

Thus St. Mary's lost a county seat which it never had in fact. The result, however, decided many St. Marians to move to Rockport and cast their lots with that more promising town. Among those who moved to Rockport were Robert Driscoll, Sr., Charles F. Bailey, Dr. Wm. P. McGrew, Dr. R. A. Nott, Thomas H. Nott, W. A. Williamson, Stephen Peters, J. W. Ratchford, Richard H. Wood, Youngs Coleman, James P. Cottingham, Carl Gray, Walter Gray, Port Neel, Berry Merchant, Emile A. Perrenot,

Oliver P. Reid, Jr., Lyman B. Russell, John Simpson, Henry Smith, E. L. Snow, John W. Vineyard, Thomas P. McCampbell, and the Heldenfels family.⁹

⁹ Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS
Rea, William Louis, Memoirs, MSS

CHAPTER IX
THE GOLDEN AGE

"I presume that the period of our residence in old St. Mary's was the heyday of its existence," writes Lyman B. Russell. "For several years, even when Rockport was in the height of its glory, all goods for the interior as far as Beeville and beyond were lightered from Rockport to St. Mary's, and hauled thence by teams. Captain A. C. Jones and McClanahan, of Beeville, both doing an extensive mercantile business, had their own teams and hauled their own freight from St. Mary."¹

1 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS

During the period of which Judge Russell speaks (1864-1875), the town and its environs extended about two and one-half miles from Major Woods home on the southwest to J. R. McCarty's on the northeast. At that time the Wood home was a one-story rambling ranch-style house, surrounded by a palisades fence. In 1877 the old house was razed and the new two-story house with banistered deck roof, which still stands in the heart of present-day Bayside, was erected in its stead. The lumber for this house, as well as for most of the others in that section of Texas, was brought from Florida to St.

Mary's by boat.²

2 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS
 Huson, Hobart, Saint Mary's of Aransas, MSS
 Wood, Richard H., Statement to Hobart Huson and Exhibitions of Bills of Lading and Contractors Bills.

Viggo Kohler was the contractor for the new Woods home. Kohler & Heldenfels had a large lumber yard at St. Mary's. Peter A. Johnson, afterwards sheriff, worked on the Wood mansion when a boy.³

3 Johnson, Peter A., The Two Sea Captains Johnson, MSS
 (This was published serially in Texas Sheriffs Magazine)

Mrs. Burmeister gives a description of the settlement as it appeared during such period, as follows:

There was nothing below Major Wood's home. The Linneys and Welders lived on Aransas river. Leaving Major Wood's place and going towards St. Mary's, the first house was Lyman H. Ward's, the surveyor. It was a funny little lumber house, with a bow roof constructed of lumber. The next was Major Egery's old home, which was built of shell rock. Next was the Stoner place, a two-story rock house. On the beach, in front of the Driscoll home was Dr. J. A. Throckmorton's, a lumber structure. Jerry Driscoll later bought it and moved it back of his house and made a barn of it. Near the southwest limit of the town, Jeremiah O'Driscoll built a large story and a half lumber house for the joint occupancy of his brother Robert's family, as well as his own. This home was built in 1871 or 1872. Captain John Low was the contractor, Floyd Carpenter helping with the carpenter work, and George Perrenot doing the painting. In this house was born Clara Driscoll, daughter of Robert Driscoll. The house was burned about 1873 or

1874, and the Robert Driscolls moved to Rockport. Jeremiah O. Driscoll began rebuilding on the same site, and while construction was in progress, lived in the Theopholis Dugat home, about a half block nearer the center of town. While the family were in these temporary quarters, Birdie Driscoll, daughter of Jeremiah, was born. She became and wife of Frank B. Rooke, and is now living at Woodsboro.

The second Driscoll home was built by the same contractors and artisans. When it was completed the Jeremiah Driscoll family moved into it and lived there until Jerry Driscoll died.

Next on the bluff was the two-story concrete building built by J. M. Crandall and known as the 'opera house'. In the same yard was a small lumber cottage. The big house was usually used as a residence, the upstairs being also used for dances and entertainment. The next house up the beach was known as the Dewese house. It was a two room rock building, and was rented out. On these premises was located the Dutch windmill brought from Goliad by V. A. Dixon and used to grind corn.

The next house from Driscoll house on Second Street was Captain Low's house, later owned by The' Dugat. It is still standing. Mrs. Mary F. Lambert, who was the captain's daughter, was reared in this house. The next home was that of my father, Judge Charles A. Russell. It was a large two-story wooden building that had formerly belonged to Sextus Garrett. There were eleven rooms altogether, four upstairs, the rest downstairs. Later on Judge Russell built a law office on the northeast corner of the property. After his death the Grays bought the office building and moved it to the center of town, where it was used as the post office. The post office building had been burned.

Across the street from the Russell home was a house owned in 1868 by Micajah Thomas, the blacksmith. He had a blacksmith shop on the grounds. George Howard later bought the property and remodelled the house, and he in turn sold it to Viggo Kohler, who had a big lumber yard in St. Mary's about 1876. Kohler never lived in it but rented it out. Floyd Carpenter and Will Gray were some of the renters. The Grays subsequently bought the property. The post office was in this house at the time the post office of St. Mary's was discontinued.

Going up Second Street, the next building was the school house. The big two story school house at Well Mott was torn down about 1892 or 1893 and rebuilt on Second Street as a one room affair. The storm of 1886 blew this school house down, and Dan Yeamans bought the lumber and moved it to Tilden. The next building was the cottage of Albert G. Kennedy. The next was the home of Mrs. Pathoff. Dr. Junius Nott's cottage adjoined. Above it was the two story wooden building which Dr. Rufus Nott had built when he first settled at St. Mary's. This building was used by the Gray family as their residence. On the corner of Center street was the store building of Ratchford & Vineyard, later Ratchford & Howard.

Across Second Street from the school house lot was the home of J. I. Cottingham, which faced the beach. It was a one story lumber building having about four rooms and having a kitchen and dining room separate from the main house. After the Cottingshams left, Will Gray lived there. "Telegraph" Martin lived there ahead of the Grays.

Across the street from Mrs. Pathoff's was Major Egery's home, in which he was living when our family came to St. Mary's, and in which he died. His wife died at Beeville many years later. She lived with the J. V. Ellis family there.

Northeast of the Cottingham home was the two story wooden building in which S. S. Mapes had his store. He was Justice of the Peace for many years and held court in his store. The upstairs was used for many years by the Masonic lodge.

This gets us to the business district. As I have stated, Ratchford and Vineyard's store was at southwest intersection of Center and Second Streets. Center Street ran down to the wharf. At the northwest intersection was the two story wooden store building of Mc Campbell Bros., later owned by Coffin Bros. The latter had an immense lumber yard west of the store and had a separate office for the lumber business. At the northeast intersection was a store building, a one-story affair. I do not know who built it. Some Jews named Kahn had a store there when I first knew the place. At the south intersection was the two-story wooden store building, occupied in 1868, by Ellis & Wood, and afterwards by Wood & Welder, John Henry O'Connor, and finally by J. H.

Wood & Sons. This building burned down. The old iron safe of J. H. Wood & Sons is still on the premises. Next to the Wood store on Center street was another two-story building, which was formerly south of the Ellis hotel, and in which the old printing office had been located. Major Wood bought it and moved it next to his corner building. My father, Chas. A. Russell, had his law office upstairs before he built his own office building. This building was burned when the Wood store burned.

Across Second Street from the Dr. Nott property was the Neel hotel, which faced towards the bay. It was originally a large two-story building. It was afterwards bought by the Brightmans, who reduced it to a one story building. This part of the original Neel hotel is still standing and occupied at this time by the Brightman boys.

Down Center Street towards the wharf, the next building from the Wood corner was the residence of the F. M. Ellis family, a nice cottage. Next to it was the three story Ellis Hotel, a wooden building, which Mr. Ellis moved to Beeville when he left St. Mary's.

Across Center from the Ellis Hotel was the barrel house operated by Geo. S. Sherman. Between it and the cattle pens was the saloon and gambling house operated by Arthur Haynes, and in which Ben Thompson and his brother, and John Wesley Hardin, Sallie Scull and Poker Molly, all played.

Going back to Center and Second street, the next house on left hand side of Second to Coffin Bros., was the J. M. Martin residence; next above it was J. W. Ratchford's home. Major Ratchford and his uncle, Colonel Ratchford, were bachelors when they came to St. Mary's. Colonel Ratchford stayed that way, but the major married Linda Rose, and built this nice cottage. Colonel Ratchford was an uncle to Mrs. J. I. Cottingham and he lived with the Cottingham family. Next above Major Ratchford's was the home of Captain and Mrs. Charles Hughes. Mrs. Hughes was the widow of Joe Lemore who was killed in the war. She kept boarders at her home.

Across Second from the Martin and Ratchford homes were three small wooden store buildings owned by Joseph Dugat. These buildings were occupied respectively by a

restaurant, tinshop, and blacksmith shop. All three were burned down about 1874.

At the east side of this block was the George S. Sherman residence. Then going up the bluff, northeasterly, were the following houses, in order, rock house of Joe Dugat, house of Dr. E. F. Carpenter, the three-story concrete house built by Joseph F. Smith, the J. R. McCarty house, in which our family lived for two years, the Thomas J. Howard cottage, a two-story concrete house whose owner I do not remember, and finally, a one-story concrete house in which General T. T. Williamson spent the last days of his life.

On Center Street back of Coffin Bros. store was Mrs. Leonoir Campbell, the schoolteacher's home, where she lived with her son, Will. Next to it was a Presbyterian Church which once had been two stories high, but due to storm, had been reduced to a single story, with a bell-scaffold on the roof. This was the only church building ever built at St. Mary's. Union services were held in it. The edifice was also used at times for school house purposes.

The last house west on Center was that of John Foss, a Swede, who had a blacksmith shop on the premises.

Across Center Street from Mrs. Campbell's was a rent house owned by Major Egery. In it was located at one time the telegraph office at St. Mary's. Lyman B. Russell was the operator at that time. The Foss family was among the very last to leave St. Mary's. They joined a Socialist colony in Mexico.

Back at some distance from the Pathoff house was the Richter gin and residence. Richter at one time taught school at St. Mary's.⁴

4 Burmeister, Sallie J., Reminiscences, MSS

The wharf and warehouses which were the mainstays of all St. Mary's business, were pretentious affairs, from all accounts.

It sat at the foot of Center Street, below the bluff, and extended into the bay about a quarter of a mile to the deep channel. The wharf was wide enough for a railroad track with space for wagon traffic on each side. At the channel end of the wharf was a T head where wagons could turn. On the railroad tract a car was operated mostly by mules power but often by wind power. When the wind was strong enough a large sail was attached to the car, and "when the car was loaded, the brakes would be released and the wind would blow the car down the track and into the big warehouse at the shore end of the wharf. The wharf at the beach end was flanked by a large warehouse, a small warehouse, and a loading platform. On the bluff above the warehouses was a palisaded cattle-pen and a few sheds.

The first wharf master was Captain Charles F. Bailey. He was succeeded by Billy Neel. Floyd Carpenter was wharfmaster for several years. The last was Trancido Alista, whose home was destroyed in the 1886 storm.⁵

5 Johnson, Louis Henry, Recollections, MSS
 Rea, William Louis, Memoirs, MSS
 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS
 Burmeister, Sallie J., Reminiscences, MSS
 Thomas, Joe F., Recollections, MSS
 Brightman, Mort and Andy, Recollections, MSS

During the heyday of the town, the telegraph office was maintained in the wharf offices. The telegraph line was built

into St. Mary's in 1870 or 1871. It connected with Rockport, Corpus Christi, Brownsville and Indianola. The office at St. Mary's was opened for business December 1, 1871. John R. Martin was the first local operator.⁶

6 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Granddad's Autobiography, The Comanche Publishing Co., 1930, pp. 17, 19.

Lyman B. Russell and Frank B. Rooke were other operators at St. Mary's. Rooke was the last operator. He married Miss Birdie Driscoll, daughter of Jeremiah O. Driscoll, and became a successful ranchman. The telegraph was discontinued at St. Mary's in about 1890.⁷

7 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS

Of the sea-going vessels which regularly called at the port of St. Mary's, the "Waterloo" and her skipper, Captain Frederick Augustine, already have been mentioned. The "Alfred and Sammy" was owned and captained by Charles Hughes with his stepson Alexander (Sandy) Lemore, as mate. The "Fairy" and "Belleport" owned by Captains Peter and Theodore Johnson, prior to the Civil War. The "Hannah" captained by John Thomas, of Lamar. The "Julia A. Hodges" and "Luna of St. Mary's were also ante-bellum

schooners who made St. Mary's. Both were in Confederate service during the war. Post-bellum vessels included the schooner "Frances", owned and captained by Theodore (Charley) Johnson; the "Annie Catherine" (Captain Asborne Bailey); the sloop "White Ball", (Captain Kroner or Cronin); the schooner "Anide" (Captain Sam Gray); and the mailboat "Ruth" (Captain Charlie Walton). All of these were vessels owned by residents of the local bays. In addition the Morgan Steamship line had steamers call at St. Mary's for several years until two were wrecked on Aransas bar. Thereafter Morgan service was discontinued. There were many lumber schooners and cattle boats which visited the post from 1857 to 1885.⁸

8 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS
 Johnson, Louis Henry, Recollections, MSS
 Johnson, Peter A., The Two Sea Captains Johnson, MSS
 Brightman, Andy, Recollections, MSS.

The schooner "Frances" was the favorite and most famed of all the vessels which visited St. Mary's and has been immortalized in a poem, entitled "A Night in Tilden".⁹

9 The Refugio Timely Remarks, Centennial Edition, December 14, 1934, p. 61. "A Night in Tilden", author unknown, reproduced from The Refugio Review, issue March 17, 1911.

The complement to the sea-going vessels and the wharf-works were the teamsters and carters and cattle drivers who met the

vessels here at the sea. John Young, hero of Doctor Dobie's "Vaquero" was one of the latter. Among the former were Dave Talman, S. D. Ezell, R. A. Ezell, John Shoemaker, Louis Unsworth, A. J. Heard, Captain Wm. T. McCampbell, Captain Allen C. Jones, Mick McGill, John H. M. Ryals, Holmes Heard, David J. Kelly, Robert A. Rigby, Joseph T. Mahavier, and John Dugat.¹⁰

10 Brightman, Andy, Recollections, MSS

These freighters hauled from St. Mary's to Goliad, Beeville, San Antonio, and as far west as Uvalde.¹¹

11 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS

The principal merchants of the town have been given random mention throughout this history. General mercantile stores at St. Mary's after the Civil War were: Post & Hobby, succeeded in 1866, by Ellis & Wood, succeeded in turn by John H. Wood & Sons. The Post & Hobby business was consolidated with Ellis & Loftin business by the new firm. Ratchford & Vineyard, succeeded by Ratchford & Howard. McCampbell Bros. (Wm. T. and T. P.), succeeded by Coffin Bros., who were succeeded by John Henry O'Connor. E. J. Pickert & Co., in business in 1867, in hands of C. A. Russell, assignee in 1869. Kahn's, the owners unknown

and George R. Robertson, dry goods. Emile A. Perrenot, Ben Ellis, Berry Merchant, Charles H. Russell, W. D. Campbell, Samuel S. Mapes, James M. Martin & Co., Capt. John Low all had stores at divers times. Marion A. Mull had a jewelry store. Dr. R. A. Nott and Willie A. Williamson were succeeded in the drug business by Dr. H. J. Nott. J. I. Cottingham, Coffin Bros. and Kohler & Heldenfels had large lumber yards. Moses McKinney, Micajah Thomas (McKinney & Thomas), Henry C. Bellows, and John Foss were blacksmiths. V. A. Dixon was a miller, and F. M. Ellis sold the output. Lucero was a tailor. Henderson, a photographer, and C. B. Caswell had a picture gallery. George S. Sherman, Oliver P. Reid and Arthur Haynes operated liquor houses. Sextus Garrett, F. M. Ellis and Isabella Neel conducted commercial hotels. Thomas J. Howard, Capt. Charles Hughes, Captain John Low, and Judge Charles A. Russell kept boarding houses at various times. James R. McCarty operated a packing house and had a salt works and oyster bed. His products were sold by Ezell & McCarty, Market. T. B. McNeill operated a brickyard and S. D. Ezell & Son were also brickmakers. Jackson & Ratchford had a tin shop. H. H. Jackson was an Englishman whom Major Ratchford brought from Indianola and set up in the tin business. Martin & Co. (J. M. Martin) conducted a livery stable business.

School teachers at St. Mary's included Miss Sarah E. Ellis, John C. Campbell and wife, Ellenoir N. (Shive) Campbell, Miss Edgie Shives, W. J. Morris and daughters, Colonel John H. Allen, William H. Allen, Thomas A. Blair and wife, Mrs. L. B. Randolph, the Misses Alcanza and Mollie Howard. Miss Alcanza Howard married Richard H. Wood and was the mother of Will W. Wood, ex-sheriff of Bexar County.¹²

12 Burmeister, Sallie J., Reminiscences, MSS
Brightman, Andy, Recollections, MSS

From 1883 to the end of St. Mary's the school-teachers were: Miss Missouri Welch, Allen P. Folsom, D. S. Boone, Miss Mary Taylor, Mrs. Willbanks, Tom Hargraves, Miss McGrew, Miss Inez Street, Fay Touns. The last teacher was Miss Mattie Tom.¹³

13 Brightman, Andy, Recollections, MSS

Mrs. William Brightman was a music teacher and E. D. Hastings was a "dancing master".¹⁴

14 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS

Lawyers who practiced at St. Mary's included Joseph F. Smith, General Thomas T. Williamson, Cornelius K. Stribling,

J. Richard Lynn, Col. L. B. Camp, Charles A. Russell, Charles E. Williamson, Willie McWillie Williamson, Edward Spear Atkinson, William C. Carroll, Thomas A. Blair, and I. N. Mitchell.

Surveyors who lived at St. Mary's included Lyman H. Ward, Charles A. Russell, Lyman B. Russell, Mansfield Barlow, Wm. H. Long.

Physicians and surgeons who were residents of St. Mary's included Dr. Rufus A. Nott, Dr. Thomas H. Nott, Dr. H. J. (Junius) Nott, Dr. E. F. Carpenter, Dr. T. T. Williamson, Jr., Dr. W. J. Morris, Dr. Wm. P. McGrew, Dr. A. J. Throckmorton, Dr. M. W. C. Frazier, and Dr. Theodore Fabian.

Ministers of Religion included: Methodist: Rev. Gideon Wesley Cottingham, C. R. Gillett, and Berry Merchant. Baptist: Benjamin F. Stribling and Dr. W. J. Morris. Church of Christ: William Baxter. Presbyterian: Parson John N. McCain was minister at St. Mary's for many years. Mrs. Ellenoir Campbell and the Ratchfords were lay readers. The Episcopalians had no church or rector, but a number of ministers. Captain Charles F. Bailey was lay reader. The Allen, Beeman and Atkinson families, and Mrs. Jerry Driscoll were leading Anglicans.¹⁵

15 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS
Burmeister, Sallie J., Reminiscences, MSS

Incidentally, the Rev. John N. McCain, Presbyterian minister at St. Mary's, had been president of the famous Aranama College at Goliad in 1869, 1870. This family came to St. Mary's and remained for several years.¹⁶

¹⁶ Madray, Mrs. I. C., A History of Bee County, Bee-Picayune, Beeville, Texas, 1939, p. 61

From the sole existant copy of the "Vaquero", (issue of December 11, 1869) we find under the heading "Arrival and Departure of the Mails", the information: "Victoria - Arrives Wednesday at 8 A.M. -- Departs Thursday at 6 P.M. Corpus Christi - Arrives Thursday at 6 P.M. Departs Wednesday at 8 A.M." Mails came into St. Mary's both by boat and overland. The postmasters of St. Mary's from beginning to end were: Cyrus W. Egery, Francis Marion Ellis, Lyman H. Ward, Mrs. Mary M. Bailey, George S. Sherman, Horace Wadsworth, Samuel S. Mapes, Sextus Garrett, Lyman B. Russell, Charles A. Russell, George Howard, John W. Ward. From 1880 to end, John Gray, Charles B. Gray, William B. Gray, (the last postmaster).¹⁷

¹⁷ List of Postmasters of St. Mary's furnished Hobart Huson by United States Post Master General, with exception of Civil War period, which is furnished by Colonel Phil Power's Memoirs.

Mail carriers between St. Mary's and Refugio included, William J. Dorsett, Jr., Charles F. Leisering, all of the Brightman "boys", Walter Toups, Jake Gray and L. R. Jeter, the latter being present mayor of the Town of Refugio.¹⁸

18 Brightman, Andy, Recollections, MSS

CHAPTER X

THE END OF ST. MARY'S

With the rise of Rockport and the failure to obtain the county seat, it took no prophet to predict the ultimate fate of St. Mary's. Yet despite these conditions, St. Mary's continued to exist in a more or less flourishing condition until a combination of events conspired to write Finis to her history. These conditions in brief were (1) the failure to overcome the disadvantages of the Aransas bar, and the discontinuance of Morgan steamship service; (2) the failure to obtain a railroad connection, while Rockport, Beeville, and Corpus Christi were successful in doing so; (3) the occurrence of a series of disastrous storms, in 1869, 1875, 1886 and 1887, which wiped out the port facilities; and (4) the lack of community capital and determination to repair the damage. The remarkable thing about it is that the town existed in any strength after the storms of 1875.

The storm of 1869 came during the night of August 16th, and before it had expended its fury, not only a considerable part of the Texas coast was well battered up, but the interior as well had suffered appreciable damage. The roof of the Catholic Church at Refugio was blown off.¹

1 Rea, William Louis, Memoirs, MSS

Mrs. Burmeister relates:

Our family was at St. Mary's during the 1869 storm. My father was at Refugio attending court at the time the storm came up and my mother and younger children were alone in our big house. The storm appeared about dark and continued throughout the night, abating about day-break. The wind was so strong and loud that you couldn't hear one another speak without shouting. The rain poured down all night.

The people were afraid their homes would blow down and crush them beneath the wreckage. When roofs began to blow off and chimneys began to crumble, many people quit their houses and took to the open, seeking shelter from the wind in gullies, which did not have too much water running in them. I remember the Howard family as having spent the night in the storm. These people remained in the storm all night and got thoroughly drenched, but the banks of the gullies protected them from the howling wind.

Our family went out into the storm and stayed long enough to get drenched, but, after seeing that our roof did not blow off, we decided the house to be safest, and went back into it. No harm came to us. Our house had been built differently from most, inasmuch as the gable faced the bay instead of the length of the roof.

The roofs of practically all houses along the beach were blown off. The two-story Presbyterian church and school was blown flat. The front porch and shed room of the Dr. Carpenter house were torn off and blown onto the prairie. Emila A. Perrenot was lodging with Mrs. Carpenter and had the shed room. He was in it when the storm blew it away. Aside from sticking a nail in his foot he escaped injury. The chimney of this house crashed in and crushed the cradle in which young Eugene Low had been just a moment before. His mother happened to take him out just before the chimney fell.

Mrs. L. B. Randolph had opened a private school in the Joe Dugat house and lived there. The younger Russell children, including myself, attended this school. The roof of this house was blown away and all our school books got wet.

There was some, but not serious, injury to the wharf installations.

2 Burmeister, Sallie J., Reminiscences, MSS
 Russell, Lyman B., Recollections, MSS

Despite this storm, a number of new business men came to St. Mary's, and the town continued to hold its own; in fact, the future seemed bright.

The storm of September 16, 1875, was the fiercest that had stricken the Texas coast up to that time. Saluria was entirely wiped off the map and Indianola badly wrecked.³

3 Indianola Scrap Book, compiled and published by The Victoria Advocate, Victoria, Texas, 1936, pp. 70-84.
 Rea, William Louis, Memoirs, MSS

The storm which began to take form on the 15th, reached the proportion of a cyclone on the 16th, and the wharf and many houses at St. Mary's were badly damaged.

Mrs. Burmeister, who was at St. Mary's during the storm of 1875, relates:

The 1875 storm lasted about two days. It was about twenty-four hours before it reached its intensity which was of cyclonic proportions. My father was at home on this occasion. Our family had gone through the 1869 storm safely and had confidence that our home would stand. We did not feel in any particular danger as no water was being blown over the bluff. In fact no water has ever

come over the bluff in any storm at St. Mary's.

St. Mary's did not suffer from this storm as did Indianola and Rockport. Indianola was almost wiped out by wind and water and hundreds of people were killed and drowned. Rockport did not suffer from wind damage, but the sea water rose in her streets and flooded many buildings. No one was killed or injured at St. Mary's, and only a few houses suffered minor damage, although the storm was fearsome.

The principal damage at St. Mary's was to the wharves. At that time there were two wharves paralleling each other. One was called the 'old wharf', the other the 'new'. The old wharf which had been built at the beginning of St. Mary's and had been kept in repair, was not greatly injured, while the new wharf was almost washed away. The warehouses were only slightly damaged.

Before the storm appeared, Frank M. Ellis had made arrangements for a big ball to be held in his hotel on about the 22d or 23d. After the storm subsided news began to come over telegraph of the awful disaster at Indianola. John R. Martin was the operator at St. Mary's and my brother, Lyman, was operator at Rockport. The news was a terrible shock to the people of St. Mary's, who had come through the same ordeal unscathed. People hung around the telegraph office awaiting each new flash. There were no St. Mary's people at Indianola that I know of. I met a lot of Indianola people in after years.

Because of the tragedy at Indianola, which evoked the deep sympathy and appreciation of the people of St. Mary's, there was considerable discussion about calling off the Ellis ball. However, it was decided to go ahead with it.

4 Burmeister, Sallie J., Reminiscences, MSS

The damage at St. Mary's was speedily repaired, and still new business men came in, although some old ones left. Among

the new men were Kohler & Heldenfels, and Coffin Bros., and others.

Judge Rea relates:

My first visit to the old town of St. Mary's was on July 4, 1876. The occasion of my visit was an old-fashioned tournament held as a part of the Fourth of July celebration down there. Thousands of people from all parts of this section attended. The tournament was held at the Well Mott, back of the town. There were many contestants in the tournament to decide who was to have the right to name the Queen of the celebration. However, I can now remember the names of but two, Tobias D. Wood and Sandy Lemore. Sandy was the champion. * * * The celebration ended with a dance that night in the top floor of the old three-story Ellis Hotel. * * *

5 Rea, William Louis, Memoirs, MSS

The tournament, which was on horseback, was an annual event at St. Mary's, for many years. In fact, the people of St. Mary's were fond of horsemanship and horseracing, and impromptu races were frequently run along the fine hard sand beach below the bluff. Andy Brightman relates

Many horse races were run on this course. The races were mainly local "match" affairs, to decide which was the fastest horse, with a small bet to make the event more interesting. Among those having horses to run on this course were Frank B. Rooke, Tom Pathoff, David Talmon, Frank Talmon, and William Brightman. Most of the owners rode their own horses but Brightman did not. * * *6

6 Brightman, Andy, Recollections, MSS

Another favorite diversion which began when St. Mary's began, and lasted until the big ships came in, was a moonlight dance on the deck of a great lumber schooner after she had docked at the wharf. Andy Brightman, who is a great fiddler himself, says on this point:

Up to the 1887 storm, the big three-masted schooners came to the port. Their arrival was the signal for much activity. There would be a dance on deck at every arrival. Sometimes the sailors would furnish the music; most times the fiddling was done by local talent. One of the best fiddlers was Judge Lyman Russell. He could 'fiddle' and cut the 'buck and wing' himself, and could 'play both ways'. (This was before he 'got religion'). A dance by moonlight on the decks of these big schooners was something for St. Mary's folk to look forward to."⁷

7 Ibid

Another attraction which outlasted the town of St. Mary's was the moonlight 'oyster bakes'. Copano bay was full then, as it is now, of oyster reefs. E. L. Snow, R. Armstrong and the Brightman 'boys' were experts in gathering all the oysters a big crowd could devour. People came from miles inland to attend these functions.⁸

8 Ibid

See also many news items in Refugio Review for years prior to 1912.

The gambling house at St. Mary's was one of the largest on the coast, and lasted until after the 1886 storm. Many stockmen and professional gamblers came to it.⁹

9 Burmeister, Sallie J., *Reminiscences*, MSS

Long prior to the Civil War railroad construction projects for Live Oak peninsular were launched. The Aransas Road, which was to have traversed St. Mary's, has been mentioned. After the war the project was revived and modified into a railroad from Live Oak Point, via Rockport, and Corpus Christi to Mexico. Richard King, James M. Doughty, Major John Wood, the Mathis, and George W. Fulton, were prominent in the promotion of the latter enterprise.

10 Gammel's, Laws of Texas, The Gammel Book Company, Austin, 1898. Vol. III, p. 1214; Vol. IV, p. 786

This Mexican railroad project languished, but the promoters of Rockport never gave up the fight for a rail connection, while the people of St. Mary's did nothing about it. In the early 1880s the San Antonio & Aransas Pass Railroad was projected by B. F. Yoakum and others. The line was built from San An-

tonio towards the coast, and the first train came into Beeville June 14, 1886, bringing the first shipment of lumber which that town had received otherwise than through the ports (principally St. Mary's). Incidentally, the first shipment of furniture which came by this train was consigned to Kohler & Heldenfels who had moved from St. Mary's.¹¹

¹¹ Madray, Mrs. I. C., A History of Bee County, Bee-Picayune Publishing Co., Beeville, 1939, pp. 23-23.

The railroad continued building southward to Aransas Pass and Rockport. It reached Rockport in the late 1880s, or about 1890.¹²

¹² Nims, Dorothy Louise, A History of the Village of Rockport, Thesis, presented for Master's Degree, Southwest Texas State Teachers College, 1939, p. 68.

A branch line from Rockport to St. Mary's was considered, and actually shown on the early time tables of the S. A. & A. P. Railroad, but nothing ever materialized. Refugio County did not get its first railroad until 1906, and then St. Mary's was but a memory.¹³

¹³ Allhands, J. L., Gringo Builders, privately published, 1931, 283 pages.

Mrs. Burmeister was not at St. Mary's when the storm of August 20, 1886, came. She had married Frank Burmeister, a young lawyer, a few months before, and was living in Tilden, but her sister, Mrs. Floyd Carpenter, who was in St. Mary's on the occasion, wrote her all the details. According to Mrs. Burmeister:

My mother, who was then a widow, had everything packed, ready to move the family from St. Mary's to Tilden. Dave Kelly had brought his wagon and team to St. Mary's to do the moving. About the time he arrived, which was about noon, the storm began to shape up, and Kelly gave up the idea of moving our family. The storm lasted from about noon until sundown, and though it did not last as long as the storm of 1886, it was fiercer and more disastrous. It totally destroyed Indianola and eliminated that famed town from the map.

The storm at St. Mary's came from two directions. There was a lull and it came back from a different direction. No one was killed or injured at St. Mary's, but property was severely damaged. The new school house, next to my mother's home was blown to pieces. Mrs. Hughes home was blown to bits.

The negro family then living in it escaped injury. The wharves and warehouses were demolished. A half-hearted effort was made to rebuild them, but the storm of 1887 forever ended the port of St. Mary's.¹⁴

14 Burmeister, Sallie J. Reminiscences. MSS

Judge Rea states,

The storm of 1886 * * * was the worse that ever hit Refugio County. St. Mary's was badly wrecked by it, and never recovered from the disaster. However, I believe

the damage at Refugio was even greater than that at St. Mary's.¹⁵

15 Rea, William Louis, Memoirs, MSS
Indianola Scrap Book, The Victoria Advocate, Victoria, Texas, 1936, 198 pages.

Andy Brightman mentions that F. W. Heldenfels one-story brick home at St. Mary's was blown down in the storm of 1886. He promptly rebuilt. Andy was at St. Mary's during the 1887 storm. He relates that R. Armstrong, who lived on Egery's Island, got washed off his boat and was drowned. He states:

The end came to St. Mary's as a commercial center in 1887 * * * Some of the people left following the storm, but the others began to rebuild, and had about half rebuilt the town, when another storm came in 1887 and put them back where they were before * * * There had been an attempt to repair the wharf after the 1886 storm, and some big vessels came to the port in 1887, but the storm that year put the wharf out of commission, and no one attempted to rebuild it.¹⁶

16 Brightman, Andy, Recollections, MSS

The exodus from St. Mary's was rapid. The citizens who owned homes took their buildings with them to their new locations. The Ellis Hotel was moved to Beeville.¹⁷

17 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections, MSS
Madray, Mrs. I. C., A History of Bee County, Bee-Picayune Publishing Co. 1939, p. 41 (Photograph of hotel and sketch of Ellis).

Dr. H. J. Nott, John Henry O'Connor, Will Campbell, Viggo Kohler, F. W. Heldenfels, were among those who moved to Beeville. A number of families, including the Russells, and Martins, moved to Tilden. A few families went to Refugio, and a large number to Rockport.

The families remaining at St. Mary's as late as 1890 were those of Major John H. Wood, Jeremiah Driscoll, Frank B. Rooke, Clara Dugat, Edwin Peets, Charles F. Leisering, Tom Maton, Mike Linney, John Foss, Jirou, Foster, Tackett, Armstrong, Dorsett, Carpenter, Jirou, Kelley, John L. Richter, and the Grays and Brightmans. Foss left to Mexico about 1890. Allen P. Folsom, the school teacher, and William Tedford, a newcomer, acquired the Foss properties.

The telegraph office was discontinued in 1890. Major Wood, old in years and service to country, closed his store about the same time. The store and post office kept by the Gray family was the last vestige of commerce in the old town.¹⁸

¹⁸ Brightman, Andy, Recollections, MSS

In 1901 Richard H. Wood, grandson of Major Wood, visited the site of St. Mary's. He found his grandsire's mansion still proudly overlooking the bay. The ruins of the Joseph F. Smith house were in evidence, and the Armstrong family were living

in the best preserved portion. The old Sherman barrel house was still standing, and Andrew Greenwood, an old negro slave, was living in it. The old Neel hotel was standing and the Brightmans were living in it. The two-story Gray home (once the Dr. Nott building) was still there, as was the Will Gray home (M. Thomas old place). The Theophilis Dugat house (Capt. Low place) was in place. Down the block were the charred ruins of Mrs. Pathoff's cottage. The old Jerry Driscoll home was standing, but deserted. The Foster home was in existence, and a few years later was brought by S. A. Drodgy to Refugio. Such was the remains of St. Mary's at the turn of the Twentieth Century.¹⁹

¹⁹ Interview, with Richard H. Wood, of Refugio, 1937
(Huson's notes)

Now, St. Mary's in 1942! Only three original buildings remain. The remnants of the Neel hotel, the Dr. Nott building and The Dugat house. Prowling through the dense brush which covers most all of the towasite, old shell concrete cisterns may be discovered, now the habitat of the rattlesnakes which are plentiful in that area. The piling of the old wharves and warehouses still project like snagged teeth above the waters of Copano bay.

Of the many families who once resided there, but one remains - the Brightman "boys", old bachelors who live in the old Neel house and spend their time fishing.

The late Lyman B. Russell, who had a penchant for connecting his family with royalty, claims for the Brightman "boys" a royal descent from "Edward I, King of England and his first wife, Eleanor, daughter of the King of Castile". In the line are great names, earls, lords and sirs. The Brightman "boys" probably know nothing, and care less, of their royal background. With a fascinatingly quaint courtliness, they are content to hold solitary dominion over what was once the proud TOWN OF SAINT MARY'S.²⁰

20 Russell, Lyman Brightman, Genealogy of the Russell Family, privately printed, Comanche, Texas, evidently as supplement to Comanche Chief, undated. See page 3 for "Brightman Royal Lines".

Bibliography

Printed Works

- Allhands, J. L., Gringo Builders, Privately Published, 1931
- Bridges, C. A., The Knights of the Golden Circle, Southwest Historical Quarterly, Volume 44
- Brown, John Henry, History of Texas, Beckett and Company, St. Louis, Mo., 1892, Volume I and II
- Brown, John Henry, Life and Times of Henry Smith, the First Provisional Governor of Texas, A. D. Aldridge & Co., Dallas, 1887
- Chabot, Frederick Charles, The Perote Prisoners, The Naylor Company, San Antonio, Texas, 1934
- Daniell, L. E., Personnel of the State Government, Maverick Printing Company, San Antonio, Texas, 1892
- Daniell, L. E., Texas, the Country and its Men, Publisher and date unknown
1. Burmeister, Frank H., pp. 506-508
 2. Hobby, William R., pp. 608-681
 3. Jones, A. C., pp. 242-248
 4. Kohler, Viggo, p. 748
 5. Power, James F., pp. 466-467
 6. Ryals, John H. M., pp. 511-513
 7. Welder, Phil R., pp. 372-373
- Davis, Ellis A. and Grobe, Edwin H., The New Encyclopedia of Texas, Development Bureau, Dallas, Texas - No date given; Sketches of: Driscoll, Robert; Jones, W.W.; McCampbell, John S.; Boyd, James; Kohler, Viggo.
- Dixon, Sam Houston, Poets and Poetry of Texas, Texas Historical Publishing Company, Houston, Texas
- Dobie, J. Frank, A Vaquero of the Brush Country, Southwest Press, Dallas, Texas, 1929
- Elliott, Claude, Leathercoat, Standard Printing Co., 1938
- Gammels, Laws of Texas, The Gammel Book Company, Austin, Texas, 1898, Volume III and Volume IV

- Hunter, J. Marvin, The Trail Drivers of Texas (2nd Edition)
Cokesbury Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1925
Sketches of: W. S. Hall, Dennis O'Connor, A. C.
Jones, Captain Henry Scott
- Huson, Hobart, Directory of Officials of Refugio County,
Privately published, 1942
- Huson, Hobart, District Judges of Refugio County, Refugio
Timely Remarks, 1941
- Huson, Hobart, El Copano, Ancient Port of Bexar and La Bahia,
Refugio Timely Remarks, Refugio, 1935
- Huson, Hobart, Iron Men, Privately Published, 1940
- Indianola Scrap Book, The Victoria Advocate, Victoria, Texas,
1936
- Johnson, Frank White, A History of Texas and Texans, The Amer-
ican Historical Society, Chicago, Ill., and New York
1914, Washington Government Printing Office
- Journal of Secession Convention of Texas, Austin Printing Com-
pany, Austin, Texas, 1912
- Kennedy, William, History of Texas, Molyneaux Publishing Co.,
Fort Worth, 1925 (Map of Aransas Bay)
- Lamar Papers, Volume 2, J. C. Baldwin & Sons, Austin, Texas,
1922
- Linn, John J., Reminiscences of Fifty Years in Texas, D. & J.
Sadler & Co., New York, 1883
- Madray, I. C. Mrs., A History of Bee County, The Bee Picayune
Publishing Company, Beeville, 1939
- McCampbell, Coleman, Saga of Frontier Seaport, South-West Press,
Dallas, Texas
- Neighbors, Alice Atkinson, Charles Arden Russell, University of
Texas, 1937
- Norton, Milford P., Papers, University of Texas
- Oberste, William H., History of the Mission of Refugio, Refugio
Timely Remarks, Refugio, Texas, 1942

- Reeves, Frank, Sr., A Century of Texas Cattle Brands, The Fair Publishing Company, Fort Worth, Texas
- Russell, Lyman Brightman, Granddad's Autobiography, The Comanche Publishing Company, Comanche, Texas, 1930
- Rosters of the 8th Texas Infantry, War Department, Washington, D. C.
- Speer, Ocie, Texas Jurists, Steck Publishing Co., 1937
- Sutherland, Mary A., The Story of Corpus Christi, Rein & Sons, Houston, Texas, 1916
- Texas Almanac, 1867-1868, "Refugio County, Judge Patrick Shelly"
- Wharton, Clarence, Texas Under Many Flags, The American History Society, Chicago and New York, 1930, Volume 4
- Watson, May Mathis Green, and Lillico, Alex., Taft Ranch, privately printed, 1934
- Writer's Project, W.P.A., Corpus Christi, A History and Guide, Caller Times, Corpus Christi, 1942

Manuscripts

- Beeman, Geraldo Alonzo, Fireside Talks with the Children, (In possession of Beeman family)
- Dugab, Clara Lemore, Recollections
- Ellis, F. M. Jr., Recollections
- Hobby, Edwin to Charles Arden Russell, Letter dated April 14, 1861
- Huson, Hobart, Letter from James Doughty Williamson, Waco, Texas, May 17, 1937
- Huson, Hobart, St. Mary's of Aransas, Refugio Timely Remarks,
- Johnson, Peter A., The Two Sea Captains Johnson
- Power, Philip, Memoirs,
- Rea, William Louis, Memoirs

Russell, Lyman Brightman, Recollections
 Thomas, Joe, Recollections
 Burmeister, Mrs. Sallie J., Reminiscences
 Brightman, Andy, Recollections
 Norton, Mary Stevens Russell, Diary

Refugio County Records

Commissioners' Court Minutes, Refugio County, Vol. 1, June
7, 1869

Commissioners' Court Minutes, Refugio County, Vol. 1, May
1862 to April 3, 1865

Original Poll List of Election, St. Mary's Precinct, October
12, 1866, Office of County Clerk, Refugio County

Proceedings of Meeting of Citizens of Refugio and San Patricio
Counties, October 10, 1853, Archives, State Library,
Austin, Texas

Refugio County Deed Records, Vol. G, Williamson, T. T. and
Vineyard, J. W., to Bailey, Charles F., Trustee,
October 1, 1867

Refugio County Deed Records, Volume F, Smith, Joseph F. to
Willett, Gilbert B., June 30, 1860

Refugio County Deed Records, Vol. E, p. 124, Contract between
Joseph F. Smith and Joseph F. Armstrong, September
19, 1840

Refugio County Deed Records, Vol. G, H, I, J. M. Q

Refugio County Deed Records, Deed to T. T. Williamson, March
10, 1857, Recorded in Volume F, Refugio County

Refugio County Deed Records, Joseph F. Smith, Contract with
John W. Vineyard, June 23, 1858

Empresarios Contract between Coahuila and Texas, and Power and Hewetson, dated June 11, 1826, and April 21, 1830, recorded in Volume 45, p. 639

Smith, Joseph F. to Augustine, Frederick, Deed, Aug. 7, 1858,

Smith, Joseph F. and Meyer, A. C., Contract, Oct. 31, 1857

Smith, Joseph F. and Vance, James, Contract, Feb. 10, 1857

Smith, Joseph F., and Tirzah Ann Williamson, et vir., Contract, August 7, 1845, Volume K, p. 167

Williamson, T. T. to Vineyard, J. W., Deed, March 22, 1858,

Archives, State Library, Austin

Petition to the Legislature of Texas by Citizens Favoring St. Mary's for County Seat, 1869,

Petition to Legislature of Texas by Citizens of Fulton in favor of Rockport as County Seat, 1869

Camp, L. B., et al, Address to People of Texas, 1861

Archives, General Land Office, Austin

Grants from State of Coahuila and Texas to James Power and James Hewetson, 22 leagues of land in Refugio County, and on Texas islands, 1829

Newspapers

Galveston News, Centennial Edition, April 11, 1942

Refugio Timely Remarks, March to September, 1937

Refugio Timely Remarks, December 14, 1934

Russell, Lyman Brightman, Genealogy of the Russell Family,
Privately Printed, Comanche, Texas, Supplement
to The Vanguard

Russell, Lyman Brightman, Royal Line of the Beeman-Deming
Family from William, The Conqueror, privately
printed, 1931

The Shreveport Times, Centennial Edition, June 28, 1935

Victoria Advocate, Centennial Edition, September 28, 1934,
Vol. 88

Reported Cases

Egery vs. Power, 5 Texas, 500

Luter, Exum, vs. William L. Hunter, (The Sequestration Cases)
30 Texas, 688

H. S. Foote, vs. Egery, 65 U.S. 267, 16 L.Ed. 655

Power vs. Smith, 14 Texas, 4

Smith vs. Lipscomb, 13 Texas, 532

Smith vs. Power, 2 Texas, 57

Smith vs. Power, 14 Texas, 146

Smith vs. Power, 23 Texas, 29

Smith vs. Russell, 37 Texas, 248

League vs. Egery, 65 U.S. 264, 16 L.Ed. 655

APPENDIX

The following is a list of all persons who at any time owned lots in the Town of St. Mary's:

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Adams, John | Cottingham, J. I. |
| Albritton, Emma C. | Cotton, W. D. |
| Albritton, James | Crandall, James M. |
| Alfred, William | Cummings, W. S. |
| Armstrong, R. | Dorsett, T. M. (farm) |
| Arnett, W. W. | Dorsett, Wm. J. |
| Augustine, Frederick | Doughty, James M. |
| Bailey, Charles F. | Driscoll, J. O. |
| Bailey, Frederick A. | Driscoll, Robert |
| Bailey, Mary M. | Dugat, Clara |
| Bailey, Fannie J. | Dugat, Charles E. (farm) |
| Barber, John A. | Dugat, W. A. |
| Baxter, P. | Dulse, Thomas |
| Baxter, William | Dumphey, Richard |
| Beeman, G. A. | Dumphey, Sarah |
| Bell, George | Dunn, Augustus A. |
| Bellows, Henry C. | Dunn, J. W. |
| Bellows, Mary | Durnham, Sylvanus |
| Bellows, V. A. | Edgett, Geo. W. |
| Bewell, Wm. | Egery, Cyrus W. |
| Borick, Lucinda | Egery, Mary |
| Borsaldova, Victor | Ellis, Benjamin C. |
| Braasher, B. C. | Ellis, F. M. |
| Brightman, J. H. | Ellis, F. N. |
| Brightman, William | Ellis, Frances M. |
| Byrne, Thomas A. | Ellis, Sarah E. |
| Byrne, Thos. K. | Ezzell, H. G. |
| Camp, L. B. (farm) | Ezzell, Robert A. |
| Campbell, Wm. D. | Ezzell, S. D. |
| Carpenter, E. F. | Fabian, Theodore |
| Carpenter, M. C. | Frazier, M. W. C. |
| Carter, Sam N. | Fulton, G. W. |
| Cassidy, John | Garrett, Julia B. |
| Chambers, John | Gill, A. J. |
| Chambler, John | Gill, N. |
| Coffin Bros. | Goddat, R. |
| Cook, Stephen T. | Hackett, Jane E. |
| Corsant, David | Halsey, N. M. S. |
| Corsant, E. (farm) | Heldenfels, Hugo |
| Cottingham, Gideon | Hess, Charles |
| Cottingham, James C. | Hester, Jno. W. |

Hitchings, A. J.
 Hitchner, Sarah
 Hobby, Alfred M.
 Howard, Elizabeth
 Howard, George
 Hughes, Charles
 Jackson, H. H.
 Jordan, Richard
 Kay, Mary E.
 Kenedy, Albert G.
 Kimball, Thomas B. (farm)
 Kohler, Viggo
 Kohler & Heldenfels
 Lambert, Thomas
 Lehan, A. H.
 Leisering, C. F. (farm)
 Lemore, Alexander
 Lenoire, Joseph
 Leonard, Elisha
 Linney, J. F.
 Loftin, Francis
 Loftin, James
 Long, Wm. H.
 Low, John
 Lynn, J. Richard
 McCampbell, T. P.
 McCampbell, W. E.
 McCarty, George
 McCarty, James R.
 McCarty, Jeff
 McGrew, Mrs. C. F. W.
 McCutcheon, J. E.
 McMillan, A. M.
 McMillan, James A.
 McNeel, J. M.
 McNeill, Archibald
 McRae, D. A.
 McRae, D. A., Jr.
 May, J. W.
 Maley, J. W.
 Martin, James M.
 Martin & Co.
 Mahavier, J. H.
 Mapes, Samuel S.
 Maton, John (farm)

Methodist Episcopal Church
 Merchant, B.
 Mirear, P.
 Mull, Marion A.
 Neel, Isabella
 Neel, James M.
 Neel, Martin
 Neel, P. M.
 Nott, H. J.
 Nott, R. A.
 Nye, Richard
 O'Connor, John Henry
 Pathoff, Mary
 Peaks, A. M. (farm)
 Peaks, J. W.
 Peets, E. (farm)
 Phillips, Chas. M.
 Plummer, Mary K.
 Price, H. F.
 Randolph, L. B.
 Ratchford, James W.
 Reid, Oliver P.
 Reynolds, Patrick
 Rice, E. (farm)
 Rice, Mary
 Richmond, John A.
 Roark, W. G. (farm)
 Rogers, Lieun M. (farm)
 Rupe, D. (farm)
 Russell, Charles A.
 Russell, Lyman B.
 Ruthven, E. M.
 Seward, J. A. (farm)
 Sherman, George S.
 Shumaker, John
 Simpson, John
 Simpson, Catherine
 Smith, Charles
 Smith, Gertrude
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, Joseph
 Smith, Joseph E.
 Snow, E. L.
 Spence, R. H.
 Stribling, Benjamin F.

Stribling, Cornelius
Steen, F. A.
Stewart, A. M.
Stowe, Alvin
Stow, Abel
Stow, Albert
Sweeny, Candy
Talley, Elizabeth
Talmon, David
Talmon, Mary G.
Tatum, Thomas S.
Thomas, Micajah
Thompson, Wm.
Townsend, W. T. (farm)
Trackmartin, J. A.
Vineyard, J. W.
Waldrop, J. C.
Willett, John
Williamson, Ellen Reese
Williamson, Thomas T.
Wilson, Morris
Wilson, Thomas
Williamson, W. A.
Wood, James B.
Wood, Maj. John H.
Wood, Richard H.

Source: Abstract Tract Indices of Refugee County

