



OUR HERITAGE: RANCHING & FARMING IN ARANSAS COUNTY TEXAS Monte Rouquette, Jr. PAS **TAMUS Regents Fellow & Professor**



Texas A&M AgriLife Research Overton, Tx.



OUR HERITAGE:

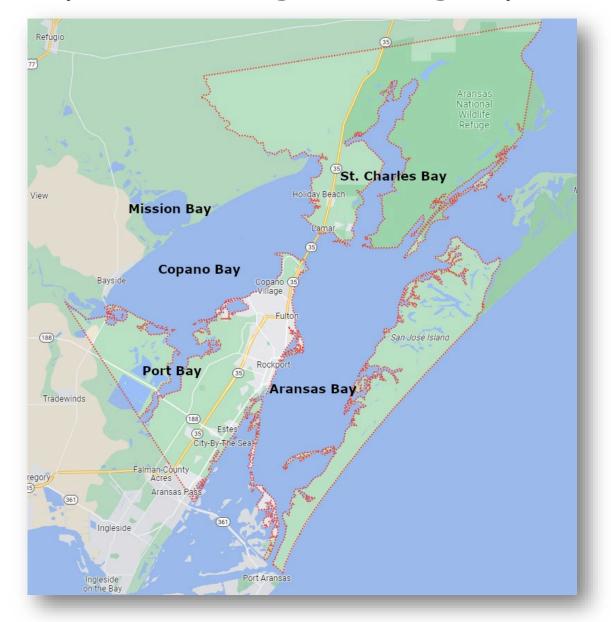
RANCHING & FARMING IN ARANSAS COUNTY TEXAS



Aransas County - Heritage & Legacy

The major waterways of Aransas County include the bays of Aransas, Copano, Mission, Port, and St. Charles which surround the peninsulas of Live Oak, Lamar, and Blackjack.

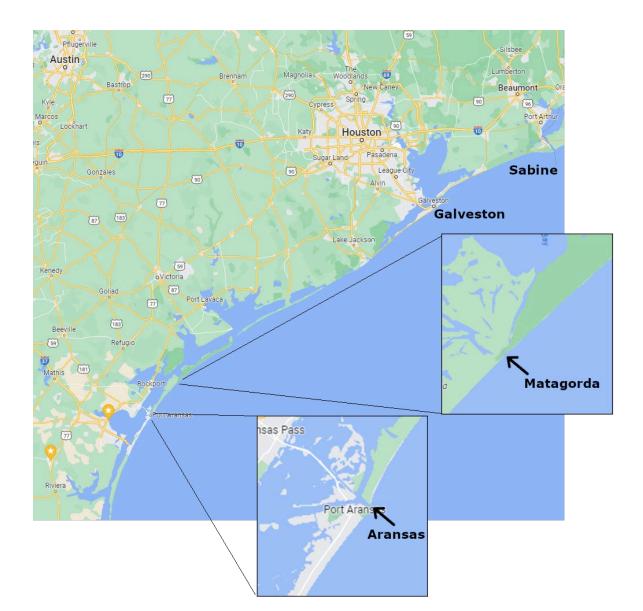




Aransas County - Heritage & Legacy

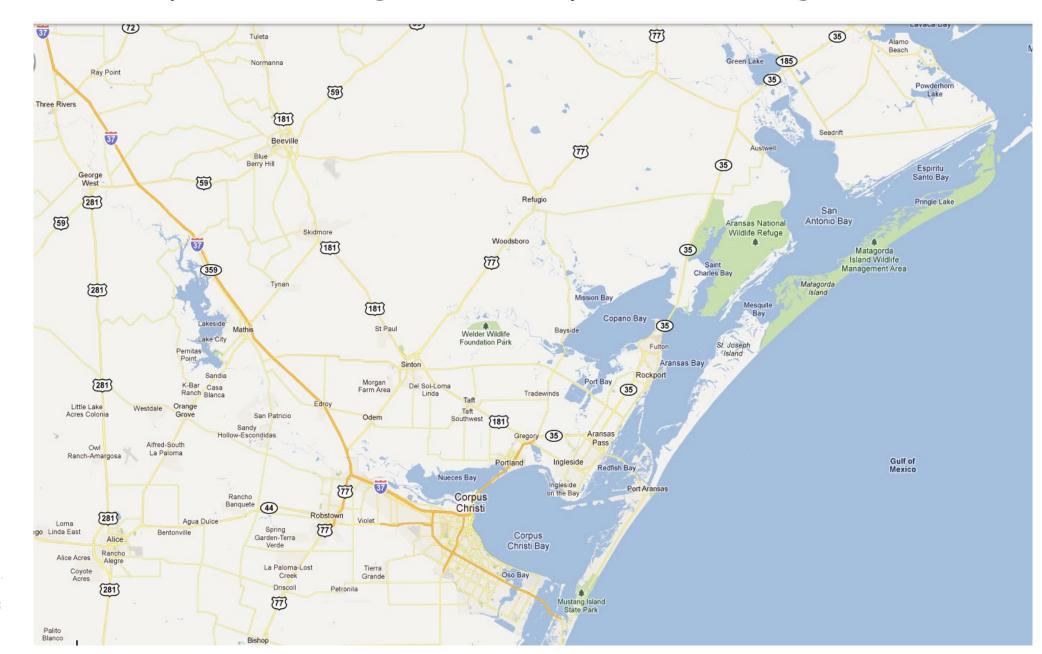
In 1840, Texas had only 4 seaports:

- Aransas
- Matagorda
- Galveston
- Sabine



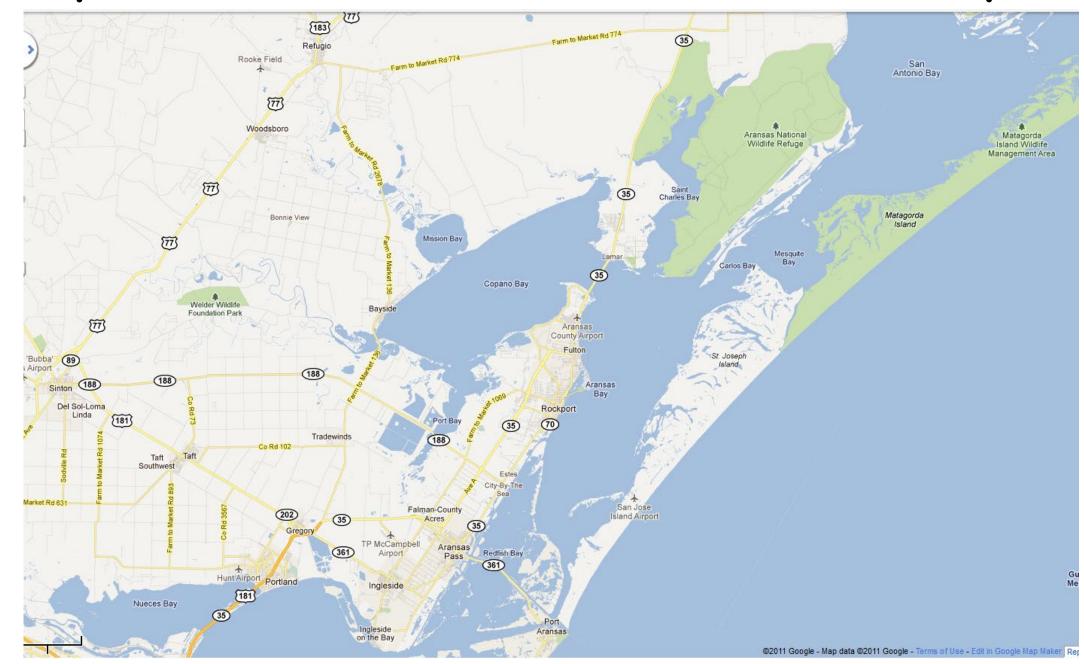


Saltwater Bays Bordering St. Joseph and Matagorda Islands





Rockport, Fulton, Goose Island, and Aransas Bay





Matagorda Island and Surrounding Bays



The History Center For

Aransas County

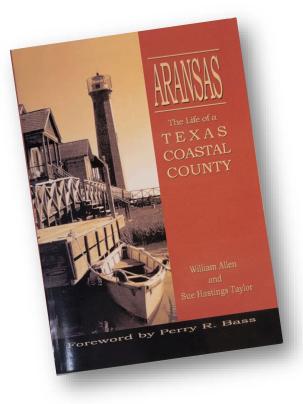


Aransas Count

Cedar Bayou Separating St. Joseph and Matagorda Islands

Aransas: The Life of a Texas Coastal County

by William Allen and Sue Hastings Taylor





In the Forward by Perry R. Bass:

"...In the fall of 1925, my family "discovered" San Jose Island. In 1936, Mr. Giesecke (owner) called my uncle Sid (Richardson) and said he was ready to talk about selling the island."

"My boatworks were between Cecil Casterline's place and Rouquette and Wendell. I will always be grateful to Zeph Rouquette and Bunk Wendell. They would call me over to their place several times a week to give me oysters, shrimp, and fish to take home for Nancy Lee to cook."

Wrangling Cattle: Then and Now

Monte Rouquette, Jr. PAS TAMUS Regents Fellow & Professor



Texas A&M AgriLife Research Overton, Tx.



Aransas County - Heritage & Legacy

- Located in the Coastal Bend of Texas
- Spain's Cabeza de Vaca spent years on the shores
- Spanish ship captain Piñeda charted the Aransas shoreline and bays, then sailed south and named Corpus Christi
- LaSalle mapped parts of Aransas; his 300-year-old ship, La Belle, was found in Matagorda Bay
- France's Beranger was first European explorer to map the natural pass waterway of Aransas Pass and Cedar Bayou
- Pirate Jean Lafitte was a superior navigator and supposedly buried treasures of gold on Blackjack Peninsula



Aransas County - Heritage & Legacy

- During Texas' battle for independence, Gen. Santa Anna's brother-in-law, Gen. Cos, sailed into Aransas and Copano bays with munitions and supplies for the Battle of the Alamo
- Zachary Taylor camped in Rockport with young officer Ulysses Simpson Grant before starting on the long "Taylor Trail" to fight the Mexican War
- The first American flag to fly over Texas was raised at the southern tip of San Jose Island



- Cattle are not native to the Americas; brought here by early explorers and settlers
- Earliest cattle drifted into Texas from Mexico
- 1731 many missions established in East and South Texas; cattle were source of food for missions and forts between San Antonio and Nacogdoches



- 1750-1800 Hernan Cortez imported Spanish cattle into the South Texas grasslands; these grew into large herds
- 1800 More than 50,000 head of cattle drowned on Padre Island due to a storm surge
- 1850s Vast cattle herds exceeded the market for meat; with no market for beef, no shipments left Rockport and Fulton



- 1800 Longhorns were first cattle that increased in numbers due to hardiness, resistance to most diseases and pests, and good forages
 - Roamed both sides of the Rio Grande
 - In 1830, Longhorn population in Texas estimated at 100,000 hd





Early Texas

- Texas Revolution War of Texas (Oct 1835 to Apr 1836)
 - Battle of Gonzalez "Come and Take It"; Oct 2, 1835
 - Battle of the Alamo; Feb 23, 1836 to Mar 6, 1836
 - Texas Independence Day -Texas declared its independence from Mexico on Mar 2, 1836
 - Battle of San Jacinto General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna was defeated; Apr 21, 1836
- United States Civil War (Apr 12, 1861 to Apr 9, 1865)



- 1846 First year of statehood; 382,873 cattle were assessed for taxes
- 1860 Cattle numbers increased to 3.8 million in Texas, while population was only 604,215 people
- 1850-1860s Cattle thieves killed and skinned animals on the open range and took hides to Mexico where there was a ready-cash market; carcasses left for predators



- 1865 5 to 6 million Longhorns in Texas that were not branded
 - Confederate veterans claimed cattle by branding
 - Cattlemen hired brush poppers; they would "pop out" cattle out of the brush and brand them
 - Once branded, they're yours!





- 1867 First hide processor and packery began in Rockport; another followed at Lamar, and then in Fulton
- 1867 W.S. Hall's Packery in Fulton was the first packing plant in Fulton
 - killed more than 20,000 cattle in a year and left a bone and "hash" pile sufficient to load 50 ships
 - the number of cattle annually shipped, slaughtered and driven to market bears no comparison to the number of calves annually branded



- 1868 George Fulton William Caruthers Packing Company and about 6 others focused only on hides; hides, dry or salted, were rolled and tied in bundles for loading on boats for shipment
- Without refrigeration, 5 to 6lb chunks of meat were sold to the army
- 1868-1870 Meat converted into "mess meat" or pickled beef
 - Meat was steeped in large steel vats filled with a "three fours" formula:
 - 4 lb brown sugar
 - 4 lb salt
 - 4 oz saltpeter





- Packers cooked remainder of meat in steam vats and rendered the fat, or *tallow*
- Tallow was the target for sales and most of meat was dumped into the bay or fed to hogs
- Tallow was packed in 100 lb barrels
- In one year, 100 million lb tallow were shipped from Texas coast plus hides, valued at more than \$2 million
- Typical schooner would carry nearly 2000 hides, 4000 horns, and 20 tons of unbaled bones; market was for buttons, combs, and handles for tools







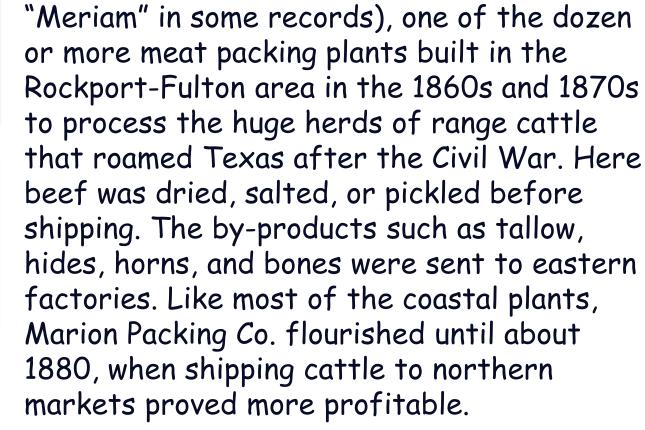
Marion Packing Company

The ruins of this rendering vat mark the

location of the Marion Packing Co. (spelled













Marion Packing Company



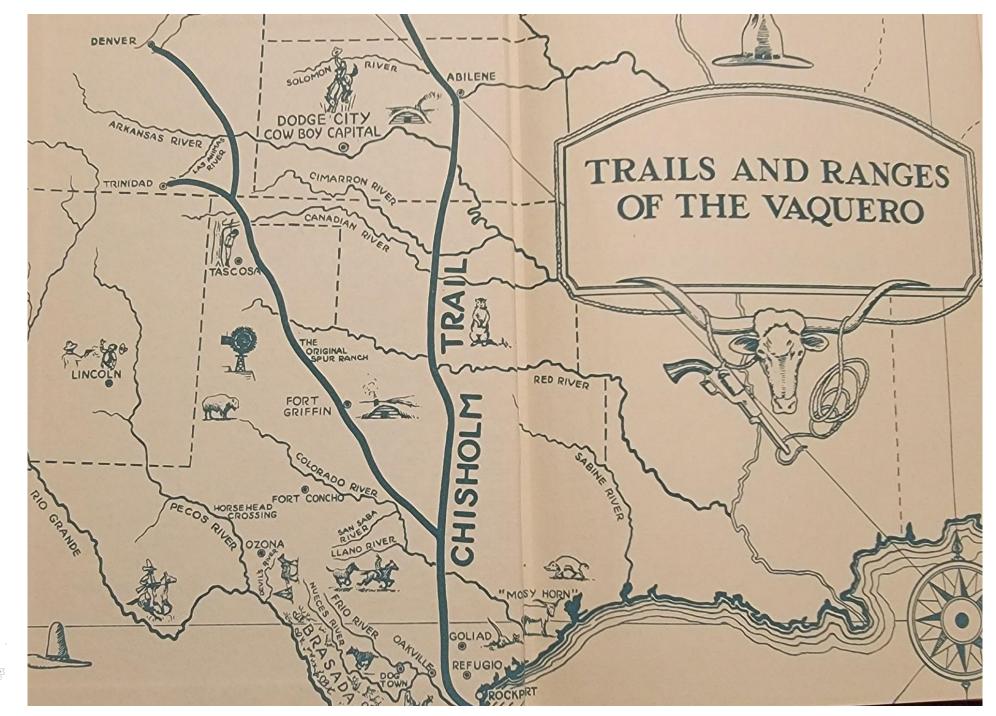


Rubble of rendering vat made of shellcrete

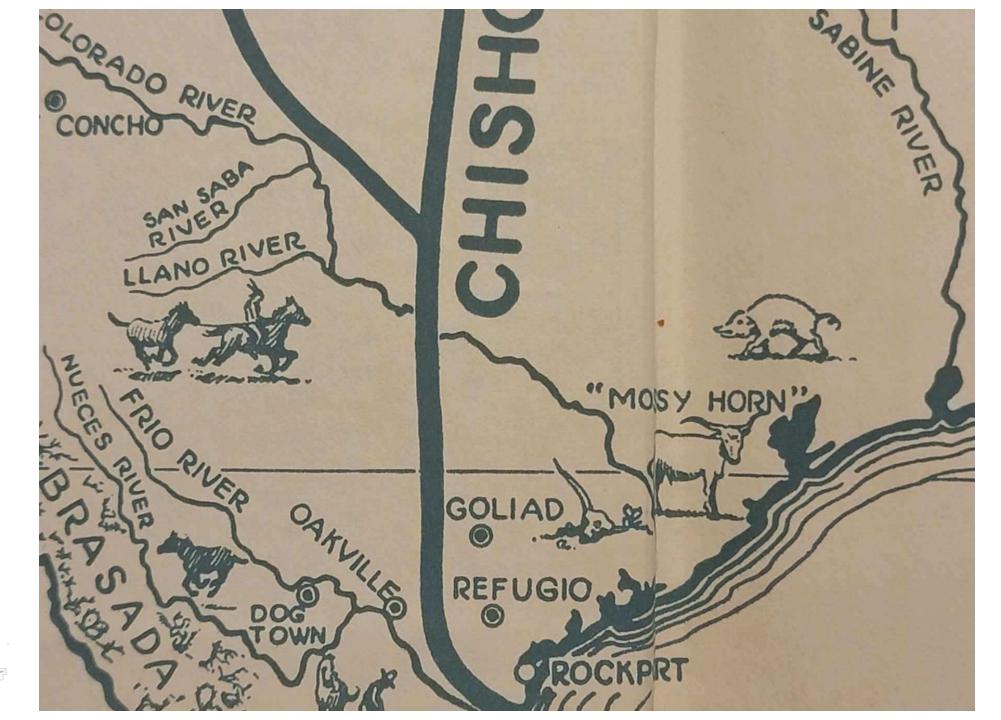














- Cushman's Packery was located on Frandolig Island, now Key Allegro
- One steer killed at Cushman's Packery had spread of horns 9 feed wide; horns were mounted and sent to President U.S. Grant
- Hammond "Ham" Smith said, "You could go by a packery and cut off a chunk of meat and take it home... no one cared. And, when tallow/lard was rendered, you could fill a 50 lb can and take it for free."
- Piles of discarded animals filled a 5 square acre hill; the spoiling beef stank and attracted hogs, coyotes, and seagulls
- Sharpless and Carpenter salvaged the decaying cattle carcasses, used them to make a fertilizer-type product, and shipped it north



Packing Companies in Rockport-Fulton

- Soon, other packing plants began to pop up in the Rockport-Fulton area (1868 - 1882):
 - Lyman Meat Packing and Canning
 - Coleman, Mathis, and Fulton
 - The American Meat Company
 - J.W. Baylor and Company
 - McNeill, Nash, and Company
 - Wost and Weiser
 - Butler and Company
 - J.M. Doughty and A.W. Clark



- 1869-70 County seat moved from Refugio to St. Mary's on Copano bay, and later moved to Rockport
 - Numerous packeries in Fulton had semiweekly shipments via steam ships to New Orleans
- 1870-75 George Fulton organized a ranch of about 115,000 acres across Aransas and San Patricio counties with partners, the Colemans and Mathis'; company was called "CMF"
- The partnership purchased 274 brands of cattle
- CMF shipped 105,000 full-grown cattle from Fulton to New Orleans

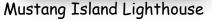


- 1872-78 As many as 6 ships may be tied to the wharf at Rockport at any one time, with payment in bags and barrels of silver which was referred to as "bland money"
 - There was so much silver that no one counted it, but rather it was weighed out
- 1871 George Fulton received state charter for the Rockport-Fulton-Laredo and Mexican-Pacific railroad... but the project never materialized
- 1888 First train arrived in Rockport and extended to Live Oak Point
 - Rockport's water transport heyday was ending
 - The tourist era began



The Mercers on Mustang Island

- Robert A. Mercer and family settled on Mustang Island in 1885
- Established El Mar Rancho and stocked it with cattle and sheep
- Mercer and his two sons, John and Edward (Ned), became boat pilots and assisted vessels across the bar
- Mercer, and then his sons, kept a captain's log
 - Noted the coming and going of vessels
 - Documented the interaction of all the inhabitants on Mustang Island
 - births, deaths, marriages, etc.
- Mercer's son-in-law, Frank Stephenson, served as Lighthouse Keeper for several years and was the original builder and owner of Tarpon Inn







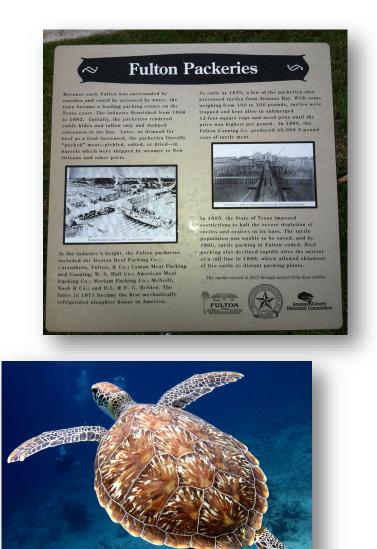
El Mar Rancho





Tarpon Inn

- 1870s Beef packeries began small sideoperations to process the plentiful supply of turtles
- 1890 85% of all Texas turtle catch, about 250,000 lb, were made in Aransas bay; the Fulton canning company produced 40,000 2lb cans turtle meat that year
- 1895-1900 Most turtles had been caught, and without a limit, the industry was closed





- 1866-1885 Estimated 10 million Longhorns, valued at \$4/hd in Texas, were driven to rail and range markets in the North, Northwest, and West where their value increased to \$20/hd
- 1885 Fenced pastures emerged, and cattle drives of Longhorns declined and eventually disappeared from the cattle "industry"





Tangled history of barbed wire

The GOOD:

- First patent to Joseph F. Glidden of De Kalb, Illinois in 1874
- His original double-strand design, the Winner, is the best-selling barbed wire of all time
- In the late 1870s, John Warne Gates of Glidden's company, began to promote barbed wire in the lucrative markets of Texas
- Gates touted the Winner as "light as air, stronger than whiskey, and cheap as dirt"
- At first, met with opposition under the unwritten law of the open range, Texas' grass and water belonged to all and could be freely used for livestock
- Eventually, potential was recognized as it would allow ranchers to selectively breed their stock by fencing out strays





The **BAD**:

- The "drift fence": wire strung along the south end of a ranch to prevent the drift of cattle during the winter. Caught between instinct and the wire, cattle piled up against drift fences and froze by the thousands in the "big die-ups" of the 1880s
- "Vicious" wire with razor-edged barbs that could gash and cripple. Too dangerous for the range, it later made a comeback on modern battlefields







The UGLY:

- Soon barbed-wire fences were everywhere, and the small cowman was the victim; the open range was gone
- Barbed wire remade Texas once an empire of grass and cattle, Texas slowly became a patchwork of ranches and farms, stitched together by miles and miles of wicked-looking wire







- 1868–1872 four packing plants built in Kansas City
 - Killed up to 1000 cattle and 3000 hogs per day
 - Closed in 1991
 - This ended the long cattle drives
 - Chicago Union Stockyards 1865–1971
- 1890 Aged Longhorns fed at Brownwood, TX
- 1900-1910 Cattle feeding became prominent
 - Chickasha, OK
- 1910-1912 began feeding young cattle to finish in corn belt by 20 months of age

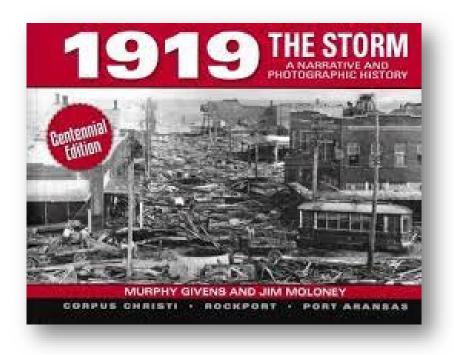






Hurricanes Hit Rockport-Fulton

The worst hurricane in the history of Aransas County came on Sept 14, 1919. Ten-foot water surge over San Jose island, only 350 head of cattle survived.





Farming and Ranching Milestones

- 1862 US Morrill Act to establish Land Grant College
- Nov 1866 State of Texas agreed to create a college under terms of Morrill Act
- Apr 17, 1871 Establishment of Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas and namedTexas Agricultural & Mechanical College
 - Included 2416 acres of land from Brazos Co.
 - Students to participate in military
 - Limited to white males
- 1876 Instruction began at TAMC
- 1963 Renamed Texas A&M University, and military service was optional; African Americans and women were allowed admission



Texas Agricultural Experiment Station (TAES)

- Apr 2, 1887 US Hatch Act established Texas Agricultural Experiment Station
- Jan 25, 1888 A&M College established the Experiment Station as a division of the College
- 1890 Bulletin No. 12: "Screwworms"
- 1892 Bulletin No. 24: "The Cattle Tick: Biology and Prevention Measures"
- 1894 Sub-Station No. 1 established at Beeville, Tx



TAES Bulletin No. 12: "Screwworms" (1890)

- After 50 years, TAES, TAEX, and USDA helped eradicate this disease by eliminating the screwworm fly
- Entomologists found that the female screwworm fly mated only once in her lifetime
- They used low-level radiation on screwworm larvae causing sterility, and then dropped thousands of boxes containing sterile male flies
- The female screwworm fly mated with a sterile male, and thus the screwworm fly could be bred out of existence for an area



Last screwworm case in Texas was on August 31, 1982

Texas Agricultural Experiment Station (TAES)

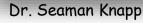
- 1920 Initiated performance testing of beef cattle at Sonora, Tx
- 1924-27 Brahman bulls X Hereford cows and Shorthorn bulls X Brahman cows with USDA and King Ranch; early breeding work to establish Santa Gertrudis breed



Texas Agricultural Extension Service (TAEX)

- 1903 Dr. Seaman Knapp, special agent with USDA, created a demonstration plot at the Walter C. Porter Farm in Terrell, Tx where local farmers could observe scientific farming methods, including the control of the cotton boll weevil
- May 8, 1914 Smith-Lever Act established the "Cooperative Extension Service in Agriculture, Home Economics, and Related Subjects"
- Eventually led to County Extension Agents
 in each of Texas' 254 counties







Porter Farm

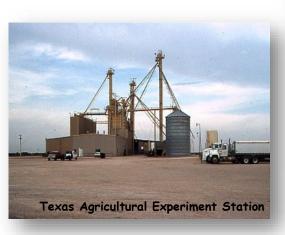


Cotton boll weevil



- 1914 WWI; more beef needed
- 1931-1946 A 3000 head feedlot near Lubbock
- 1960 Paul Engler came from Nebraska, built the Hereford Feed Yards
 - The Boom was underway !!
- 1972 574,108 fed cattle marketed
 - Deaf Smith County No. 1







- Cattle and calves on feed for the slaughter market in the United States for feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head totaled 11.2 million head on July 1, 2023 (USDA)
- The 2017 Census of Agriculture, conducted by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) counted
 25,776 feedlots with at least one animal
 - 700 operations with 2,500 head or more on feed
 - Feedlots with 1,000 to 2,499 cattle on feed totaled 645
 - those with 500 999 cattle totaled 1,826 lots
 - 22,605 feedlots with fewer than 500 head









 Texas Cattle Feeders Assn - TX, OK, NM - feed several million hd/year

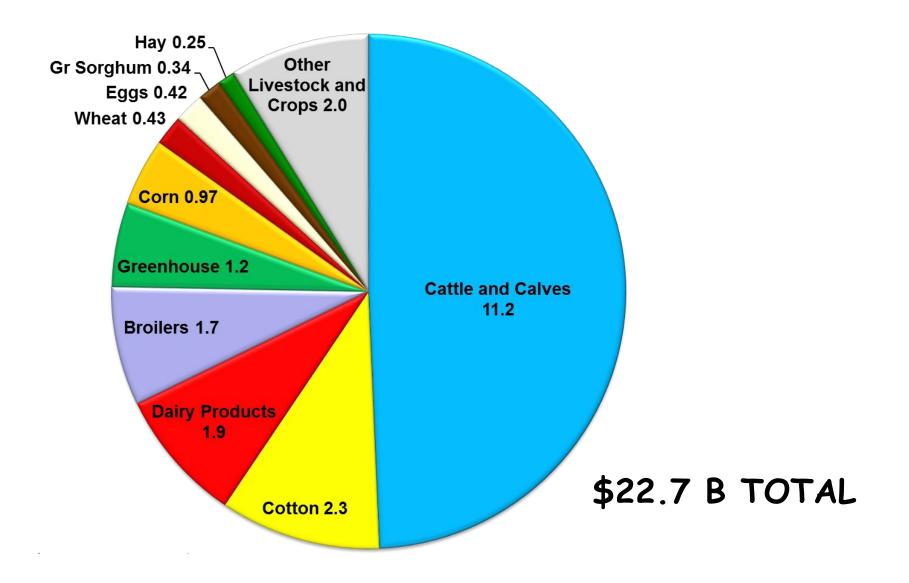


 The Texas Beef Council (TBC) is "building beef-loving communities by engaging consumers, chefs, health influencers, and more with demand-driving programs. We work to bring Texans to the table over a shared love of beef through promotion, research and education."





Texas Cash Receipts of Agricultural Commodities 2016



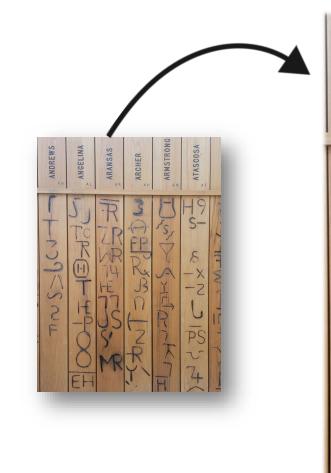


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RANCHING & FARMING IN ARANSAS COUNTY TEXAS



Texas A&M's Branded Stairway - Aransas Co.





Floyd "Blackie" Rouquette

Zeph Rouquette Rouquette & Wendell

J.F. Brundrett

Harrist-Eller

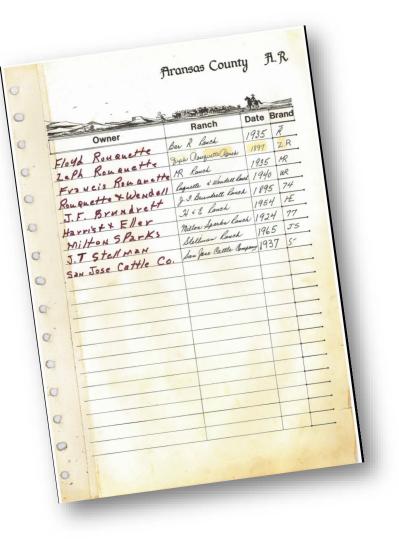
ARANSAS

Milton Sparks

J.T. Stellman

San Jose

Francis "Monte" Rouquette



Texas A&M's Branded Stairway











This is a "Crop" and "Split" in one ear and an "Underbit" in the other ear.

Owner is Floyd "Blackie" Rouquette





This is a "Crop" and "Two Splits" in the same ear.

Owner is Francis "Monte" Rouquette



This is a "Crop" in one ear and an "Overslope" in the other ear.

> Owner is Zeph Rouquette





This is a "Crop" in one ear and an "Under Half-Crop" in the other ear.

Owner is Rouquette and Wendell Company























Wrangling Cattle: Then and Now

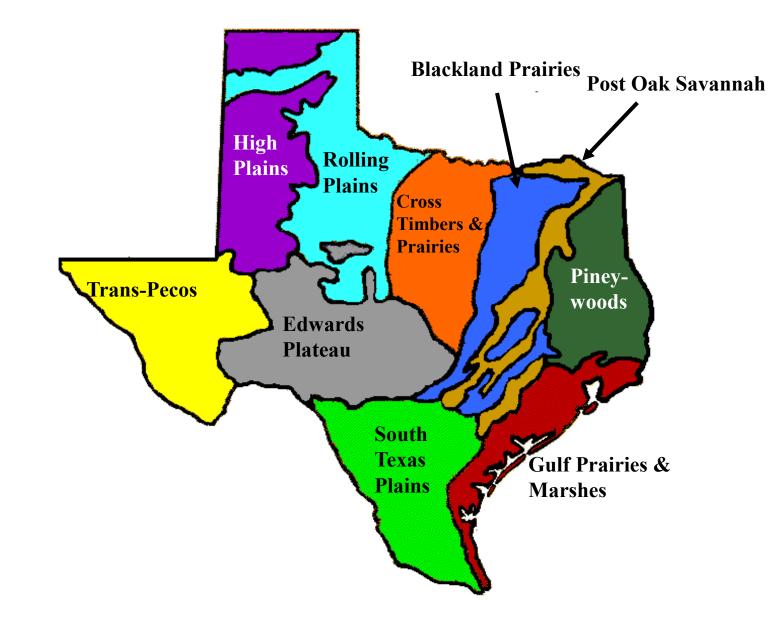
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Texas Vegetation Regions: Climate, Soils, Topography





Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Overton (est. 1967)



































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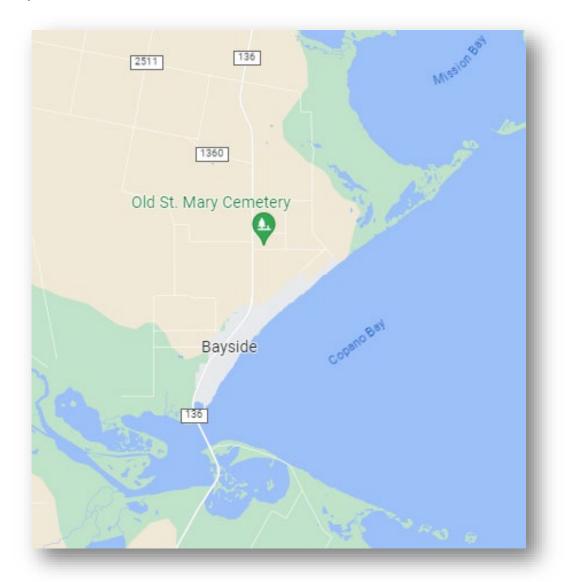
RANCHING & FARMING IN ARANSAS COUNTY TEXAS



John Thomas Simpson – Greenock, Scotland (July 30, 1833 – Apr 5, 1923)

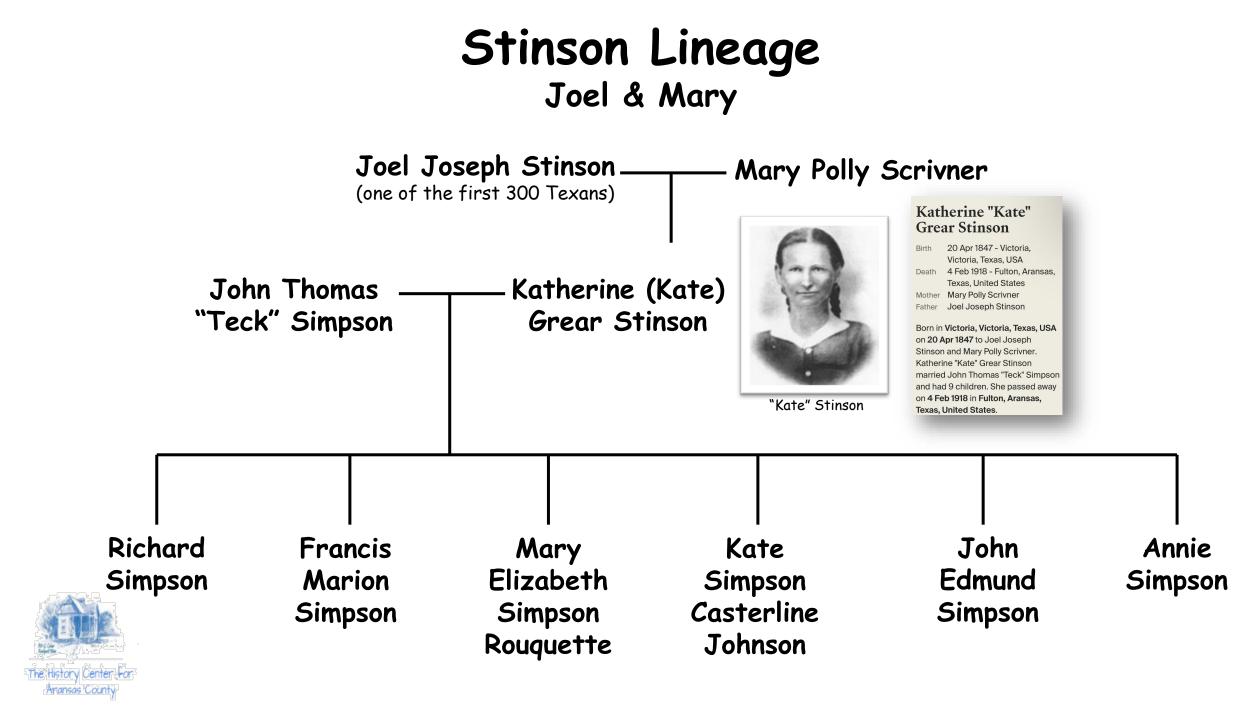
- Came as a cabin boy on full rigger ship at age 13
- Landed in Galveston, TX on July 4, 1848
- Joined Confederate Army, served in Navy, and was an active boat pilot along the Texas Coast
- Lived and married at St. Mary's, which was near present-day Bayside on Copano Bay



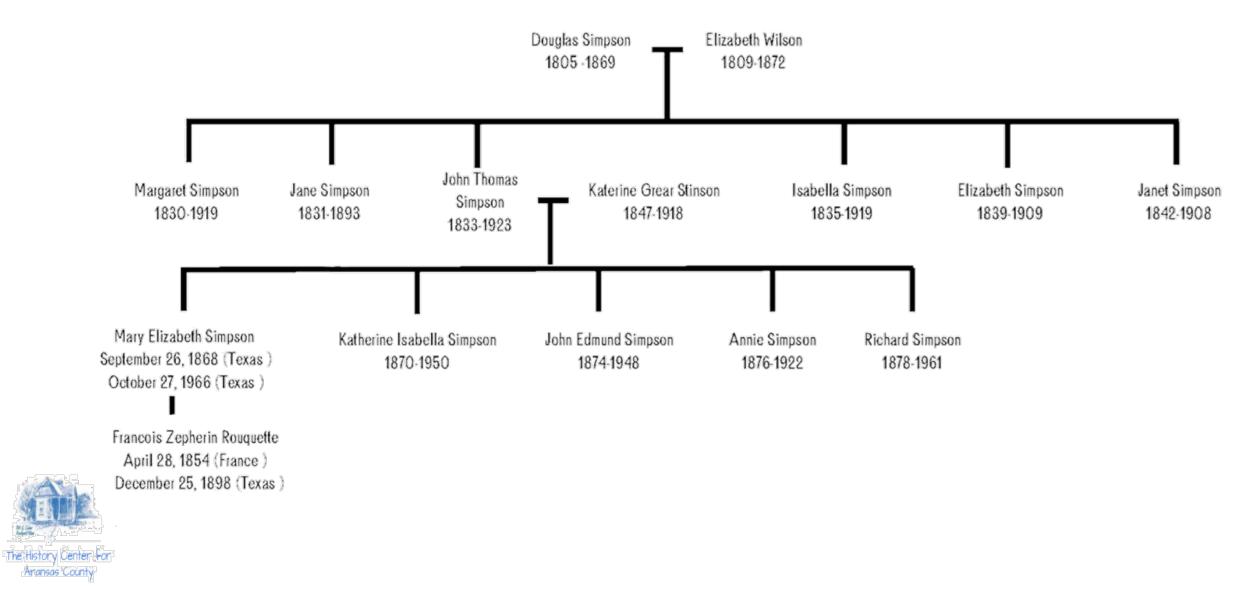


compand. by application 2147-FIELD NOTES Dorsey Printing Co., Stationers, Printers and Hindurs, Dallas, Texas-8051503 Cases 2 The State of Texas, survey Mansas. COUNTY. No. FIELD NOTES of a Survey of One hundred and diaty 160 acres of Lands, made for John Gimpson by authority of This application (and applica with for Homes lead Donation Diled Meeried, In John G. umpter Tarner Betoneset Surveys of arranews 600went 202 July. 1890 .. Varas per Inch. Said Survey is No. Aramoas County, Texas, situated on the St Charles Baga tributary of Anan 1 as Bay River about 14 miles N. E Pocruport. Beginning at a take, set on The Cast Ohope of Barkes Bay being the Western Coast of Of Charles'on Blass atto Schindula, and The N.W Corner of The Samp to Jurner durivey. 5% 640 acres. Patent ed I for W. Phyme. by vertue of duplicate Bryon Gerijo ato 3387 dated cliden 11 1854, Shence following The meander of the Pay, N. 18" E 122:22 varas. N. 10" E 181.99 Varas. N23" W. 108 Varas. N. 26:30'E 108, yaras, N. 44°E 180 Varas, N 8030'E 144. 00000, N 89:30'E 360 varas, 5.55 E 424.5 varas, N.8. E 144.36 varas, det state for NW. corner of this curvey from which the S. W. curner of the & Tribble alway bears. West 9. 50. varas. and a lone merquite on the gracery edge of the Bay. 10m dia bears. N.22'E 146.88 varas. Theuse Cearing the Bay East 553.78 varas the d. E. Comer of this Dursey, Thence Bouth. 547-28 varues The S. E corner of this Durvey. on the book Rit Line of the sumpter sumer survey aforeaid. Thence weit gollowing said line. 1624. 26 varas. I the place of the gunsil. to the place of beginning. Bearings marked



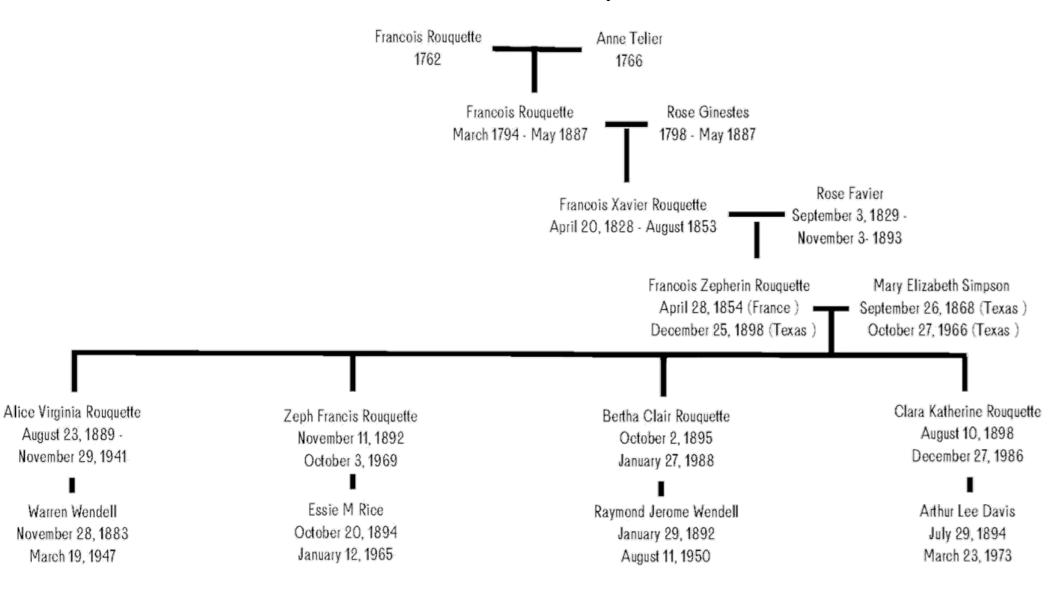




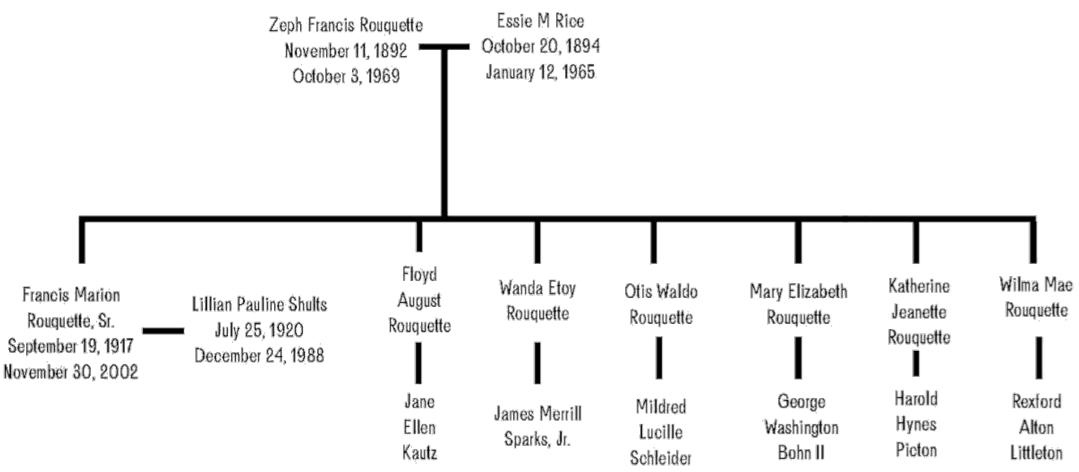


Rouquette Lineage Francois & Mary

The History Center For Aransas County

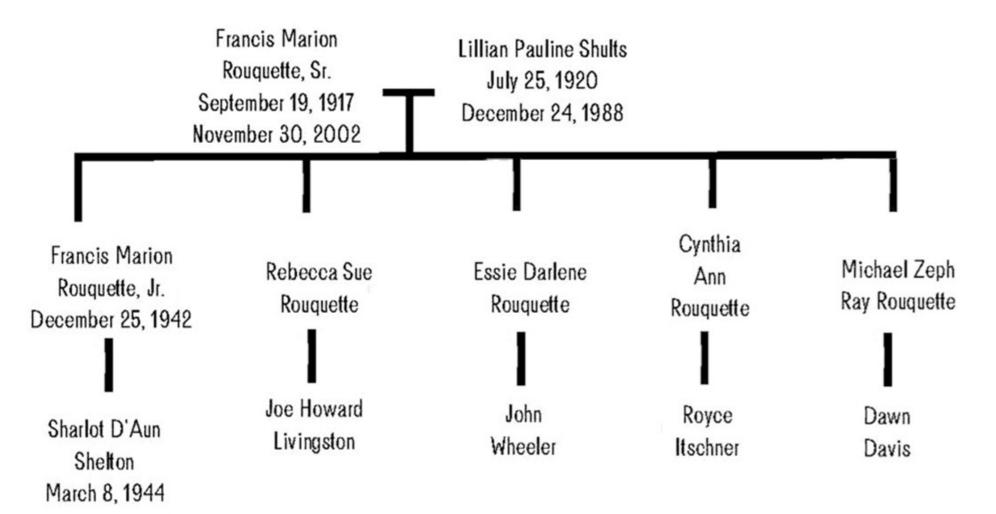


Rouquette Lineage Zeph & Essie



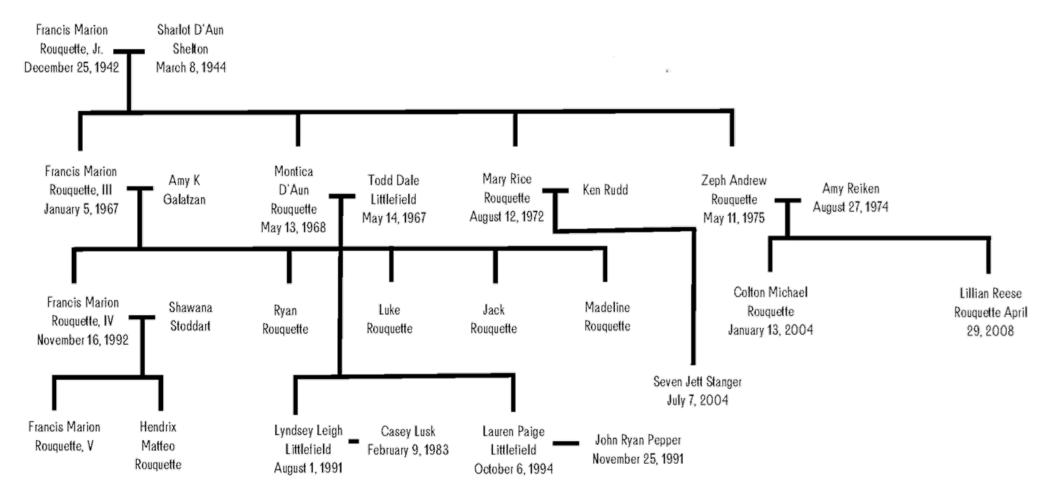


Rouquette Lineage Francis & Lillian



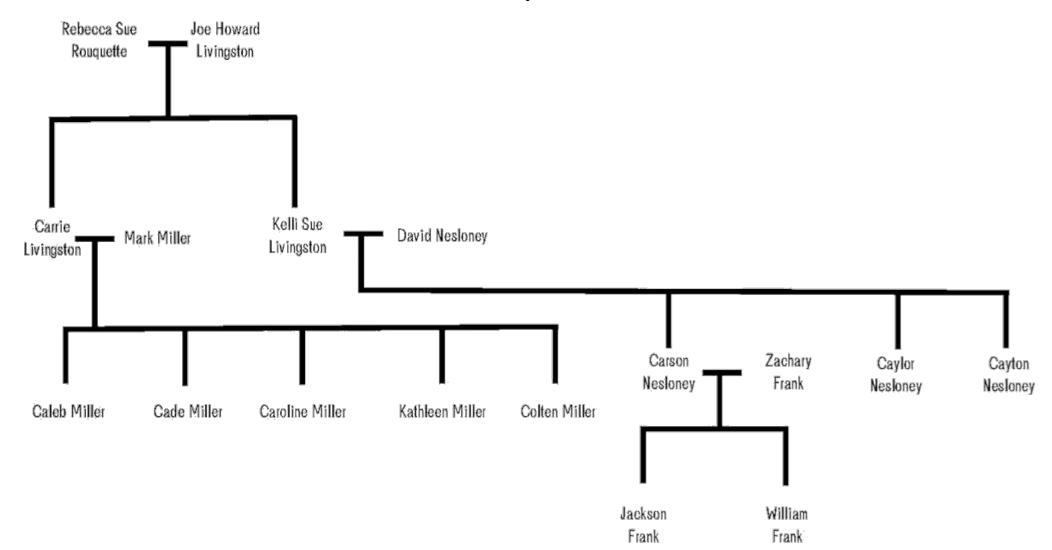


Rouquette Lineage "Monte" & Sharlot



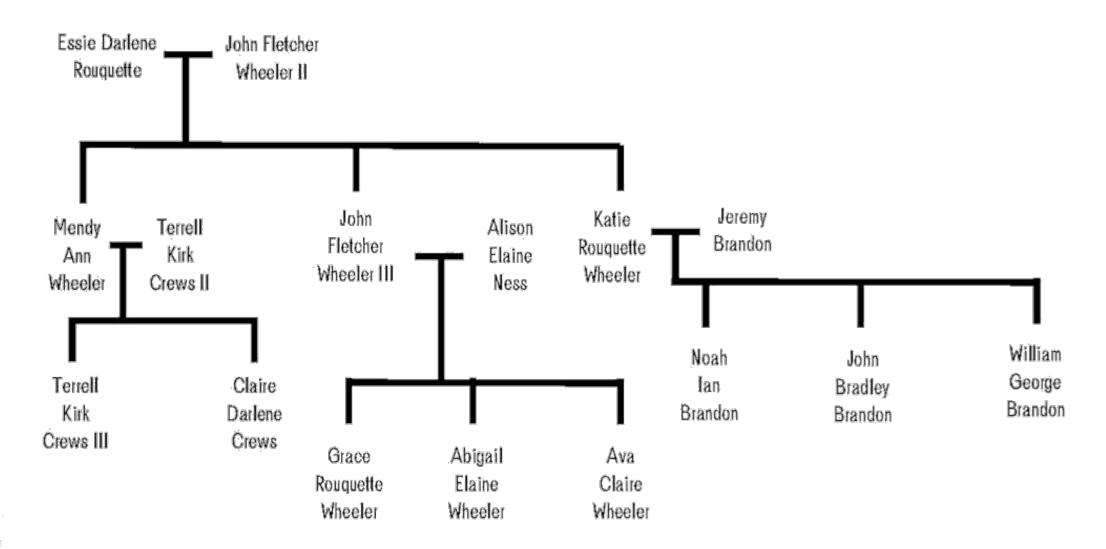


Rouquette Lineage Joe & Becky



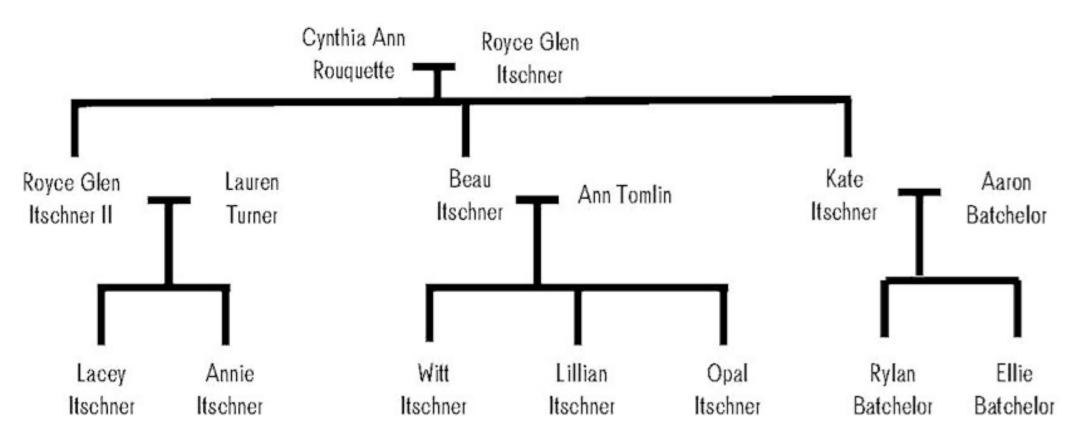


Rouquette Lineage John & Darlene





Rouquette Lineage Royce & Cynthia





Rouquette Lineage Mike & Dawn

