



The Window Pane

Brazoria County Historical Museum

100 East Cedar Street
Angleton TX 77515

Mosaic of Beliefs: Sacred Places in Brazoria County

The Brazoria County Historical Museum has opened a new exhibit entitled *Mosaic of Beliefs: Sacred Places in Brazoria County*. The exhibit highlights a variety of religious groups present in Brazoria County, and features related materials from the Museum's collection as well as items donated or loaned by individuals and organizations from across the county. Whenever possible, the exhibit text also utilizes the narratives of specific groups to relate their organization's history. The contacts and research that are the foundation of this exhibit will be applied toward another larger project in which the Brazoria County Historical Museum will complete a countywide survey of sacred places, both those still in use and those that are still present but used for purposes other than that for which they were originally designed. With over four hundred religious organizations in Brazoria County, there was not enough exhibit space in the Museum to present each one individually. Nevertheless, it is important to document them in order to illustrate the cultural and social diversity in the County. From the earliest days of European settlement in the area that today is Texas, religion has been an important aspect of colonization. Stephen F. Austin's contract with the colonists, he



John Rathburn with Model of Gulf Prairie Presbyterian Church.

Stipulated "[t]he government of the Mexican nation will protect the liberty, property and civil rights, of all foreigners, who profess the Roman Catholic apostolic religion, the established religion of the Empire." surprisingly when Texas won its independence from Mexico, the fledgling country's new national constitution was written to reflect more closely the United States' constitution, with which many of the more recent colonists were familiar. Texas' population increased so did its variety of religious structures. sacred places evolved into more than just places of worship - they served as places for social gatherings and for retreat in times of crisis. The exhibit will be on display through November 25, 2005. *Michael Bailey*

July 2005

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Concert on the Lawn Featuring the Ramblin Cajuns

July 30, 2005

Dinner @ 6:00PM

Music @ 7:00PM

Rsvp 979/864-1208

ROUGHNECKS & ROUSTABOUTS IN COUNTY MUSEUM

The Brazoria County Historical Museum has opened a new exhibit entitled *Roughnecks and Roustabouts: Beginnings of the Oil Industry in Brazoria County*. The exhibit features documents and photographs from the Museum's collection that highlight the origination of the petroleum industry in Brazoria County.

Oil has had a place in regional history from the earliest of times beginning with the Native Americans

who used the naturally occurring asphaltum, a tar-like substance, as an adhesive. Among the first Europeans recorded to have used an oil-based product, Luis de Moscoso, a survivor of the De Soto expedition, applied asphaltum to his leaking boats as a caulking material.



While cotton may have been king in the nineteenth century, oil quickly ascended the throne in the twentieth century. By the mid 1920s, cable oil rigs in Brazoria County were as thick as trees at some area sites such as West Columbia and Damon Mound. With easy access to large salt domes locally and newly developed equipment and tools, like the rotary bits invented by Howard Hughes, Sr., Brazoria County quickly became an important hub in the

powerful petroleum industry. Petroleum fueled Texas' leap into the modern industrial age and continues to play a significant role in regional economics. The exhibit will be on display through December 9, 2005. *Michael Bailey*

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Concert on the Lawn

Sponsored by the Brazoria County Historical Museum

July 30, 2005 Dinner @ 6:00PM Music @ 7:00PM

Free concert on the Courthouse Lawn by the

Ramblin Cajuns

Red Saltzman, Accordion

Ray Aucoin, Guitar

Skipper Benoit, Fiddle

A.J. Broussard, Vocals &
Bass

Larry Comeaux, Drums



Boudin & Fixins
\$7.00/plate

Tickets for meal
available by RSVP
at Brazoria County
Historical Museum
at 979/864-1208 or
ce@bchm.org

The Museum Staff also can be reached at the following:
100 East Cedar Street
Angleton, TX 77515
979/864-1208 (office)
979/864-1217 (fax)



Thanks to Killum Pest Control for their donated services to the Museum.

Adriance Library & Research Center

The name *Zychlinski*, while may be difficult to pronounce and spell, is distinctive, and it is a name you probably remember if you have ever encountered it. For Pearland-area residents, the name is familiar since there is a park in Pearland by that name, but how many who have heard of the park know the origin of its name?

I remember noticing Zychlinski for the first time in connection with a few photos of Zychlinski Park in the Museum photo collection. While processing these images in 1998, I learned that a W. Zychlinski is recognized as the founder of Pearland. The Museum's Information Files on Pearland history provided few facts about Zychlinski. His name popped up here and there throughout the file, but most references were just a repeat of the same meager information.

One source on Pearland history is the brief but interesting article "A History of Pearland" penned by Emma Jarisch Coppinger in 1941, which appears in the 1976 publication *Early Days in Pearland*. Mrs. Coppinger writes that L.W. Murdock sold 520 acres to W. Zychlinski in 1892. This was land that Mr. Murdock had purchased earlier that year from the Brazoria Land & Cattle Company for a sum of twelve dollars per acre. Zychlinski "platted the town site to be known as *Pearland*" and appointed an agent named J.R. Jeter to sell the lots and colonize the land surrounding the town site. Mrs. Coppinger wrote that "purchase money notes were not met" and the land was later contracted to the Southern Homestead Company, which constructed a depot for the Santa Fe Railroad and brought in a large number of settlers.

Another article in the same publication is entitled "Oldtimers Answer Question: Were There Ever Any Pear Trees in Pearland?" The author is Bunny Audel. She writes almost nothing about Zychlinski, but throws in a bit of mystery with the line "W. Zychlinski, rumored by some to have been a Polish count, platted the town site in 1892 and started selling land."

On September 23, 1994, the *Pearland Journal* produced a special section commemorating the Pearland Centennial in which the rumor that Zychlinski had royal roots surfaced again. "Had it not been for the dashing, unmarried, William Zychlinski, supposedly a Polish Nobleman, arriving in Brazoria County in the late 1880s, perhaps Pearland may have never been." The writer said that he came "with a pocket full of money" and was "so taken by the beauty of the flowering pear trees as he rode around in his fancy buggy behind two shiny black horses, that he bought several Abstracts of land in this area." He chose to develop 2560 acres, including a 273-acre town site. Zychlinski recorded the plat at the Brazoria County Courthouse in September 1894. A copy of this original plat map of Pearland (spelled on the map as *Pear-Land*) is in the Adriance Library's Pearland History file. When Zychlinski recorded the plat, he also gave Power of Attorney to Harris County lawyer J.W. O'Brian to handle his business, and according to the writer of the *Pearland Journal* article, Zychlinski then "moved on". We have the copy of the official courthouse records, but what is the writer's source for the interesting personal information about Zychlinski?

Something else of interest in the Pearland History file is a set of notes prepared in 1975 by Edwin Shepherd of the Brazoria County Abstract Company in Angleton for Quillian Garrison. Garrison was collecting information for the Brazoria County Historical Commission's *Narrative History of Brazoria County*. While citing deed book volumes and page numbers for transactions relating to the early development of Pearland, Mr. Shepherd also states that Zychlinski "lost the lots to someone else" or "actually sold off the lots." In addition to the Brazoria Land and Cattle Company, Mr. Shepherd mentioned that the Allison-Richey Company helped develop the area by bringing in train loads of buyers and building the Suburban Gardens Hotel. He does not mention the Southern Homestead Company referred to by Mrs. Coppinger in her article.

A second page is attached to the Shepherd notes. This page is on a different kind of paper, and so may not have been written by Edwin Shepherd. It gives a source for that romantic description of Zychlinski that appeared in

the Pearland Journal centennial edition. The writer states that an Angleton attorney named A.R. Rucks, who lived in Pearland before 1900, "used to recall seeing Zychlinski dashing around the area, in his beautiful buggy, with a matched team of black horses, and it was his memory that Zychlinski was reputed to be a Polish nobleman."

Until very recently, that was the sum total of what the Museum had about W. Zychlinski. In January of 2005, we received a research request from Tom Hunter of Denver, Colorado. Tom grew up in Pearland and remembered his grandmother's stories of coming to the area with her family in 1894, when she was nine years old. Tom's grandmother's name was Julia Martin Hunter, and she also had described the dashing Polish nobleman and his fancy rig drawn by two black horses.

The book, *Pearland, Texas: A Centennial Celebration* by Barte Haile, inspired Tom to try to find out more about the mysterious Zychlinski who founded his home town. We provided Tom with what little information we had about him in the Museum files. Curator Michael Bailey, who does an outstanding job on Internet research, came up with a couple of additional references to add to the Zychlinski material. Michael suggested that Tom add "de" to Zychlinski while researching since he had found a reference to a William de Zychlinski on a Muster-Out Roll of Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders. This tip enabled Tom to locate a descendant of Zychlinski on a Polish genealogical web site. Tom was able to contact the great -grandson of the founder of "Pear-Land" who told him that he was in the process of writing a book about his family. He said that his grandfather, the William on the Rough Riders Muster Roll, was the son of Witold von Zychlinski, the man who had named Pearland.

In trade for the research that Tom had assembled, the man he contacted provided an image of his great grandfather, the mysterious Witold von Zychlinski. Tom wrote a story about his research for the *Pearland Historical Society Newsletter*. Our special thanks go to Tom for sharing a copy of his article with us, along with a copy of the image of Witold von Zychlinski. Thanks, too, to Pearland historian Marguerite Massey Smith for sharing her research. She has located a Mary Zychlinski in Washington, D.C. who has been trying to help her find information on Pearland's founder. In her research, Mary found a reference to a Witold Zychlinski who was born in June of 1848 in Poland, married a woman from Baltimore, Maryland, in Vienna in 1871, and died in Mexico "about 1884." This bit of information just adds to the mystery. Obviously, a man who died in 1884 could not have been the one who platted the Pearland town site ten years later in 1894. Was this death date just recorded incorrectly, or were there two Witold Zychlinskis who were contemporaries? As long as we are speculating, is it possible that someone else could have assumed the identity of a Polish nobleman who had died in Mexico, and then came to Brazoria County for a land venture? Or could it have been Witold's son William who platted the town, signing his name as W. Zychlinski, and who then moved on to join the Rough Riders? As is often the case, research can raise more questions than it answers.

Why did Zychlinski leave Pearland? Where had he gone after leaving the newly established town? When and where did he die and where is he buried? These are questions we have asked ourselves, and it will be interesting to see if they are answered when the Zychlinski family book is published. The Zychlinski descendant seemed sure that it was his great grandfather Witold who was associated with the development of Pearland, and that it was Witold's son William who was one of the Rough Riders. Depending on what information Witold's great -grandson is able to provide, we may finally have some answers to our questions about the mysterious figure who founded Pearland.

Jamie Murray

Photo courtesy of William F. Willoughby

Austin Town Update

The paperwork is finished and the ground-work has begun for Austin Town 2005! This year's Austin Town is very ambitious, including moving the event to a new site, adding new program elements, and building a new log cabin. These exciting developments should work to make this year's Austin Town one of the best ever.

The log cabin is being built in the Museum's shop. All of the logs have been stripped of bark and are being cut to length. The walls of the cabin will be assembled in the shop, then moved to the new site after the bulldozers are finished with the site preparations. The cabin is being built using traditional tools and methods. Use of traditional tools leave distinctive tool marks, which create a historically accurate appearance for the log cabin.

The fundraising campaign for the cabin was very successful, garnering \$5,000 for the construction expenses of the cabin. This money will be used to purchase tools to build the cabin, pour a foundation, lay on a cedar shake roof, etc. We would like to thank everyone who generously contributed to the project and bought logs (see page 4).

As the Museum works on this year's log cabin, many other organizations also are actively working on Austin Town this year. Drainage District 1 has begun clearing the new Austin Town site. They have cleared

out the nuisance trees and graded the bank of the lake, creating a gentle slope to the water. This site work is critical to create a safe environment for school children and visitors.

In addition, the engineering plans for the new



parking lot are being finalized. Once the blueprints for the new parking lot are approved, the County and the City of Angleton will construct the 200-car parking lot. On-site parking will provide visitors to

Austin Town convenience and flexibility. Many thanks to the hard working crews of Drainage District 1, the City of Angleton and Brazoria County Precinct 2.

While the capital development of Austin Town is underway, the program for this year also is gearing up. Humanities Texas, a state partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities, has provided a grant for Talking Back Living History Theatre to perform at Austin Town 2005. This professional theatre troupe will re-enact a broom jumping on Friday and Saturday. Their performances are widely hailed as moving and poignant portrayals of slavery antebellum Texas.

If you want to be a part of all of this great activity, contact the Museum today!

Members and Memorials

New Members:

La Familia

Joe & Ruth Ann Lostracco, Austin
Sharon & Speedy Rogers, Lake Jackson

Recent renewals:

El Presidente

Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Finch, Houston

El General

Lavinia Bircher, Galveston
Arnold Langston, Angleton

La Familia

Tom Chaffin, Lake Jackson
Garvin & Joyce Germany, Angleton
Robert & Jessica Munson, Angleton
Eddie Venne, Freeport

El Tejano

Suzanne Cain, Sherman
Mary Coburn, Missouri City
George Easterling, Angleton
Sue Gupton, Angleton
James Smith, Lake Jackson
Edward Wilkes, West Columbia

Senior

Nancy Bertoncej, Angleton
Jay Mallard, Angleton
A.M.J. Martin, Angleton
Virginia McGee, Houston
M. M. McMullen, Lake Jackson
Earline Miles, West Columbia
Helen Phillips, Angleton
Billy Richardson, Angleton

Nancy Smith, Lake Jackson
Dr. Frederick Turner, Lake Jackson

Memorials

In memory of Don Parish:

R. Scott Sanders
Jamie & Stan Murray & Jack Giesecke
Marcus & Lila Stephenson

In memory of Fred Schumm:

Laura Ingraham & Virginia Munson McGee
Gail Steele

Log Cabin Donors

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Hunt, Larry & Leslie	Parish, Mr. & Mrs. Donald H. ••	Worfe, Kris, Patti & Paige



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Historical Museum

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www.bchm.org

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Angleton, Texas

77515

Happy Independence Day !

From a Watery Grave into the Museum

Dr. James Bruseth will review his book, From A Watery Grave: The Discovery and Excavation of La Salle's Shipwreck, La Belle on July 14, at 6:30 PM in the Museum's Auditorium. This fascinating and beautiful book, for sale in the Museum's bookstore, details La Salle's doomed mission to locate the mouth of the Mississippi River as well as his plights on the Texas Gulf coast.

