PORT SULLIVAN, TEXAS: GHOST TOWN

A Thesis

by

John Martin Brockman

Submitted to the Graduate College of Texas A&M University in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

August, 1968

History
PORT SULLIVAN, TEXAS: GHOST TOWN

A Thesis
by
John Martin Brockman

Approved as to style and content by:

[Signatures]

(Chairman of Committee)
(Head of Department)
(Member)
(Member)
ABSTRACT

Port Sullivan, Texas: Ghost Town. (August, 1988)

John M. Brockman, B.A., Southwestern University
M.A., Texas A&M University;
Directed by: Dr. J. M. Nance

On the Brazos River in Milam County, Texas, just above the mouth of Little River, the town of Port Sullivan was founded in the early 1850's. The town, located 341 miles above the mouth of the Brazos and approximately six miles above the present town of Hearne, grew to a population of 1,423 by 1870. Around 1870, Port Sullivan began a rapid decline and soon disappeared completely.

This is a study of the town of Port Sullivan, from its rise to its passage from history. It is the story of the people who lived there; their economic, political, religious, and social institutions. The study includes a thorough investigation of the navigation of the Brazos River to Port Sullivan and the effect of railroad transportation on the town. The relationship of Port Sullivan with the major events in the state's and nation's history during the time the town existed is discussed.
PREFACE

The remains of a lock built by the United States Corps of Engineers between 1910 and 1920, can be seen in the Brazos River just above the bridge on United States Highway 190, five miles west of Hearne, Texas. The lock is all that remains from the attempt made by the Corps of Engineers to improve the Brazos River for navigational purposes from its mouth to Waco, Texas. Westward from the bridge about three-fourths of a mile, a gravel road joins the highway from the right. Following this road a short distance, one comes to a historical marker placed at the site of old Port Sullivan. The marker is a reminder of the days when steamboats ventured up to this point on the Brazos.

This is the story of Port Sullivan, Texas, from its rise to its passage from history. Why study the history of a ghost town that was never very important even at its zenith? By limiting the scope of such a study as this one is limited, one may learn more about the individuals that lived in a certain area during a particular time in history. One may learn what life was like for the average man and how individuals reacted to various events, little and big, publicized and un-publicized. One may also gain a deeper insight into the
history of the surrounding area.

This is the history of the people of Port Sullivan: why they came to the town; their religious, economic, political, and social institutions; their part in the history of their state and nation; and why the people left the town.

I would like to express appreciation to the following persons for making this thesis possible: Dr. J. M. Nance, my adviser, for permitting me to attempt such a study as this and for his expert criticism in formalizing the results of the study; Mr. John C. Roberts of Bremobd for granting me access to his grandfather's diaries and for the time he spent with me deciphering them; Mr. John B. Henderson of Milam County Abstract Co., for granting me the privilege of examining the company's records that pre-date the Milam County Court House fire; Mrs. Helen Peel of Hearne for the use of a typescript which contained a great deal of information on Port Sullivan; Mr. Niley Smith of Cameron for his recollections of his father's days in Port Sullivan; and Mr. Johnny Watkins of "Ten Acres" on TX Television in Waco and Bryan, Texas, for the initial stimulation of my interest in the history of Port Sullivan. I would also like to thank the Inter-Library Loan Department of Texas A&M University Library for its aid in obtaining materials.
from various libraries throughout the state. Finally, I express my appreciation for the aid given me by my wife (Martha Beard Brockman) in completing this work.

John M. Brockman

College Station, Texas
July, 1968
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ........................................ iii
Preface ........................................... iv

Chapters

1. Sullivan's Bluff ............................... 1
2. From Bluff to Port ............................. 38
3. The Port. A Bluff .............................. 66
4. Port Sullivan Society .......................... 86
5. Secession and War ............................. 111
6. Declining Days ................................. 143

Appendix .......................................... 172
Bibliography ...................................... 177
Vita ................................................ 187
LIST OF MAPS AND TABLES

Maps

1. Map Showing Area Subject to Flooding
   Along the Brazos and Little Rivers . . . 173

Tables

1. Partial List of Land Owners in Robertson
   County Who Lived in Port Sullivan in
   1860 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 174
2. Block Numbers Used in Port Sullivan . . 175
3. Assessed Value of Real Estate in Port
   Sullivan . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 176
CHAPTER I
SULLIVAN'S BLUFF

A bluff, known as Sullivan's Bluff\(^1\) by early settlers, overlooks the Brazos River in Milam County Texas, two miles above the mouth of Little River. Looking eastward from this bluff, one can see the fertile flood plain of the Brazos Valley. The bottom lands of the Little River Valley lie two miles or so to the south and west. Sullivan's Bluff, as surveys show, is almost twenty-five feet above the Brazos River.\(^2\) From the bluff, to the north and west, the land increases in elevation, and the area becomes immune from floods.

Across the Brazos River from the bluff, in Robertson County, the land is very fertile, but it is also much lower in altitude and is subject to being flooded by the river for several miles to the east of Sullivan's Bluff.\(^3\) Farmers living in this area found

---

The citations on the following pages follow the style of the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*.

1 Also spelled Sillaven's Bluff.

2 *Soil Survey of Milam County Texas*, 8.

3 *Brazos River and Tributaries, Oyster Creek, and Jones Creek, Tex.*, U. S. Congress. House Document No. 535, 81st Cong. 2nd Sess., Plate 1-A. See also Appendix, Map No. 1.
it necessary to build their homes or stilts to be out of the reach of a flooding Brazos River. Owners of land adjacent to the river found it necessary to live either several miles east of their land or to live just across the river on Sullivan's Bluff.

Little River presented a similar problem to the owners of land along its banks. The flood plain of Little River extends some distance on both sides of the river's normal channel. Near its junction with the Brazos River the area subject to flooding by Little River extends almost all of the two miles distance to Sullivan's Bluff, causing land owners in the area to have to live on or very near the bluff. Nature provided Sullivan's Bluff with a potential for a more than normal concentration of population.

Opposite Sullivan's Bluff a ledge of limestone creates a shoal in the Brazos. Large limestone and sandstone boulders clutter the river bed for almost a mile below the shoal. This combination of boulders and shoal constituted a serious obstruction to water

\[4\text{Ibid.}\]
transportation. The shoal, on-the-other hand, was a boon to land transportation. The limestone ledge made it easy to ford the river at that point. Sullivan's Bluff, through the aid of nature, became the head of navigation of the Brazos and a crossing point for land transportation. This rise of land along the Brazos River in Milam County in time became a townsit. Nature provided the bluff with the potential for the location of a town, and persons desiring to cultivate the rich bottom lands would make it a reality.

The early Indians around Sullivan's Bluff did not cultivate cotton; their canoes were not hindered by the shoal; and rivers were not a great barrier to their form of land transportation. The Indians, however, were a barrier to those who would be affected by the geography of Sullivan's Bluff.

In the eighteenth century Indians of the Tonkawa tribes occupied the land near the junction of the

---


Brazos and Little rivers, and up the Brazos about eighty miles from the bluff lived the Wacos and Tahuacanos. The first Europeans to settle the area near the bluff came as missionaries to the Indians.

Spain was the first European country to claim the area under consideration in this paper. Her claim was over two hundred years old before a very temporary settlement was made near Sullivan's Bluff. Partly, as a measure of strengthening their claim to the region; and, partly, as an effort to Christianize the Tonkawa Indians, the Spaniards established three missions and a presidio on the San Gabriel, a tributary of Little River. This settlement began in 1746, but it lasted only until 1755. The missions were located about thirty miles from Sullivan's Bluff. The Spaniards, however, did not take advantage of the geography of the bluff.

It was almost seven decades after the Spaniards left the area before other people of European stock

---

7 Herbert Eugene Bolton, Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century, Map Insert.

8 Eugene C. Barker, The Life of Stephen F. Austin, 95. Hereafter cited as Barker, Life of Austin.

9 Lelia M. Batte, History of Milam County Texas, 8. Hereafter cited as Batte, Milam County.
became interested in the lands along the Brazos and Little Rivers. Stephen F. Austin, an Anglo-American, in August of 1821, concluded arrangements to establish a colony in Texas. At first he was interested in the Colorado River and its navigability. He gained permission to explore this river and to sound it.  

Later in 1821, the first settlers to enter his colony came to Texas on the Lively from New Orleans. Austin had left instructions for them to land at the mouth of the Colorado, and to take soundings along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico as they came. Austin considered water transportation a very important factor in choosing a site for his colony. The travelers on the Lively followed their instructions about sounding along the coast as they came, but they mistook the Brazos for the Colorado and landed at its mouth.  

Because the Constitution of Mexico forbid settlement of foreigners within ten leagues of the coast or within twenty leagues of an international boundary, the first permanent settlements were made in the interior of the country, about thirty miles inland.  

---  

10 Barker, Life of Austin, 31.  
11 Ibid., 38-39.  
12 Ibid., 120.
The ideal location was one that fronted on running water. Surveyors were instructed to limit the length of river frontage in any one tract to one-fourth of the depth of the survey, and both banks of a river or stream were not to be included in one survey if avoidable.13 This system of limiting river frontage gave more settlers a chance for a tract of land along a major stream. However, despite this procedure, the banks of the Brazos filled up very quickly. By 1824, the fourth year of settlement in Austin's colony, the east bank of the Brazos had been surveyed and granted as high up as present Brazos County,14 and settlement had extended to a point about eighty miles below Sullivan's Bluff.

By 1824, advance parties of locators had already been up as far as the bluff looking over the country. One party had penetrated up the Brazos to the junction of Little River as early as 1822. This party described the Brazos as being a large navigable stream up to that point. Bear and wild cattle were reported in the bottom lands to the east of the Brazos. The explorers

13 Ibid., 139.
14 Ibid., 116.
sighted wild horses and more wild cattle on the prairies. The buffalo seen were estimated at one thousand per day as the explorers approached the mouth of Little River. The land nearby was described as being rich and fertile. Timber in the form of white oaks and cedar was found along the banks of Little River. The area near Sullivan's Bluff was reported on favorably for settlement as early as 1822.

As the area of settlement moved farther up the Brazos, the pioneers came into contact with the Indians of the upper Brazos, resulting in increasing difficulties between the two civilizations. Stephen F. Austin, in 1824, sent agents to Waco Village, the principal settlement of the Wacos, near present day Waco. Waco Village was about one hundred and sixty miles above Austin's highest settlements; and Sullivan's Bluff was at this time midway between the Anglo-American and Indian settlement. The party sent by Austin made contact with the Wacos and was able to arrange a treaty with them. The Wacos, however, were not the only Indians on the upper Brazos. The Tahuacanos still made

---

occasional raids upon the settlements along the lower Brazos, and Austin developed another plan for protecting his colony from the raids of the Indians.

In the early part of 1825, Austin petitioned the Governor of Coahuila for permission to start another colony above his original colony. The new colony was to be a buffer zone for the lower colony, much like Georgia had been designed as a buffer zone for South Carolina. The boundary of Austin's first colony crossed the Brazos twenty miles below Sullivan's Bluff. The second colony, or Upper Colony as Austin called it, would start at the boundary of his first colony and continue up the Brazos several hundred miles. The Upper Colony included Sullivan's Bluff. Austin suggested that settlers for the new colony could be obtained from the twenty league zone along the border with the United States in East Texas. Squatters in the prohibited area did not have title to the land they lived on, nor did they have adequate protection from the frontier elements. These rough characters from the old Neutral Ground would provide a good buffer.

17 Ibid.
against the Tahucaros, similar in some respects to those taken from debtors' prisons and sent to Georgia. The Mexican officials, however had other plans for the land above Austin's first colony.

The Texas Association of Davidson County, Tennessee, in March 1822, had made application to the government of Mexico for a land grant and for permission to start a colony in Texas. Two years later the Association sent agents to Mexico to obtain a grant. One of their agents, Robert Leftwich, received a grant on April 15, 1825, which included the area Austin had in mind for his buffer colony. Sullivan's Bluff lay within the Leftwich Grant.

The grant to the Tennessee company, made in the name of Robert Leftwich, actually delayed the settlement of the land above Austin's colony. Little was done by the company during the first five years of its six year contract. Much time was lost due to administrative changes in the company. Leftwich transferred his grant to the Nashville Company. The Tennessee

---

18 Ibid.
20 Batte, Milam County, 12.
parties did not like the idea of the grant being in Leftwich's name, nor did they like the expense account turned in on his return from Mexico. The Nashville Company soon replaced Leftwich with Hosca H. League.\textsuperscript{21} This transfer, however, did not lead to the settlement of the colony.

All the Nashville Company did during the first five years of its contract, according to Austin, was to encourage speculation in the land through the sale of land script. This, Austin said, was frowned upon by the Mexican government, and it led the Government to a change in its immigration policy.\textsuperscript{22} A new law passed on April 6, 1830, prohibited immigration into those Mexican states from foreign countries adjoining Mexican territory. Persons from the United States were, therefore, barred from settling in Texas. The new law also suspended colonial contracts if less than one hundred families had been settled by April, 1830.\textsuperscript{23}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{21}Richard Denny Parker, \textit{Historical Recollections of Robertson County}, 7. Hereafter cited as Parker, \textit{Robertson County}.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{22}Stephen F. Austin to M. B. Lamar, Columbia, December 5, 1836, in Eugene C. Barker (ed.), \textit{The Austin Papers}, III, 466. Hereafter cited as Barker (ed.), \textit{Austin Papers}.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{23}Parker, \textit{Robertson County}, 7.
\end{flushright}
About the time the Law of April 6, 1830, was passed, the Nashville Company had started to take definite steps toward fulfilling the obligation of its contract to settle 600 families.

Another change in the administration of the Nashville Company soon placed Sterling C. Robertson in the top position. Late in 1830, Robertson led a group of families to explore the land that had been designated for the colony and to stake out claims. They were stopped at Nacogdoches, Texas, because of the Law of April 6, 1830, and were not allowed to settle in their colony. Over five years had passed since Austin had first sought to establish a buffer zone for his colonists, and it now seemed that the settlement of the upper Brazos would be delayed much longer; so late in 1830, Austin took additional steps to settle the Upper Colony.

At first, Austin tried to persuade the Government to return the grant to Robertson and to give Robertson additional time to fulfill the terms of the contract. Austin was not successful in this attempt. To the State officials, the Law of April 6, 1830, was very

24Stephen F. Austin to M. B. Lamar, Columbia, December 5, 1836, in Barker (ed.), Austin Papers, III, 466.
clear in respect to Robertson and the grant to the Nashville Company. Robertson was an American; he could not settle in Texas. The contract with the Nashville Company was void. The government of Mexico had received other offers to colonize the Upper Colony from nations not excluded by the new immigration laws. English and French companies were interested in the land above Austin's first colony. These companies, Austin believed, would do even less than the Tennessee company to settle the buffer zone. Austin, therefore moved to keep the land above his colony from being transferred to the European Companies.25

In February 1831, a month before the original contract with Leftwich was to expire, the Upper Colony was granted to Austin and his secretary, Samuel May Williams.26 Six years had passed since February 5, 1825, the day Austin had petitioned the Governor of Coahuila for permission to settle the Upper Colony.27 February 1831, found Sullivan's Bluff still unoccupied. Barriers to settlement continued to exist. Under the

25 Ibid., 468.
26 Ibid., 468.
27 Barker, Life of Austin, 124-125.
now turn of events, only Europeans or Mexicans could settle in the Upper Colony now controlled by Austin and Williams. By 1835, very few grants had been made by Austin and Williams in the Upper Colony, and these grants were to Mexicans, most of whom later sold their claim to Anglo-Americans. Unless changes were made in the immigration laws, the area near Sullivan's Bluff would be settled very slowly. There were not many Europeans or Mexicans interested in the Upper Colony, and Americans were prohibited by law from settling in Texas.

After a wait of nearly five years, the Mexican government on December 7, 1835, agreed to repeal the Law of April 6, 1830. Anglo-Americans were again permitted to settle in Texas. Austin would now have no difficulty in finding settlers to move into the buffer zone. Robertson, in the meantime, dissatisfied with the manner by which the contract with the Nash-ville Company had been broken, had not been idle the past four years. After convincing the Government that he had introduced one hundred families into the Upper

28 Batte, Milam County, 15.

29 Barker, Life of Austin, 373.
Colony before the Law of April 6, 1830, Robertson succeeded in getting the contract with the Nashville Company renewed. On May 22, 1834, the contract was returned to Robertson's group; nine years had passed since the contract had first been let to Leftwich. Still no one lived on Sullivan's Bluff.

The change in the immigration laws and the restoration of the Nashville Company's rights stimulated settlement in the area around Sullivan's Bluff. Robertson, through his agent, William H. Steel, began granting land to settlers in the Upper Colony, now called Robertson Colony. Nine grants were made in present day Milam County in the latter part of 1834; the next year some fifty-one more grants were made. A grant dated July 2, 1835, began by saying, "I, Citizen Guillermo (William) H. Steel commissioner appointed by the Supreme Government of this State for the distribution and giving possession of lands and issuing title to the new colonists in the colonization enterprise of the Nashville Company," and ended up granting some

---

30 Ibid., 312.

land to Edwin Caruthers. 32 By this grant, Caruthers owned Sullivan's Bluff for a few months.

The area around the Bluff was beginning to become settled by 1835. Only two years before it was said that no more than five white persons lived anywhere in that general area. 33 The newcomers from the United States settled along the Brazos and Little rivers. 34 Tracts with river frontage were still preferred. The original surveys made along the streams only had water frontage equal to one-fourth of their depth. 35 Even with this limitation, the lands along the banks of rivers were patented rapidly.

With the influx of settlers several towns were formed in Robertson County. Robertson laid out Sarahville de Vieca at the "Falls of the Brazos" in 1834. 36 This site, some forty miles above Sullivan's Bluff, was to be the land office for the colony. Another town

32 Caruthers Survey Abstracts, Milam County Abstract Co.

33 Henderson, "Milam County," 50.


35 Map of Milam County, Milam County Abstract Co.

36 Batte, Milam County, 18.
was formed in the southern part of the colony, about four miles below Sullivan's Bluff. This town, Nashville, was situated on a bluff overlooking the fertile land of the Brazos Valley. In this respect Nashville was like Sullivan's Bluff, but there were differences as well. The Brazos at Nashville is made wider by the waters of Little River which join the Brazos two miles upstream. The river, however, is not made shallow by a shoal at Nashville. No boulders are in the Brazos between Nashville and Sullivan's Bluff to interfere with river navigation. Springs nearby are said to have influenced the location of Nashville. The proper conditions were not present in 1834, to transform Sullivan's Bluff into a town. Events in the latter part of 1835, and the aftermath of these events were to delay this transformation fifteen years.

As the year 1835 drew to a close, the separation of Texas from Mexico was underway. One last change regarding the ownership of the Upper Colony or Robertson Colony took place before any shots were fired between Mexicans and Texans. Austin persuaded the Congress of Texas and Coahuila to restore the contract.

---

37 Henderson, "Milam County," 65.
he held jointly with Williams. This change was announced in the Texas Republican on June 20, 1835. The report of the change, however, did not stop Robertson from issuing grants; the last grant was recorded on November 10, 1835. It was the revolution rather than the action of the Government that stopped the issuance of patents in the so-called Robertson Colony. Other events soon overshadowed any further action taken by Mexico in respect to the colony. On October 2, 1835, the opening skirmish of the Texas Revolution between Mexicans and Texans took place. No one knew what the future might hold. In these confusing times a certain young man came to the Robertson Colony or Upper Colony.

38 Ibid., 48.
39 Texas Republican (Brazoria), June 20, 1835.
40 Martin and Hill (eds.), Milam County, I, 49-50.
41 Barker, Life of Austin, 317.
42 Ibid., 415.
Augustus W. Sillaven came to Texas sometime in October 1835, probably after the first skirmish between Texans and Mexicans. He did not receive a land grant in 1835, but he did acquire title to a plot of real estate late in 1835. On December 12, 1835, Sillaven received title to one-fourth league of land from Edwin Caruthers. The eastern part of this quarter league of land along the Brazos became known as Sillaven's or Sullivan's Bluff.

Little is known about Sillaven before his arrival in Texas, or even after his arrival. He was about 29

43 The United States Census Returns, 1850, Schedule No. 1, shows his name as Augustin W. Sillaven; in Batte, Milam County, 12, his name is spelled A.W. Sullivan; in George W. Tyler, The History of Bell County, 9, Gus Sullivan; in Martin and Sill (eds.), Milam County, I, 7, Augustus W. Sillaven; in Ibid., II, 75, A. W. Silliven; in Tax Rolls Milam County, 1854, Texas State Archives, A.W. Sillaven; and in Caruthers Survey Abstracts, Milam County Abstract Co., A. W. Sullivan.

44 Grant to Augustine W. Sillaven, March 8, 1841, General Land Office, Austin. In qualifying as a resident of Texas prior to the Declaration of Independence, March 2, 1836, a requirement of this type grant from the Republic of Texas, Sillaven said he was a resident of Texas starting in October 1835.

45 Burned Record, Milam County Abstract Co.
years old at the time he came. According to some sources, took part in the siege of Bexar in December 1835. The muster rolls at the General Land Office of Texas do not list any Sillaven or Sullivan in the Army in San Antonio at that time. His purchase of Sullivan's Bluff from Caruthers took place within a week of the action in San Antonio. In fact, after his purchase of land in 1835, his name does not appear on any other records until February 2, 1837. He may have left the area until the times became more settled. The last part of 1835 and early part of 1836 saw trouble not only develop between Texans and Mexicans, but also between the Texans and the nearby Indians.

In 1835, as the frontier moved northward and westward, the Indians became more concerned, and they took advantage of the revolutionary disturbances to increase the frequency of their raids on the Anglo-American settlements. A settler on route to Nashville in 1835 was killed near the rise of land known as Sugar Loaf Mountain, which is visible from Sullivan's Bluff.

---
46 The United States Census Returns, 1850, Schedule No. 1, shows Augustin W. Sillaven as being 44 years old.
47 Batte, Milam County, 12; Henderson, "Milam County," 82.
48 Ibid., 20.
Nashville, itself, was the target of several raids in 1835. Settlers north of Nashville began to move south to safer areas. Early in 1836, following the defeat of the Texas Army at the Alamo in San Antonio, Nashville was temporarily abandoned until after the Texan victory at San Jacinto in April 1836. The victory removed, for the time being, the threat of an invading army, but the Indians continued to cause trouble for the settlers near Sullivan's Bluff for a few more years.

The news of the attack on Fort Parker in May 1836, brought about another retreat by settlers along the upper Brazos near Sarahville de Viesca at the Falls, who moved down the Brazos past Sullivan's Bluff, to Nashville. Settlers remained at Nashville or below until the fall of 1836, when they again attempted to return to their lands farther up the Brazos. This attempt was futile as families living above the mouth

49 Lengert, "Milam County," 46.
50 Batte, Milam County, 32.
51 Henderson, "Milam County," 86.
52 Lengert, "Milam County," 47.
of Little River were again forced to return to Nash-
ville. In 1837, surveyors were sent out to measure
more land for settlers. Indians, realizing that
settlers would follow the surveyors, renewed hostili-
ties with great vigor. Something would have to be
done about the Indians before the area would be safe
for settlement.

In April 1838, a petition was sent to the Senate
and House of Representatives of the Republic of Texas
from the "citizens of the county of Milam a part of
your Northern Frontier inhabitants." The petitioners
said that they were "almost daily visited and
Harrassed by a Savage foe, who seeks and avails him-
self of every opportunity to embrue his hands in the
blood of the White Man." The petitioners went on
to say,

Our old men have been killed and Scalped
under our immediate inspection. Many of our
young men have alike fallen Victims to the
Tomahawk and Scalping Knife. Our innocent
children with their Mothers have alike been
captured and driven off like so many brutes,

53 Batte, Milam County, 37.
54 Ibid., 40-41.
55 Quoted in Martin and Hill (eds.), Milam
County, I, 8.
and after having been subjected to all the Cruelties which a Savage foe are capable of inflicting, have been doomed to Slavery. 56

The petitioners wanted the Congress either to call out the militia or to create a "Corps of Mounted Volunteers" for their protection. Several of those signing the petition lived around Nashville. A. W. Sillaven added his signature to the petition also. 57

Sillaven was again in the neighborhood of his bluff in 1837. He purchased an additional tract of land on February 2, 1837, which consisted of 1,107 acres situated in the fork of the Brazos and Little rivers, 58 on the west and north banks, respectively, and about one mile from Sullivan's Bluff. In the early part of 1838, Sillaven worked with the county surveyor as a marker or blazer. 59 On June 28, 1838, Silliven was elected sheriff of Milam County. No other person was listed as holding that office until February 1841. 60 Sillaven was well known by the few settlers in the area.

56 Ibid., 8-9.
57 Ibid.
58 Burned Record, Milam County Abstract Co.
59 Martin and Hill (eds.), Milam County, II, 75-94.
60 Ibid., I, 7.
in the late 1830's.

The continued raids of the Indians slowed the settlement of Milam County. As late as 1839, only twenty-five families were reported living in the county. Although Milam County extended a hundred miles or so up the Brazos River, Nashville, near the southern boundary of the county, was the most densely populated area to the north. Once the Indian problem was settled in the 1840's, settlement pushed well to the north of Nashville.

The petition from the people of Milam County to Congress in 1838 may have influenced that body in 1839-1840, to authorize the President to accept the services of three companies of volunteers in Milam and Eastrop counties. After a few more years, the Indians were ready to make peace treaties. The Indian tribes living along the upper Brazos, by the 1840's included, in addition to the Wacos and Tahuacans, such tribes as the

61 Lengert, "Milam County," 78.
62 Martin and Hill (eds.), Milam County, I, 10-11.
Delawares, Caddos and others. A preliminary treaty was reached with these various tribes on March 31, 1843. It was agreed to stop hostilities until a formal treaty could be made later that year. In June 1843, a party of Delaware Indians came down the Brazos, past Sullivan's Bluff, to Nashville to trade a large quantity of peltries. They seemed to be content with hunting game and they showed no sign of renewing hostilities. It looked as if calmer times were coming to Milan County. Later in the summer, however, a group of about sixty Indians, including some Wacos, visited a settlement on Little River, and while there became somewhat insolent and showed signs of hostility. A short time later a few well armed men arrived at the settlement and the Indians left quietly in small groups. Later in the year, on September 29, 1843, a formal treaty was signed, but it did not stop informal hostilities.

A band of four Indians reportedly stole some horses in 1844, below the present town of Cameron,

---

64 Muckleroy, "Indian Policy," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXVI (January, 1923), p. 188.
65 Morning Star (Houston), July 11, 1843.
66 Ibid., September 19, 1843.
67 Muckleroy, "Indian Policy," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXVI (January, 1923), p. 188.
about twenty miles from Sullivan's Bluff. Obviously, some other Indians had not heard about the treaty or were not abiding by it. Yet, another treaty was negotiated in 1844. While this treaty was being negotiated, a few Indians, or perhaps some white men, made an attack on a settlement on the Brazos about twenty-five miles above Nashville. A Negro was killed and scalped, and twenty-five horses were stolen. Despite this incident, a new treaty was signed in October 1844. This treaty said in part, "The Tomahawk shall be buried." Indians were still blamed for incidents in the area near Sullivan's Bluff in 1845, and some Wacos were blamed for the death of a Robertson County man in the early part of 1845. After the latter incident, life became less dangerous in the area of the bluff, and settlers came more readily to the area.

With the conclusion of peace treaties with the Indians in 1844-1845, immigrants began pouring into the

68 George W. Tyler, The History of Bell County, 79. Hereafter cited as Tyler, Bell County.

69 Morning Star, February 8, 1844.


71 Morning Star, February 8, 1845.
area above Nashville. The frontier line now moved steadily westward. In 1849, a chain of western forts was established by the Federal government along a north-south line about one hundred miles from the junction of the Brazos and Little rivers, and Sillaven and his neighbors thereafter could feel more secure in their lives and property.

In 1846, the Legislature of the State of Texas decided that Nashville was too far south in Milam County to be the county seat. Only seven years before Nashville had been described as the extreme northern populated area of the county. The Legislature appointed a commission of seven members to locate a site for the permanent county seat. Augustus W. Sillaven was one of the commissioners. Sillaven by this service gained experience in choosing sites for towns. His bluff was too close to Nashville and the southern and eastern boundaries of the county to warrant much consideration. The site for the county seat was selected along Little River about twenty miles west of

---

72 Tyler, Bell County, 79.
73 Ernest Wallace, Texas in Turmoil, 14.
74 Martin and Hill (eds.), Milam County, 49-49.
75 Batte, Milam County, 48-49.
Sullivan's Bluff. Cameron, the name of the new town, was said to have been surveyed by Sullivan and three other men late in 1846. Another man, George B. Erath, an early Texas Ranger and member of the State Legislature, claims he surveyed the town site. He does not mention anyone helping him. The town grew fast. In 1849, it was described as having about forty houses. Farms were in operation all around the town. New settlers from northeastern Texas were coming to the area to live. Before long settlers were forming towns west of Cameron.

On the edge of the Edwards Plateau, the town of Georgetown was founded in August 1848. This town, on the banks of the San Gabriel, a tributary of Little River, was more than fifty miles west of Sullivan's Bluff. North of Georgetown, the town of Belton was

---

76 History of Texas, Together with a Biographical History of Milam, Williamson, Bastrop, Travis, Lee and Burleson Counties, 256-257. Hereafter cited as History of Texas, Biography of Milam County.


78 Democratic Telegraph and Texas Register (Houston), March 1, 1849.

founded late in 1850. The sale of lots began in August 1850. This town, too, was located on a tributary of Little River. Some headway was made in settling the Brazos River Valley north of the junction of that river with Little River. Fairfield, not far from the present towns of Grosbeck and Mexia, was formed in 1849. On the banks of the Brazos, eighty miles above Sullivan's Bluff the town of Waco was laid out in 1849. In the summer of 1849, about fifty wagons of immigrants crossed the Brazos at Waco enroute to the lands along the San Gabriel, Brushy, and Leon, all west of Sullivan's Bluff. The frontier was moving west. No frontier town developed on Sullivan's Bluff. A different type of town was to develop here.

As the threat of frontier violence gradually subsided, farmers became more concerned with things other than just self-protection. Farmers could now raise more than a subsistence living, and could increase their production, creating a surplus to be sold to enable them to purchase various items that they could

---

80 Ibid., I, 144.
81 Tyler, Bell County, 81.
82 Democratic Telegraph and Texas Register, July 28, 1849.
not make themselves. The main problem facing the farmer now was transportation. It might cost him more to haul his crops to market than they were worth. Supplies might be priced out of the reach of most people by the time transportation costs were added. How could these costs be reduced? Travel by water was one of the first forms of transportation to be considered with the idea of reducing costs. The market places for the area around Sullivan's Bluff and for the towns north and west of the bluff were Galveston and Houston. The Brazos River flowed in the general direction of these markets from this area in Texas. The river might be the solution to the farmers' transportation problem.

The waters of the Brazos had served the planters along the lower Brazos for many years. At first water transportation had been limited to the tidewater area of the river. Sail power was not very effective against the stronger river currents. Competition developed between various spots along the river in regard to the limits of tidewater navigation. The Texas Republican advertised the sale of lots in the town of Orozimbo on November 8, 1834. Orozimbo was described as being at the head of tide navigation of the Brazos.\(^3\)

\(^3\)Texas Republican, November 8, 1834.
This assertion was challenged by some other property interests along the Brazos. On February 14, 1835, lots in the town of Montezuma were advertised for sale. According to this advertisement, Montezuma was "the real head of Tide Navigation."84 Neither town became an important port. Other forms of water transportation were introduced on the Brazos that paid little attention to the limits of tidal navigation.

The powerful paddle wheels of the steamboat could push the steamboats up rivers against the currents. The first steamboat actually plied on the Brazos before the tidewater fight between Orozimbo and Montezuma took place. Henry Austin, a cousin of Stephen F. Austin, brought the steamboat Ariel from the Rio Grande in 1830.85 Other such craft were plying the Brazos within a few years. The Cayuga arrived on the Brazos in 1836.86 Before long these craft were venturing farther and farther up the river. How far could a steamboat travel up the Brazos?

84 Ibid., February 14, 1835.
86 Ibid., 14.
In a report on Texas in 1835, the Mexican Government indicated the Brazos was navigable by steamships some 250 or 300 miles above its mouth. The estimate placed steamboat navigation within fifty miles of Sullivan's Bluff, but this was just a guess.

Washington, a town about eighty miles below Sullivan's Bluff on the Brazos, was founded in the early 1830's, and the citizens of the town soon became concerned with improving their communications with the coast. A meeting was held at Washington in 1836 to discuss river improvements, and money was raised to purchase a steamboat. The town was described in a letter written in 1837 as being "beautifully situated on the right bank of the Brazos river opposite the mouth of the Navasota and is evidently at the head of navigation, there being a series of obstacles in the river beginning a few miles above the Town." At the time the above

88 Webb and Carroll (eds.), Handbook of Texas, II, 865.
89 Lockhart, "Navigating Texas Rivers," 35.
90 Asa Hoxey, President of the Washington Company, to the Commissioners appointed by Congress to Locate the Seat of Government, November 15, 1837, quoted in Earnest William Winkler, "The Seat of Government of Texas," Quarterly of Texas State Historical Association, X, 190.
statement was written no steamboat had reached Washington; and it was not known, therefore, if steamboats could actually go that far up the river, or if the obstacles a few miles above Washington would stop steamboats. The letter blamed the disturbed situation of the country, rather than obstacles in the river for the failure of any steamboat, up to that time, to reach Washington. The calmer times did bring the steamboats to Washington and above.

As calm returned to the area in the 1840's, steamboats ventured farther up the Brazos. The steamship Mustang was reported to be running a regular packet between Washington and Galveston in March 1843. The Mustang did not stop at Washington or Hidalgo Falls, the obstacle just above Washington. The Morning Star on June 1, 1843, reported the Mustang had ascended the Brazos above Washington probably reaching Tenoxtitlan, about fifteen or twenty miles downstream from Sullivan's Bluff. The Mustang did not stop at Tenoxtitlan. Two weeks later the paper reported:

The Steamer Mustang lately ascended the Brazos to the shoals fifteen or twenty miles above

---

91Ibid.

92Morning Star, March 25, 1843
Nashville.-- The river was falling rapidly, and Capt. Moore did not consider it prudent to ascend the great falls as he intended. The trip upwards to Nashville was made in 22 hours, and no shoals or other obstructions were found in the river. The trip down from Nashville to Washington was made in ten hours and three quarters.93

On this trip the Mustang undoubtedly made it up the river as far as Sullivan's Bluff, just four miles above Nashville or fifteen to twenty miles above Tenoxtitlan. From the newspaper article, it seems that the boat actually crossed the shoal and boulders at the bluff, if it did go fifteen or twenty miles above Nashville as reported. Boulders clutter the Brazos at Curley's Shoal fifteen miles above Nashville and again at Cannon Ball Shoal twenty miles above Nashville. One of these two barriers may have stopped Captain Moore and the Mustang after crossing the shoal at Sullivan's Bluff. The two upper shoals, at a later date, were not considered by the United States Corps of Engineers surveyors to be so much a barrier to river navigation as was the shoal at Sullivan's Bluff. The shoal at Sullivan's Bluff was considered the greatest barrier to river navigation between Richmond, eighty-nine miles above the river's mouth, and Waco, eighty-seven miles above.

93 Ibid., June 15, 1843.
above Sullivan's Bluff. The Kornning Star may have meant to say the Mustang traveled fifteen or twenty miles above Tenoxitlan rather than Nashville. This would have meant the Mustang stopped at Sullivan's Bluff instead of crossing it. No other report has been found by the author, of a steamboat crossing the shoals at Sullivan's Bluff going upstream, although, as will be shown later, one steamboat built at Waco crossed the shoal going downstream.

The Mustang established that Washington was not the limit of steamboat navigation on the Brazos in 1843. At this time the population around Sullivan's Bluff was still very small. The treaties discussed earlier were yet to be signed; Texas was still a Republic. Settlement, at this time, was not very much north or west of Sullivan's Bluff. The demand for cheaper and better transportation was not strong enough in the early 1840's to induce the steamboats on the Brazos to travel much higher than Washington. The

---

CHAPTER II
FROM BLUFF TO PORT

Early in 1849, two new steamboats, built at Pittsburgh, arrived on the Brazos River.¹ These were the Brazos and Washington, often called the "Brazos Boats," and they marked the beginning of a new era of steamboating on the Brazos. Both boats were large ones, possessing 120-foot keels, 22-foot beams, and 4-foot holds. The bottoms were made from three-inch white oak planks. Each engine consisted of two ten inch cylinders with four-foot strokes. The paddle wheels, thirteen feet in diameter, were mounted on the stern of the boats. The captains of the vessels reported the boats could travel five miles per hour against the strongest current in the Mississippi River. Despite their size, the Brazos and Washington were of light draft. Unloaded, they drew only fifteen inches. Each three hundred bales of cotton would cause them to draw an additional foot.² When loaded with six hundred bales they could move in forty inches of water, an important factor for transportation on the Brazos.

¹Galveston Weekly News, November, 1848, and January 5, 1849.
²Texas Ranger and Brazos Guard (Washington), January 16, 1849.
Soon after the arrival of the "Brazos Boats" at Washington, a "Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen Brazos Counties" was published in the Washington paper, declaring the Brazos planters would henceforth no longer suffer at the hands of the Houston merchants. The "Brazos Boats" set them free from the abuses and usurpations of the Houstonians. The planters would now be able to ship their produce to and buy their goods from Galveston. The document was signed by the residents of Milam and eleven other counties bordering on the Brazos. Galveston joined the Brazos counties in announcing the new trading arrangement brought about by the "Brazos Boats."\(^3\) Milam County, at this time, was free only in theory, from transactions with Houston merchants and from the high costs of land transportation between the county and the market place. Steamboats would have to call at her shores to prove her independence.

About the time of the arrival of the boats at Washington, there was talk of navigating the Brazos above Washington. "One effort has already demonstrated its easy navigation to this point," said an article in the Texas Ranger of Washington, "another, we trust, may

\(^3\)Ibid.
Soon open it to the 'falls' at Milam forty miles above Sullivan's Bluff, and in less than three years, we trust, to see boats from the 'clear Fork of the Brazos' above Waco.4 For the first year of their operations, however, the "Brazos Boats" stayed on the lower Brazos. The next year they extended their sphere of operations higher up the river.

The Brazos, in March 1850, traveled up the Brazos to Munson's Bluff, near the mouth of Little River or about one hundred miles above Washington, according to a Galveston paper. Hidalgo Falls, just above Washington, was no obstacle at high stages of water. The captain of the boat reported the river was navigable to Munson's Bluff with little difficulty, but not beyond.5 The shoal near Munson's Bluff, however, did not stop the "Brazos Boats" for long. They soon overcame this obstacle and proceeded up the Brazos.

In May 1850, settlers along the Brazos River witnessed the greatest overflow since 1833. The river was reported four miles wide at Washington.6 At high

4 Ibid., February 1, 1849.
5 Galveston Weekly News, March 11, 1850.
6 Democratic Telegraph and Texas Register, May 23, and June 20, 1850.
water Munson's Shoals were crossed and Little River was navigated by a steamboat for eighty miles. J. W. McGown, a businessman in Cameron, took advantage of the high water to set out in a skiff on Little River for Washington. At Washington he contacted Basil Hatfield, the captain of the Washington, and offered him a five hundred dollar bonus, plus a certain amount of freight to take provisions and whiskey to Cameron. A shoal on Little River stopped the Washington just two miles from Cameron, where the boat stayed for two days of celebrations. The Texas State Gazette reported the trip as follows: "The steamer Washington, Captain Hatfield, recently ascended Little River eighty miles above its confluence with the Brazos,— a welcome visitor to the people of Cameron."

Later McGown used the trip to advertise some land he owned. An advertisement of land for sale by McGown in 1852, said, "Navigation good to Cameron six months in the Year." The truth of the matter came out later. The trip was so important in McGown's life that it rated

7 *History of Texas, Biography of Milam County*, 481-485.

8 *Texas State Gazette* (Austin), May 25, 1850.

9 *Long Star* (Washington), June 26, 1852.
mention in his epitaph. In part, his tombstone reads, "Brought merchandise up Little River in 'The Washington,' Only steamboat ever to navigate the stream, 1850." The Washington's trip, in addition to bringing fame to McCown, brought the steamboat whistle within hearing distance of Sullivan's Bluff for the first time since the Mustang in 1843.

In the summer of 1850, another steamboat joined the "Brazos Boats" on the river. The Jack Hays arrived in June 1850, at Washington with 1500 barrels of government stores. These supplies were for the frontier posts in the West. Plans were laid to explore the river as high as Waco Village, and to determine if the river could be improved to permit regular navigation on the upper Brazos, and, if so, the officer was to ask for appropriations to make the necessary improvements. Supplying the forts in the West was becoming increasingly more difficult as the frontier moved west. The forts in North Texas were supplied either from Fort Leavenworth on the Missouri River or from Indianola on the Texas Coast. A depot on the Brazos would certainly be

---

10 Martin and Hill (eds.), Milam County, II, 146.
closer than either of these two points to the posts in North Texas. The prospects of a large army depot being built at the head of navigation on the Brazos gave additional importance to that point on the Brazos that would be at the head of steam navigation. The question was, "Where was the head of navigation on the Brazos?"

A group of Englishmen in 1850 added to the speculation about the head of navigation on the Brazos. In 1850, the English Universal Immigration Company bought 27,000 acres of land on the Brazos in present Bosque County above Waco. The English company planned to build a city, to be called the City of Kent, at the highest point of navigation, three hundred miles from the coast as the crow flies. Such a city, according to their dreams, had the potential to become a St. Louis, a Cincinnati, or a Philadelphia. The colonists for this enterprise landed at Galveston late in 1850. The Englishmen traveled to their proposed city not by water up the Brazos, but overland. Undoubtedly, a navigable river was one thing in Texas and quite another in England. Some of the immigrants passed through Cameron en route to their lands on the Upper Brazos. Two of them were married at Cameron on
December 2, 1850, and they may have passed over Sullivan's Bluff on the way to Cameron. The Englishmen's dreams of a large city at the head of navigation on the Brazos stirred the imagination of landowners along the river.

The trip of the Washington in May, the talk of an depot in June, and the plans for the City of Kent in December gave new importance to the area around Sullivan's Bluff in 1850. A writer in 1850 said, "nothing, perhaps, is facilitating the interests of Texas so much as improving the navigation of the rivers." In speaking of the Brazos, this same writer declared, "the entire practicability of navigating the river has been successfully tested, and this has induced settlers of large means to seek locations on its fertile valleys."

One of the more wealthy settlers to locate on the Brazos River was Reuben Anderson of Alabama. On August 10, 1850, Anderson bought 1,476 acres of land in the Brazos bottom just across from Sullivan's Bluff. He

---

14 Melinda Rankin, Texas in 1850, p. 126.
15 Ibid.
paid $20,000 for the tract.\textsuperscript{16} Anderson "induced" Augustus W. Sillaven, "to lay out a portion of his land immediately on the river, in town lots, as being the most eligible place for a town at this point, about 500 miles above the mouth of the river (Brazos), and at the head of navigation."\textsuperscript{17} The town on the bluff was appropriately named Port Sullivan. The first recorded sale of any lots in the new town took place on May 1, 1851, with two sons of Reuben Anderson, T. J. H. and W. B. Anderson, purchasing the lot.\textsuperscript{18} Port Sullivan came into existence claiming to be the head of navigation on the Brazos.

The stone historical marker at the site of Port Sullivan, erected in 1936 during the Texas Centennial Celebration, is responsible for some misinformation about Port Sullivan and its historical background. The marker reads,

\textbf{PORT SULLIVAN}

\textit{Early important trade and educational center - Established by Augustus W. Sullivan in 1835 -}

\textsuperscript{16}Deed Records, Robertson County, Vol. P, 70.

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Weekly Journal} (Galveston), November 5, 1852.

\textsuperscript{18}Burned Record, Milam County Abstract Co.
River navigation extended to this point for many years — The Austin-East Texas and the Houston-Waco roads crossed here — On this spot was located Port Sullivan College — Established in the early fifties — Incorporated December 16, 1863 — Destroyed by fire in 1878.19

The town was not established in 1835, but in either late 1850 or early 1851, as has been shown. The statements about the crossroads and the college are not accurate either, as will be shown later in this study.

A book published in 1938, containing the inscriptions on and locations of the markers erected in connection with the Texas centennial, did not copy correctly the inscription on the marker at Port Sullivan. In this book, the heading on the marker read "FORT SULLIVAN" instead of "PORT SULLIVAN," with the rest of the data being the same.20 This mistake led to another in The Handbook of Texas, published fourteen years later, which included an entry for both Port Sullivan and Fort Sullivan, and cited the first mentioned book as the source for the information on Fort Sullivan.21

19 Personal observation by the author.

20 Commission of Control for Texas Centennial Celebrations (eds.), Monuments Erected by the State of Texas to Commemorate the Centenary of Texas Independence, 152.

The Handbook of Texas leads one to the wrong conclusion that Port Sullivan originated from a frontier outpost. Although established primarily to be the town at the head of steam navigation on the Brazos, a contributing factor to the founding of the town may have been the flooding Brazos. The large flood in the spring of 1850, which allowed the Washington to navigate Little River, may have also flooded a large area across from Sullivan’s Bluff. Reuben Anderson and his sons may have been as interested in establishing a town on the bluff in order to have a place to live as they were in establishing a town at the head of navigation. An examination of the abstracts of land in the surveys directly across the river from Port Sullivan shows the names of many persons who lived in Port Sullivan. Some of the owners of land in Robertson County adjacent to Sullivan’s Bluff and the Brazos River became the leading citizens of Port Sullivan. The desire of land owners in the area for a safer place to live may not have been the most important factor in the establishment of Port Sullivan, but their purchase of lots and settle-

22 See Chapter I, 1, and Appendix, Map No. 1.
23 See Appendix, Table No. 1.
ment in the community provided the town with a good
number of citizens from the beginning. The port might
fail, but inhabitants of Port Sullivan would remain,
since they had other reasons for living there.

Port Sullivan was primarily established to be a
port. The first attempt to establish steamboat com-
mutation with Sullivan's Bluff appears to have been
a failure. Early in 1851, a shipment from Washington
was consigned to "Sullivan's Bluff," aboard the Brazos.
This shipment consisted of 144 barrels of mess pork,
4 barrels of beef, 1 barrel of ham, 2 barrels of coffee,
1 barrel of brown sugar, 5 barrels of dried apples, 7
barrels of trout, 2 barrels of salt, 5 boxes of candies,
2 boxes of soap, 6 kegs of pickles, 10 half-barrels of
molasses, 2 barrels of rectified whiskey, and 13 barrels
of bacon. The cargo was to be delivered "in like order
and condition at the port of Sullivan's Bluff (the
danger of the river only excepted) unto Hubby and
Sullivan,24 who jointly owned a warehouse there. An
advertisement in a Washington paper in April 1851 read
as follows:

24 Marjorie Rogers, "Time Dims the Brilliance of a
Pioneer Texas Town," [4]. Typescript in the possession
of Mrs. Helen Peel, Hearne, Texas. Hereafter cited as
Rogers, "Time Dims the Brilliance."
The Brazos in early 1851 may have been carrying one of the first shipments in response to Hubby & Sillaven's advertisement. It appears, however, that the Brazos did not complete the journey to Sullivan's Bluff. An article written about Fort Sullivan the following year stated that only two steamboats had made it up the Brazos to that point, neither of which was the Brazos.26

More definite steps were made in the spring and summer of 1851 to open up the Brazos to the new town on Sullivan's Bluff. In May 1851, the planters along the upper Brazos made plans to order a boat to run between Washington and the "large falls." Money to purchase a steamboat at Cincinnati was raised by interested persons. A keel boat was used for transportation until the steamboat arrived in the fall.

Also during the summer of 1851, the persons living.

---

25 Texas Ranger (Washington), April 30, 1851.
26 Weekly Journal, November 5, 1852.
around Munson's Shoals made plans to remove the shoals during low water. 27 The shoals had, perhaps, stopped the Brazos en route to Sullivan's Bluff. The keel boat placed in service until the arrival of the new steamboat was the Texas Ranger. It worked out of Washington, and an advertisement said the boat was ready in any direction to accommodate customers. 28

A report in a Galveston newspaper in June 1851, reflected the desire of the planters near Sullivan's Bluff to open the river to that point. "The planters on the Upper Brazos have resolved to open the navigation of that river as high up as Sullivan's Bluff, so that boats may run up to that point with as much regularity as below Washington. They will at the same time secure the navigation of Little River to a considerable distance. 29 McGown's tombstone testifies to the failure to navigate Little River with regularity. The navigation of the Brazos to Sullivan's Bluff was another story. Along with talk of opening the Brazos River to Sullivan's Bluff, there was talk of opening

27 Lone Star, May 24, 1851.
28 Ibid., July 5, 1851.
29 Galveston Weekly News, June 3, 1851.
the river all the way to Waco.\textsuperscript{30} This was just talk, however, as the writer found no evidence of any steamboat crossing the shoals at Port Sullivan going up-stream, except for the questionable trip of the \textit{Kustang} in 1843.\textsuperscript{31}

Sullivan's Bluff was not firmly established as a port until 1852. This year brought several steamboats calling at the Milam County town. On March 13, 1852, a Washington paper reported, "The steamer Camden arrived at our landing monday \textsuperscript{32} evening and proceeded the next day to Sullivan's Bluff, heavily freighted."\textsuperscript{32} The next week the story continued,

The steamer Camden arrived at this place \textit{Washington} last evening from Sullivan's Bluff, having been absent about one week. She was detained in consequence of the large quantity of drift wood rendering it unsafe to run. The Camden brought in but little cotton, for the reason it could not be gotten to the boat on account of the high stage of the river.\textsuperscript{33}

The \textit{Camden} established Sullivan's Bluff as a port. Other boats followed the \textit{Camden} to the new port.

Munson's Shoals still offered some resistance to steam navigation even after the voyage of the \textit{Camden}.

\textsuperscript{30}\textit{Ibid.}, June 3, 1851; \textit{Texas State Gazette}, June 28, 1851.

\textsuperscript{31}See Chapter I, 28-29.

\textsuperscript{32}\textit{Lone Star}, March 13, 1852.

\textsuperscript{33}\textit{Texas Ranger}, March 19, 1852, quoted in the \textit{Texas State Gazette}, March 27, 1852.
In May 1852, the steamboat Reliance started from Washington to Sullivan's Bluff with a full cargo of assorted merchandise. The river fell as the Reliance was en route just below Munson's Shoals. The boat could neither continue up to Port Sullivan nor return to Washington. After a short wait Captain Maffitt was able to take the Reliance up to Port Sullivan, returning to Washington on May 26, 1852. This trip was more successful than the trip of the Camden, for the Reliance brought back 500 bales of cotton from the landings above Washington.

The Washington planned also to make a trip to Port Sullivan in May 1852. An advertisement in the Washington Lone Star on May 8, 1852, said the Washington "is now lying at our landing, bound for Port Sullivan, and immediate landings above Washington." An article written about Port Sullivan in October 1852, indicated that the Washington did not reach its planned destination. The article presents the first description of Port Sullivan in a letter by "Rover" to the editor of the Galveston Weekly Journal.

34 Lone Star, May 15, 1852.
36 Ibid., May 15, 1852.
Port Sullivan, Milam Co., Texas
Oct. 14, 1852.

Mr. Editor:— I arrived at this place last evening and as it is a new village, only a 12 months piece, perhaps some of your numerous readers would like to know something about it. The place is named after Mr. Sullivan the original owner of the site. I made his acquaintance and as a specimen of a "Texian" he cannot be surpassed. He is a man of intelligence, and really is a sociable and agreeable gentleman. He told me that he has lived on the place thirteen years, and passed through all the hardships and privations that belong to a frontier life. He says for years whenever he left his cabin, if it was only to go to the river, about 200 yards, he had to carry his rifle for fear of the Indians. "I have such an attachment for the place that I will never leave it"— such were his words. He was induced by his friend Mr. Anderson, a cotton planter on the opposite side of the river to lay out a portion of his land immediately on the river, in town lots, as being the most eligible place for a town at this point, about 500 miles from the mouth of the river (Brazos), and at the head of navigation. The village is just opposite the falls, and about two miles above mouth of "Little River."

The "Reliance" Capt. Maffit, and "Camden" Capt. Smith, are the only steamers that have ever reached this place before.

Last year there was not a bag of cotton raised above this point. I am now told that there will be about 2000 shipped from this point. Mr. Anderson with about forty slaves, will make this year (his second crop), 300 bags, besides more corn than he can gather. He sold some 3 or 4000 bushels at 10 cts per bushel in the fields. In riding by his place I was struck with the production of his land. He had planted pumpkins in his cornfields, and really there was not end to them, and I can say he literally had "Some Pumpkins." His cotton was the largest growth I ever saw, the stalks are larger than my arm, and higher than my head on horseback. There can be no better land in the State of Texas, than the Brazos bottoms. But this is straying from the village. The population is about 200 or
upwards, there are 20 families in the place, four stores, and as they say, a "small chance" of goods are sold. Mr. Ferguson leaves in a day or two for New York, to replenish his stock, and lay in a large supply so as to furnish the merchants above this place. There are two blacksmith shops, three carpenter shops, one circular saw mill, two or three large warehouses, and last but not least (for the intelligence of the place) there is a P. O. and P. M., also a mail from "Independence" once every week, and it is likely next year the arrival will be semi-weekly. There is also several Doctors, and but one Lawyer, Mr. Farley whose acquaintance we made. He was very kind in offering us all the information we wanted in reference to the country. There is one thing very much needed in the place: A Tavern, for the accommodation of the traveling public; there is at present no place in the village where they "take in strangers." The village is filling up very fast, and is generally the opinion that it will be "some" place. Mr. S. does not ask extravagant prices for his town lots, he will sell them reasonable and on twelve months time.

The situation is beautiful, and indicates health, &c. The country around is fertile, and is a good as any of the Texas lands, and in my opinion emigrants coming to this country will be pleased with this section of the state.37

This was Port Sullivan at the end of year one.

The Camden and Reliance proved once and for all that steamboats could navigate the Brazos as far as Port Sullivan. Other steamboats made occasional trips to the town in 1852 and later years. An advertisement in a Washington paper on November 20, 1852, announced that the steamboat William Penn would go to Sillaven's

---

37Weekly Journal, November 5, 1852.
Bluff as soon as the stage of water permitted. The next week the boat left for the upper Brazos. After making the trip to Port Sullivan, the William Penn ran into trouble returning to Washington. The Brazos fell six feet on the evening of December 1, 1852, making it impossible for the boat to cross Hidalgo Falls just above Washington. Toward the end of January 1853, the William Penn was able to return to Washington and from there to the mouth of the Brazos. The cargo from Sullivan's Bluff consisted of cotton, pecans, and hides, the total equal to 500 bales of cotton. The goods were unloaded at Quintana at the mouth of the Brazos.

From that point the freight from the Brazos was hauled to a loading point for the steamboats that operated in the Gulf of Mexico. The transloading arrangement enabled the boats to avoid the bar at the mouth of the Brazos, but it added to the cost of transportation.

The difficult trip of the William Penn did not discourage the captains of other steamboats desiring

---

38 Lone Star, November 20, 1852.
39 Ibid., November 27, 1852; Telegraph and Texas Register (Houston), December 3, 1852; Weekly Journal, January 28, 1853.
40 Galveston Weekly News, February 1, 1853.
41 Ibid., March 25, 1851.
to go to Port Sullivan. Even the William Penn was still willing to travel to Port Sullivan as is shown in an advertisement by the boat's captain, J. W. Slepier, who planned to run regularly, "during the season between Velasco [at the mouth] and Richmond, [89 miles up stream] and to Washington and Sullivan's Bluff, when the stage of the river permits. The Penn is admirably adapted to the comfort and accommodation of passengers, and to the transportation of freight. Public patronage is solicited." Another advertisement early in 1853 suggests that travel to Port Sullivan was becoming more regular. "Merchants and Planters wishing to make shipment to and from Galveston are duly notified that through bills of lading will be given on all shipments from Galveston, to the different points and places on the River Brazos as high as Port Sullivan." Rates of insurance on shipments varied from two per cent, from Galveston to Washington, and two and one-half per cent, from Galveston to Munson's Shoals, to three per cent from Galveston to above Munson's Shoals. Munson's Shoals was still hazardous enough to cost shippers one-

42 Texas Ranger, [Circa February, 1853].
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
half per cent of the value of the goods shipped. Steamboat travel, despite Munson's Shoals was, seemingly, an accepted fact in 1853. Steamboats, however, did not monopolize the transportation market from Port Sullivan.

Flatboats carried a portion of the produce from the Port Sullivan area to the mouth of the Brazos. Obstacles in the river, such as Munson's Shoals and Hidalgo Falls, may have prevented the steamboats from reaching Port Sullivan often enough to suit the shippers; flatboats may have been cheaper for down river traffic than steamboats; or the steamboats may have been kept too busy on the lower Brazos to call at Port Sullivan. Whatever the reason, flatboats answered part of the transportation needs of Port Sullivan.

In May 1853, a flatboat arrived at the mouth of the Brazos with 250 bales of cotton from Port Sullivan. A considerable amount of cotton was still left above Washington at this time. It appears that the steamboats could not reach the area, probably because of a low stage of water. The same problem was prevalent in the early part of 1854. In April 1854, a fleet of seven flatboats passed Washington on their way down the Brazos. One of the boats carried between 500 and 600

---

45 *Weekly Journal*, May 20, 1853.
bales of cotton. A flatboat carrying 327 bales of cotton from Port Sullivan tied up at Columbia in April 1854. Not all of the flatboats came from Port Sullivan. A flatboat was built at Marlin, forty miles above Port Sullivan in 1854. The shoal at Port Sullivan was not unsurpassable going downstream. Port Sullivan did not claim to be the head of flatboat transportation. Its claim to be the head of steamboat navigation was questioned in the latter part of 1853 and the early part of 1854.

The writer has found no report of any steamboat going to Port Sullivan after the voyage of the William Penn late in 1852, despite the advertisements for boats saying they planned to go there. Flatboats were used in 1853 and 1854 to ship cotton from Port Sullivan. Later in 1854, as the steamboat Water-Moccasin was traveling up the Colorado River towards Austin, several steamboats ventured up the Brazos towards Port Sullivan, but did not arrive there.

46 Galveston Weekly News, April 11, 1854.
47 Columbia Democrat quoted in the Texas State Gazette, April 15, 1854.
48 Texas Ranger, March 30, 1854.
49 Texas State Gazette, June 3, 1854.
The steamboat **Nick Hill** left Washington in May 1854, when the Brazos was up, and headed for the "Big Falls" near Waco. The **Nick Hill** intended to run between the Falls of the Brazos and Washington, but it did not reach its intended destination above Port Sullivan, or even Port Sullivan. She had to turn around at Moseley's Landing below Port Sullivan, in the vicinity where State Highway 21 today crosses the Brazos. Soon after the **Nick Hill** returned to Washington another steamboat headed up the Brazos.

On Monday evening, June 12, 1854, the **Brazos**, Captain Hatfield in command, started up the Brazos for Port Sullivan. Hatfield had commanded the **Washington** in 1850 when it ventured up Little River within two miles of Cameron. In 1849, he was described as "a kind hearted, gentlemanly and sociable man," and this is how the people of Port Sullivan found him in June 1854. The **Brazos** was the first steamboat to call at the Milam County port since the **William Penn** in late 1852; and, consequently, the boat and crew received a warm welcome.

---

50 *Texas Ranger*, May 25 and June 8, 1854.
52 *Democratic Telegraph and Texas Register*, November 29, 1849.
A ball was held aboard ship while the Brazos was tied up at Port Sullivan, which was said to have passed off merrily. Captain Hatfield, according to a writer who styled himself "Citizen" in a letter from Port Sullivan to the Texas Ranger, deserved much credit for bringing the boat to Port Sullivan. Hatfield greeted the guests that came aboard with politeness and gave encouraging remarks to the possibility of regular steamboat transportation to Port Sullivan. "Citizen" expressed hope that the sound of the steamboat whistle at Port Sullivan would mean the arrival of Captain Hatfield again.53

The Brazos left Port Sullivan with only 140 bales of cotton. "Citizen" regretted that no more cotton was shipped and blamed it on the short notice given the arrival of the boat. The farmers could not get the cotton to town in time to ship it. A merchant, "Mr. S.," probably either Sillaven or Blanton Streetman, was given credit by "Citizen" for trying to build a good landing for steamboats at Port Sullivan. Credit was also given a planter, "Mr. B.," perhaps C. O. Barton, "for the attention he gave towards the welfare of the boat."54

53 Texas Ranger, June 22, 1854.
54 Ibid.
The trip of the Brazos established once again that steamboats could reach Port Sullivan. Four years, however, were to pass before another steamboat came to Port Sullivan. The town of Sullivan's Bluff enjoyed the name of Port Sullivan, but it had to be more than an occasional port to survive.
CHAPTER III

THE PORT: A BLUFF

As the years passed, the town established upon Sullivan's Bluff, Port Sullivan, became more independent of the river. It had to become more independent, or it would have died in infancy. Although the town was established hopefully at the head of steamboat navigation on the Brazos, the lack of navigation did not hurt its growth. Once it was founded, other factors contributed to its growth. The townsite provided many of the rich planters of the Brazos bottom with a nearby town in which to live.\(^1\) Those planters and those of the surrounding area provided a market for the goods and services offered by the merchants and craftsmen who came to live in Port Sullivan. The town also became a supplier for the towns nearby. Reuben Anderson had been right in believing Sullivan's Bluff to be a good location for a town, but it was not just because steamboats managed to make it up the Brazos to that point every now and then. The ford at Port Sullivan was to become more important to the town than the port.

Port or no port, Port Sullivan was a boon to

\(^1\)See Appendix, Table No. 1.
Augustus W. Silleven, owner of the townsite. In 1847, the 1,107 acres in the Caruthers Survey owned by Silleven was assessed at $277. Ten years later this survey, minus the few acres devoted to the town, was assessed at $5,485, or twenty-fold the previous mentioned value. In 1858, Silleven sold less than one-third of the land in the survey for $6,140. He also made money from the sale of lots; and, in addition, he owned a combination store and warehouse in the town. The town made Silleven fairly important in the area. Before the town was built, he had served as a sheriff and upon the commission to choose a site for a county seat. After the town was built, he became a county commissioner and a member of the County Democratic Committee. In 1854, Silleven was listed as a notary public for Milam County. Thus he was a man of local respectability and standing, all of which, perhaps, aided him in making transactions in Port Sullivan.

---

2 Tax Rolls, Milam County, 1847-1857, Texas State Archives.
3 Caruthers Survey Abstracts, Milam County Abstract Co.
4 Lengert, "Milam County," 207; Texas State Gazette, January 17, 1852.
5 Texas State Gazette, April 4, 1854.
As mentioned in the previous chapter, Sillaven owned a warehouse jointly with C. M. Hubby, a businessman in Cameron and later in Waco. Hubby sold his interest in the warehouse to Sillaven on October 1, 1851. Sillaven continued in the warehouse business for a little over a year. During this time he had trouble collecting debts owed him. A Justice of the Peace in Milam County, L. H. Bolinger, advertised in a Washington paper for a certain John C. Lewis to appear before him. Sillaven claimed that Lewis had failed to pay off a note of forty-two dollars. Soon after the appearance of this advertisement, Sillaven entered into a partnership arrangement with a man named Streetman.

Sillaven reported in 1852, "I have such an attachment for the place [Fort Sullivan] that I will never leave it." He did, however, soon leave the town which had been named after him. A deed signed by him on December 22, 1858, reveals that he had become a citizen of Prairie County, Arkansas.

---

6 Burned Record, Milam County Abstract Co.
7 Texas Ranger, [Circa February, 1851].
8 Burned Record, Milam County Abstract Co.
9 Weekly Journal, November 5, 1852.
10 Caruthers Survey Abstracts, Milam County Abstract Co.
town grew too big for him. Whatever the reason, Port Sullivan continued to prosper without him.

One of the early residents of the area around Sullivan's Bluff in 1850, was a young lad by the name of Charles Goodnight, later a famous trail driver and rancher. Although he was only fourteen or fifteen years old at the time, Goodnight went to work for an "Irish" farmer named "Sullivan," probably Augustus W. Sillavon. "Sullivan," according to Goodnight, paid him double his first month's salary, but Goodnight did not say how much that was. Later, Goodnight went to work for Sillavon's neighbor, John C. Pool, who lived on the survey adjacent to Sillavon. Working for Pool, the young lad received ten to twelve dollars per month, plus much good advice. Goodnight described Pool as "a very kind and noble man." Goodnight said Pool was the only person to give him good advice when he was a boy. Besides working for Sillavon and Pool, Goodnight hired out to a racing outfit at Port Sullivan, boy and saddle weighing only ninety pounds.\(^{11}\) Goodnight was the first of several persons who became important in their fields of interest after leaving Port Sullivan.

Many of the first settlers of Port Sullivan were owners of land in Milam or Robertson county. Some, however, were from more distant places. A man by the name of William Winfield Scott Tyson came to Port Sullivan from Tennessee following an all water route. He traveled down the Cumberland and Mississippi rivers to New Orleans; from New Orleans to the mouth of the Brazos by steamer; and then up the Brazos in a smaller boat to Port Sullivan.12

Others came to Port Sullivan from nearby places in Texas. A story is told about a young Washington County couple that went to Port Sullivan "to set up shop for themselves." This particular couple eloped, planning to stop off at the county seat of Brazos County, Boonville, near present day Bryan, to be married. In 1852, the time of this elopement, life in Boonville was very simple. One man, Harvey Mitchell, was able to take care of most of the community services. His house served as a hotel and a honeymoon spot, and his blacksmith shop served the needs of the farmers and ranchers, shoed their horses, and served as a lively stable. Mitchell made arrangements for the couple to

12History of Texas, Biography of Milam County, 355.
spend their honeymoon in the hotel; fixed a broken shoe on their horse; and then put the horse in the livery stable. Later Mitchell, as county clerk, filled out the marriage license for the pair. After Mitchell had been able personally to fulfill all of their requests, the groom became concerned about the legality of a marriage which Mitchell volunteered to perform. The groom did not know that Mitchell, in addition to his other jobs, was also the chief justice of Brazos County. This young couple was one of the first to settle in Port Sullivan.

Port Sullivan seems to have been laid out in sections as needed. The transactions of land in Port Sullivan recorded in 1851, mention only lot numbers, no block numbers. The abstracts in 1852 show block and lot numbers. The tax assessment rolls for 1852 show taxes levied on lots in blocks numbered from one to seventy-three; and, in 1854, block number eighty-one was assessed. The blocks contained eight lots each and eighty-one blocks would give the town a

---

13 "Historical Sketch of Brazos County, Texas," American Sketch Book, IV (No. IV), 1878, pp. 244-245.
14 Burned Record, Milam County Abstract Co.
15 Tax Rolls, Milam County, 1852-1854, Texas State Archives.
potential for six hundred forty-eight lots. However, it seems that many block numbers were not used.16 Perhaps some of the blocks contained land that was undesirable for construction purposes.

The assessed value of lots in Port Sullivan ranged from fifteen to eight hundred dollars in 1852, depending upon location and improvements. Early transactions for lots show the price of unimproved lots in Port Sullivan to start at fifteen dollars.

The business section of Port Sullivan was centered in blocks numbered from one to ten. Blocks numbered nine and ten were of particular importance. The lots on these two blocks changed hands quite often, and they were owned in many cases by partnerships. Lots one and two in block ten, in combination, sold twice in 1853, and again in 1854, 1856, 1859, and 1861. Partnerships owned lots two, three, four, and eight in block nine, and also lots three, four, and five in block ten. One particular block was not numbered, but it was referred to by the letter "W." Block W, lot one, was owned at one time by a druggist who sold it to a physician, and the physician in turn sold this particular lot to another

16 See Appendix, Table No. 2.
doctor. A particular type of building may have been constructed on this lot.

Lots in blocks numbered in the seventy's appear to have been used for residents. A lady by the name of Lucy Elkin bought lot number four in block seventy-one on January 17, 1853, and, in March 1854, she purchased lot three. Lucy Elkin took in boarders, one of whom was a young man by the name of John C. Roberts, who came to live in Port Sullivan on August 18, 1854. Roberts, fortunately for this writer, kept a diary during the years he lived in Port Sullivan. From the diary, the writer was able to gain additional insight on the town's history.

Port Sullivan in October 1852, had four stores. One of the merchants, James Ferguson, went to New York to buy his goods, a big event in these days. Ferguson is later mentioned in business transactions with his brother Sampson. Together, their business

---

17Burned Record, Milam County Abstract Co.; United States Census Returns, Schedule No. 1, 1860 and 1870.

18Burned Record, Milam County Abstract Co.


20Rogers, "Time Dims the Brilliance," 67.
grew as they added to their holdings lots three, four, and five in block number ten. Sillaven may also have been in business as a merchant in 1852. He entered into a partnership arrangement with Blanton Streetman the next year. Streetman was one of the early merchants in Port Sullivan. In 1853, the merchandise in Streetman's store was assessed at $1,200. Also in 1853, the partnership of Stidham and Beal was assessed for property owned in Port Sullivan. In the spring of 1853, Sillaven sold lot two in block nine to the partnership of Foster and Hargrove. This pair, as well as, Sillaven, had trouble collecting debts owed them. Acting Justice of the Peace, John H. Neill, ordered Robert C. Lancaster to appear before him in his office in Port Sullivan concerning an alleged debt of $29.13 owed to Robert Hargrove and William Foster. The printers fee for running the notice in the Washington paper came to $17.50, or over one-half of the debt.

In addition to the four stores, Port Sullivan had two blacksmith shops, three carpenter shops, a circular saw mill, two or three warehouses, a post office,

---

21 Burned Record, Milam County Abstract Co.

22 Tax Rolls, Milam County, 1853, Texas State Archives.

23 Texas Ranger, Circa February, 1853.
several doctors, one lawyer, but no hotel.  

Sparks came to Texas in 1849, and he rented some land in Milam County. Later, Sparks was a carpenter in Port Sullivan for ten years before going into the grocery business. He probably ran one of the carpenter shops in 1852. The first postmaster in Port Sullivan was Hawthorn S. Chamberlin, appointed on March 24, 1852. In 1854, the mail was received once a week from Independence. The mail carrier left Independence on Sundays at 8:00 a.m., passed through Caldwell, Chance's Prairie, Nashville, Port Sullivan, and arrived in Cameron by 7:00 p.m. Monday. The return trip from Cameron to Independence was made every Tuesday and Wednesday. Port Sullivan was not on either the Austin-East Texas or the Houston-Waco road, as is stated on the stone marker at Port Sullivan.

By 1854, the hotel situation was corrected in Port Sullivan. Mr. Foster advertised in the Galveston Weekly News on February 28, 1854, that he had leased the Port

---

24 *Weekly Journal*, November 5, 1852.

25 *History of Texas, Biography of Milam County*, 731.

26 *Martin and Hill (eds.), Milam County*, II, 10.

27 *Texas State Gazette*, February 7, 1854.
Sullivan Hotel. Foster promised to give the traveling community and the public in general as many of the conveniences and comforts as possible in that section of the country. Foster said it was his aim to make all that stayed in his establishment feel at home. If his service could not equal the best, he would try to come as close to the best as "circumstances will permit." The hotel rounded out Port Sullivan. The town now had everything the other nearby towns had, plus the port. The Brazos made a visit to the port in June 1854.

Port Sullivan, in the summer of 1854, attracted a young man by the name of John Coleman Roberts. Roberts had been born in Virginia. His family later moved to Kentucky, and he moved on to Texas at the age of twenty-one. He first stopped in Chappell Hill, traveled to Boonville, and finally, arrived in Port Sullivan in August 1854.  

Roberts "commenced business with R. W. Hargrove at Port Sullivan, August 18, 1854." Hargrove was a merchant in the town. In Port Sullivan, he boarded at N. R.

---


29 Parker, Robertson County, 188-189; Roberts Diaries, August 18, 1854.
Johnson's for one month at twelve dollars per month, but he left there because he did not get enough to eat. Shortly after his twenty-third birthday, Roberts began boarding with Lucy Elkins at ten dollars a month. This arrangement did not suit Roberts either; so, he commenced to board with A. L. Streetman in January, 1855. As a twenty-three year old bachelor, Roberts found Port Sullivan a dull place. He considered going to California; but, instead, he subscribed to the *Saturday Evening Post*. In working for Hargrove, Roberts often traveled in the nearby area, perhaps collecting debts and delivering goods. He frequently visited the community of Brackenville in late 1854. Brackenville was a nearby settlement in Milam County and a rival to Port Sullivan. The Post Office at Port Sullivan was moved to Brackenville in 1854, but was returned to Port Sullivan the next year. It seems to have been a settlement on land owned by J. M. Bracken, who lived nearby. On Christmas Day, 1854, Roberts went to Brackenville and to a party at the Hearne's, a family that lived in Robertson County. On this day Roberts recorded in his diary, "no fights in town yet," as if he

---

30 Roberts Diaries, August 18, 1854—January 4, 1855.
31 Martin and Hill (eds.), *Milam County*, I, 8, 10.
expected some. Roberts lived in Port Sullivan a little over one year before moving to Wheelock in Robertson County. 32 No steamboat came to Port Sullivan while Roberts lived there. In fact, steamboat transportation at Port Sullivan was pure speculation from June 1854, until the Civil War, except for one brave steamboat in 1858.

Efforts were made in Texas to improve the rivers for transportation purposes. A law enacted by the state legislature on February 7, 1853, provided $37,000 for the improvement of the Brazos and Little rivers, and provided additional money for the other major rivers in Texas. 33 This law, however, was subject to the approval of the people of the state in a referendum. The voters of Milam County favored the appropriations by a slight majority, while Robertson County voted overwhelmingly against the measure. Statewide, the vote was a setback for river improvements. 34 If the rivers were to be improved, the money would have to be obtained from some other source than the statetreasury.

32 Parker, Robertson County, 189.
34 Texas State Gazette, December 13, 1853.
A survey of the Brazos River in the early part of 1854, estimated that $30,000 to $40,000 would be needed to improve the river sufficiently to open it for navigation the year round as far as Washington. This report aroused some interest among the farmers above Washington also. A writer styling himself "A Texian," from Burleson County (just below Milam), tried to interest the cotton shippers in improving the Brazos between Washington and Port Sullivan. He quoted the prices in shipping cotton from Port Sullivan to Galveston:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From Port Sullivan to Galveston</th>
<th>$4.00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insurance @ 2% on $50.00 bale of cotton</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reshipment and damages</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total cost per bale</td>
<td>$6.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the river could be improved, "A Texian" estimated the costs would be greatly reduced, somewhere along the lines of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From Port Sullivan to Galveston</th>
<th>$2.50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insurance @ 1/2%</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total cost per bale</td>
<td>$2.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using "A Texian's" figures, the cotton farmers could expect a $3.75 greater return on each bale of cotton, sold at Galveston.

35 Texas Ranger, May 11, 1854.
36 Ibid., June 1, 1854.
Shortly after the publication of the letter from "A Texian," the Brazos made the trip to Port Sullivan described in the previous chapter. In July 1854, an article in the Texas State Gazette said the citizens of Burleson County planned to remove Munson's and Moseley's shoals, two major impediments to river transportation between Washington and Port Sullivan.  

Captain Basil M. Hatfield of the Brazos gave encouragement to the improvement schemes in a letter published in the Washington Texas Ranger in the summer of 1854. Having navigated the Brazos for several years and having made a number of trips to Port Sullivan and one to Cameron on Little River, Hatfield believed that $10,000 "judiciously expended" would open the Brazos year round. In the same paper, five pilots and engineers who had navigated the river from Port Sullivan to the mouth "repeatedly," agreed with Hatfield that $10,000 would be sufficient to open up the Brazos. Despite these recommendations, nothing definite was done in the way of improving the Brazos at this time.

The talk about improving the Brazos River in 1854 was followed by three bad years for river transportation.

37 Texas State Gazette, July 29, 1854.
38 Texas Ranger, August 3, 1854.
The year 1855 started off good with the arrival of a new boat for the Brazos River trade. The *Fort Henry* was larger than the "Brazos Boats." It had a 150-foot keel; 36-foot beam; and 29 staterooms with two berths each. The boat possessed accommodations for 125 cabin and 116 deck passengers. Despite its size, the *Fort Henry* drew only 16 inches light and 30 inches loaded.\(^3^9\) The boat made its first trip to Washington at a time when the Brazos was very low. This maiden voyage supposedly proved that the Brazos could be navigated the year round.\(^4^0\) While the *Fort Henry* was at Washington, the water level on the Brazos fell even lower. This did not stop the captain of the boat from attempting to return downriver with a load of cotton for Galveston. The *Fort Henry* was scheduled to leave Washington on April 4, 1855, with 500 bales of cotton. The trip down to Galveston was intended to silence "those railroad and land-carriage maniacs" who opposed river improvements.\(^4^1\) The *Fort Henry*, however, failed to get off for Galveston for sometime. The boat was still at Washington in January 1856, until the Brazos

---

\(^3^9\) *Columbia Democrat*, February 20, 1855.

\(^4^0\) *Galveston Weekly News*, March 13, 1855.

\(^4^1\) *Texas Ranger* quoted in *Galveston Weekly News*, April 10, 1855.
had a rise. 42

The shippers in Port Sullivan gave up on using the Brazos in 1855 to transport their products. A letter from Port Sullivan printed in the Galveston Weekly News explained that the farmers were resorting to the use of wagons to get their cotton to market, and had given up the idea of getting their cotton off on flatboats. 43 The next two years were no better as far as upper Brazos River transportation was concerned. A Washington paper stated, in January 1857, it would give up on seeing the Brazos up again if it did not rise soon. 44

Plans for improving the Brazos for navigation continued to be developed despite the low water years of 1855, 1856, and 1857. According to a plan formulated in 1855, the state government should purchase 200 Negro slaves for the purpose of improving the major streams in Texas. The slaves were to be used in gangs, starting at the mouth and working upstream. After finishing the river project, the slaves could be sold

42 Columbia Democrat quoted in Ibid., February 5, 1856.
43 Ibid., June 19, 1855.
or put to work on other projects. The plan, however, was not adopted.

Following the failure of the people to approve the proposal authorizing the Legislature to appropriate money for river improvement in 1853, another plan was formulated for river improvement in 1856. This time the people of the state did not have a chance to voice their opinion on the matter. The law passed on August 1, 1856, provided a matching fund for river improvements. The local people interested in improving a certain river would have to raise at least $1,000 in order to receive state funds. The state was to contribute four times the amount raised by the local authorities, up to $50,000 in state funds.

The inhabitants along the Brazos below Washington were very much interested in improving their portion of the river. By January 1, 1857, $11,900 had been raised, entitling the Brazos River project to $42,840 in state funds. More money was raised for the Brazos project than for any other river project in Texas. In May

45 *Columbia Democrat*, February 20, 1855.
46 *Findlay and Simmons (eds.), Gammel's Laws of Texas*, IV, 427.
47 *Texas State Gazette*, February 7, 1857.
1857, the contract for the project was awarded to a company by the name of French and Brown, the lowest bidder for the proposed work.\(^{48}\) Work started on May 18, 1857.\(^{49}\) The work went slower than expected and the Legislature found it necessary to pass a law to extend the time for completing the project.\(^{50}\) The project on the Brazos soon fell from the spotlight, as railroads caught the imagination of Texans. Finally, on January 27, 1860, a new law was enacted to release the local subscribers on the Brazos project from any future payment, should the contract be cancelled or modified.\(^{51}\) Thus the Brazos River project came to an end. Had the project been undertaken a few years earlier, ahead of the railroad boom, it might have been more successful.

While work on the project to improve the Brazos was going on, one last steamboat ventured up the Brazos to Port Sullivan. The large steamboat Fort Henry, in the early part of 1858, arrived at Washington with a

\(^{48}\) Democrat and Planter (Columbia), May 25, 1857.
\(^{49}\) The Texas Almanac for 1857 with Statistics, Historical and Biographical Sketches, &c., Relating to Texas, 191. Hereafter cited as Texas Almanac.
\(^{50}\) Findlay and Simmons (eds.), Gammel's Laws of Texas, IV, 976.
\(^{51}\) Ibid., IV, 1386.
large amount of freight, picked up additional freight in groceries, and proceeded up to Port Sullivan. The boat brought a square, rosewood piano to Mrs. Harry Foster in Port Sullivan, from New Orleans. The piano could not be shipped by wagon when the family came to Texas. After depositing the freight at Port Sullivan, the Fort Henry took on 200 bales of cotton and returned to Washington.

The trip of the Fort Henry in 1858, was encouraging, but not necessary, to the economic development of Port Sullivan. By this time the town was well established. The town still called itself a port but it did not have to be one in order to exist. According to the Texas Almanac for 1858, the market places for Milam County produce were Houston and Galveston. Transportation to the markets was by ox wagon from Milam County. Nothing was said about river navigation.

---

52 Parker, Robertson County, 92.

53 Galveston Weekly News, February 9, 1858. In Normal L. McCarver and Normal L. McCaryer, Jr., Hearne on the Brazos, 59, the trip of the steamboat Lizzie from Waco is mentioned. The Lizzie crossed the shoal at Port Sullivan in May 1876, going downstream to engage in the trade in the lower Brazos. According to this report, the Lizzie was the first steamboat to pass Port Sullivan 1858, the year the Fort Henry called at the town.

54 Texas Almanac, 1858, p. 77.
Land transportation was more costly than water transportation, but it was also more dependable.

The towns and counties to the west of Port Sullivan traded with Houston and Galveston as did Port Sullivan. Bell, Coryell, Llano, and Williamson counties, to the west traded with the coastal cities.\[^{55}\]

The big problem was how to get their produce to the market and to bring back the supplies, materials, tools, and other manufactured goods that they needed. In the early 1850's, the products of these counties to the west of Port Sullivan moved over routes west of the Brazos River. In following these routes, the teamster had to cross Yegua Creek, a major tributary of the Brazos; and, then, cross the Brazos well below Port Sullivan. A trip from Bell County to Houston and back took two to three months, or longer, if the Yegua was up. In the late 1850's, the routes to Houston and Galveston from these western counties changed. As the Houston and Texas Central Railroad moved north out of Houston, goods were shipped by ox wagon only to the railhead.\[^{56}\]

\[^{55}\]Ibid., 1858, pp. 55, 61; and 1859, pp. 167, 177, 183.

\[^{56}\]Tyler, Bell County, 171-172.
the towns and counties west of Port Sullivan moved over routes that crossed the Brazos at or near Port Sullivan, missing the Yegua altogether.

Port Sullivan, according to a former citizen, now deceased, was an important stop between Belton and Houston. He recalled seeing six to eight ox wagons at a time coming down the one and only main street in town, loaded with cotton for Houston.57 A map of Texas published in 1858, shows a road from Port Sullivan to Cameron and Belton on the west.58 This was the first map to show such a road. At this time the Houston and Texas Central had reached Hempstead in its northward advance, and was under construction a few miles beyond.59

In September 1859, it was reported that two wagons of flour for Coryell County had arrived in Cameron.60 These wagons may have passed through Port Sullivan earlier. A railroad promotional pamphlet published in 1859, said that the trade of twelve counties crossed the Brazos bottom at Port Sullivan.61

57 Rogers, "Time Dims the Brilliance," 337.
58 Pressler's Map of the State of Texas, 1858.
59 Democrat and Planter, December 21, 1858.
60 Galveston Weekly News, September 20, 1859.
61 The Port Sullivan, Belton and North-western Railroad of Texas, 2.
The crossing of the river at Port Sullivan was an easy one, especially in a dry year. A traveling newspaperman wrote in 1857,

From Boonville, I came to Cameron, the county seat of Milam county, via Port Sullivan, crossing the Brazos at this point. The river was very low, the water hardly above the wheel hubs of my buggy at the ford, and a hundred yards above the falls a person could easily cross high and dry by stepping from one rock to another.62

The year, 1857, however, was a very dry year.

The traveling newspaperman did not stay overnight in Port Sullivan on this trip. He had heard that there "was no corn in town that could be had for horse feed." He went to the Smith's farm house outside of town. The newspaperman collected money for subscriptions on his travels in Texas, and, the next day being Sunday, he did not return to Port Sullivan to collect for the paper. He stated that he had no scruples about collecting money on the Sabbath, but he thought some in Port Sullivan might have scruples about paying out money on the Sabbath.63 The citizens of Port Sullivan may have been short on money anyway.

In the summer of 1857, a drought occurred in Milam

63 Ibid.
and Robertson counties. Water was scarce and in some places it had to be hauled long distances. For corn sold for $1.75 and $2.00 a bushel. Five years before, Reuben Anderson had sold corn for 10 cents a bushel in the field. In 1857, a Robertson County farmer and his wife brought home the production of a ten-acre field in her apron.

Port Sullivan survived the drought and the remarks made by the newspaperman in 1857. The *Texas Almanac* for 1858 contained descriptions of the counties of Texas. Port Sullivan was not mentioned in the article on Milam County, but the description of Falls County included a plug for Port Sullivan. "Port Sullivan is a village of considerable trade," reported the *Texas Almanac*, "located upon the West bank of Brazos near the Falls, the prairie extending at this point to the banks of the river." Port Sullivan may have served the towns to the north, as it did the towns to the west, as a stopping point on the way to Galveston or Houston, or as a trading center.

---

65 *Texas State Gazette*, October 3, 1857.
66 "Inventory of the County Archives of Texas, No. 198, Robertson County (Franklin)," 11.
67 *Texas Almanac*, 1858, p. 64.
By the end of the 1850's Port Sullivan was well established. The census of 1860 contains the names of 680 free, white persons who received their mail at the Port Sullivan post office. The males outnumbered the females by 366 to 314. Only one couple reported that they were married in the census year. Some 150 of the residents attended school a portion of the year. The town boasted of a collage with three teachers and eighty students, as will be discussed later. Some of the residents, however, were not educated. Forty-one were listed as over twenty years of age and illiterate.68

In addition to the free, white population of Port Sullivan, there were a number of slaves owned by some of the residents of the town. The slaves thus owned numbered two hundred and eighty in Milam County; and, in addition, some residents of Port Sullivan owned numerous slaves that were kept on the plantations in Robertson County.69

The census of 1860 for Milam and Robertson counties is difficulty to use except for counting names or for counting check marks. The names of persons and the

68 United States Census Returns, 1860, Schedules No. 1 and No. 6.
69 Ibid., Schedule No. 2.
names of occupations are difficult to determine. Farming was by far the most numerous occupation listed by the residents of Port Sullivan. Of course, the planters were listed as farmers. Following the farmers, who numbered in the seventies, those listing themselves as laborers, about thirty, were the most numerous in Port Sullivan. Between five and ten in numbers were the merchants, clerks, and physicians. Four persons considered themselves teachers in 1860. Mechanics and stockraisers numbered three each, while preachers, students, and druggists were counted at two each. In addition to these occupations, Port Sullivan had a seamstress, a carpenter, a blacksmith, a hotel keeper, an overseer, and several whose occupations the writer has been unable to decipher.70

Near the end of 1860, Port Sullivan was described as "situated on a high prairie bluff, on the west bank of the Brazos, commanding a fine view of the surrounding country. It has some tasty private buildings, a good hotel, a male and female high-school, and is inhabited principally by intelligent, wealthy planters."71

70 Ibid., Schedule No. 1.
71 Texas Almanac, 1861, p. 185.
CHAPTER IV
PORT SULLIVAN SOCIETY

The town of Sullivan's Bluff developed much like the other towns along the Brazos River; and, in many ways, the town was not unique. Port Sullivan in the 1850's and 1860's saw the birth of several social, religious, and educational institutions. These institutions began shortly after the town appeared on the bluff and remained there as long as the town did.

Religious institutions were the first to make an appearance in Port Sullivan. Baptist and Methodist circuit riding preachers were probably the first to bring religious services to the area around the bluff. Another group, however, caused the first religious excitement around Port Sullivan. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, better known as the Mormon Church, found some interest in their beliefs among the people of Port Sullivan.

In September 1854, the editor of the Texas State Gazette said he was surprised to learn that a Mormon preacher was active around Sullivan's Bluff. He asked for someone to verify this information.¹ A person in

¹Texas State Gazette, September 2, 1854.
Port Sullivan, signing himself "I. S." answered the editor of the Austin paper two weeks later. In printing the letter, the editor of the Gazette commented upon "Mormonism in Milam County," as follows:

The following letter introduces us to a new chapter in the history of Mormonism in Texas. That the whole doctrine originated in a bold and unblushing fraud, and can only be believed in, where the reasoning powers are held in complete abeyance, seems to be no safeguard against its progress. If our friends at Port Sullivan will aid us in the diffusion of real information, and the constant exposure of error and charlatanry, they will do more to rid themselves of the evil of Mormonism, and to save their friends and neighbors the loss of money, since, the best years of their life, and future bitter regrets and mortification than any other remedy which human ingenuity may devise.\(^2\)

The letter itself offers insight into the activities of the Mormons in Port Sullivan and into the attitudes of those that were not impressed with the Mormon beliefs. In addition, the letter is written with a good sense of humor that can only be appreciated by reading the author's own words.

Messrs. Editors: I see by your paper of the 2d September that you have been informed of a Mormon Elder making converts at this place, and you expressed a wish that some friend would inform you of the correctness of the report. I must say that your information was correct. Since then, there has been another here to assist him in his work, which is one day, as they prophesy, to excite the wonder and admiration of all Christendom. I have heard them preach their doctrine for some three or four weeks, and it is truly astonishing to hear men

\(^2\)Ibid., September 30, 1854.
of common sense get up in this enlightened commu-
nity and assert such doctrine as they set forth. They declare that they have the power
to heal the sick, open the eyes of the blind,
&c., and that their powers have been handed down
from on high by an all-wise Providence, who at
once broad glance from his throne, sees the
fallen and degraded race of man that has been
 taught a doctrine that will carry his soul down
to hell, and offers them the Mormon doctrine as
the only true one by which they can be saved.
I suppose that they have made some 20 or 25 con-
verts here, and the Lord only knows how many
more they may get, for Mormonism is the only
engrossing subject at this place. Some are
baptized nearly every day in the Brazos river,
and the Mormons assert that the cat fish are
dying below this place very fast on account of
it, and those caught alive are unwholesome.
Port Sullivan is a place of deep interest to the
community, or ought to be. If you have any deaf,
dumb or blind friends, acquaintances or relatives
that is afflicted with any of the above diseases,
advice them to come here that they may be cured.
We have none of the above diseases in our town,
but we have had scorching fevers, racking pains
among our good people, and they have been healed
instantaneously, at least so I have heard them
get up in the congregation and testify. Our town
is perfectly healthy as far as I have been able
to learn, with the exception of a little EPI-
Demic, which it is hoped will soon subside. I
would be somewhat afraid our good Mormon Elder
would take this disease, but that I have heard
him, as well as others, get up and say that he
could not be poisoned or killed, and that he had
been close enough to angels to tell the color of
their eyes, and could wrestle with them; but he
was careful not to say that he did, I suppose
that he had rather the task might devolve on
some other brother, whose physical and spiritual
strength was somewhat stronger than his, or he
might have met with the misfortune of Jacob of
old. They make broadest assertions as to the
prophecies, and to the avowal that Joseph Smith
was a prophet.— Many of our good citizens are
making arrangements to leave for Salt Lake next
Spring; and they are going to sacrifice both
friends and property to reach that beautiful
clime, where these Mormon Elders assert there is no lying or swearing to be heard, or gambling carried on. Some of our best citizens have joined them, and several have had revelations, spoke in unknown tongues, seen visions, &c.; so they all testify in public; and they are men and women whose veracity would not be doubted in open court, but I am of the opinion that some of the converts are infatuated beings, and are carried away by the Mormon Elders, who make the boldest assertions and seem inclined to hurl their doctrine down the throats of their auditory. They assert that when they refuse to baptize any one, that his destiny is sealed, and all the praying and baptizing by any other denomination would be in vain, for they hold the keys of heaven and hell in their hands; they profess to know nothing in themselves, but their bodies being a fit temple for the spirit of God to dwell in, he speaks through them, and they are authorized to preach to all the nations and people of the earth, and those that hear this doctrine and are baptized, are to be saved, while those that hear it and do not believe, are to be damned. 3

A number of Mormons still lived in the Port Sullivan area in the 1860's. John C. Roberts recorded in his diary during the summer of 1860, that "some mormons went up to be prayed for," during a camp and basket meeting held by the Methodists. Roberts added that he was glad to see it happen. 4 It could not be determined by this writer if any of the residents of Port Sullivan actually moved to Utah. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has been unable to find any records

3Ibid.
4Roberts Diaries, July 19-29, 1860.
concerning the activities of their church in either Robertson or Milam counties.5

The Methodist Episcopal Church had preachers in the area near Sullivan's Bluff in very early times. One of the earliest in the area was a preacher by the name of Joseph F. Sneed. Sneed came to Texas in 1838, after serving in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. In 1840, this young preacher was assigned to Nashville, four miles below Sullivan's Bluff.6 From this date until his death in 1881, Sneed lived and preached in the area near Port Sullivan. In 1845, he was still in the same district but was listed as "without an appointment."7 A Washington newspaper, in 1852, recorded a marriage in Robertson County which was performed by Rev. Sneed.8 In the meeting of the Texas Conference of the Methodist Church in 1855, Joseph P. Sneed was admitted on a trial basis,9 as if he had been expelled for some reason and was being readmitted on

5 Merrill S. Lofthouse, Assistant Research Supervisor, Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, March 12, 1968, to author.
7 Lone Star, October 30, 1852.
8 Morning Star, February 11, 1845.
9 Phelan, Early Methodism in Texas, 378.
trial. Later in 1855, Sneed was appointed to the Port Sullivan African Mission.\(^\text{10}\) This was the first appointment ever made by the Methodist Church in Port Sullivan.

Although assigned to the African Mission, Sneed performed services for the white population in Port Sullivan as well. On October 17, 1855, he officiated at the marriage ceremony for Miss F. A. Barton, daughter of C. O. Barton, and W. B. Anderson, son of Reuben Anderson.\(^\text{11}\) This marriage united the families of two very wealthy planters of the Brazos bottom.

The list of appointments of the Texas Conference of the Methodist Church does not show a regular preacher in Port Sullivan until 1861. Until this time, the only preacher mentioned was Joseph Sneed at the African Mission. The Methodist, however, had a church in Port Sullivan before 1861. On March 27, 1856, Augustus W. Sillaven transferred lot number one in block number seventy-three to the Methodist Episcopal Church.\(^\text{12}\) The people of Port Sullivan, perhaps, went to church in a building located on this lot. John C. Roberts attended

\(^{10}\) Galveston Weekly News, December 18, 1855.

\(^{11}\) Ibid., November 6, 1855.

\(^{12}\) Burned Record, Milam County Abstract Co.
church in Port Sullivan on numerous occasions before the town had a regular preacher. On Saturday, October 30, 1858, Roberts went to church in Port Sullivan and "heard a good Sermon Preached." He returned again on Sunday for more of the same. In 1860, Roberts sent Rev. J. P. Sneed five dollars for preaching in 1859. Roberts recalled hearing him three times.  

A camp meeting was held in Port Sullivan between July 15 and July 29, 1860, which Roberts described in his diary. He referred to it as a "Camp and Basket meeting," and as an examination or speaking. According to Roberts, there was a lot of barbecue to eat and a number of people were converted. It was at this meeting that the Mormons were prayed for. In the end Roberts contributed five dollars for the preaching and remarked that it was "a good time, Praying and Shouting, good news, many converts."  

The work at the African Mission was important but slow. In 1856, the mission under the leadership of Sneed, had on its roll some sixty-seven colored members and twelve more colored probables.  

13 Roberts Diaries, October 30 and 31, 1859; March 17, 1860.  
14 Ibid., July 14-29, 1860.  
15 Phelan, Early Methodism in Texas, 426.
mission was probably aimed at keeping the slaves content as well as saving their souls. One of the arguments used by slave owners to justify slavery was that the slaves had the opportunity to become Christians and go to heaven; whereas, if left in Africa, slaves after death would "roast in Hell." Some of the owners, perhaps, felt they would need slaves in heaven as well as on earth. The slaves, however, did not seem interested in the mission as Sneed listed only seventy-nine on his roll in 1856. The residents of Port Sullivan in 1860, owned 280 slaves residing in Milam County, and numerous other slaves that lived across the river in Robertson County. In fact, Reuben Anderson alone owned more slaves than the total on the mission roll.17

The Methodist Church in Port Sullivan continued to grow during the 1850's. In 1861, two preachers were listed as being at Port Sullivan. J. Carpenter and R. Y. King were listed at the town, although an asterisk by King's name indicated that he was serving in the army at that time, the Civil War having broken out some months earlier. The next year, 1862, L. B. Whipple was

17United States Census Returns, 1860, Schedule No. 2.
18Texas State Gazette, November 30, 1861.
appointed to the church in Port Sullivan, while Sneed was again listed in charge of the Port Sullivan Colored Mission. Washington Hearne supposedly gave "Brother Whipple" one hundred dollars to come from Port Sullivan to his house near Hearne, about six miles east of Port Sullivan in Robertson County, to baptize his wife when he thought she was going to die.20

A college was formed in Port Sullivan in the late 1850's, as will be discussed later, which came under the supervision of the Methodist Church. In 1864, J. B. Allen was listed as the president of the college, and T. T. Smothers was also assigned to Port Sullivan. This year, J. P. Sneed was put in charge of the Colored Mission of Wheelock in Robertson County.21 It seems that Sneed was not qualified to hold a regular appointment. This may have been because he was not a member of the church conference. Sneed was a trial member in 1855, but was not admitted to the church conference until 1866.22

19 Ibid., December 2, 1862.
20 McCarver, Hearne on the Brazos, 85.
21 Tri-Weekly Telegraph (Houston), November 18, 1864.
22 Olin E. Nail (ed.), Texas Methodist Centennial Yearbook, 484.
The membership of the Methodist Church in Port Sullivan was not very large in the year following the Civil War. Only seventy-five whites were on the church rolls in 1866; no Negroes were members. This year A. L. P. Green was the minister. The church at Port Sullivan continued in existence until at least 1874. By this time, the church membership had so declined that it had to share a preacher with Cameron.

Not until near the close of the Civil War was the Port Sullivan Baptist Church organized. The Baptist started late but grew rapidly. Some eighty-six persons signed the charter roll on August 27, 1864. Rufus C. Burleson, later president of Baylor University at Waco, came to Port Sullivan to lead the opening ceremonies.

Sarah J. Phillips sold block number twenty-two to the Trustees of the Baptist Church on December 30, 1864, for $400 cash. Even at this price Mrs. Phillips suffered a loss because the same block had been acquired by her husband shortly before his death for some $250 cash and an equal amount in a twelve-month note bearing 10% interest.

---

interest. It appears that no church was built immediately, for in the year after the purchase of the block, the Baptists obtained permission from the Methodists to hold services in the college chapel. The Port Sullivan Baptist Church in 1867 shared a preacher with churches at Cameron and Little River in Milam County. The circuit rider serving these three congregations died in 1867.

Another church holding services in Port Sullivan was the Episcopal Church. This church came late on the scene in Port Sullivan, almost too late. A preacher by the name of John W. Phillips traveled between Cameron and Port Sullivan after being relieved of his duties in Calvert, a new town in Robertson County. In 1871, Phillips was in Port Sullivan and Maysfield, on the way to Cameron, three days each, and the last day of the week he was in Cameron. Phillips held missionary services for the Negroes.

---

28 Z. N. Morrell, *Flowers and Fruits in the Wilderness or Forty-Six Years in Texas and Two Winters in Honduras*, 284.
Port Sullivan developed religious institutions much like those in the neighboring towns, except for the Mormon activity in the 1850's. The town also had masonic and educational organizations like the ones found elsewhere in the state at the same time.

John C. Roberts attended a meeting in Port Sullivan on August 31, 1858, to discuss plans for building an academy in the town. "A fine arrangement" was agreed upon according to Roberts. More action was taken in 1859 toward the construction of the school. F. M. Hall and W. H. White deeded eleven and seven-tenths acres to the Methodist Church South for the use and benefit of the church. This tract of land was located in the Frier Survey, adjoining the town of Port Sullivan, and became known as the college lot. Port Sullivan College was built on this land some time in 1859 or early 1860, under the auspices of the Methodist Church in Port Sullivan. In 1863, an advertisement for the college stated that it was under the care of the Texas Annual Conference, a division in the organization of the Methodist Church in Texas. Appointments were made by

---

30 Roberts Diaries, August 31, 1858.
32 Tri-Weekly Telegraph, October 7, 1863.
the church to the college in the 1860's, much on the
order that a chaplain is appointed to serve a student
body today. The president of the college was listed as
an appointment of the Annual Conference of the Methodist
Church in Texas. An advertisement in 1865, said Rev.
L. B. Whipple was in charge of boarding at Port Sullivan
College. Whipple had been serving the people of the
town also, since his appointment to Port Sullivan
College in 1862.33 Thus, the Methodist Church and Port
Sullivan worked closely together during the first years
of the school's existence.

Port Sullivan College was built by August 5, 1860,
because on that day John C. Roberts attended a prayer
meeting there. The first teachers at the college were
John Cramer and his wife. In the census of 1860,
Cramer listed his occupation as a professor of college.
He was thirty-one years old in 1860, and had been born
in New York.34 Port Sullivan was the only town in Milam
County claiming a college when the census of 1860 was
taken. Port Sullivan College had three teachers and
eight pupils according to the census taker in 1860.35

32 Texas State Gazette, December 3, 1862; and Tri-
Weekly Telegraph, March 15, 1865.
34 United States Census Returns, 1860, Schedule No. 1.
35 Ibid., Schedule No. 4.
The college from the start was more than just an educational institution. It was a meeting place for community functions. Roberts went to prayer meetings there on several occasions, and he sometimes went to other events. On the night after Christmas, 1860, Roberts attended a party at the "academy," as he called it. He described it thusly, "Party at the Academy. Lots of ladies present and plenty of good things to eat. Broke up at 1 o'clock at night."36

Port Sullivan College continued to grow during the 1860's in spite of the Civil War which distracted many would-be students and created more pressing needs. The Confederate State of Texas incorporated the college on December 16, 1862. W. H. White, J. G. Hanna, C. C. Barton, D. Cole, F. M. Hall, J. C. Livingston, B. Streetman, R. J. Davis, J. Ferguson, H. A. Foster and C. C. Wilcox were named members of the board of trustees. According to the law, the board had the authority to establish rules and regulations for the college, to buy and sell property, to receive donations, and to regulate their own time of service. The wartime atmosphere was reflected in the law of incorporation in that the college was authorized to establish a military department.

36 Roberts Diaries, December 26, 1860.
"in which the science of war shall be taught." In addition to the military department, the college could have a male and female department, "in which may be taught all branches of education taught at such institutions." The school, incorporated in the name of "Port Sullivan Male and Female College," had the power to employ professors, tutors, and teachers; to confer degrees; and to do anything done in similar institutions.37 The law incorporating the school was like the laws incorporating many other schools in Texas at the same time, except Port Sullivan College was not prohibited from teaching the particular doctrine of any religious denomination, and the sale of liquors within three or four miles of the college was not prohibited.

The first advertisement found by this writer for Port Sullivan College appeared in a Houston paper in August 1863.

PORT SULLIVAN COLLEGE.—Rev. I. B. Allen, President; Alonzo A. Adey, Professor of Music; Miss Mary P. Clark and Miss Mary S. Lyne, Teachers; Mrs. Eloise Allen, Matron. Fall session begins first day of September, 1863. Tuition $30, $46, $50, $60; and Music $60 per session. Boarding at the College for young Ladies, they furnishing their own rooms.

37 Findlay and Simmons (eds.), Gammel's Laws of Texas, V, 739.
$12.50 per month, Payable in provisions or Confederate money at corresponding rates.38

The editor of the paper added some compliments to the college at Port Sullivan by saying that the teachers were all of high quality. Adey, the paper said, was from Houston, and had a good reputation both as a teacher and as a performer. Port Sullivan was described as "a healthy place, retired from the excitements of the day."39 Later, in 1863, the college advertised for a female teacher. The school had one hundred pupils in attendance in October 1863, and the situation offered a good opportunity to someone interested in teaching. "None but those of ability and experience need apply," cautioned the advertisement.40

The following year, 1864, the spring session of the college started on January 25th. The cost of tuition was much like that of the year before, except that drawing was added as a new course for an increased cost of twenty dollars. Board was sixty dollars per session, payable in provisions. The college now boasted that it was chartered by the Legislature of the State of Texas

38 Tri-Weekly Telegraph, August 20, 1863.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., October 7, 1863.
and that it had an attendance of one hundred and twenty pupils. 41

In 1865, as the Civil War drew to a close, Port Sullivan College carried on without interruption. An announcement appeared in a Houston newspaper stating that Port Sullivan College had started its regular spring session with "an efficient corps of teachers." The staff included Professor R. W. McKinney, who taught mathematics and languages; Professor A. A. Adey, in the music department; and Miss M. E. A. Girze, in charge of the female department. The school pledged to give each student a "systematic and thorough course of instruction." Each department would have to be mastered before the student was allowed to start in another. The courses offered by the college were mathematics, geometry, languages, and music. In addition, the school promised to give particular regard to the "culture of a refined taste and Christian principles were to be daily inculcated." In commenting on Port Sullivan the editor of the Houston Tri-Weekly Telegraph pointed to the strong music department under the leadership of Adey, the principal of the college. 42

41 Ibid., January 8, 1864.
42 Ibid., March 15, 1865.
For the fall session of 1865, the number of women teachers was increased by three, with the number of professors remaining the same. The additions to the staff may have been necessary because of increased enrollment due to the end of the Civil War in the spring of 1865. The faculty was said to be composed of good teachers. The *Tri-Weekly Telegraph* stated that the college was located in a fine region of the country, surrounded by a good society.43

A former student of the college, Maggie Duncan, interviewed in 1930, said the college was located on the north side of Fort Sullivan, among some trees. The main building was a two story wooden building with large rooms and a hall that ran through the center of it. The schoolrooms had large windows and were furnished with nice desks and blackboards. The rooms for female boarding students and teachers were located in the main building, according to Miss Duncan. Large fireplaces provided heat for the rooms. The men students stayed in Steward's Hall which was located near the main building. For recreation, "the girls played checkers and mumble peg, and walked and chatted under the shade of the trees." The school was patronized by the sons and

daughters of wealthy, slave owning planters, and was not limited to members of the Methodist denomination. Many Baptists attended and their support helped in providing the buildings. Another former student, W. S. Allen, described the main college building as being two stories high with large porches and white columns extending the full length of both stories. The downstairs portion of the building included a chapel which was used by all denominations in town. The school, according to Allen, had a large number of students during the Civil War, with as many as thirty boarders staying at the college.44

The church and the school appears to have split sometime in the late 1860's or early 1870's. The Texas Almanac of 1873, showed Port Sullivan with N. J. Edgerly, Principal, as a private school, but gave a separate listing of Methodist schools.45 The Texas Methodist Centennial Yearbook, published in 1934, listed twenty-four Methodist schools in Texas and mentioned eight additional towns had previously had church schools. Port Sullivan College was not mentioned in either list.46

---

44 Rogers, "Time Dlms the Brilliance," 15-117.
45 Texas Almanac, 1873, p. 155.
46 Nail (ed.), Texas Methodist Centennial Yearbook, 210-211.
Elsewhere in the book, an article stated that a small school at Port Sullivan had been a conference school, but that the school no longer existed.

Port Sullivan Male and Female College was a source of pride to the local community. It continued to serve the area through the 1860's and part of the 1870's. The Texas Almanac of 1871, described Port Sullivan College as "one of the most pleasantly situated and well conducted institutions of learning in the State." The school was more than an institution of learning, it was partly a religious and social institution as well.

Attempts to organize a Masonic Lodge chapter at Port Sullivan began in the summer of 1855. Several men in the town signed a petition in June 1855, requesting permission from the Grand Lodge of Texas to establish a chapter in Port Sullivan. A charter was granted to St. Paul's Lodge, No. 177, at Port Sullivan on January 21, 1856. The charter members included B. F. Streetman, William Jones, F. M. Hall, John C. Roberts, J. O. Adams, James M. Stidham, R. W. Hargrove, W. H. White, A. P. Allday, and John L. Winston. Roberts was a regular

47Texas Almanac, 1871, p. 97.

48Reports of St. Paul's Lodge, No. 177, to the Grand Lodge of Texas, 1856-1885, Grand Lodge Library, Waco, Texas. Hereafter cited as Masonic Reports.
attendant of the lodge meetings, which usually took place on Saturday afternoons at 2:00 p.m.; occasionally, the members were treated to supper. At one meeting, oysters were served. The Masonic Hall was located above a general merchandise store, said to be the most pretentious building in Port Sullivan. The lodge, in addition to the meeting hall, purchased on November 29, 1867, five acres of land in the Friar Survey, adjacent to Port Sullivan, from F. M. Hall for one hundred and twenty-five dollars in gold. It was stipulated in the deed that the land was to be used as a cemetery for the white community of Port Sullivan.

Thomas J. H. Anderson, a son of Reuben Anderson, and member of St. Paul's Lodge, was named Grand Junior Deacon of the Grand Lodge of Texas in 1859. From this position, Anderson worked his way up to the top position in the Grand Lodge of Texas. He became Grand Master of Grand Lodge of Texas on June 16, 1871, which office he held for only a few months until his death August 29, 1871, at the age of forty-two. The Masons erected a

---

49 Roberts Diaries, October 27, 1860.
50 Rogers, "Time Dims the Brilliance," 9.
51 Deed Records, Milam County, Vol. B 2, p. 82.
52 Galveston Weekly News, June 28, 1859.
monument at Anderson's grave in Port Sullivan, a broken Ionic column, said to be one of the finest monuments that ever left the city of Galveston. On one side of the monument were supposedly Anderson's last words, "Tell my Brethren that I die at my post." 53

Port Sullivan society was not all institutionalized. A former visitor in the old town, interviewed in 1930, talked about the informal aspects of the social life of the town during the first year of the Civil War.

We had parties and square dances and plenty of good food. We danced to the tune of a fiddle and there was a man to call off the dances. The refreshments usually consisted of stacked pies, boiled custard, or "silly-bub," as it was called in those days, cakes and meats of every description. There was no drinking at the dances then. It was considered a disgrace for a man to call on a lady with liquor on his breath. I never saw a drunk man until after I was married, although whiskey was kept in demijohns in every house.

The ladies sometimes wore as many as eight underskirts. The dresses were sweeping on the floor and it was fashionable to have a small waist. We wore our hair long and plaited it and then wound it around our heads. The men wore whiskers or mustaches.

People did not worry about the high price of having company, because they all had a smoke house full of homecured meat and lard, barrels of syrup, kraut, strings of red peppers, bags of sage, and a cellar full of potatoes and pumpkins. Rail fences were the vogue as well as the old coffee mill nailed to the wall.

53 Galveston Tri-Weekly News, June 16, 1871, and September 13, 1871; and Galveston Daily News, August 20, 1871.
We bought the coffee in the green stage and parched it. We old folk think that the young people had a better time than than they do now.\footnote{Rogers, "Time Dims the Brilliance," \cite{Rogers_1860}.}

A former resident of Fort Sullivan recalled that the town boasted of three saloons, which were favorite places for horsetrading. Every deal supposedly began with a drink and closed with one.\footnote{Ibid., \cite{Rogers_1860}.} Roberts mentioned in his diaries that he purchased brandy on occasions for a friend of his, for either 50 cents or one dollar.\footnote{Roberts Diaries, August 24, 1860.}

The dances in the town often had music played by a trio of fiddlers, Jared Steel, A. H. Allen, and Joe Foster. Popular tunes were "Turkey in the Straw," "Fisher's Hornpipe," "Ole Gray Eagle," "Bonaparte's Retreat," "Pop Goes the Weasel," "Rye Straw," "Chicken in the Bread Tray," and "Sally Goodin." On more formal occasions tunes such as "The Years Creep Slowly By, Lorena," "Silver Threads Among the Gold," and, perhaps, some Strauss' waltzes were called for.\footnote{Parker, \textit{Robertson County}, 95.} 

Other forms of entertainment were attendance at
displays of wild animals. Roberts once paid one dollar to see a Bear Show that came to Port Sullivan. Roberts also traveled out of town for entertainment purposes. Electioneering and Court Week at Owensville, the county seat of Robertson County, were often exciting days. At Boonville, the county seat of Brazos County, Roberts watched horse races and at Piedmont Springs in Grimes County, he rolled ten-pins, similar to bowling today. 58

Port Sullivan, to Roberts, was a "Dull place Surtain," at least the first time he lived there. He moved to Wheelock for a short time, back to Port Sullivan, over to Owensville, and then back again to Port Sullivan. Even while living in Port Sullivan, Roberts often traveled to other nearby towns on his mule named Prince. The area had no banks at this time, and Roberts' job seems to have been to handle transactions between persons living in different towns. He paid off notes for persons in Port Sullivan and collected debts due them.

In his travels about the countryside, Roberts was able to keep up with the latest news, and to know what was going on. Because of this, he was chosen secretary

58 Roberts Diaries, September 3 and 27, 1858; July 2, 1860; and September 5, 1860.
of the Vigilance Committee established for the purpose of protecting the lives and property of those living in the area just prior to the Civil War. A Vigilance Committee was needed to keep an eye out for those individuals who might create unrest among the slaves, encouraging them to run away or to rise against their owners.
CHAPTER V
SECESSION AND WAR

Port Sullivan was the home of many Brazos bottom planters whose plantations were worked with slave labor. The residents of the town in 1860 owned two hundred and eighty slaves in Milam County. Eleven persons in the town owned more than ten slaves, but no one person owned more than fifty slaves in Milam County. William Anderson owned thirty-six slaves and Jasper McKinney was the owner of twenty-seven slaves in the county.¹ Some residents of Port Sullivan owned slave plantations across the river in Robertson County. James Hanna of Port Sullivan owned fifty-four slaves that lived in the Brazos bottom. Ruben Anderson, who lived near Port Sullivan and attended the masonic lodge meetings there, owned a total of one hundred and ten slaves, according to the census report of 1860.² Most of the citizens of Port Sullivan owned no slaves, but the more influential settlers were slaveholders. Slaves were important to the planters, and the planters were important to Port Sullivan. Under such circumstances,

¹United States Census Returns, 1860, Schedule No. 2, Milam County.
²Ibid., Robertson County.
the institution of slavery was not taken lightly by the residents of the town.

As the controversy over slavery grew in the United States, the citizens of Port Sullivan became more involved. Threats against the system of slavery, real or imaginary, were considered to be very serious, and appropriate measures were taken to protect the institution of slavery, and to deter runaway slaves. In the summer of 1851, a slave named Ned ran away from his master named Anderson and was apprehended in Washington County. An advertisement placed in the Washington Lone Star by the sheriff of Washington County, down the Brazos from Port Sullivan, requested the owner to come forward and prove ownership, pay the charges for detention, and take him away. The slave told the sheriff that he belonged to a man named Anderson who lived on the Brazos near Sullivan's Bluff.  

In addition to an occasional slave running away, slave owners generally feared that the slaves might rise in rebellion. A few white persons were suspected of encouraging and aiding the slaves in such endeavors. A general uprising among the slaves in Eastern Texas expected in 1856, prompted the citizens of Washington

\[\text{Lone Star, September 20, 1851.}\]
County to organize a Vigilance Committee to keep an eye on suspicious contacts between whites and blacks and to patrol the area. The anticipated uprising, however, never came off.

The non-slave owning whites were often believed to be unsympathetic to the institution of slavery. A letter from Cameron, the county seat of Milam County, published in the Austin newspaper in 1858, stressed the importance of giving the small farmer a stake in the institution of slavery. He suggested the re-opening of the African slave trade in order to lower the price of slaves so that small farmers could own one or two. This suggestion, however, had no chance for passage in the United States House of Representatives, where representation was based on population and the Southern slaveholding states were greatly outnumbered.

The events of the 1850's—the Compromise of 1850, Uncle Tom's Cabin, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the rise of the Republican Party, the trouble in Kansas, the election of 1856, the Dred Scott decision, the Lincoln-Douglas debates, and John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry, put the slavery question in the spotlight. The

---

4 Washington American, September 24, and December 30, 1856.
5 Texas State Gazette, July 31, 1858.
presidential election of 1860 became the topic of discussion two years before it was to be held. A letter from "J. L. T." of Robertson County dated July 16, 1858, undoubtedly expressed the thoughts of many residents of nearby Port Sullivan. "J. T. L." believed that "the institutions of our country" were in great danger. The future, according to his predictions, would see, the inauguration of a "Black" Republican president on March 4, 1861, or "as our hope and last resort, the inauguration of a southern confederacy composed of the slave States of the Union." His predictions, on both counts, came true nearly two years later.

As the time for the presidential election of 1860 drew near, the parties prepared to make their nominations. The Democratic Party met in Charleston, South Carolina, to choose its nominee. Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois appeared to be the favorite, but it would require two-thirds of the delegate votes to win the nomination. The Southern delegates were able to block the nomination of Douglas, who had angered the South with his famous Freeport Doctrine, concerning slavery in the territories. The Southern delegates, however, did not possess the strength to nominate a candidate of

---

Galveston Weekly News, August 31, 1858.
their own, but they were determined to block Douglas's nomination and to deadlock the convention, which, in the end, paved the way for separate conventions to be held later. John C. Roberts of Port Sullivan entered in his diary for May 10, 1860: "I heard the result of the Charleston Democratic Convention, busted up in a row. Good news for us conservative men. I am glad of it." His opinion of the convention was shared by the Democratic Party of Milam and Robertson counties in meetings held in May. A letter from a man in Cameron said the news from the convention had not stopped the corn from growing, the wheat from ripening, or the herds from gaining weight. Most of the people of the area, by this time, seemed to be looking forward to some changes in the national government. All that was needed now was an excuse to make the changes. This would come late in 1860.

The summer of 1860 was an exciting one in Texas and in Port Sullivan. "The atmosphere was filled with excitement and alarm. Reports were circulated, often unfounded, of negro [sic] uprisings and wholesale poisonings. Incendiary fires occurred in many parts of

---

7 Roberts Diaries, May 10, 1860.
8 Texas State Gazette, June 2, 1860.
the state."  

Starting in June 1860, the **Texas State Gazette** at Austin began to run stories about "Black" Republican activity in the state. One so-called "Black" Republican, reportedly, was a sheep drover that came to settle on the Blanco River. The sheep herder stated that other "Black" Republicans were coming to settle in Texas. Later, a school teacher came to the Waco newspaper office asking about the Republican convention in Chicago and left expressing satisfaction in their moninee, Abraham Lincoln. The Waco paper suggested "the propriety of watching his movements, abolitionists have no business in our country," the editor added. In June 1860, the Austin paper reported a Negro conspiracy existed in Fannin County and that an abolitionist had been found in Grayson County. The paper suggested that the "Black" Republican on the Blanco and abolitionist in Grayson County might be part of a band located at convenient points to give aid to the underground railroad, an organization that helped


10 *Texas State Gazette*, June 1, 1860.


runaway slaves escape to freedom.

The Texas State Gazette of July 28, 1860, reported that Dallas and other North Texas towns had recently experienced a rash of fires, supposedly part of a "Black" Republican plot against Texas. The paper warned "the citizens of Texas everywhere to be on their guard."\(^\text{13}\)

Vigilance committees were formed in all parts of Texas.\(^\text{14}\) On August 1, 1860, Roberts recorded in his diary that Negroes and abolitionists were burning towns and houses up the country.\(^\text{15}\) The citizens of Fort Sullivan, and in Robertson County, followed the advice of the Austin paper and formed a Vigilance Committee. Roberts was elected secretary, and Robert Calvert of Sterling, in Robertson County, was elected president of the committee. The group was formed on August 8, 1860, and four days later, on August 12, Roberts reported that an abolitionist was in town. He went to a meeting later that day, but no action was taken concerning the abolitionist. Between August 13 and August 20, Roberts was

\(^{13}\)Ibid., July 28, 1860.


\(^{15}\)Roberts Diaries, August 12, 1860.
out of town and did not mention the abolitionist again. The Texas State Gazette of September 15, 1860, in an item from Robertson County stated: "Two men, Richard Broadwright and nephew, were hung in this county on the 19th ult. [August] for tampering with slaves."¹⁶ Roberts did not mention this incident until August 22, 1860, when he recorded in his diary that the "citizens hung 2 men, Boatwrights." In commenting on the aftermath of the event, Roberts reported, on August 23, that there was "no excitement about hanging, all has subsided," but two days later he added, "rumors going on around the country."¹⁷ It could not be established by this writer if any link existed between the abolitionist reported to be in Port Sullivan on August 12, and the hanging in Robertson County on August 19, 1860.

The persons responsible for the hanging of the Boatwrights, no doubt believed they were doing what was necessary to protect their lives and property from an abolitionist plot. The action taken in Robertson County and in many other counties in Texas was condoned by many of the leading citizens and organizations in the state.

John H. Reagan, an important figure in Texas politics

¹⁶ Texas State Gazette, September 15, 1860.
¹⁷ Roberts Diaries, August 19-25, 1860.
before and after the Civil War, reported the day before
the hanging in Robertson County that he believed there existed an abolitionist plot against Texas. All persons
who might be found to be clearly involved, Reagan said,
should not "be permitted to leave the state alive."18
The Texas Baptist, published in Anderson, Grimes County,
Texas, was not silent in regard to the abolitionists.
The paper considered the abolitionists to be the slave-
holders most deadly enemies.

It is now our painful but positive duty to re-
pel their assaults by such means as will most
certainly prevent their recurrence. It may be said that it is unchristian-like to hang a fellow-being, and religious editors should op-
pose it. To this we reply: "The powers that
be are ordained of God for the punishment of
evil doers;" and it is seen that no other means
will stop those men from stealing and murdering,
we are under the necessity of hanging them to
save our own lives and property.19

One could conclude from this article that the hanging of
the Boatwrights was merely doing what God ordained.

After the excitement of August and September cooled
down, more attention was given to the coming presidential
election. The likelihood of a "Black" Republican presi-
dent did not rest well with many in Robertson County.

In a letter from Robertson County, dated October 22,

---

18 Texan State Gazette, August 18, 1860.
19 Texas Baptist (Anderson), September 13, 1860.
1860, a traveler reported that he had "met with many in Robertson county who openly advocated resistance to a "Black" Republican President. There are old Texans who feel now that a sight of the "Lone Star Flag," in such a contingency would do them good. The reporter went on to say that the people of Robertson County would prefer Santa Anna to a "nigger-loving Northern President." The election created considerable interest in Port Sullivan. Roberts wrote in his diary on the day before the election, "Election on hand tomorrow."22

The election of 1860 was between four parties: Abraham Lincoln, Republican; Stephen A. Douglas, Northern Democrat; John C. Breckenridge, Southern Democrat; and John Bell of the newly formed Constitutional Union Party. Sam Houston, the Governor of Texas, whose name was circulated as "The People's candidate," withdrew on August 19, 1860.23 As far as Port Sullivan and the South were concerned, the only two men in the race were Breckenridge of the Southern

20 *Texas State Gazette*, November 3, 1860.
21 Ibid.
22 Roberts Diaries, November 5, 1860.
23 Rupert Norval Richardson, *Texas: The Lone Star State*, 244.
Democrats and Bell of the Constitutional Union Party. On Tuesday, November 6, 1860, Roberts recorded that "224 votes were Poll'd in Port Sullivan. Democrats 186, Bell 38. Some excitement on hand. Cloudy all day. Union decided or divided. No votes were cast for Lincoln or Douglas. It probably would not have been safe to do so, judging from the fact that two men were hanged in Coryell County for voting for Lincoln. The national election results were not known in Port Sullivan for nine days. On November 15, 1860, Roberts said "Abe Lincoln is Elected President of U. S." The election of Lincoln, in combination with the alleged abolitionists plot against Texas in the summer of 1860, paved the way for the secessionist movement in Texas. In a little over a week after the results of the election were known, Port Sullivan, in a fitting ceremony, declared itself in favor of the secession of Texas from the United States.

24 Roberts Diaries, November 6, 1860.
26 Roberts Diaries, November 15, 1860.
Yesterday November 24, 1860 was quite a merry day in Fort Sullivan. The ladies having previously made a Texas Lone Star Flag, presented it at 1 p.m. to the citizens. Mr. Herndon received the flag on the part of the sons of old Milam, in a neat and appropriate speech of an hour in length, reviewing the acts and measures of Northern fanatics, which had brought about such an outburst of Southern disapprobation and disgust. His eloquent appeals were frequently disturbed by enthusiastic applause from the assemblage. The crowd was large, and everything passed off quietly. Everyone seemed to have the same opinion -- now's the day and now's the hour. After the address the crowd formed into a procession and marched to the liberty pole, (erected near the Masonic Hall and some 80 to 90 feet in height) the ladies marching in front. The flag was then run up amid deafening shouts for the Lone Star, Texas, Southern Republic, &c. 28

The citizens of the town believed that a "Black" Republican President would not govern to suit the South and its institutions, and they talked of a new nation made up of the Southern States.

Even after the election and the return to calmer times, there was still trouble near Fort Sullivan in connection with slavery. Robert Calvert, president of the Vigilance Committee, should have kept a better vigil at his own plantation. Two of his slaves, Sam, age 22, and Sam's wife, Betty, age 20, ran away from his plantation. Betty was described as a mulatto, crossed by Indian, medium sized, and slender and

28 Texas State Gazette, December 22, 1860.
delicate in appearance. Both slaves had been raised in 
the Choctaw Nation, Indian Territory, and could not 
speak English very well. Calvert offered $100 reward 
for their apprehension and delivery to Sterling in 
Robertson County or $50 reward if delivered to any 
 jail.29

After the election of Lincoln, many of the leading 
citizens of Texas began to urge Governor Houston to 
call a session in the state legislature so that it could 
make arrangements for a special state convention to con-
sider seceding from the Union. Houston refused to give 
in to the demands of the secessionists. On December 3, 
1860, a self-appointed group, including John Marshall, 
editor of the Texas State Gazette, issued an address to 
the people of Texas urging them to hold elections in 
each representative district to choose delegates to a 
special convention to meet in Austin.30 The citizens of 
Port Sullivan quickly responded to this request. A 
meeting was held over which R. J. Davis presided and in 
which John C. Roberts was elected secretary. Citizens 
from the town and the nearby area came to the meeting 
in Port Sullivan, which featured speakers from

29Tri-Weekly Telegraph, December 20, 1860.
30Richardson, Texas: The Lone Star State, 246.
Owensville, the county seat of Robertson County. The group adopted two resolutions, both unanimously. The first resolution requested the chief justice of Milam County to call a special election to choose delegates to the special convention, and the second resolution nominated E. P. Gould of Cameron to be a delegate.\footnote{Texas State Gazette, December 29, 1860.}

In the meantime, seeing that the delegates had been elected throughout the state, and the convention was going to meet anyway, Houston agreed to call a special session of the state legislature, which in turn called for the election of a special convention, along the procedures already carried out. Houston succeeded in getting the Legislature to include a provision in its call that any decision reached in the convention must be submitted to the voters for final approval.\footnote{Richardson, Texas: The Lone Star State, 246.}

When the convention met on January 28, 1861, it lost no time in adopting an ordinance of secession from the United States. The reasons given for seceding included the election of Lincoln, the failure of the United States to protect the frontier areas from Indians and Mexican bandits, the administration of the territories of the United States in a way to exclude Southern
people from them, and the doctrine of the "higher law" fanatics that believed that all men were equal. 33

The ordinance of secession was submitted to the voters of Texas on February 23, 1861. The day set aside for voting proved to be a big day in Port Sullivan. The people of the town were treated to a barbecue by the "generous old farmers," before going to the church to hear speeches on the topics of the day. A "Lone Star" flag was placed on the wall at each side of the speaker's stand. The name of Lewis T. Wigfall, an ardent secessionist and later a member of the Confederate Senate, was placed beneath one flag, and under the other flag was the name, Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America. In the course of the speeches, Captain Barton of the Port Sullivan Grays asked all the ladies present who might be in favor of secession to rise. It was a race to see who was first on her feet as all of the women down to the age of ten stood up. It was said that all of the ladies of Port Sullivan were united for secession. The voters of Port Sullivan favored secession 227 to 24, or almost 10 to 1. At least one person, the author of the article describing the event in Port Sullivan, believed that

33 Ibid., 247.
February 23, 1860, would be looked back to by future generations as one of the "Most glorious achievements that was ever won, either in the fields or anywhere else, by Texans." The Port Sullivan Grays, it was said, intended to be ready to "meet old Abe or any of his stripe."  

Not long after the voters of Texas decided to separate Texas from the United States, a showdown came between the Federal Government and the seceded states. After the firing on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, and Lincoln's call for volunteers to crush the insurrection, Texans began to organize into military groups in order to resist anticipated invasions from the North.  

Citizens of Port Sullivan were quick to join the newly formed volunteer guards and militia companies. In May 1861, the Milam County Guards were organized, and a muster roll of the company was sent to the state authorities in Austin. The roll included the names of those who were willing to form an infantry company to be used at the call of the new governor, Edward Clark, who had succeeded to the office when Houston was forced to resign. Residents of Port

---

34 *Texas State Gazette*, March 9, 1861.

35 Richardson, Texas: *The Lone Star State*, 250.
Sullivan or nearby who added their names to the list included Henry and William Pendarvis, A. P. Streetman, Z. Phillips, Middleton Livingston, and Hugh Davis.36

Another company formed in Milam County, known as the Milam County Grays, volunteered its services to the Confederate Army for the duration of the war unless sooner discharged. This unit was not to be used for the protection of Milam County or Texas, but it was to be used at the will of the Confederate Government. Several of the officers, including John Smith, First Lieutenant, and Samuel Streetman, Second Lieutenant, were from Port Sullivan. Privates in the Milam County Grays had in their numbers R. B. Mayes, Alexander Jones, and James M. Stedham from Port Sullivan.37 This company, under the command of Captain John C. Rogers, later became Company G of the Fifth Texas Infantry Regiment, a part of John Bell Hood's famous Texas Brigade.

36"Milam County Guards," quoted in Martin and Hill (eds.), Milam County, II, 38. The names on the muster roll were compared with the names of persons on the Tax Rolls, Milam County, Texas State Archives, owners of lots in Port Sullivan; in the Masonic Report, 1860; and in Burned Record, Milam County Abstract Co., abstracts of lots in Port Sullivan. This same procedure was used to determine Port Sullivan residents included in muster rolls cited later in this study.

37"Milam County Grays" quoted in Martin and Hill (eds.), Milam County, II, 51-52.
Other residents of Port Sullivan became members of Hood's Brigade by a different route. Many residents of the town had closer ties with Robertson rather than Milam county because of land owned in the Brazos bottom. These residents joined companies being formed in Robertson County. One Company, the Robertson Five Shooters, was organized sometime in May 1861. The commanding officer, William P. Townsend, while not a resident of Port Sullivan or Milam County, was a member of St. Paul's Lodge in Port Sullivan before and after the war. In May 1861, it was reported that each of the eighty-four men in the company had a Colt Model Seventy-Four, Improved Patent, five-shot rifle. In addition, fifty in the company had revolvers. Company supplies included twelve to fourteen tents, camp equipment, cooking utensils, blankets, two or three wagons, eighteen kegs of powder, and twenty-seven thousand ball cartridges and waterproof percussion caps. It was reported that the company had trained eight or ten days and that it was "all fixed up for a fight."

38Masonic Reports, 1860-1866.

39Muster Roll of Captain William P. Townsend's Company of Robertson Five Shooters Infantry for the Month of May 1861, Texas State Archives; and Texas State Gazette, May 11, 1861.
Several of the noncommissioned officers were from Port Sullivan: John C. Roberts, Third Sergeant; and M. Livingston, Third Corporal. 40 Privates that served in the Robertson Five Shooters from Port Sullivan included J. O. Adams, John Smith, Jesse Livingston, H. Foster, R. H. Foster, L. Barton, F. Barton, John Barton, James Sneed, Peter Alliday, Andrew Herndon, W. I. Anderson, M. D. Reavers, S. N. Coe, E. N. Coe and T. E. Dennis. 41 Several of the noncommissioned officers and privates moved up in rank during the course of the war.

In May 1861, a man named Newman from Milam County, on returning from Montgomery, Alabama, reported that no Texas companies would be used in Virginia. 42 Only a few months later, however, both the Milam and Robertson county companies were on their way to Virginia to fight for the Confederacy.

40 Harold B. Simpson (ed.), Texas in the War, 1861-1865, Collected by Marcus J. Wright, 210.

41 "Volunteers," quoted in Martin and Hill (eds.), Milam County, II, 57-58; and Muster Roll of Captain W. F. Townsend's Company, in the 4th Regiment, (Wigfall's Brigade) of Texas Volunteers, commanded by Colonel J. B. Hood, Texas State Archives.

42 Texas State Gazette, May 25, 1861.
Captain Roger's Company left Milam County in the summer of 1861 with no uniforms and very few arms. The Robertson County company had arms, but they, too, had no uniforms. The trip to Virginia was made during August and September, and, on arrival, the Milam County Grays became Company G., Fifth Texas Infantry Regiment, and the Robertson Five Shooters, Company C, Fourth Texas Infantry Regiment. The two regiments, for the most part, were kept together during the war.

After their arrival in Virginia, Companies C and G, with the other Texas units, were stationed along the northern border of Virginia, protecting that area from a possible attack from the Yankees. The Texans did not take part in any action during their first winter in Virginia. By the spring of 1862, Captain William Townsend's Company was anxious to meet the Yankees. On April 1862, Townsend reported his troops "in fine spirits and anxious for a fight. We feel perfectly confident that we can and will beat the enemy."  


44 Harold B. Simpson, Gaines' Mill to Appomattox, 42-51.

45 Quoted in Ibid., 75.
On May 7, 1862, a small engagement was fought at Eltham's Landing, Virginia. None of the four officers and sixty men of Company C who took part in the action became a casualty. A. J. Tomlinson was wounded and constituted the only casualty suffered by Company C, which had three officers and forty-nine men in the action. In terms of casualties, the two companies were not so lucky in future battles.

The men in gray from Port Sullivan faced their first real test in the battles that were fought to drive the Federal Army under General George B. McClellan in 1862 from the outskirts of Richmond, the Confederate capital. A great battle shaped up around Gaines' Mill late in June 1862, as McClellan was losing ground in his campaign to capture Richmond. Near Gaines' Mill the Federal troops dug in not wishing to lose more ground. The Yankees were entrenched on top of a hill and they had the support of artillery. Early attempts by Confederate troops to dislodge the enemy ended in

46 L. D. Tomlinson was a property owner in Port Sullivan in 1860. A. J. Tomlinson may have been his son. Tax Rolls, Milam County, 1860, Texas State Archives.

failure; so when the Fourth and Fifth regiments arrived on the scene, they saw dead and wounded men in gray. The Texans, however, went forward under the direction of their beloved commander, General John Bell Hood. As the line of Texans came over a rise of land, "all hell broke loose; sheets of fire leaped from the Union trenches cutting down the oncoming Texans 'like wheat in a harvest.'" When the Texans were within a hundred yards of the enemy, they fixed their bayonets and charged with a high-pitched Rebel yell, breaking through the Union lines.43

The victory was costly; the Texas Brigade suffered a casualty rate of almost fifty per cent. The Robertson County company lost eight men killed outright; twenty-two wounded, two of whom died later; and had one missing in action. A. P. Streetman and J. C. Adams, a druggist, from Port Sullivan were both killed in the battle. John C. Roberts lost an arm as a result of the battle. Other wounded men in Company C from Port Sullivan included H. W. Davis, F. M. Barton, Robert Foster, and W. H. Foster, whose arm was later amputated.

The Milam County company lost two killed and nine

---

43 Simpson, Gaines' Mill to Appomattox, 86-87.
wounded in the battle at Gaines' Mill. 49

During July and August 1862, Companies C and G saw action in several other engagements in Virginia, and in September the Texans played an important role in the second battle of Manassas, or Bull Run, under General John Pope. In the battle Townsend's company from Robertson County captured part of the Union artillery that had inflicted heavy damage to its ranks at Gaines' Mill. 50 Again the battle was costly to the Port Sullivan men. Andrew Herndon of Company C, and F. M. Bolinger of Company G, both of Port Sullivan, lost their lives in the action. A number of other men from the Brazos River town were injured. 51

After halting the Union forces at Manassas, Lee's army and the Texans moved northward into Maryland. The push northward was stopped in the fierce battle of Antietam in which 23,000 were killed, wounded, or reported missing in action. 52 Two Barton brothers lost arms in the battle and several others also from Port Sullivan were wounded. 53

---

49Tri-Weekly Telegraph, August 4 and 20, 1862; and Simpson (ed.), Touched with Valor, 87.
50Simpson, Gaines' Mill to Appomattox, 90.
51Tri-Weekly Telegraph, September 29, 1862.
52Simpson, Gaines' Mill to Appomattox, 107.
53Tri-Weekly Telegraph, October 24, 1862.
The Milam and Robertson county companies continued to function in Hood's Brigade after Antietam, although with reduced numbers. The next great battle in which the two companies fought was at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on July 1-3, 1863. In this battle Company C lost one killed, fourteen wounded, and three missing. Heavier losses were experienced by the Milam County company; seven were killed, eighteen wounded and nine reported missing, a good portion of the entire company. Yet the two companies were called on for more lives and limbs after Gettysburg.

After two years of fighting in and around Virginia, the Texas Brigade was transferred to bolster defenses farther south, in Georgia and Tennessee. In September 1863, they participated in a great battle near Chickamauga, Georgia. The Texans were called on for two charges against the Union lines, with predictable results in casualties. Five were killed and six were wounded from Company C, including J. A. Smith of Port Sullivan who was wounded severely in the chest and died later. Company G's losses included two killed, five wounded, and three missing.54 Lieutenant Sam

---

Streetman of Company G, then commanding officer of the company, was killed leading his men in a charge. John C. Roberts boarded with Sam Streetman's father in Port Sullivan. An obituary for Sam Streetman appeared in a Houston paper late in 1863. It said in part,

He was among the first to volunteer in the present war to fight for his country; and passed through many battles and hardships, but finally, in the battle of Chickamauga, (in the language of his surgeon), fell dead on the 19th of September gallantly leading his company in a charge of that evening. Sam was beloved by all who knew him, was a good officer, and a gallant soldier. He leaves a large circle of relations and friends to mourn his loss.

The obituary was placed in the paper by "A FRIEND," perhaps a girl friend.

After the Battle of Chickamauga, the Texas Brigade saw duty in Tennessee during the rest of 1863 and early 1864. During the remaining part of the Civil War, the Texas Brigade was stationed in Virginia as a part of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Not many of the Texans who came to Virginia in September 1861 were left by the time of Lee's surrender to Grant on April 9, 1865.

---

55 Roberts Diaries, January 5, 1855.
56 *Tri-Weekly Telegraph*, December 30, 1863.
57 Simpson, *Gaines' Mill to Appomattox*, 281.
The men of Port Sullivan gave their lives and limbs for the cause of their country, in Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Tennessee, as a part of Hood's Texas Brigade. Those who stayed at home also contributed to the cause by supporting the Confederate government, by trying to keep the local economy strong, by supporting manufacturing, and by passing resolutions supporting the cause of the South.

The Civil War caused some changes in trading patterns of Texas and Port Sullivan. The Federal government extended its blockade of the seceded states to Texas in July 1861.\textsuperscript{58} Cotton could not be shipped to Houston or Galveston for export. The usual route for trade from Port Sullivan, just prior to the war, was to ship produce to Houston, via the nearest railhead, Millican, five miles above Navasota on the Houston and Texas Central Railroad. With the blockade, the Texas export trade, except for a few blockade runners, went to Mexico. Prior to the war the port of Bagdad on the Rio Grande received about six ships per year, but by 1863, a regular packet line ran to the port.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{58}Wallace, \textit{Texas in Turmoil}, 87.

\textsuperscript{59}\textit{Ibid.}, 129.
As an effort to procure military supplies, agents of the Confederate government exchanged bonds bearing eight per cent interest for cotton. The cotton was transported to the Rio Grande where it was traded for supplies. The activities of one agent for the Confederacy came under fire from the pen of a Port Sullivan merchant. James Ferguson of Port Sullivan on July 10, 1863, accused an agent, J. Wood Dunn, of neglect of duty. Dunn, according to Ferguson, purchased a large lot of cotton from the plantation of W. R. and T. J. H. Anderson sometime in 1862. No one from the government came to pick up the cotton, and, as a result, it rotted and became useless. Also, Ferguson pointed out, some bacon and lard purchased from the plantation of A. L. and G. W. Hearne was being eaten by bugs and worms, and was fit only for soap grease. The Texans in Hood’s Brigade could have used the bacon and lard, but it was wasted by inefficiency of the Confederate government. Several weeks later in the Tri-Weekly Telegraph, "A Friend of Justice" came to the defense of agent Dunn. Dunn, according to the article, had resigned his position about ten months previous and had transferred his accounts to another agent who was to

---

60 *Tri-Weekly Telegraph*, July 22, 1863.
have seen that the goods purchased by Dunn were used by the Government. Nevertheless, the taxpayers and soldiers lost something because of the inefficiency of a Government agent, and the exposure of the matter, no doubt, damaged the morale of the people, especially since the loss came to light shortly after the defeats at Gettysburg and Vicksburg.

In 1863, the Confederate government tried to build up local manufacturing in its territory. A plan was adopted to build a cotton and woolen factory in combination with a flour mill in Robertson County, about five miles from Hearne, today, and not very far from Fort Sullivan. The operation was to be a joint effort between the local planters and the Government. The planters of the Brazos bottom are alleged to have put over $500,000 in cash into the Brazos Manufacturing Company. Machinery for the plant was imported from Europe by way of Mexico, and thence carried overland by ox cart to Robertson County, a very costly operation. The planters also provided the labor for the construction of the plant by contributing the use of one-tenth of their slaves from nearby plantations. The bricks for the building were made locally from raw

---

61 Ibid., July 30, 1863.
materials close at hand. Several citizens of Port Sullivan and of the nearby area invested in the plant. John C. Roberts, who lost an arm in the war at Gaines' Mill, after returning to Port Sullivan, purchased fifty shares of stock. Major Townsend, likewise returning wounded, also purchased fifty shares. Thomas and William Anderson of Port Sullivan bought one hundred shares each. The war ended before the plant was completed and it was torn down later. The investment was a total loss.

The people of Port Sullivan and the South experienced shortages in several areas during the war. Salt and medicines were of short supply after the blockade of the coast began. Governor Francis R. Lubbock of Texas advised the people of the state to improvise medicines, using roots, herbs, and even animal dung, "sheep pill" tonic and fresh cow manure plasters. Texans were urged to grow poppies for opium. Coffee had to be made from parched okra seeds. Despite these hardships, Milam and Robertson county citizens kept up their morale.

Public meetings were held throughout the state during

---

63 Wallace, Texas in Turmoil, 130.
the war in which resolutions were passed expressing support of the war and of the Confederacy. On September 16, 1863, such a meeting was held in Robertson County, with Robert Calvert presiding. A total of fifteen resolutions were passed at the meeting, in which the citizens of the county said that:

1. Each one should dedicate himself completely to his country's cause.

2. No regrets were felt about secession and the "Great Disposer of Human Events" had ordained it.

3. Secession was the only means left to insure their rights.

4. As freemen, they had the right to change their form of government.

5. Their present form of government might not be the very best, but it could be improved with experience.

6. The war waged against them by the North was "unjust," unchristian, and uncivilized."

7. Slavery is a "Bible institution, and is in the keeping of Him who ordained it."

8. The importation of paupers from Europe for soldiers and the use of slaves against the South proves that the North is unequal to the South.

9. To shorten the war, all able-bodied men, regardless of age, should bear arms in the military service of their country—to the last man if necessary.

10. Teamsters and beef drivers should be placed in the army and replaced with Negroes.
11. The Confederate Congress should change the property tax exemptions, outlaw the practice of hiring substitutes for the army, and better supervise the government agents.

12. The state militia should be increased in size and better trained.

13. No one should refuse Confederate money, and those that do should be regarded as one of the enemy.

14. All property over and above that needed for the bare support of each one's family should be "sacredly placed upon the altar of our country as a consecrated offering to the safety of her name."

15. No distinction should be made between rich and poor; all should band together as brothers.64

A meeting held in Milam County two days earlier passed some of the same resolutions.65

The morale of the citizens of Milam and Robertson county stayed fairly high throughout the war. Even after the surrender of the Texas Brigade and Lee at Appomattox on April 9, 1865, some expressed the desire to fight on. A mass meeting in Robertson County on May 2, 1865, resolved that the people were "determined to all die freemen rather than live all slaves." The meeting regretted the surrender of the gallant Lee and his noble men, and the members pledged themselves not

64Tri-Weekly Telegraph, October 2, 1863.
65Ibid., September 25, 1863.
to lay down arms as long as the Yankees kept coming south. 66

Toward the end of May 1865, the editor of the Tri-
Weekly Telegraph suggested that the only practical thing for Texas to do was to become a state of the United States again by voluntary action. 67 This is the course that Texas decided to follow. The war ended, and reconstruction began.

66 Ibid., May 5, 1865.
67 Ibid., May 30, 1865.
CHAPTER VI
DECLINING DAYS

The end of the Civil War brought social, economic, and political changes to Port Sullivan and to the South. The town was able to adjust to the new situation without too much trouble, but a change in the transportation system in the state, which had begun before the war, spelled doom to the town. Railroad companies resumed construction soon after the war ended, and new railroad companies were chartered. Port Sullivan sought to attract a rail line to the community much like it had sought to have steamboats solve its transportation problems, and the town tried once more to assert its claim that it was a steamboat port. Both attempts failed, and the town began to fade away rapidly.

The first obstacle Port Sullivan faced after the close of the Civil War was the end of slavery, which was declared officially at an end by General Gordon Granger's proclamation on June 19, 1965. Many residents of Port Sullivan were directly affected by the order. It was thought by many in the South that the Negro could only be encouraged to work as a slave.

1Wallace, Texas in Turmoil, 147.
This assumption proved to be false. The planters of the Brazos bottom along the boundary of Milam and Robertson counties were able to make contracts with the Freedman in the summer of 1865. The planters reported that "everything is getting along smoothly." Of course, not all of the former slaves went back to work right away, and some shortage of labor occurred. In the spring of 1866, "Dan" writing from Milam County reported a new sight in the cotton fields, where he observed white women hoeing cotton. "Dan" described them as "heoric, noble girls!" A former soldier who had lost an arm found he could still manage a plow, and that life continued on after the war, if not always in the same style or to his liking.

Some of the Negroes after emancipation became landowners. Dennis Sullivan, a free man of color, purchased lot number eight, block three, in Port Sullivan on September 7, 1866. As block number three was in the commercial section of Port Sullivan, Sullivan may have opened a store or saloon of some type.

---

2 *Texas State Gazette*, August 1, 1865.
4 *Burned Record, Milam County Abstract Co.*
5 See Chapter III, 57-58.
Other Negroes purchased farm land in Milam County near Port Sullivan and Cameron. Tracts of land varying from two to two hundred acres each were bought by Negroes after the war. Those purchasing land were described as "pretty good citizens."  

Some of the former slaves stayed on the plantations where they had previously lived and worked. Others left the plantations for a few years; but, in time, many of them returned. The former slaves came back to the plantations on which they had formerly worked because, according to one writer in 1868, they missed the social life of larger communities. By 1869, a new system was developing on the large plantations. The owners were no longer selling part of their lands, but had begun to rent land for a share of the crop. The share-crop system came into existence. Under this new system, the Negro was provided with ten to forty acres of land, plus living quarters. The houses for the Negroes consisted of two, three, or four rooms, with a yard and stable lots, and were located at various points on the plantation. In return for the house and land the Freedman agreed to pay the landowner from one-fourth to one-

---

7 Ibid.
third of the crop as rent. If the planter furnished mules and tools, the rent was increased to one-half of the crop. In rare cases the landowner provided subsistence; and, consequently, the rent was raised to two-thirds of the crop. Thus was born a new economic system for the production of the usual staple crop of the South.

In the first months after the end of the war, minor changes in the political system were made. Planters with over $20,000 in taxable property were disfranchised and not allowed to hold office. Most of the citizens of Port Sullivan, however, suffered no political disabilities in the first year after the war. Andrew Johnson, who became President upon the death of Lincoln, wished to restore the Southern states to the union on easy terms and as quickly as possible. Texas adopted a new constitution in 1866 in attempting to fulfill President Johnson's requirements to be re-admitted to the United States. This constitution did not suit the Radicals who gained control of Congress late in 1866.

The Radicals had other plans for Texas and the

---

8 Ibid., March 10, 1869.
9 Wallace, Texas in Turmoil, 162.
South. It was their contention that the Southern states had seceded, and that they were now conquered territories and needed to be disciplined before re-entering the Union as states. After the Congressional elections of 1866, the Radicals gained control of the Congress of the United States, and early the next year even before the new members took their seats in Congress the Radical leadership began to enact its own reconstruction plans. State officials or anyone who had taken an oath to support the Constitution of the United States and who later had voluntarily participated in the war on behalf of the South or had, in any way, voluntarily supported the Confederacy, were disfranchised and had to obtain a special pardon from the President to regain their political rights. General Philip H. Sheridan was named military commander of the Fifth Military District, which included Texas. Sheridan extended the disfranchisement to any participant in the war who had previously been a minor official in the state, including court clerks, justices of the peace, school trustees, and policemen. This provision prohibited a number of the leading citizens of Port Sullivan from voting. A letter from "Ike" in Milam County in the

10 Ibid., 192-195.
summer of 1869, declared that politics had lost its charm for the masses. He said there was no county government to speak of; the tax collector was called "an old scalawag." 11

The people of Milam County and Port Sullivan did not get along with the military during the Radical reconstruction program. A Captain George Haller came to Milam County in the summer of 1869, to investigate the murder of several Negroes in Bryan. Haller disappeared while in the county. Later a squad of cavalry came in search of him and, reportedly, arrested some persons for killing him before the body had been found. 12 Haller's body was not found until eight months later when it was found on Elm Creek between Port Sullivan and Cameron. 12

In 1868-1869, after a new registration of voters, followed by an election for a new constitutional convention, a new constitution was written in Texas completely under Radical influence. Hopefully, this new constitution would meet the approval of both the people of Texas and the Congress of the United States. The

12 Ibid., July 26, 1869.
13 Ibid., March 6, 1970.
constitution was placed before the voters of Texas late in 1869 in a special election that would also choose a new Governor and other state officials.\(^\text{14}\) In the gubernatorial race, the actual contest was primarily between two Republicans, E. J. Davis, a Radical, and A. J. Hamilton, a Conservative; although the Democrats, most of whom could not vote, put forth Hamilton Stuart as their candidate. The election was set for November 30 through December 3, 1869. Troops were sent to all of the polling places,\(^\text{15}\) which were, during this election located only at the county seats. Orders were given to close the polls should any disturbance occur.\(^\text{16}\)

The election proceeded quietly in Milam County until December 1, when the polls were closed. Reuben A. Smith, who lived near Port Sullivan and had been the secretary of St. Paul's Lodge for many years,\(^\text{17}\) and had lost a brother in the war, rode over to Cameron with his son to vote. Smith took with him a group of Negroes who

\(^\text{14}\) Wallace, *Texas in Turmoil*, 207.

\(^\text{15}\) W. C. Nunn, *Texas under the Carpetbaggers*, 13-17.


\(^\text{17}\) Masonic Reports, 1856-1870.
had formerly belonged to him. He had instructed the Negroes on how to vote in the election, and the former slaves rode on ahead of the Smiths toward Cameron. Before reaching Cameron, the Negroes were stopped by Colonel Emil Adams and a company of Federal troops. Adams was supposedly a "Yankee detective," and he proceeded to give the Negroes the Radical's ticket to cast in Cameron. The Smiths later caught up and tried to persuade the former slaves to go on and vote before their minds were changed. Adams began to curse Smith and his son violently and ordered them to leave at once. "Many Citizens," who signed the article that appeared in the Galveston newspaper describing the incident, said Smith, after being cursed by Adams, started to dismount, and while doing so his pistol discharged, shooting his own horse in the neck. Adams and his men ducked behind some trees and opened fire on the Smiths. All in all, about twenty shots were exchanged. Adams, along with Smith's horse, was wounded. The polls at Cameron were closed after Adams got to town, and the votes were not counted.18 Had the votes been counted in Milam County, and had the polls been opened in

18Galveston Daily News, December 5, 1869.
Navarro County, the election might have gone to the conservative Hamilton instead of the radical Davis.\textsuperscript{19}

Before the town of Port Sullivan was founded on Sullivan's Bluff, the Galveston and Red River Railroad was organized in Texas. The line, chartered on March 11, 1848, was to run from the Gulf to the Red River in northern Texas. Little was done by the company until it received permission, in 1853, to begin construction at Houston instead of on the coast. In 1856, the name of the company was changed to the Houston and Texas Central, and the line started moving northward out of Houston. By 1860, the railroad had reached Millican in Brazos County, and a branch line was extended over to Brenham in Washington County. Millican remained the railhead until after the Civil War.\textsuperscript{20} The main line of the railroad stayed east of the Brazos River and the town of Washington, and the branch line crossed the river south of Washington, leading to the downfall of that Brazos River town. Washington, in 1858, had many empty business houses; the trade had moved to other towns.\textsuperscript{21} In 1859, Washington was described in the Texas

\textsuperscript{19}Nunn, \textit{Texas under the Carpetbaggers}, 18.

\textsuperscript{20}S. G. Reed, \textit{A History of the Texas Railroad}, 65-74.

\textsuperscript{21}\textit{Galveston Weekly News}, July 20, 1858.
State Gazette as a town that once had a considerable amount of business. The town still had many well constructed business houses, but most of them were empty. Would Port Sullivan suffer the same fate?

In the Texas Almanac of 1861, it was predicted that the Houston and Texas Central Railroad would run within ten or fifteen miles of Port Sullivan. "A tap road will doubtless be built to Port Sullivan," concluded the Texas Almanac. Since the railroad was delayed at Millican by the war and its aftermath, the people of Port Sullivan had time to make plans to build a tap road. This time, however, was not used. The town waited until construction of the railroad resumed before making definite plans concerning a tap road.

The construction of the Houston and Texas Central moved northward from Millican in 1867, reaching Bryan in 1868. Late in 1868, Professor C. G. Forshey, one of the founders of the Texas Engineers Association and later its chairman, visited Port Sullivan. Forshey explained to the citizens of the town his ideas on wooden railroads. The people of the town became very

22 Texas State Gazette, March 26, 1859.
23 Texas Almanac, 1861, p. 185.
much interested in this type of railroad, and plans were made to build one. "Ariel" writing from Port Sullivan on November 27, 1868, after insulting the editor of the Galveston News, described the town and the railroad, and made some predictions as to the future importance of Port Sullivan. In beginning the letter, "Ariel" asked:

Did the News ever get a letter from this Port, or did the Geographic Editor of that well informed journal ever know that there was such a port? No ship-channel, let me assure you, is needed-- for the rapids of the Brazos-- where the waters roar over the rocks in the channel, and forbid any higher navigation. No ship has ever passed above this point, and hence the propriety of the name Port.26

"Ariel" went on to say that much discussion was heard in Port Sullivan concerning railroads. All persons in town agreed that a road should be built, but there were differences of opinions on whether to build an iron or a wooden road. Some favored the wooden road because it could be built to Hearne by the time the Houston and Texas Central reached that point. "Ariel" had no doubts that a railroad would be built to Hearne, and he predicted that the "prairie village will grow into immediate importance," and the storekeepers would become merchants.27

26Ibid., December 4, 1868.
27Ibid.
In a later letter from Milam County, "Ariel" was even more optimistic concerning the railroad and Port Sullivan. After the railroad was built from Port Sullivan to Hearne, no wagon would ever have to cross "that swamp" or "that Red Sea and wilderness" again, as he described the road across the Brazos bottom from Port Sullivan. Once the railroad was completed, Port Sullivan would become the "New Bryan," and "those spirited men about the Port will have their day—the speculation in lots and their grand market place." The writer went on to say that Port Sullivan would always be an important place because it was right on the river and had unmeasured water power.28

The State of Texas chartered the Port Sullivan, Belton and Northwestern Railroad on January 25, 1869. Among the members of the board of directors were such men as Thomas J. H. Anderson, F. M. Hall, Blanton Streetman, Hugh Davis, H. C. Ghent, C. G. Forshey, and William White. The company was authorized to build a railroad from nearby Hearne in Robertson County, by way of Port Sullivan to Belton, thence in a northwestwardly direction to the boundary of Texas. The capitalization of the company was limited to $5,000,000,

28 Ibid.
and the company had the right to organize once $10,000 had been subscribed to, with 5% payment on the same. The company was given authority to build the road with wooden rails and to use horse power until the traffic over the road indicated the need for iron rails. One other condition had to be met. The road had to be surveyed to Belton and at least five miles had to be constructed by January 1, 1870, only eleven months away.

Soon after the road was chartered, the people of Belton indicated their support for the "Belton and Port Sullivan Railroad," as they called it. A meeting was held in Cameron on March 23, 1869, to organize the company. A letter from Cameron on that day indicated the importance of the meeting. "The quiet of our sober little city has been considerably broken to-day by the proceedings of the railroad meeting. . . . Expectation, of course, was on tiptoe, and the various streets and roads were watched during the morning for the coming in of the parties interested." The company was organized after the citizens

29 Findlay and Simmons (eds.), Gammel's Laws of Texas, VI, 124.
31 Ibid., March 31, 1869.
of Cameron dipped into their pockets and purchased the few additional shares required by the law for organization. Cameron would benefit from the road as the town was situated between Port Sullivan and Belton.

The stockholders resolved, on the day the company was organized, to build a first class iron railroad, unless there was some danger in not meeting the January 1, 1870 deadline.

The company published an eighteen page pamphlet in 1869, containing the "financial plan of operation; description of the country traversed, and the general advantages to the country, and the enriching of the parties who own and operate the railroad." The pamphlet reported that the route had been surveyed to Belton, and it gave an estimate of the cost of constructing the road from Hearne to Port Sullivan. The total cost of construction of the first phase of the railroad was set at $20,000, including depots at Hearne and Port Sullivan, and for a ferry across the Brazos. The road was expected to earn $43,750, the first year of its operation. The cost of running the road was estimated at $15,600. Thus a net profit of $28,150 could be

32Ibid.
33Ibid., April 1, 1869.
expected from the first year's operations,\(^{34}\) which sum would amount to more than the cost of construction.

Despite the optimism of "Ariel" and the rosy outlook given the Port Sullivan, Belton and Northwestern Railroad in the pamphlet published by the company, January 1, 1870, rolled around with no railroad being built. Meanwhile, the Houston and Texas Central continued its construction northward throughout the year 1869.

In the summer of 1869, the Houston and Texas Central Railroad reached Calvert, a town built along the right-of-way near Sterling. The town grew rapidly, and had an estimated population of 4,000 to 5,000 by the time regular train service was established. The town contained a number of business houses, beer saloons, bar rooms, doctors, lawyers, mechanics, and a company of United States troops was stationed there.\(^ {35}\) Thomas J. H. Anderson, who, with his brother, had purchased the first lot in Port Sullivan in May 1851,\(^ {36}\) bought lot number five in block four in Calvert several

\(^{34}\) The Port Sullivan, Belton and North-western Railroad of Texas, 1, 9-12.

\(^{35}\) Galveston Tri-Weekly News, August 23, 1869.

\(^{36}\) Burned Record, Milam County Abstract Co. Also see Chapter II, 36.
months before the railroad reached that point.\textsuperscript{37}
Anderson, perhaps, saw the handwriting on the wall as far as Port Sullivan was concerned. He, however, did not move to Calvert, but continued to live in Port Sullivan until his death in 1871.

The railroad changed the lives of the people with whom it came in contact. Its depot became a meeting place for the residents of the town and of the surrounding country. Many got into the habit of meeting the trains.\textsuperscript{38} It was quite a novelty in 1869, to see someone get off the train in Calvert at 7:00 p.m., after leaving Houston the morning of the same day.\textsuperscript{39}

The railroad to Calvert changed also some of the trading habits of the people to the west of the Brazos River. As the railroad was nearing Calvert, it was announced that a new road was being opened between Belton and Calvert.\textsuperscript{40} An increasing amount of the trade from Belton and other towns nearby which had formerly passed through Port Sullivan en route to the railhead now

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{37} Calvert, Love Abstract Co.
\bibitem{38} Parker, \textit{Robertson County}, 62.
\bibitem{39} \textit{Galveston Tri-Weekly News}, October 6, 1869.
\bibitem{40} \textit{Galveston Daily News}, April 30, 1869.
\end{thebibliography}
by-passed Port Sullivan and went directly to Calvert.\textsuperscript{41} Port Sullivan would have to get on the ball if it wished to survive as a trade center.

Shortly after C. G. Forshey had made his talk on a wooden railroad at Port Sullivan, he reported on another proposed railroad, the International Pacific, that was to run from Cairo, Illinois, near the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, to Manzatlan, Mexico, on the Pacific coast. This route would connect the middle portion of the United States with the closest Pacific port. The International Pacific, according to Forshey, planned to cross the Brazos at Port Sullivan,\textsuperscript{42} so the town still seemed to have a chance to obtain a rail connection with other places.

The talk of the International Pacific Railroad and the Port Sullivan, Belton and Northwestern Railroad was heard at the same time. This may have frightened some would be investors away from the Port Sullivan road. A short-line railroad would have little chance to compete with a parallel, long-haul railroad. Some in Port Sullivan may have lost interest in the proposed railroad

\textsuperscript{41}The Port Sullivan, Belton and North-western Railroad of Texas, 1; Galveston Tri-Weekly News, March 23, 1870.

\textsuperscript{42}Galveston Daily News, January 8, 1869.
to Belton, thinking that a transcontinental railroad would soon be built through their town.

The failure of the United States Congress in 1869 to incorporate the International Pacific Railroad proved to be only a temporary setback, as the State of Texas incorporated the railroad the next year, and the company began to make more definite plans as to routes.\textsuperscript{43}

The citizens of both Calvert and Bremond, the next town north of Calvert on the Houston and Texas Central Railroad, were anxious for the new International Railroad, as it was now being called, to pass through their respective towns.\textsuperscript{44} The surveyors of the road, however, had their own ideas about where to build the line. They were more concerned with finding a suitable crossing point on the Brazos. The engineers of the International ran a survey from Hearne to the Brazos, planning to cross the Brazos below where Little River joins it, and to build the line along the divide between the Yegua and Little River to Austin.\textsuperscript{45} Port Sullivan, on the Brazos above the mouth of Little River, seemed again to be out of luck as far as railroads were concerned.

\textsuperscript{43}\textit{Galveston Tri-Weekly News}, June 19, 1870.
\textsuperscript{44}\textit{Ibid.}, December 14 and 16, 1870.
\textsuperscript{45}\textit{Ibid.}, November 30, 1870.
While talk of wooden and iron railroads was going on in Port Sullivan, several articles on Brazos River navigation appeared once more in the Galveston papers. A letter from Bryan on October 21, 1869, stated that the Brazos had been navigable as high as Port Sullivan at least six months of the year in every year since the end of the war. The writer urged that some effort be made to improve river transportation as the freight rates by land conveyance and by the railroad were "exorbitant." The Texas Almanac of 1870, suggested that some money should be spent to improve Texas' rivers. River transportation would be cheaper than the freight rates charged by the railroads, and in a period of falling farm prices the cost of transportation loomed even more important to the farmers. Consequently, in an effort to revive river transportation, plans were made in 1871 to purchase two steamers for the Brazos trade. The boats were to run to Port Sullivan at high water. Nothing, however, came of these plans.

In 1871, Port Sullivan was still alive and kicking, but it was as if in her death agony. Her attention was

46 Ibid., October 25, 1869.
47 Texas Almanac, 1870, p. 191.
now turned to developing improved post roads. The Galveston Tri-Weekly News of September 22, 1871, reported that "a splendid wagon road" was being built from Port Sullivan to Hearne at the cost of several thousand dollars.49 Earlier the same year, on May 29, 1871, F. M. Hall, and Ira W. Smith were authorized by the State to build a bridge over the Little River between Hearne and the mouth of Little River,50 as the first important step toward improved freighting between Hearne and Port Sullivan. Later that same year, J. Wise Parker was authorized to operate a ferry across the Brazos River at or near Port Sullivan on the Cameron and Hearne Road.51 At least the trade of Cameron still came through Port Sullivan on its way to the railroad. The wagon road from Hearne to Port Sullivan was included on a map of Texas about 1874.52 A wagon road was better than no road, but was certainly not a railroad and surely did not offer the advantages that rail transportation held for developing the economy.

49Ibid., September 22, 1871.

50Findlay and Simmons (eds.), Gammel's Laws of Texas, III, 1548-1549.

51Batte, Milam County, 82.

52Correct Map of Texas, Published by the Galveston, Harrisburg & San Antonio Railway, n. p., c1874.
of a community.

A railroad through Port Sullivan was still a possibility in the early 1870's. In November 1872, it was reported that the International and Great Northern Railroad, the company resulting from the merger of the Houston and Great Northern Railroad with the International Railroad, planned to build a line from Huntsville to Belton through Hearne.53 Such a line would probably pass through Port Sullivan, but, unfortunately for Port Sullivan, it was never built. Two years later, in 1874, the Hearne, Belton and Northwestern Railroad was chartered; but, like the Port Sullivan, Belton and Northwestern projection, it proved to be only a pipe dream.54 The Panic of 1873 stopped virtually all railroad construction in Texas.

The International and Great Northern Railroad crossed the Brazos going west in late 1873. In February 1874, trains began to run regularly between Longview, in East Texas, and Rockdale, a new town in Milam County. The railroad advised those having freight for Cameron, Belton, and Georgetown, to ship it to Rockdale.55 Trade from the towns west of Port Sullivan now no longer came

54Batte, Milam County, 84.
55Galveston Daily News, February 1, 1874.
through the Brazos River town. There were more convenient places with which to trade.

The tax rolls for Milam County indicate that Port Sullivan began its long, but steady, decline immediately after the Civil War. The tax values of the property holders in the town reached their highest point during the war and began a rather sharp decline thereafter.\(^{56}\) This, however, was not unusual for many communities in Texas, but for Port Sullivan, it marked a continual downward decline and not a temporary post-war recession, as was the case of a number of other towns. Some of the people at Port Sullivan, perhaps, foresaw doom for the town. John C. Roberts left the river town in 1868 for Bryan. The next year, he moved up to Bremond.\(^{57}\) He was only typical of a number of others who moved to other areas, usually not too far away.

The census of 1870 was taken soon after Port Sullivan had reached its zenith. The total population for the community in 1870 was 1,423, as compared to 960 in 1860; but a closer look at the census reports reveals that the urban population, the merchants, clerks, doctors, mechanics, and the like, had decreased in

\(^{56}\)See Appendix, Table No. 3.

\(^{57}\)Parker, *Robertson County*, 188-189.
in numbers between 1860 and 1870. The increase in population was the result of more farmers living in the area, and not because the town as a trading center had gained importance. The farmers numbered in the seventies in 1860, and by 1870, there were one hundred and twenty-eight farmers plus twenty-one farm laborers, who received their mail at Port Sullivan. Housekeeping was considered an occupation in 1870 and ninety-four persons spent their time in that manner. Except for eight persons who listed their occupation as servants, the other occupations listed by Port Sullivan residents numbered less than five each in 1870. Ten years before there had been eight merchants, five clerks, and five mechanics. The non-farming population was considerably less in 1870, pointing to a reduction in trade at Port Sullivan. The railroad reached Calvert a year before the census was taken.

The census of 1880 included the Village of Port Sullivan with a total population of 123, less than one-tenth of the figure ten years earlier. The village had one physician, one druggist-merchant, and one school

58 United States Census Returns, 1860 and 1870, Schedules No. 1 and No. 2
59 ibid.
teacher. The remainder of the population consisted of farmers or housekeepers. Port Sullivan was no longer "some place," as "Rover" had predicted it would be in 1852, and the town had had its day.

The storekeepers, clerks, doctors, blacksmiths, carpenters, and others of non-farming occupations began moving from Port Sullivan as the railroads approached the general area, but failed to come to Port Sullivan. Some of the residents waited hopefully for a few years after the railroads were built through the area before deciding to leave the town. Wesley Platt Ferguson, who worked in his father's store in Port Sullivan, moved over to Hearne in the early 1870's. A saddle maker in Port Sullivan, W. T. Watt, moved to Hearne in 1874 and opened a mercantile business. Later, Watt moved up to Waco where he founded the Provident National Bank. H. B. Easterwood, who operated a store in Port Sullivan, waited until 1880 to move to Hearne, where he opened a grocery business. Many of the first residents of Hearne were from Port Sullivan.

---

60 Ibid., 1830, Schedule No. 1.
61 McCarver, Hearne on the Brazos, 138-139.
62 Ibid., 122; and Rogers, "Time Dims the Brilliance" 67.
63 McCarver, Hearne on the Brazos, 99, 120.
Dr. Henry Clay Ghent came to Port Sullivan right after the Civil War. He had been trained at the University of Louisville and at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. Although a physician, Ghent was active in politics. He had been elected to the Secession Convention in Alabama in 1860. After coming to Port Sullivan, he continued to be active in politics. He gave the principal speech at the July 4, 1871, celebration of national independence at Cameron, held in "old-fashioned Democratic style." Dr. Ghent, who listed himself as a merchant in the census of 1870, was elected to the Texas House of Representatives in 1872. The next year Ghent moved to Belton. Later in life, he served as president of the Texas Medical Association and as vice-president of the American Medical Association. Another doctor in Port Sullivan, U. A. Rice, moved to the Brazos River town in 1871. Rice's son, S. P. Rice, joined his father in Port Sullivan after Ghent moved to Belton. S. P. Rice later moved to Marlin and he, too, became president of the Texas Medical Association, being elected to that position in

64 Galveston Tri-Weekly News, July 14, 1871.

1917. The father remained in Port Sullivan until 1880, when he joined his son in Marlin. After the elder Rice left, the town of Port Sullivan had no doctor, or, perhaps by 1880, the doctor had no town.

Slowly the organizations of Port Sullivan faded away. As early as 1875, Port Sullivan no longer had a Methodist minister, not even a circuit rider. The college burned in 1878, but it had probably been abandoned before then. The Methodist Church refiled the deed to the college land on May 19, 1880, following the courthouse fire in 1874; but the school was not re-built. On November 28, 1899, the college land, eleven and seven-tenths acres, was sold for $224. Membership in the Masonic Lodge hit its peak in 1871, two years after the Houston and Texas Central Railroad reached Calvert. The number of masons in the lodge, however, began decreasing rapidly the next year. The chapter was moved to Maysfield in Milam County, in 1885.

67 Weekly Examiner and Patron, November 19, 1875.
69 Masonic Records, 1856-1885.
Toward the end of the 1870's the town of Port Sullivan became less and less important. It had lost its position as a trade center, and its economy had dwindled rapidly in the decade of the 1870's. In 1878, someone built a fence across the Cameron and Port Sullivan Road. In the early 1880's, J. A. Peel began buying up the land in the town site, paying as little as $22.50 for two whole blocks. The town soon disappeared altogether. Miley Smith, a resident of Cameron and descendent of R. A. Smith, the figure in the election of 1869, says that the town of Port Sullivan was completely gone by 1894, and had passed into the realm of a ghost town. Later, around the turn of the century, a store and gin were built near the site of the old town, and a small settlement began. The settlement called itself Port Sullivan, but it had no ties with the old steamboat port, except for the location.

Port Sullivan was both a product and a victim of geography and technology. Technology in the form of

70 Batte, Milam County, 81.
71 Rockdale and Miscellaneous Towns, Milam County Abstract Co.
72 Miley Smith, Cameron, Texas, in an interview with the author on November 3, 1967.
steampowered boats killed Orozimbo and Montezuma, the two towns that claimed to be at the head of tidal navigation on the Brazos, and it gave rise first to Washington and later to Port Sullivan. Geography aided the development of the town on Sullivan's Bluff through the obstruction to steamboat navigation produced by the shoal and boulders at the bluff and the absence of unconquerable obstructions below the bluff. The shoal at the bluff created a ford making river crossings easier at that point than at other points along the Brazos, giving Port Sullivan even greater importance. The location of the bluff, north of Little River, gave the town a good portion of the trade in the counties west of the Brazos and north of Little River. As the years passed, both geography and technology began to hurt the town. Railroads came to the scene, replacing the steamboats. The ironhorse did not follow the roads used by ox wagons but blazed new paths in Texas. The flood plain of the Brazos to the east of Port Sullivan forced planters farming adjacent to the river to live in Port Sullivan or to live several miles east of their land, and it kept the Houston and Texas Central several miles east of Port Sullivan also, as it passed through
Bryan, Hearne, and Calvert. If the road could have been built right along the river, Port Sullivan might have survived. The International Railroad planned at first to cross the river at Port Sullivan and to continue on to Austin. The engineers of the road must have realized that to cross the river at Port Sullivan would mean that an additional bridge would have to be built to cross Little River and possibly another at the San Gabriel River. Being north of Little River was no advantage in regards to the International Railroad.

The death of Port Sullivan was summed up by a former resident of the town, J. A. Peel, interviewed in 1930: "When I first moved here it was the finest community I ever saw, but when the railroad was located at Hearne and Calvert, the trade as well as the people moved away."  

---

73 See Appendix, Map No. 1.
74 Rogers, "Time Dims the Brilliance," 4-67.
Map No. 1
Map Showing Area Subject to Flooding
Along the Brazos and Little Rivers

Marlin
Sullivan's Bluff
Cameron
Hearne
Bryan

Brazos River
Little River

Prepared from Brazos River and Tributaries, Oyster Creek, and Jones Creek, Tex., Plate 1-A.
Table No. 1

Partial List of Land Owners in Robertson County
Who Lived in Port Sullivan in 1860

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Name</th>
<th>Survey Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G. A. Nixon Survey</td>
<td>John V. Davis Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(G. W. McGrew Conflict)²</td>
<td>F. M. Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. J. H. Anderson⁵</td>
<td>John D. Smith Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. M. Hall</td>
<td>F. M. Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Dread Dawson Conflict)²</td>
<td>C. O. Barton³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. M. Hall</td>
<td>John A. Hill Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(H. K. McGrew Conflict)²</td>
<td>H. A. Foster⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. B. Anderson⁴</td>
<td>C. O. Barton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. J. H. Anderson</td>
<td>G. M. G. Grafton Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Harlan Survey</td>
<td>J. S. Hanna⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Harlan⁶</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1Prepared from the United States Census Returns, 1860, Schedule No. 1; and the abstracts of the surveys mentioned at the Love Abstract Co., Franklin, Texas.

2The survey conflicts resulted from the granting of the same land to more than one person.

3Taxable property in excess of $100,000.

4Taxable property of between $50,000 and $100,000.

5Taxable property of between $10,000 and $50,000.

6Taxable property not determined.
Table No. 2

Block Numbers Used in Port Sullivan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>21</th>
<th>31</th>
<th>51</th>
<th>71</th>
<th>81</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prepared from "Burned Record" and "Rockdale and miscellaneous Towns," Milam County Abstract Co.; Deed Records, Milam County Court House; and Tax Rolls, Milam County, 1846-1874, Texas State Archives.
Table No. 3
Assessed Value of Real Estate Property
in Port Sullivan

Thousands of Dollars

Based upon information found in Tax Rolls, Milam County, 1853-1873, Texas State Archives.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Primary Sources

1. Manuscripts and Typescripts

   Burned Record. Milam County Abstract Co.,
   Cameron, Texas.

   Calvert. Love Abstract Co., Franklin, Texas.

   Caruthers Survey Abstracts. Milam County Ab-
   stract Co., Cameron, Texas.

   Deed Records, Milam County. Milam County Cour-
  thouse, Cameron, Texas.

   Deed Records, Robertson County. Robertson
   County Courthouse, Franklin, Texas.

   Grant to Augustine W. Sillaven, March 8, 1841.
   General Land Office, Austin, Texas.

   Masonic Reports. See Reports of St. Paul's
   Lodge.

   Muster Roll of Captain William P. Townsend's
   Company of Robertson Five Shooters Infantry
   for the Month of May 1861. Texas State
   Archives, Austin, Texas.

   Muster Roll of Captain Wm. P. Townsend's Company,
   in the 4th Regiment, (Wigfall's Brigade) of
   Texas Volunteers, commanded by Colonel J. B.
   Hood. Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas.

   Reports of St. Paul's Lodge, No. 177, to the
   Grand Lodge of Texas, 1856-1885. Grand
   Lodge Library, Waco, Texas.

   Roberts, John C. Diaries and Memorandum Books of
   John C. Roberts (1831-1909). In possession
   of John C. Roberts, Bremond, Texas.

   Rockdale and Miscellaneous Towns. Milam County
   Abstract Co., Cameron, Texas.
Tax Rolls, Milam County, 1846-1874. Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas.

United States Census Returns, 1850-1880 (microfilm). Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas.

2. Printed


The Texas Almanac for 1859. Galveston: W. & D. Richardson, 1859.


3. Maps

Correct Map of Texas Published by Galveston, Harrisburg & San Antonio Railway, n.p., c1874.
Map of Milam County. Milam County Abstract Co.


Richards' New Map of the State of Texas including part of Mexico. Philadelphia: Charles DeSilver, 1859.


4. Newspapers

Columbia Democrat (Columbia, Texas), October 18, 1853-July 24, 1855.

Democrat and Planter (Columbia, Texas), October 9, 1855-October 22, 1861.

Democratic Telegraph and Texas Register (Houston, Texas), March 1, 1849-January 20, 1850.

Galveston Daily News, November 1, 1868-February 28, 1874.


Galveston Weekly News, April 19, 1852-April 4, 1866.

Lone Star (Washington, Texas), May 17, 1851-November 27, 1853.

Morning Star (Houston, Texas), January 1, 1843-February 3, 1846.


Telegraph and Texas Register (Houston, Texas), December 3, 1852.

Texas Baptist (Anderson, Texas), September 13, 1860.
Texas Ranger (Washington, Texas), April 30, 1851-
March 3, 1856.

Texas Ranger and Brazos Guard (Washington, Texas), January 16, 1849-February 1, 1849.

Texas Republican (Brazoria, Texas), December 17, 1834-January 6, 1836.

Texas State Gazette (Austin, Texas), August 25, 1849-January 7, 1867.

Tri-Weekly Telegraph (Houston, Texas), November 3, 1856-January 31, 1870.

Washington American (Washington, Texas), November 8, 1855-August 18, 1857.

Weekly Examiner and Patron (Waco, Texas), November 28, 1874 and November 19, 1875.

Weekly Journal (Galveston, Texas), December 24, 1850-February 3, 1855.

5. Personal Correspondence and Interviews with


B. Secondary Sources

1. Manuscripts and Typescripts


Evans, Cleo F. "Transportation in Early Texas." Masters' thesis, St. Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas, 1940.


"Inventory of the County Archives of Texas, No. 166. Milam County (Cameron)." The Texas Historical Records Survey, Division of Community Service Programs, Works Projects Administration. Published by Milam County, Texas, June 1941.

"Inventory of the County Archives of Texas, No. 168. Robertson County (Franklin)." The Texas Historical Records Survey, Division of Community Service Programs, Works Projects Administration. Published by Robertson County, 1941.


McThompson, J. "The First Steamship to Old Nashville, Texas." Typed MS. Milam County Scrapbook Collection, University of Texas Library Archives Collection, Austin, Texas.


Rogers, Marjorie. "Time Dims the Brilliance of a Pioneer Texas Town." Typed MS. In possession of Mrs. Helen Peel, Hearne, Texas.

2. Printed

A. Books


Monuments Erected by the State of Texas to Commemorate the Centenary of Texas Independence. Austin: Commission of Control for Texas Centennial Celebrations, 1938.

Morrell, Z. N. Flowers and Fruits in the Wilderness; Or Forty-six Years in Texas and Two Winters in Honduras. Irving, Texas: Griffin Graphic Arts, 1966.


B. Articles


"Historical Sketch of Brazos County, Texas," American Sketch Book, IV (No. IV), 1878.


VITA

The writer was born in Terrell, Texas, on February 8, 1942, the son of Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Brockman. He attended public schools in Mart, Austin, and Rockdale, Texas. He received his B. A. degree from Southwestern University, Georgetown, Texas, in May, 1964, with a major in history and minor in psychology. After working for the Missouri Pacific Railroad in St. Louis, Missouri, for two years, the writer enrolled in Texas A&M University to continue his education. During the school year 1967-1968, he served as a part-time instructor in the Department of History, Texas A&M University, teaching the survey course in American History to international students.

The writer is married to the former Martha L. Beard of Bryan, and they have one son, Hampton.

John M. Brockman
P. O. Box 206
Rockdale, Texas 76567

The typist of this thesis was Mrs. Hortense Spangler.