

Historical Chronology of Seabrook, Texas

The First 100 Years

By C. David Pomeroy, Jr.

1820 — While using Galveston Island as his base of operations from 1816 to 1820, the pirate Jean Laffite frequently visits the Seabrook area. Mr. Taylor (for whom Taylor Lake was named) and his brother-in-law, Mr. Roach, provide Laffite and his men with game and fish. Rumors begin that Laffite buried treasure in the area. Moses Austin enters Texas and secures a grant for settlement for 300 Anglo-American families. Indianapolis, Indiana, is founded. The statue, "Venus de Milo", is discovered on an Aegean island. Sir Walter Scott writes *Ivanhoe*.

1830 — Ritson Morris moves from Old Nacogdoches to the Seabrook area with his wife Minerva and daughter Virginia. Morris builds their home near the mouth of Clear Lake, fronting on the bay. Chicago is laid out on Lake Michigan. The first full cargo of bananas arrives at New York. Belva Lockwood is the first woman nominated for the presidency. Mexico enacts law prohibiting immigrations from the United States.

1832 — Mr. Morris receives a Mexican land grant on Nov. 14 for the land that will later be the site of Seabrook. A.C. and J.K. Allen (founders of the city of Houston) arrive in Texas looking for real estate investment opportunities.

1835 — Friendly Indians on a hunting party drop in for food at the Morris home. Chili powder is developed in Texas. P.T. Barnum begins his career in show business.

1836 — Prisoner Santa Anna spends the night at the Morris home enroute to Freeport. His identity is uncovered when a parrot screams the name of the cook, "Savannah", and the men thought it said "Santa Anna." Texas wins independence from Mexico at the Battle of San Jacinto. Houston is founded in August. The Colt six-shooter is patented.

1876 — A channel is cut across Morgan's Point to allow ocean-going ships into the "Buffalo Bayou Ship Channel." Alexander Bell patents the telephone.

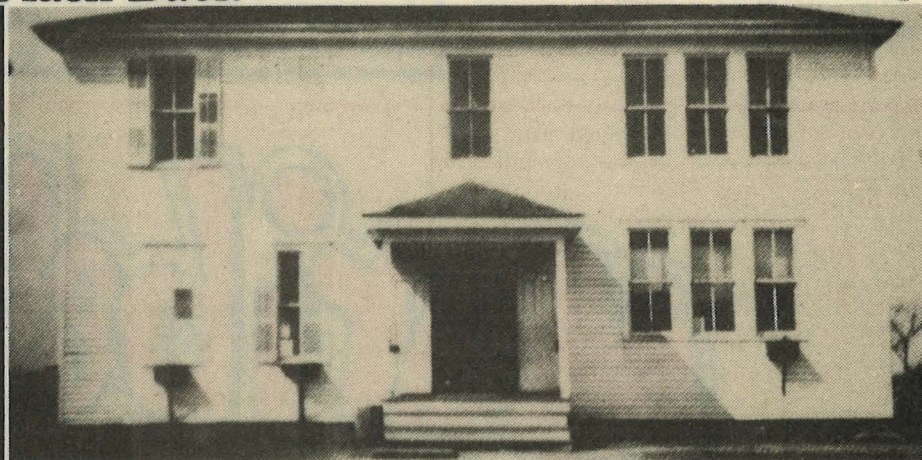
1879 — As people settle in the area, the community becomes known as Morris Cove. A schoolhouse is built by Alfred Menard and his brother-in-law Ed Brantly. It doubles as a church on Sundays with

Rev. Peter Nicholson as the first pastor. The Palm brothers build the first store in the community. Jim Martyn's father purchases his farm on Middle (Armand) Bayou. Houston gets its first telephone exchange. Leadville, Colorado, becomes the world's largest silver camp. Thomas Edison demonstrates the first practical incandescent lightbulb. Milk is sold in glass milk bottles for the first time and saccharin is discovered.

1884 — Houston gets its first public electric light system: \$3 per month for a 16-candle light burning all night or \$1.50 per month if it is turned off by 9:30 p.m.

1891 — Townsite of LaPorte is laid out. Houston's population exceeds 27,000.

Flash Back



In the early 1900s, Seabrook built the town's first school for students attending first through eighth grade. Photo courtesy Bay Area Museum

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ing the '40s with government surplus food cooked and served the children and any family needing food. The food was shipped in by sacks and included potatoes and carrots with varying surplus supplies. Seabrook school principal Jim Bay helped serve the food after it was cleaned by ladies from the community. Mrs. L. Gale cooked all the meals.

Over the years, Seabrook has seen its share of hurricanes blowing in from the Gulf and causing great damage. But, the town always bounced back because of the people. The 1900 and 1915 storms, hurricanes Carla and Alicia all left their mark on the community.

In 1898, land where Timber Cove is today sold for about \$25 per acre. Today subsidence and the effects of hurricanes have claimed much of the sought-after waterfront property. Just before the

Remember when . . .

On February 12, 1899, temperatures fell to eight degrees in the area and Galveston Bay froze solid. But if you think it was a once-in-a-lifetime occurrence... on February 8 and 9, 1933, temperatures hit 15 and 17 degrees respectively, and the bay froze again!

turn of the century, the mean sea level for both "the flats" and "old Seabrook" was 15 feet, now it is around 12 feet.

Electricity came to Seabrook in 1927, followed by natural gas in 1932. Telephones were very scarce before the 1950s and when they did become more available, they operated on eight-party lines. Everyone used septic tanks, water wells and even outdoor toilets before 1954 and the creation of the water and

sewer district.

Seabrook remained unincorporated until 1961, when one night LaPorte annexed the town. Not wanting to be part of LaPorte, several community leaders convinced that city to let Seabrook incorporate so no one else could annex the town. But at the time, the town had no money to call an election, so the Ladies Auxiliary wrote the check and Seabrook became a city.

Flash Back



The summer resort atmosphere around Seabrook drew many people from Houston who built summer homes on lakefront property. Photo courtesy Bay Area Museum

Maribelles

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