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THE ROMANCE OF SABINE LAKE: SCENE OF SLAVING, SMUGGLING, STEAMBOATING, CIVIL WAR AND BORDER CONFLICT, HURRICANES, AND COTTON AND LUMBER COMMERCE, 1777-1900

By W. T. Block

EARLIER, TEXAS GULF HISTORICAL SOCIETY PERMITTED REPRINTING A VERY LONG ARTICLE WITH THIS NAME, PUBLISHED IN 1973. HOWEVER, THE WRITER HAS CHOSEN TO CONDENSE IT FROM ITS 1973 FORM

In the geology of the Gulf Prairie, Sabine Lake is one of a number of tidal lagoons, others being Calcasieu and Grand Lakes in Louisiana and Galveston and Lavaca Bays in Texas. Like its neighbors on Calcasieu and Mermentau Rivers, Sabine Lake has a 7-mile-long tidal inlet or estuary, that connects the lake to the Gulf of Mexico. The lake is the confluence of three rivers, the Sabine, Neches, and Angelina, which together with other tributaries, drain about 40,000 square miles of East Texas and Western Louisiana. By earlier treaties with Spain and the Republic of Texas, the boundary between Texas and Louisiana was placed at the western landfall of the Sabine River, Lake and the Sabine Pass, although the common boundary in more recent times had been placed in mid-stream.

During the transition from wilderness to civilization, each ripple of the lake's waters has witnessed a multitude of occurrences, the Attakapas Indians' dugout, loaded with shellfish; the French fur trader's pirogue, the sails of the slave ship and smuggler; the cotton bales of the schooners, keelboats, and steamers; the chained rafts of logs towed across Sabine Lake to the sawmill at Sabine Pass; and finally the long tows of lumber and oil barges. Whatever the occasion, the lake's history has been as undulating as its waters, varying from the serene murmurs of its dainty whitecaps to the turbulence of a hurricane's wrath.

In addition to the rivers, the lake has a number of wide bayous flowing into it, or nearly into it, among them Cow Bayou, Adams Bayou, Black Bayou, Johnson's Bayou, Madame Johnson's Bayou, Willow Bayou, as well as Taylor's, Hillebrant, and Big Hill Bayous. Many of the bayous are up to 25 miles long and 100 feet wide, large enough to accommodate schooners and small steamboats. Similar bayous, such as Green's at Garrison Ridge, have been silted over by the hurricane actions of yesteryear.

Sabine Lake's aboriginal populations date back to at least 500 A. D., long before any written history existed, but the tribes varied. In 1970, John Prescott, a Louisiana State policeman of Cameron Parish, found an intact, incised vase at Johnson Bayou, that was dated by the Curator of Anthropology at Baton Rouge to the "Marksville Culture," around 500 A. D. Between perhaps 1,000 A. D. and 1900, six large Indian burial mounds of shell were built at present-day Port Neches, each 60 feet wide, 20 feet high, and 400 feet long. Skeletons in those mounds varied from infant size to over seven feet tall, many of them with flat heads. In 1896, Captain Jack Caswell described a seven-foot skeleton at Port Neches as having a "skull from about one inch above the eye socket (that) turned straight back and was as flat as a pancake clear to the rear end of the head..." That leads the writer to believe that they practiced infant skull deformation. Since only the Karakawa Indians around Galveston Bay grew to seven foot heights and above, as opposed to the short and stocky Attakapas, the writer also believes the latter displaced the Karakawas in Southwest Louisiana and Southeast Texas some time around 1550 A. D., and drove them farther west into Texas.²

The Attakapas tribe occupied the Sabine Lake region for perhaps 300 years, but their numbers in Texas and Louisiana dropped from about 3,500 in 1698 to about 200 by 1830. There were four sub-tribes in Texas, the Orcoquisas, Deadose, and Bidais on the Trinity River, the Nacazils on the Neches and Sabine, and the Cocos, Apelas, and Carcashus in Southwest Louisiana. About 1720, Simars de Belle Isle was marooned on Galveston Island, and both he and Athanase de Mezieres claimed that the Attakapas were cannibals, such stories being quite popular in Europe about 1750. However, two modern-day Louisiana historians have disputed that claim. Fred Kniffen observed that the Attakapas tribe was "undeserving of its ancient reputation as roving cannibals," and added that the 140 Attakapas warriors in Don Bernardo de Galvez' army of 1779 "created no disturbances." Since Belle Isle remained a prisoner of the Orcoquisas for two years, Lauren C. Post, another college professor, wondered: "...How did Belle Isle escape the (stew) pot and spit?"³

There was really no reason for Attakapas cannibalism since the food supply was plentiful both winter and summer. Most Attakapas

tribesmen lived along the sea coast during the summer months, although the old Indians and pregnant squaws live inland permanently, where there was always a good supply of firewood. The Attakapas warriors were excellent spear fishermen, and their diet consisted principally of fish, alligators, oysters, clams, hermit crabs, blue crabs, and any small animals they could spear, shoot, or snare. They carried dugout loads of shellfish inland almost daily to their permanent abodes, where the shell refuse and all Indian corpses gradually filled up the shell mounds. Joseph C. Dyer of Lake Charles and Capt. Jean Berlandier together discovered that the language spoken by the Orcoquisas near Anahuac and the Attakapas warriors of the Calcasieu River was one and the same language. Since there are indications, particularly in Cameron Parish, that a natural calamity may have killed thousands of that tribe, the writer believes that the great hurricane of 1780 (which killed 50,000 in the West Indies before striking the Texas coast) was responsible.⁴ The ranks of the Attakapas along the Trinity River were thinned primarily by small pox. All the Attakapas warriors were gone from the Sabine and Neches Rivers by 1800, and very few were left on the Calcasieu and Mermentau Rivers as of 1830.⁵

To the best of the writer's knowledge, only two Spanish expeditions are on record as having ever reached Sabine Lake. While the Spanish cared very little about Southeast Texas per se, they cared enough to seek to keep out the French and English fur traders. Even though all of Louisiana was ceded to the Spanish in 1762, the latter allowed no trade, including cattle and horses, between Spanish Texas and Spanish Louisiana until 1780. The Spanish at Nacogdoches learned that in 1770, two French fur traders were living with the Neches River Indians at Port Neches. In 1773, an English ship anchored there for three months, even planting a crop, and in 1776, an English ship from Jamaica ran aground on a mudflat at Louisiana Point in the Sabine Pass. In July, 1777, Capt. Antonio Gil y Barbo's expedition from Nacogdoches visited both the Indian village at Port Neches and the wrecked English ship at Sabine Pass. Capt. Gil y Barbo's expedition almost encountered Capt. George Gauld and the English map surveying ship Florida, which in July, 1777, was also mapping Calcasieu and Sabine Lakes. Capt. Gauld's map of that year, which was drawn with extreme skill accuracy, still survives in the British Admiralty archives.⁶ Father Augustin Morfi was the Spanish priest, who accompanied and kept the expedition's journal, and Morfi's expedition journals became the sources of information for Morfi's History of Texas Until 1779, two volumes, published in Albuquerque.

The second and last Spanish mapping expedition to reach Sabine Lake left New Orleans on May 15, 1785, under Don Jose de Evia. Evia's mission was to map all bays, rivers, and inlets between the Mississippi and Rio Grande rivers. The expedition began in two schooners, but upon encountering shallower waters, the mappers switched to light draft sloops which they called "pirogues." A portion of Evia's journal reads as follows:⁷

. . . From Carcasiu {Calcasieu Pass}, I followed the coast 29 miles (?) toward the west, to the eastern points of the Rios de las Sabinas and Nieves {Sabine and Neches}. It was a good clean beach without timber.... About two miles from the beach, I came upon a stranded brigantine {at Louisiana Point}, dismantled.... I supposed it to be English because of having found a part of its cargo {bricks} on land....

Evia had found Captain Joseph David's brigantine (a two-masted, square-rigged boat), which had wrecked in 1776 while on a trading voyage from Jamaica. Evia's journal also mentioned a small lake in the Sabine Pass, that should be clarified. A section of the Sabine Pass, 1 mile wide and north of Sabine lighthouse, has since disappeared, but it was visible on the Texas Boundary Commission maps of 1840 and on the Civil War maps. The Louisiana side was filled with oyster reefs, and during constant channel dredging after 1880, and the pumping of the channel spill to the eastern side, the Louisiana side of that lake was filled up and disappeared. Although Evia found Indians living on the Calcasieu River, he mentioned no Indians as living on the Neches and Sabine Rivers, which prompted the author's surmise that the latter had suffered a calamitous demise from a hurricane.

There is a dearth of information about Sabine Lake between 1785 and 1820, but there were a number of factors at work during those years. Between 1800 and 1821, there were a number of filibustering expeditions into Texas, with intent to displace the Spanish, but that of Dr. James Long was probably the only one which used Sabine Lake and Calcasieu River as avenues to supply the Long base of operations on Bolivar Peninsula. Also in 1773, the Spanish abandoned two coastal missions in Texas, and along with them, they abandoned 40,000 heads of branded and unbranded cattle at Presidio Goliad, and 4,000 heads at Mission San Augustin de Ahumada, near present-day Wallisville on Trinity River. As a result, the increase of those Spanish herds reached perhaps a million cattle by 1820, by which time the herds had also swum across the Sabine River and had stocked the Imperial Calcasieu marshes.

While the "cheniers" or high marsh ridges of Sabine Pass, then belonging to Spain, were avoided by settlers, Anglo-American settlement at Johnson Bayou, Louisiana, began as early as 1790, when families named Daniel Johnson, Reuben and Solomon Barrow, Henry Gallier, and George Orr settled there. Orr, the Barrows, and Gallier moved on to the Trinity River region in Texas, but about 1815, Gallier moved back to Johnson Bayou, where his large herds of Spanish cattle roamed the sea cane marshes.

The Galveston Island buccaneering era, 1816-1821, provided Sabine Lake with its greatest period of romance, but some of its poorest history, because almost no records survived. It is certain, however, that the most reprehensible traffic in Sabine Lake involved the transportation of captured African slaves, being moved usually from Galveston Island to the sugar cane plantations of the Bayou Teche region.

In 1852, John Bowie wrote his memoirs, stating that he and his brothers, Rezin and James Bowie, bought 1,500 African slaves from Jean Lafitte at Galveston between 1817 and 1820. Some slaves were delivered along a water route through Sabine Lake or up the Calcasieu River. Some were moved overland via Liberty and Niblett's Bluff, and on one occasion in 1818, the only known Comanche Indian raid to swing so far east into Texas captured ninety slaves, which they adopted into their tribe, but the three Bowie brothers escaped. On two occasions, James Bowie bought cattle from Henry Griffith of Johnson's Bayou to feed to his slave coffles, bound for the Bayou Teche. And often after 1818, the New Orleans revenue cutter Lynx patrolled Sabine Lake in search of

illegal Africans, and it was on one such visit that the Lynx caught Captain George Brown (later hanged by Lafitte), a notorious pirate, attacking an unarmed American ship at Sabine Pass. In 1819, Lafitte built slave barracks near Ballew's Ferry, north of Orange, Texas, and across from Niblett's Bluff, where he allowed the Louisiana sugar cane planters to come and select the slaves of their choice.⁸

After Jean Lafitte sailed away from Galveston in March, 1821, the African slave trade in Sabine Lake gained some respite until 1836. That being the principal year of the Texas Revolution, slavers took advantage of Texas' social upheaval to renew the African trade. It should be mentioned, too, that under either Texas or United States maritime laws, the trade in Africans, whether at sea or ashore, was regarded as piracy, with hanging as the ultimate penalty. In 1836, a Spanish slave ship brought 200 Africans up the Sabine River. The ship's owner, an American named Coigley, quarreled with and murdered his Spanish master, Captain Moro, after which Coigley sailed the ship back to the Gulf of Mexico without unloading any slaves.⁹ In April, 1836, Captain John Taylor sailed the English slaver Elizabeth to the "Brig Landing" at Sabine Pass, where his ship remained anchored for six weeks. His cargo were actually British freedmen or indentured servants kidnapped at Barbados. Taylor marched a coffle of slaves overland from Port Neches to San Augustine, but failed to sell all of his slaves before he returned. Taylor then sailed for Galveston Bay, where Texas officials surrendered Taylor to a British warship for trial.¹⁰ In 1837, an English slaver, under pursuit by a warship offshore, ran aground at Blue Buck Point, the southern terminus of Sabine Lake. The ship was loaded with emaciated Africans, who spoke only tribal dialects. Henry Griffith sold cattle to the slaver captain, whose human chattels were so starved that they ate the beef raw and drank the blood of the cattle.¹¹

During the Texas Runaway Scrape of March-April, 1836, W. F. Gray met between Beaumont and Liberty, three brothers, Sterling, Leander, and Pleasant McNeel, Brazos River planters, who had just landed forty slaves at Caney Creek. The slaves had tribal markings on their faces, spoke only African dialects, and the McNeels were en route to Louisiana to sell their slaves to the sugar planters.¹²

By 1830, perhaps four families lived at Johnson Bayou, Louisiana; an equal number lived at Orange, Texas, and about a dozen families were scattered out at "Old Jefferson," along Cow Bayou at present-day Bridge City, Texas. In 1832, John McGaffey, formerly of Old Jefferson, built a log cabin at Sabine Pass, where he applied for a Mexican land grant, and for the next five years, McGaffey's family and the Thomas Courts family were the only residents there.

In 1830, Thomas F. McKinney floated the first keelboat of Nacogdoches County cotton down the Angelina-Neches watercourse to Sabine Lake. McKinney and his partner, Samuel May Williams, were the wealthiest cotton merchants in the Republic of Texas and helped finance the Texas Revolution. Other keelboats loaded with cotton followed on both the Sabine and Neches Rivers, and New Orleans cotton schooners began anchoring at the mouths of both rivers to buy their cargoes. During the Texas Revolution, the United States Army maintained an army of about 4,000 troops at Fort Jessup, east of Many, Louisiana. As the Mexican Army moved eastward to its ultimate fate at the Battle of San Jacinto, the U. S. Army established another outpost, known as Camp Sabine, opposite Sabinetown, now a ghost town near Hemphill, Texas; and many persons believe that in the event General Santa Ana's Mexican Army crossed the Sabine River, the Fort Jessup army had orders to attack them. Nevertheless, the high wagon-freighting costs (6 cents a pound) to supply the army at Fort Jessup forced the U. S. Army to consider clearing logjams and navigation impediments in the Sabine River in order to reduce freight costs.

In October, 1837, Major Belknap arrived at the Garrison Ridge on Sabine Lake with a detachment of the 3rd U. S. Infantry. In three weeks time, Lieutenant J. H. Easton and his detachment had blown up all the logjams, allowing them to float down the river and out to sea, and in December, 1837, Belknap sent Captain Isaac Wright aboard the steamboat Velocipede all the up to Camp Sabine. Wright reported by letter on his return voyage that he had no problem ascending the river and that freight could "now" be delivered by boat for only 2 cents a pound. By 1844, cotton was arriving regularly by steamboat as well as keelboat from the Sabine River, and the first steamboat came down the Angelina-Neches River from Nacogdoches County in 1846. The writer will not discuss steamboating on Sabine Lake at any length, since his book, Cotton Bales, Keelboats, and Sternwheelers, was released by Dogwood Press of Woodville in 1995.¹³

In 1837, the Texas Republic ordered establishment of a custom house at Sabine Pass. The renewed emergence of a slave trade forced the Texas revenue cutter Santa Ana to patrol Sabine Lake at intervals. Very quickly, the United States authorized a U. S. custom house on Green's Bayou at Garrison Ridge, where the 3rd U. S. Infantry was encamped, and between 1839 and 1844, the U. S. revenue cutter Woodbury and the Texas cutter Santa Ana, while ostensibly patrolling for slave ships, maintained a virtual armed truce while an undeclared customs war continued in Sabine Lake.

By 1840, a custom house, two cotton commission merchants, and about a dozen families, mostly sailors and custom house employees, resided at Sabine Pass. Although John McGaffey claimed ownership of 4,400 acres of land at Sabine Pass, based on his Republic of Texas land grant, a long land dispute evolved between McGaffey and Niles F. Smith, the latter as land agent for President Sam Houston's 11,000 acre Mexican grant, most of which was marsh land. Smith's claim was based on a 640-acre bounty certificate on the Sabine Pass, which in 1844 was declared a clever forgery.

Ordinarily, the New Orleans cotton schooners were expected to stop at the Texas custom house and pay tonnage fees for the right to load Texas cotton coming down the rivers. None of the cotton schooners ever stopped, though, claiming the waters of Sabine Lake were outside Texas authority, and the Texas customs collector was powerless to stop them. In March, 1844, the Texas cutter Santa Ana delivered two cannons to the Texas custom house, and thereafter, the Texas customs collector, W. C. V. Dashiell, determined that all cotton schooners would stop and pay fees. On April 17, 1844, as the cotton schooners Louisiana and William Bryan sailed through the Sabine Pass, Dashiell fired a warning shot across the bow of each, forcing the captains to stop and pay tonnage fees under protest. Fortunately, Dashiell was one of Texas' foremost promoters of Texas annexation, and as there was

much support in Washington, D. C. at that moment for a Texas Annexation Resolution, Dashiell prudently chose not to carry the customs war any farther. The Sabine Lake customs war ended on December 29, 1845, when Texas became the newest star in "Old Glory." Dashiell also became the first United States collector at Sabine Pass until his death in 1847.¹⁴

Much merchandise smuggling also took place along Sabine Lake and River, the smugglers always maintaining that the Republic of Texas had no jurisdiction over the waters of the lake and pass. In 1840, the Texas Collector J. D. Swain seized merchandise imported by Beaumont merchant Thomas Brennan. Brennan sued and won his case, and Swain resigned as collector. To the chagrin of Sabine Pass merchants, New Orleans cotton schooners and steamboats anchored fifty yards offshore from Sabine Pass and sold untaxed merchandise indiscriminately to Texans and Louisianans alike. When a Texas-bound wagon loaded with merchandise crossed the Sabine River at the Belgrade ferry, a Texas collector, who attempted to collect import duties, was nearly killed by the wagon drivers, who then proceeded on their way.¹⁵

In 1839, Dr. Niles F. Smith surveyed the first townsite of Sabine Pass for President Sam Houston and other investors of the Sabine City Company, and Dr. S. H. Everett surveyed the townsite "City of The Pass," with its 2,500 town lots. Both townsites were generally unsuccessful. Everett's townsite grew nothing but marsh grass on its streets, and in 1844, Dr. Smith's townsite became null and void when the Texas General Land Office adjudged Dr. Smith's land certificate to be a forgery. Between 1839-1844, both Dr. Everett and Augustus Hotchkiss opened cotton commission businesses at Sabine Pass. In 1843, Dr. Everett died of yellow fever at New Orleans, and Hotchkiss gave up and returned to Sabinetown. In 1840, the first session of the Texas-United States Boundary Commission convened in Dr. Everett's home. The Texas-United States boundary map of 1840 showed a boundary marker built at Texas Point only a short distance from the beach. Today, because of new shoreline built up at Texas Point by coastal currents and silt washing out to sea from the rivers, what remains of the boundary marker now lies a mile inland.¹⁶

After 1842, Dr. N. F. Smith owned a store at Sabine Pass, except for the 22 months when he was collector of customs. In 1846, Otis McGaffey opened a cotton commission business there, which he operated until he moved away in 1878. In 1855, Charles H. Alexander and Company became the dominant cotton merchant there, following the removal to Galveston of Hutchings-Sealy and Company, and Alexander remained the major merchant (and blockade-runner) there until his death in 1873. Although John Sealy and John H. Hutchings are principally identified with Galveston, they started out in business at Sabine Pass in 1846. So shrewd were their cotton commission dealings that by 1854, the year that the merchant traders moved to Galveston, Hutchings-Sealy and Co. had earned a \$50,000 profit and had run all the other merchants except Otis McGaffey out of business. The partners ran that Sabine Pass profit into two multi-million dollar fortunes at Galveston.¹⁷

By 1860, Sabine Pass had acquired a population of 500, which increased to 1,500 by April, 1861. There were schools and churches there, a shipyard and sawmill, and other cotton merchants, including Craig and Keith, Eddy and Adams, John McRae, Tom Snow, and Edmondson and Culmell. (Major Edmondson was later killed at the Battle of Vicksburg.) There were also two hotels, a physician, drug store, blacksmith and tin shops, etc. A total of 18,000 bales of cotton were shipped from Sabine Pass in 1859, followed by 20,000 in 1860.¹⁸ Johnson Bayou, Louisiana, had grown almost equally as much, except that all its residents were cotton planters scattered out along Blue Buck Ridge, Smith Ridge, and the other marsh "cheniers." Johnson Bayou remained cut off from the world except by water, but usually a schooner made one round-trip weekly to Galveston, carrying mail, passengers, cotton, and other produce.

Sabine Lake made other great industrial strides during the 1850's as well. In 1846, Sidney A. Sweet moved his steam sawmill from San Augustine to Sabine Pass, and it was he, who conceived the idea of floating chained log rafts down the Sabine River and towing them across Sabine Lake to his mill. Although Sweet died in January, 1849, he lived to own half of the second townsite of Sabine Pass, as well as to see the first school, church, shipyard, and sash and door factory every built at Sabine Pass.

Soon others followed in his footsteps. David Bradbury, Orrin Brown, Isaiah Ketchum, and Benjamin Granger took over Sweet's sawmill and sash and door factory, which they operated as Spartan Mill Company until 1857. In 1850, the new proprietors cut 4,000 saw logs, worth \$5,500, into 1,200,000 feet of lumber, valued at \$23,000, and they paid out \$637 monthly in wages to 15 employees.^{18a}

In 1857, David R. Wingate of Newton bought the abandoned Spartan Mill Company industrial plant at Sabine, overhauled it, adding new saws and surfacing machinery, and built it into the largest sawmill in Texas, cutting 30,000 feet daily. During only a part of 1860, D. R. Wingate and Co. cut 7,488 logs, worth \$11,980, into 2,496,000 feet of lumber, valued at \$43,680. In August, 1860, a boiler explosion damaged the mill and killed and maimed four persons, but the damage was soon repaired. Wingate built up a considerable export trade before the Civil War, especially with the West Indies, until the Civil War ended his business. On October 21, 1862, while a virulent yellow fever epidemic was in progress, the Union Navy came ashore at Sabine Pass, burned Wingate's sawmill, home, and other factories, thus ending the sawmilling epoch there for all time.¹⁹

The writer is not going to record much about the Civil War epoch, except to add that Lt. R. W. "Dick" Dowling's 40-minute stunning victory at Sabine Pass shot the remaining four years of Civil War there into historical oblivion. Other history there included the first Battle of Sabine Pass, September, 24, 1862; the offshore battle, which captured the Union blockaders Morning Light and Velocity on January 21, 1863; the Sabine lighthouse skirmish of April 18, 1863; and the Battle of Calcasieu Pass, fought to victory by the Sabine Pass garrison against the Union gunboats Wave and Granite City at Leesburg (Cameron), Louisiana, on May 6, 1864. Most of these events are covered elsewhere in this volume.

Disease and the Civil War epoch completely destroyed Sabine Pass. By the end of August, 1862, nearly all of the town's population, not already dead or dying from yellow fever, had already fled the town to points inland, and most never returned. During the epidemic, when Confederate soldiers were either ill or dying, the Union Navy came into Sabine Lake and Pass, generally

avoiding the town because of the illness, but occupying the water areas to reduce blockade-running. On January 8, 1863, nine Confederate cavalymen burned the last Union gunboat (Dan) during a heavy fog while it was at anchor at Sabine lighthouse. In the summer and fall of 1862, between 150 and 200 Sabine soldiers and civilians died of the fever. And on October 20-21, 1862, Bluejacket detachments of the Union Navy came ashore and burned 14 cavalry barracks and stables, all of Wingate's wood-working industries, and several large homes, a total of \$150,000 worth of property.²⁰ Throughout that period, three Sabine Pass heroines, Kate Dorman, Sarah Vosburg, and Sarah Ann King, stand out, a full ten feet tall in bravery.

Sabine Pass, the population of which had skyrocketed during the last few months before the war, never completely recovered from the Civil War. Its industries never returned either, although there were three cotton gins there in 1870. In the meantime, Johnson Bayou, Louisiana, suffered but little during the war, because its forty or more farm houses were scattered out over five or six high ridges. With its very fertile lands in all directions, Johnson Bayou continued to attract cotton farmers, until by 1880 its 600 residents were producing about 600 bales of cotton annually, and it also had 100 acres planted in mature satsuma orange trees.

Before 1950, the oldtimers remembered tales about the terrible gulf hurricanes of 1886, 1900, and 1915, but all else about them either had never been known or had been forgotten. For instance, the earliest settlers of Sabine Pass found that a long, 3-masted bark (sail ship) was high aground about five miles north of the beach, and they often cannibalized its hull or hulk for firewood or timbers. Most did not know that a terrible tidal wave of 1837 (the same storm that wrecked two Texas Navy schooners on Galveston island) had driven the ship far inland. On September 13, 1865 and August 22, 1879, two terrible hurricanes followed the same path of Hurricane Audrey in June, 1957, striking Leesburg, Louisiana, first and then Orange, Texas. In 1865, both towns were levelled, about 25 persons from the twenty families drowning at Leesburg (Cameron), and 25 more killed by falling debris and flying timbers at Orange. Of 200 homes at Orange in 1865, only four were left standing, and 19 of twenty ships anchored in the harbor were capsized and sank in the Sabine River.²¹

Between 1865 and 1879, a hurricane struck Sabine Lake during each odd year. Little record of them survives today, except that there were three storms in 1871, two in early June and another about September 1st. The 1870 Census Schedule of Agriculture of 1870 reported that a hurricane in 1869 destroyed all the orange and apple tree orchards at Sabine Pass. However, it was the huge hurricane of October 12, 1886, that destroyed both Sabine Pass and Johnson Bayou in a single night.

By 1886, Johnson Bayou had grown into two towns and two post offices, named Radford and Johnson Bayou, and it took one schooner and one steamboat full-time to supply the towns' needs for mail, passengers, cattle and produce commerce with Orange and Galveston. Without any warning on the morning of October 12th, schools were in session and the farm hands were picking cotton, when suddenly between 2:00 P. M. and 4:00 P. M., the waters in the lake and bayou rose two feet. By 7:00 P. M., 80-mile gale winds were blowing, and by 9:00 P. M. tides were six feet deep in the houses, driving people either upstairs or into attics. Parents began tying their children with rope to the upper branches of live oak trees. By midnight, both Johnson Bayou and Sabine Pass had died.

One would have to read all of the typewritten pages, 347 through 371, of the writer's unpublished typescript, "Emerald of The Neches," to fathom the tragedy, the extent of the suffering, and the magnitude of the 150-mile hurricane. Those pages reprint every storm article in Galveston Daily News between October 14-21, 1886. For weeks, the stench from 25,000 drowned cattle was stifling. Two direct quotes from those pages (but not the same article) read verbatim: "...Sabine was once a port. Sabine Pass is now a trackless and barren waste..." "There is hardly a living thing in the once beautiful Acadian settlement of Johnson Bayou....Today it is a community of beggars...."

There were 110 persons drowned at Johnson Bayou and 86 more at Sabine Pass, not including any strangers in town that no one knew. Some families lost every member; elsewhere, some stunned and incoherent refugees were the lone survivor of other families. Those buildings not whipped to pieces by the gale winds floated ten or more miles inland, some to the Louisiana marshes opposite Orange. Many survivors fled both locations for all time, but always a small band of nestors remained to rebuild from scratch.

About 1880, Kountze Brothers, a New York and Denver banking firm, moved into Sabine Pass and bought up most of the marsh countryside. Kountze Brothers soon rebuilt the Sabine and East Texas Railroad to Beaumont, which had lain abandoned, a part of its rails torn up since 1863. Whereas the new town of Sabine Pass, a half-mile inland from the Pass, had replaced the old Civil War townsite of Sabine City on the Pass, Kountze Brothers began building an entire new townsite, named Sabine, Texas, along with wharves and docks, south of the present-day battlefield park. About 1895, the Kountzes built the extravagant 3-story, 50-room Windsor Hotel, which was "hotel perfection" for its day and age and the new town's best-known landmark. It was eventually abandoned in the 1920's and torn down in the 1930's. Up until 1905, the big Beaumont and Orange sawmills shipped tows of lumber barges to Sabine Pass, to be reloaded and trans-shipped worldwide on ocean-going schooners and steamboats. After the oil discovery at Spindletop in 1901, some pipelines were built to Sabine Pass to carry oil. The town became a main oil-shipping terminal for Sun Oil Company, which built a tank farm and loading docks there. At a later date, even a "sulphur dock" was built at Sabine Pass by a Louisiana firm, that shipped sulphur by rail for coastwise water shipment.

The ultimate destruction of Sabine Pass as an export terminal came at the hands of Kansas City Southern Railroad, which owned and founded the cities of Port Arthur and Nederland in 1895-1897. During 1894-1895, Kansas City Southern negotiated with Kountze Brothers for a railroad right-of-way through the Kountze marsh properties, but the two principals could not come to terms on price. Actually, there was already a railroad to Sabine Pass that the Kountze interests formerly owned, and perhaps that firm felt a second railroad to Sabine Pass was not needed.

As a result, the Kansas City Southern Railroad founded the townsite of Port Arthur in 1895, and when the firm could not bring the

railroad to the sea, they decided to bring the sea to the rails. They organized the Port Arthur Canal Company and began digging a new deep channel alongside the lake shore to Port Arthur. Both Beaumont and Orange had been clamoring for deep canalization of the Sabine and Neches Rivers since 1880, but they only envisioned a deep canal dug through the center of Sabine Lake, which would constantly be subject to silting up. Kountze Brothers filed several law suits and injunctions to stop the digging of the Port Arthur ship channel, but to no avail. By 1910, the new channel, plus its extension to and the ultimate deep canalization of both rivers, signaled the death warrant for Sabine Pass as a deepsea export city.

While the whitecaps of Sabine Lake are perhaps more docile with their murmurs today, they are still occasionally churned up by gale force winds, and a lot of the romance remains. In 1920, every marsh ridge along the shores of Sabine Lake and its tributaries had its own particular Jean Lafitte legend of buried gold, and during his childhood in the 1920's, the writer recalls scores of money hunters, who rented his father's boats while searching for buried treasure with their various "machines" and other gadgets along the lake's shores. During the Prohibition era, 1920-1933, the Sabine Pass and Johnson Bayou marshes were filled with sea cane, 15 to 20 feet high, where hundreds of "moonshine stills" abounded. And if space permitted, the writer could add a dozen "bootlegger" tales of his own. Perhaps most important of all, subsequent generations may wish to read something about the romance of Sabine Lake - about the Attakapas Indian's dugout canoe, the fur trader's "pirogue," the stories of the pirates and slave smugglers, tales of the Union and Confederate gunboats - for each in its own way contributed another ripple or wave to Sabine Lake's saga of romance, violence and intrigue that survives as history today.

Endnotes

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See more ideas about War, American civil war and Battle of the Nile. This Day In History: The Confederates Defeat the Union at the Second Battle of Sabine Past (1863). Rear Admiral, Naval History, America Civil War, River Bank, Warfare, Civilization, Past, Battle, Images. Uss San Jacinto San Jacinto Monument San Jacinto California Uss Texas Texas Revolution Seizures American Civil War Battleship Boats. A Gullah "praise house," a surviving example of slaves' secret meeting places, and its pastor, Rev. Henderson; St. Helena Island, South Carolina, circa 1995. Places In New York Places To See High Falls Gorge Summer Vacation Spots Adirondack Mountains Adventure Is Out There The Great Outdoors Day Trips Weekend Trips. A brief description of the Slave B manga: The world is ruled and oppressed by the evil god Sekneum. Niro, a boy of the Half Elf race, born of an elf and a man who lost his parents, fell into the hands of a human slave as a baby. He grows up in a world where you can't find justice for people. Having lost his father and mother, he soon becomes the head of the family, taking responsibility for two younger sisters. There is only one way to break out of hell slavery and protect his loved ones. To get out of the academy, as the Emperor here, a former slave, did. Will Niro be able to enter the Excanum? Will he be able to escape from despair? The Civil War in the United States began in 1861, after decades of simmering tensions between northern and southern states over slavery, states' rights and westward expansion. The election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 caused seven southern states to secede and form the Confederate States of America; four more states soon joined them. The conflict was the costliest and deadliest war ever fought on American soil, with some 620,000 of 2.4 million soldiers killed, millions more injured and much of the South left in ruin. WATCH: Civil War Journal on HISTORY Vault. Causes of the Civil War. Border slave states like Missouri, Kentucky and Maryland did not secede, but there was much Confederate sympathy among their citizens. The English Civil War Song is a song from the Horrible Histories TV series, having first aired on July 12, 2011. As the song suggests, the Cavaliers & Roundheads dance off their stories of war. It is a parody of songs from the musical/film West Side Story. Roundheads: We are the Roundheads, we don't want kings no more, That's why we started the English civil war. People say we're no fun, but we disagree, Roundhead 1: Especially when explaining, parliamentary democracy. We are particularly excited by the