

A Shellcrete Society: The Aransas-Copano Bay Community, 1830-1880

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In July 2005 the South Texas Summer Archaeology Field School under the direction of Dr. Bob Drolet and sponsored by Texas A&M University-Kingsville and the Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History, surveyed a site along the northern back side of Copano Bay in an effort to locate and map the remains of the historic port and settlement known as El C6pano. According to the preliminary field report, the site contained the ruins of ten residential structures marked by remains of shellcrete cisterns, and standing and collapsed shellcrete walls and floor sections. Two relatively large mounds of oyster shell fragments lay inland from the ruins at some distance. Tests of each mound revealed historic dates and features, suggesting they may have been stockpiles of “shell ‘hash’ brought from the beach areas . . . for shellcrete construction of the residences.”¹

Shellcrete, a concrete-like building material, was the basis of a widespread masonry tradition found in the Aransas-Copano Bay region of the Texas Coastal Bend during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Early Spanish and Mexican residents of the region employed the technique of converting oyster shells into lime and aggregate to make a distinct and durable building material that proved superior to adobe in a humid environment.² Beginning in the early 1830s Irish, Anglo, German and other colonists and settlers moving into the region incorporated the technique in the building of their own homes, and various communities featuring shellcrete structures emerged along the

shores of Aransas and Copano bays through the mid-nineteenth century up to the 1880s. For example, many of the shellcrete ruins found at the El C6pano site are reported to have been constructed by the Irish immigrants Matthew Lambert and Matthew Cody.³ Lambert is reported to have built Henry Dearborn Norton's mercantile complex at Copano in 1849, consisting of a two-story store building, cisterns and outhouses, storage sheds, a 900 foot wharf extending into the bay, and a "commodious" home located across the street. The following year, Cody started construction on a two-story residence and associated structures for the renowned Irish empresario James Power and his large household consisting of his wife Tomasita, their seven children, and two adult slaves.⁴ Today, the shellcrete remains of these and other structures visible at the Copano site are not only representations and reminders of the traditions, individuals, and families that formed the foundations of this particular community, but they also serve as a poignant symbol for the diverse and interrelated communities that existed along the shores of Copano and Aransas bays. This paper suggests that the assorted communities established in the Aransas-Copano Bay region should be understood as a single community based on the intimate familial, social, political and economic relationships among persons living in the region. Like the building material that defined much of the architectural structure of the area, the Aransas-Copano Bay area consisted of many aggregate parts representing a wide range of ethnic, social, political, and economic interests and diversity, bound together by the personal relationships that inspired cooperation, competition, and sometimes conflict among those who called this coastal region home from 1830 to 1880.

The early history of this region focuses on Copano Bay and the site of El C6pano. Prehistoric archeological and historical sources document the long-time existence of

Karankawa hunting camps and fishing villages along the shores of the bay, particularly along its northeastern and southwestern edges, and on Live Oak Peninsula.⁵ A permanent Spanish presence in the area developed very slowly after initial coastal explorations in 1519, and much later expeditions searching for LaSalle's colony in the late seventeenth century. Enduring occupation in the vicinity of Copano and Aransas bays began in the 1740s and 1750s in association with José de Econdon's colonization efforts in Mexico's northeastern coastal region. The establishment of coastal outposts around 1766 at a site called Aránzazu on Live Oak Point, and another on the southern tip of San José Island, began to solidify Spanish permanence on the Coastal Bend.⁶ Some time prior to the establishment of these posts, a landing serving as a coastal point of contact with inland missions, presidios, and settlements emerged across Copano bay north from Live Oak Peninsula.⁷ Although El Cópamo had been designated an official port in 1785, the site never developed into a thriving seaport.⁸ Instead, much of the activity at El Cópamo centered on smuggling since the nearest Spanish customs officials resided forty miles inland at La Bahía.⁹ Even as late as 1834, Mexican officials noted the undeveloped nature of the port at El Cópamo. Juan Almonte observed in 1834 that although "the port of Cópamo has been used for some time now . . . at present there is nothing more than a house there."¹⁰

The Coastal Bend and bordering regions experienced an increase in population from the mid-1820s to the early 1830s as the Mexican government encouraged settlement of the province by means of empresario contracts with entrepreneurs such as Martín de Leon of Tamaulipas, native Kentuckian Green DeWitt, and the Irishmen John McMullen, James McGloin, James Power, and James Hewetson. In 1829 the partnership of Power

and Hewetson contracted to settle a combination of Irish and Mexican families on their coastal tract centered on the Refugio Mission.¹¹ Many of the Irish colonists entered Texas at Copano and gravitated around the vicinity of the mission. Those Mexican families already living in the area, such as the Aldretes, became incorporated into the *empresa*, while a few others arrived overland from Mexico. The Power and Hewetson colony also included a good number of colonists that originally hailed from regions other than Ireland or Mexico. Naturalized Mexican colonists of Greek, Scottish, and French origin settled the *empresa* along with other non-Irish American, Canadian, and British settlers of Protestant faith. By 1835 Power and Hewetson's colonists represented the relative high level of ethnic diversity that came to characterize the Aransas-Copano settlements of the nineteenth century.¹²

In 1831 empresario Power married Dolores Portilla, the daughter of a former Spanish army officer from Matamoros whose family had relocated to the shores of Nueces Bay at a site known as "The Chimneys."¹³ Sometime between 1833 and 1835 Power and his wife constructed a home on property included among Power's personal empresario lands at the former site of Fort Aránzazu on Live Oak Point.¹⁴ As historian Graham Davis has noted, Power had aspirations of building a port at this site, developing it as an entrepot for American and Mexican goods destined for Texas.¹⁵ Unfortunately, the events of the Texas Revolution seriously disrupted Power's immediate plans for the development of a seaport at this location. Thus, it would not be until late 1836-early 1837 that Power could begin to proceed with the establishment of a harbor settlement.¹⁶

The period of the Revolution brought significant changes to the Coastal Bend region, and for empresario Power. The war had devastated Refugio and its environs.

Much of the population that had centered on the former mission relocated to the coast after the conflict. Power's activities in support of the Revolution helped him establish new and important associations that ultimately affected his professional life and the development of early Coastal Bend settlements. He also suffered profound personal loss when his wife died in the delivery of stillborn twins.¹⁷ Resilient as he was ambitious, the empresario quickly remarried to his sister-in-law Tomasita, and renewed his desire to build a coastal town at Live Oak Point. Power partnered with Henry Smith, a Kentucky native and the former governor of the revolutionary government known as the Consultation, to help in the development of the Live Oak Point settlement they called Aransas City.¹⁸

Power and Smith laid out the town in seventy-five lots extending southward from their shellcrete homes located on the west and east side of Live Oak Point respectively. Adjacent to his house Power built a large store and a wharf jutting several hundred yards into the strait connecting Copano and Aransas bays. Fellow Irish colonist and Power protégé Walter Lambert managed the store selling all kinds of goods including groceries, hardware, clothes, liquor, tobacco, and firearms.¹⁹ The wharf and the old Mexican customs house at the Copano landing became the basis of Power's significant importing and transporting business. Power and Lambert warehoused inward bound tobacco and manufactured goods at Copano where they were loaded on ox carts and shipped to San Antonio and Matamoros.²⁰ At its zenith in early 1839, Aransas City boasted ninety-eight families of would-be settlers and numerous businesses and professions including ranchers, farmers, merchants and traders, barrel house or saloon keepers, ship captains, sailors, ministers, speculators, surveyors, and lawyers.

For example, Francis Welder, a native of Germany and a close friend of the Power family, founded a ranch with his two sons, John and Thomas, near Power's home on Live Oak Peninsula.²¹ Cyrus Egery of Massachusetts also established a home at the Aransas City site and may have also been involved in ranching and land speculation on the peninsula. Other land speculators residing in Aransas City included the Georgians Joseph E. Plummer, Sr. and his brother Samuel, and Power and Hewetson colonist Arnaud Victor Loupe of Louisiana, the Pennsylvania natives Henry L. Kinney and George W. Fulton, and the Presbyterian minister Joel T. Case.²² Another Georgian, John "Squire" Talley, probably worked out of the new town as one of the many surveyors there.²³ Captain John R. Baker and Irish sailor John Chain helped make up the city's community of mariners. Chain would have worked on ships such as Captain Philip Black's 77-ton schooner *Olympus*, or Captain D.P. Barhyt's schooner *Louisiana* both of which made Aransas City a frequent port of call.²⁴ Richard Pearse, a former United States Consul at Matamoros, also made Live Oak Point his home and was somehow involved in the operations of these vessels.²⁵ Other residents such as Irishman John O'Brien, John W. B. McFarlane of Scotland, Matthew Cody, Henry Smith's nephew Joseph, John Sutherland, Israel Canfield, Jr., and Leonard Pickens resided and worked at Aransas City as clerks, merchants, traders, masons, builders, land speculators, developers and laborers.²⁶

Almost concurrent with James Power's development of Aransas City was the emergence of the port and settlement of Lamar, almost two miles directly north across the Aransas-Copano strait. Irish founder of Lamar James W. Byrne appeared in the Coastal Bend sometime in 1835 or early 1836, following his sister Mary's settlement in the

Power and Hewetson colony in 1834.²⁷ During the struggle for independence from Mexico, Byrne escaped execution at Goliad and then sought refuge at Live Oak Point and joined a company of rangers organized by Power and John W. B. McFarlane.²⁸ After the war, Byrne acquired land certificates for 1,428 acres of Power and Hewetson colony land on Lookout Peninsula from William Lewis. Together with partners George R. Hull and George Armstrong and in association with the New England lawyers Ebenezer Allen and William G. Hale, Byrne had the area of Lookout Point surveyed and platted by William H. Jones in 1837.²⁹ The founders named the prospective town Lamar after Mirabeau Lamar and proceeded to build a wharf and warehouse complex to attract shipping business.³⁰

Only a few people had occupied the vicinity of Lookout Point prior to Byrne's founding of Lamar. Rhode Islander Seth "Jim" Ballou, his wife Ann, and his brothers Lugenio, and Wilfred are generally considered to be the first settlers of Lookout Peninsula. Seth established steam ferry service connection to Live Oak Point, providing an early communications link between the two peninsulas. Kentuckians Archibald and Vincey McRae had also established a homestead at Lookout Point prior to Byrne's town building activities there. Thus, the Ballou and McRae families became foundational social and commercial cornerstones of the Lamar community. Census records show that several descendants of Ballous continued to call Lamar their home throughout the nineteenth century, while Vincey, the McRae matriarch, was recorded still living at Lamar in 1880 at the age of 80, next door to her ship builder son Murdock and his family.³¹ In 1839 Byrne noted that Lamar's residence section was made up of twenty mostly shellcrete homes, consisting of about sixty persons in all.³²

That year, Byrne and the town of Lamar began to challenge Power's and Aransas City's dominance in the region when he successfully orchestrated and administered the relocation of the customs house across the bay from Live Oak Point to Lookout Point. This incident ultimately contributed to the development and longevity of Lamar as well as the decline of Aransas City, and it represented a significant increase in the magnitude of the challenges leveled against Power's influence and his extensive land claims.³³ Several inhabitants of Aransas City, such as Israel Canfield, Leonard Pickens, the seaman John Chain, and surveyor Squire Talley relocated to Lamar at that time. Byrne's partner George R. Hull was the nephew of Aransas City shipper Richard Pearse. This relationship may have played an instrumental role in the shifting fortunes of these early Aransas-Copano settlements.³⁴

Another important kin relationship figured prominently in the demise of Aransas City and the rise of other settlements in the region. James Power's business partner, legal consultant, and neighbor, Henry Smith, together with his nephew Joseph F. Smith, and his new son-in-law George W. Fulton became possessors of a significant number of land certificates and began to challenge the historical validity of Power's land claims in the region.³⁵ The Smiths especially challenged Power's claim to the lands on Live Oak Point and those on Black Point across Copano Bay. Other Aransas City settlers such as Joseph and Samuel Plummer, and Cyrus Egery staked claims to other sites around Copano Bay. Joseph Plummer staked a claim to 640 acres centered on the old Copano landing, and constructed a one-story shellcrete home there in which he was living by 1841.³⁶ Samuel Plummer in association with his fellow Georgian and close friend President Mirabeau Lamar claimed a site at the mouth of Copano Creek on the northern

end of the Bay.³⁷ Egery claimed an island on the southern end of the bay across from Black Point. This site became known as Egery's Island after Cyrus built a shellcrete home there in late 1839. Francis Welder's sons John and Thomas relocated from Aransas City to lands near Black Point to which the family had received head rights from Power. Although Francis moved to Refugio in 1845, the 1850 census shows him living with his sons at their Black Point ranch. Sometime after that year the Welder and Power families became united when John Welder married the empresario's eldest child, Dolores Power.³⁸ By the middle of the 1840s even the besieged Power began to make plans to abandon Live Oak Point.³⁹

Other settlers close to James Power had followed Joseph Plummer across Copano Bay in the 1840s disregarding Plummer's claim to the coastal site. By 1845 a community of these settlers and their shellcrete homes emerged about a mile north of Plummer's home at Power's Point. Power then sought to establish a new settlement at Copano in an effort to reclaim dominance in the regional shipping, trading, and transportation economy re-vitalized by the Mexican-American War. By 1847 the empresario hired surveyor and sailor Lyman H. Ward of Massachusetts to survey and plat the town of Copano. At some point Plummer abandoned his home on Power's Point and built a new shellcrete home two miles removed from the newcomers. By the late 1840s the new community of Copano included several former settlers of Aransas City including John O'Brien, who was a cousin of Power's nephew Thomas O'Connor, the empresario's personal assistant, Walter Lambert, brick maker and builder Matthew Cody, and John Southerland.⁴⁰ Henry Dearborn Norton arrived in Copano in 1849 and established his extensive shellcrete living and import, storage, and distribution complex.⁴¹ By 1850 Power finally gave up

on Live Oak Point and began building a new large shellcrete home at Power's Point, actually incorporating the abandoned Plummer house in the building's construction. Unfortunately, the empresario died before his new home was completed. Fittingly, Power expired at his home on Live Oak Point as if he were loath to give up his claim to Live Oak Peninsula to aggressive speculators. With the installment of Power's widow, Tomasita, and their surviving children at the family's new home on Power's Point, Copano essentially became a hamlet of Power kinsmen and supporters.⁴² By the mid-1850s the town had grown to at least fifty inhabitants with about a dozen shellcrete residential and commercial buildings and at least three wharfs. According to the 1860 census the Copano community included, in part, the Joseph Jr. and Mary Plummer family and their fourteen year old female slave on the north end of the strand, the Moses and Mary Simpson family, Charles Pathoff and his wife Mary, a Karankawa orphan raised by James and Tomasita Power, Lyman and Mary Ward, Tomasita Power, her three daughters Mary, Elizabeth, and Agnes, and an elderly male slave of sixty years of age, and lastly Walter Lambert and his wife Tomasa, yet another daughter of James and Tomasita Power. By 1880 this community consisted almost solely of Power, Lambert, and Plummer family members.⁴³

The development of the Mexican-American War in the mid-1840s gave rise to another settlement on the southwestern end of San Jose, or St. Joseph's Island, contributing to the ongoing depopulation of Live Oak Point, and to a shifting of interest away from Lamar. General Zachary Taylor arrived at St. Joseph's in July 1845 and established a depot on the island from which he supplied his troops until they moved south to the Rio Grande.⁴⁴ The island had been sparsely populated prior to this time,

most notably by Texas Navy veteran turned rancher Capt. James B. Wells, John Baker, the father of Captain John R. Baker of Aransas City, and the lawyers and land speculators Ebenezer Allen and William Hale.⁴⁵ In 1844, Wells married Lydia Ann Hull, the sister of James Byrne's partner and Lamar speculator, George Hull, thereby establishing a close relationship between the Wells and Byrne factions.⁴⁶

The presence of the military depot "created a demand for beef and other provisions" as well as transportation services on land and sea, encouraging Byrne and his partners Allen and Hale to survey and layout a town site on the island which they called Aransas.⁴⁷ The village that emerged at the site, later simply called St. Joseph's, became a center of operations by 1860 for a number of ranchers, ship captains, pilots, sailors, engineers, teamsters, transporters, traders, merchants, black smiths, carpenters, masons, and builders.⁴⁸ A number of settlers at Lamar had followed Byrne to St. Joseph's including surveyor William H. Jones, John and Mary Ann Chain, Archibald and Vincey McRae, and Jim and Ann Ballou.⁴⁹ However, most of the island's settlers were newcomers to the Aransas-Copano region. Irishman Moses Simpson arrived at St. Joseph's at the end of the Mexican-American War after being discharged from the army at Corpus Christi. He lived on the island only a short time before moving to Lamar by 1850. In 1851 he married Margaret Manuel the daughter of a San Jacinto veteran, and eventually moved to Copano by 1860 where he operated a wharf.⁵⁰ James M. Crandall a mason from New York also lived at St. Joseph's briefly before moving to the emerging town of St. Mary's across Copano Bay near Black Point. Danish ships captains Peter and Theodore Johnson arrived from Indianola in 1851 and constructed a two-story building that served as a warehouse, commissary, lodge, and home. The captains established a

thriving land and sea shipping and passenger service that stretched from Matagorda to Corpus Christi. The Civil War brought hard times to the village of St. Joseph's and its inhabitants. The Union blockade coupled with navy incursions into the Aransas-Copano bay area especially took a toll on the exposed location of St. Joseph's. By 1863, the village was abandoned. Many of the refugees, from St. Joseph's, including James and Lydia Wells, found sanctuary in Lamar and the new town of St. Mary's.⁵¹

Lamar experienced somewhat of a renaissance during the 1850's. Byrne's interest in the development of St. Joseph's ultimately did not distract him from continuing to work on the expansion of Lamar. In the late 1840s, railroad promoter Col. Pryor Lea contracted with Byrne to develop Lamar as a coastal terminus of a railroad that would extend to San Antonio and points beyond. Lamar actually was re-surveyed and replatted by William H. Jones in 1848, and the town was re-christened TrePort for the three bays of Aransas, St. Charles, and Copano.⁵² Another Lamar development venture involved the investment of Samuel and James Colt in Byrne lands on Lookout Peninsula and in the development of the town's port facilities.⁵³ Although both of these developments ultimately sputtered they seem to have contributed to a rejuvenation of community development in Lamar.

The construction of Lamar's Stella Maris (Star of the Sea) shellcrete Catholic Church in 1857 hints at this social revitalization. A French carpenter named John Deberdes (or Dubadie) and Jim and Ann Ballou's slave Moses built the church that became a focal point of the Lamar community.⁵⁴ These two individuals however, represent the emergence of a multi-ethnic population on Lookout Peninsula at this time. By 1860, Lamar exhibited a cosmopolitan character unmatched by any other settlement

in the Aransas-Copano region. A substantial number of European settlers, particularly from Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland, lived and worked in Lamar as laborers, merchants, and sailors.⁵⁵ By the mid-1860s, the two Danish captains from St. Joseph's also joined this European maritime-oriented community.⁵⁶ A substantial number of people of Mexican descent also lived in the Lamar vicinity at this time. Marcio Garcia worked as a grocer. Francisco Garcia farmed lands on the edge of Lamar. He and his wife, Gertrudis, raised a family of seven children, all girls except the two youngest. Batchelor brothers Marcial and Palacio Montes worked in the town as laborers. Their other brother Ignacio worked out of Lamar as a ship hand and lived next door with his wife Pabla and their six year old daughter. Other families such as the Robleses, Romeros, Rambos, and Edemas helped make up the Mexican/Tejano community of Lookout Peninsula.⁵⁷ Besides settlers of European and Mexican descent, a sizable population of African-Americans also lived at Lamar in 1860 as slaves. Since the census slave schedules didn't record the personal names of slaves, it is often difficult to identify specific individuals. Moses Ballou and his family, mentioned above, can be identified individually because they remained at Lamar in 1870 and are identified in that year's census. In all, twenty-nine men, women, and children of African-American descent lived at Lamar at that time, ranging in age from fifty to one year. Seventeen of these persons were owned by one family, that of Dr. Royal and Martha Wellington. Apparently the majority of Lamar's African-American citizens abandoned the town after the Civil War. Moses, his wife Charlotte, and their six kids made up exactly half of that population in 1870.⁵⁸

After the Civil War, Lamar and all the other settlements in the Aransas-Copano region became eclipsed by the meteoric rise and dominance of the town of St. Mary's of Aransas near Black Point. Joseph F. Smith had envisioned a settlement at Black Point as early as 1839, but his efforts were delayed because of continuous litigation over the land with James Power and his heirs. In 1856, the courts decided in favor of Smith, and almost immediately he began to plan a town two miles up the shore from Black Point since the channel was deeper at that place. Lyman H. Ward surveyed and platted the townsite in 1857 and almost immediately lots began to sell. Smith reserved an entire block for himself and built a large three-story shellcrete home. Ironically it was discovered that Smith's new home rested on a tract of land that was not included in his title. Thus, he lost his home much in the way his uncle had disposed Power of his house on Live Oak Point.⁵⁹ By the time of the Civil War, St. Mary's had the largest population of any town in the region. At least 93 families and 443 people, including fifty-eight slaves, lived at the site at that time. Some of the settlers associated with earlier Aransas-Copano settlements that contributed to the establishment of St. Mary's were Cyrus Egery, James and Augustus Peaks, stepsons of Squire Talley, Lyman Ward, and James Crandall. The veteran Aransas-Copano ship captains Peter and Theodore Johnson of Lamar provided passenger, freight, and mail service to the town.⁶⁰ Local ranchers already living in the Black Point area such as Trinidad Aldrete, Francis and Thomas Welder, and John H. Wood also became important members of the emerging community at St. Mary's.⁶¹

St. Mary's developed rapidly, and thanks to the promotion activities of Joseph Smith, it attracted a large number of outsiders looking for opportunity. South Carolinian

Thomas Taylor Williamson built the first wharf and warehouse at the townsite, and when native Kentuckian and businessman John Vineyard bought into Williamson's venture he helped established a corporate operation what later became known as the St. Mary's Wharf and Warehouse Company.⁶² This company imported large amounts of long leaf pine lumber from the Florida Panhandle, helping establish St. Mary's as a major depot for building materials to be shipped further inland to Refugio, San Antonio, and Uvalde.⁶³ Vineyard also operated a lumber yard and owned a schooner that imported Florida lumber into St. Mary's. Joseph Smith also contracted with other outside businessmen such as Mississippian J.I. Cottingham, and the New Englanders Gilbert B. Willett and Charles F. Bailey in an effort to build an extensive wharf and warehouse complex as the town's commercial base.⁶⁴ Along with the promotion of wharf and warehouse development, Smith attracted builders such as Archibald McNeil of South Carolina, and a number of merchants such as Alfred M. Hobby of Georgia.

Although St. Mary's emerged from the legacy of Aransas-Copano bay area development that began with James Power, it can also be seen as a significant departure from that legacy. Joseph F. Smith was *the* inimitable figure responsible for St. Mary's. Not only did he represent a direct link to the past associated with Power's grandiose ideas for development of the region, but he ultimately wrested away the claim of that legacy from the empresario through years of successful litigation. Ultimately, Smith's legacy embodied in the development of St. Mary's departed from the heritage of limited success in town building in the Aransas-Copano region. By the 1880s, the town had grown to a respectable size. At one point over 6,000 people lived and worked there.⁶⁵ Alongside the numerous wharfs and warehouses, there were a number of lumber yards, various types of

stores that sold a myriad of goods, several hotels, churches of four denominations, and numerous homes—all made of wood.⁶⁶ The shellcrete society that had its origins in the days of Spanish colonialism and Mexican independence had faded from the Aransas-Copano scene. Maybe St. Mary's should be seen more as a antecedent of the development of Rockport, than a manifestation of the traditions and processes that led to the development of Aransas City, Lamar, Copano, and St. Joseph's.

People form the basis of communities, and by focusing on individual personal relationships the fundamental structure of those communities can begin to be uncovered. The cooperative social relationships among families, friends, and acquaintances especially form the framing structure of a community. Personal and familial relationships particularly gave rise to institutions and businesses that help shape communities. Indeed, the Latin root of the word "community" (*commūnis*) literally suggests the social ties and fellowship that necessarily underlie these relationships. Focusing on these types of interpersonal connections in and between the settlements of Aransas City, Lamar, Copano, St. Joseph's, and St. Mary's allows us to have a more comprehensive grasp of extensive community development across the Aransas-Copano region from 1830-1880. These wide-ranging social relationships did not guarantee that the Aransas-Copano community enjoyed a constant state of harmony. Indeed, fierce political and personal struggles gripped the region throughout this period. But despite these rivalries, a network of social relationships extended across settlements throughout the region. I have likened these relationships to the shellcrete material early settlers of this regions used for the construction of their homes and businesses, not only because it

consists of, and combines many aggregate parts, but also because even though it is somewhat unattractive, rough, and stubborn to the elements, it ultimately endures.

¹ Robert P. Drolet, "Preliminary Report, 2005 Archaeology Field School, South Texas," unpublished manuscript on file at the Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History, Corpus Christi, TX, 2005, 2, 5.

² According to William Allen and Sue Hastings Taylor, *Aransas: The Life of a Texas Coastal County* (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 1997), 35, settlers of the Copano and Aransas bay region manufactured shellcrete by burning oyster shells in shallow pits, thereby converting the shells into lime. Workers then shoveled the solid lime into barrels, in which the lime became slaked and disintegrated as it reacted with the humidity of the air. Brick makers then mixed the lime concoction with sand, broken oyster shell aggregate, and water, and then poured the mixture into shaped wooden forms which were set aside to harden in the sun. This process was a variation of the construction method called "tapia," which was brought to the Americas by the Spanish, and is very similar to adobe (which may be a variation of this process itself). In the coastal regions of the Americas, the Spanish used a shell, lime, and sand-based variation of this construction method which was more suited to humid climates. Various sites in the Caribbean, along the Mexican coast, and along the southeastern Atlantic coast exhibit this shell based tapia. Along the coasts of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida "tapia" has been corrupted and anglicized into "tabby," and the English colonists and their American descendants of that region continued to use tabby as a construction material for many generations well into the nineteenth century.

³ Hobart Huson, *El Copano: The Ancient Port of Bexar and La Bahia* (Refugio, TX: The Refugio Timely Remarks, 1935), 38; Hobart Huson, *Refugio: A Comprehensive History of Refugio County From Aboriginal Times to 1953*, vol. 1 (Woodsboro, TX: The Rooke Foundation, Inc., 1953), 560; Hobart Huson, *A Texas Coastal Bend Trilogy* (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 1994), 83; United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*, Refugio, Texas; Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1850. Roll: M432-914; Page: 227; Image: 102.

⁴ Huson, *A Texas Coastal Bend Trilogy*, 83-84, 86; Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 560.

⁵ Robert A. Ricklis, *The Karankawa Indians of Texas: An Ecological Study of Cultural Tradition and Change* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 36, 120, 122; Robert P. Drolet, "Preliminary Report, 2005," 2.

⁶ Donald E. Chipman, *Spanish Texas, 1519-1821* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), 166-169; Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 73, 79.

⁷ Allen and Taylor, *Aransas*, 24.

⁸ Keith Guthrie, *Texas Forgotten Ports: Mid-Gulf Ports from Corpus Christi to Matagorda Bay* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1988), 8; Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 76, 84-85, 91.

⁹ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 90; Guthrie, *Texas Forgotten Ports*, 10.

¹⁰ Jack Jackson, ed., and John Wheat, trans., *Almonte's Texas: Juan N. Almonte's 1834 Inspection, Secret Report and Role in the 1836 Campaign* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 2003), 240; Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 121.

¹¹ Graham Davis, *Land!: Irish Pioneers in Mexican and Revolutionary Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2002), 73-81; *Handbook of Texas Online*, "McMullen-McGloin Colony," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/MM/uem1.html>; *Handbook of Texas Online*, "Power and Hewetson Colony," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/PP/uep3.html>.

¹² Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 123-128, 160-164.

¹³ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 158-159; *Handbook of Texas Online*, "Nueces Bay," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/NN/rrn1.html>.

¹⁴ Graham Davis, *Land!*, 249-254; Sons of DeWitt Colony Texas, "Power and Hewetson Colony, Municipality: Refugio," <http://www.tamu.edu/ccbn/ccbn/dewitt/irishcolframe.htm>; According to Wikipedia, "in the early Hispanic settlement of New Mexico, Texas, and Colorado, a league was also a unit of area, defined as being equal to 25,000,000 square varas or approximately 4428.4 acres" ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_\(unit\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_(unit))).

¹⁵ Graham Davis, *Land!*, 75.

¹⁶ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 417; Guthrie, *Texas Forgotten Ports*, 26-27; Allen and Taylor, *Aransas*, 90.

¹⁷ Guthrie, *Texas Forgotten Ports*, 27.

¹⁸ Guthrie, *Texas Forgotten Ports*, 27; Randolph B. Campbell, *Gone To Texas: A History of the Lone Star State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 137; *Handbook of Texas Online*, "Smith, Henry," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/SS/fsm23.html>.

¹⁹ Allen and Taylor, *Aransas*, 90-91.

²⁰ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 417; Guthrie, *Texas Forgotten Ports*, 29, 37; Allen and Taylor, *Aransas*, 91.

²¹ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 416; Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 2, 235; Allen and Taylor, *Aransas*, 84-85; *Handbook of Texas Online*, "Welder, James Francis," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/WW/fwe48.html>.

²² Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 163; *Handbook of Texas Online*, "Kinney, Henry Lawrence," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/KK/fki29.html>; *Handbook of Texas Online*, "Fulton, George Ware," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/FF/ffu8.html>.

²³ Hobart Huson, *A Texas Coastal Bend Trilogy*, 33. Talley was also known as "Squire" Talley.

²⁴ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 422, 441; United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*, St. Joseph Island, Refugio, Texas; Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1850. Roll: M432-914; Page: 226; Image: 99.

²⁵ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 441-442.

²⁶ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 422; Bureau of the Census. *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*, Refugio, Texas, Roll: M432-914; Page: 227; Image: 101.

²⁷ Huson, *A Texas Coastal Bend Trilogy*, 16.

²⁸ *Handbook of Texas Online*, “Garza, Carlos de la,” <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/GG/fga71.html>; Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 399.

²⁹ Guthrie, *Texas Forgotten Ports*, 54; *Handbook of Texas Online*, “Allen, Ebenezer,” <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/AA/fal18.html>; *Handbook of Texas Online*, “Hale, William G.,” <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/HH/fha14.html>.

³⁰ Guthrie, *Texas Forgotten Ports*, 56.

³¹ Bureau of the Census. *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880*, Lamar, Aransas, Texas, Roll: T9-1289; Family History Film: 1255289; Page: 276.3000; Enumeration District: 2; Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 417; Huson, *A Texas Coastal Bend Trilogy*, 22-23; Guthrie, *Texas Forgotten Ports*, 54; Seth Ballou was commonly known as “Jim” Ballou; United States of America, Bureau of the Census, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*, Lamar, Refugio, Texas; Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. Roll: M653-1303; Page: 132; Image: 264; United States, *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870*, Subdivision 4, Refugio, Texas; Washington, D.C. National Archives and Records Administration, 1870. Roll: M593-1602; Page: 136; Image: 272; United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880*, Lamar, Aransas, Texas; Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1880. Roll: T9-1289; Family History Film: 1255289; Page: 276.3000; Enumeration District: 2; By 1850 Seth T. Ballou and his family had moved from Lamar settling at St. Joseph’s Island for some time before relocating to Grimes County, Texas, where he worked as a miller. The 1860 census shows that Seth’s wife Elizabeth (Ann?) and their children had moved back to Lamar by that time. See, Bureau of the Census, *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*, Grimes, Texas; Roll: M432-910; Page: 371; Image: 715.

³² Allen and Taylor, *Aransas*, 93-95; Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 542; Guthrie, *Texas Forgotten Ports*, 60; Bureau of the Census, *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*, Refugio, Texas, Roll: M432-914; Page: 228; Image: 103. From the 1850 census, it appears that Vincey McRae’s actual first name was “Isabela.”

³³ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 418; Guthrie, *Texas Forgotten Ports*, 20; Huson, *A Texas Coastal Bend Trilogy*, 30.

³⁴ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 442.

³⁵ *Handbook of Texas Online*, “Fulton, George Ware,” <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/FF/ffu8.html>; Henry Smith and George W. Fulton also served as customs officers at Aransas City in the late 1830s. Smith’s intimate association with Power coupled with his personal insight into the business potential of shipping and distribution facilities in the Aransas-Copano region apparently inspired his and his family’s aggressive speculative activities. Fulton had married Smith’s daughter Harriet in 1840 at Aransas City.

³⁶ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 499-500.

³⁷ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 423.

³⁸ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 416; Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870*, Subdivision 4, San Patricio, Texas; Roll: M593-1604; Page: 96; Image: 193.

- ³⁹ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 526.
- ⁴⁰ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 499-500, 527.
- ⁴¹ Huson, *El Copano*, 38.
- ⁴² Huson, *A Texas Coastal Bend Trilogy*, 85.
- ⁴³ Bureau of the Census, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*, Copano, Refugio, Texas; Roll: M653-1303; Page: 133; Image: 267; Roll: *M653-1303*; Page: 134; Image: 268; Refugio, Refugio, Texas; Roll: M653-1303; Page: 134; Image: 269; Ancestry.com. *1860 U.S. Federal Census - Slave Schedules* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: The Generations Network, Inc., 2004. Original data: United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. M653, 1,438 rolls; Bureau of the Census. *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880*, Refugio, Refugio, Texas; Roll: T9-1324; Family History Film: 1255324; Page: 339.2000; Enumeration District: 127.
- ⁴⁴ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 510; *Handbook of Texas Online*, "St. Joseph Island," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/SS/trs9.html>.
- ⁴⁵ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 425; Guthrie, *Texas Forgotten Ports*, 64; *Handbook of Texas Online*, "Wells, James B.," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/WW/fwe23.html>; Sons of the Republic of Texas, *The Sons of the Republic of Texas*, (Nashville, TN: Turner Publishing Company, 2001), 173; *Handbook of Texas Online*, "Allen, Ebenezer," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/AA/fal18.html>; *Handbook of Texas Online*, "Hale, William G.," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/HH/fha14.html>.
- ⁴⁶ Sons of the Republic of Texas, *The Sons of the Republic of Texas*, 173.
- ⁴⁷ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 505, 511, 529.
- ⁴⁸ Bureau of the Census, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*, Aransas, Refugio, Texas; Roll: M653-1303; Page: 129; Image: 259; Page: 130; Image: 260; Page: 130; Image: 261.
- ⁴⁹ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 505.
- ⁵⁰ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 529, 540; Huson, *A Texas Coastal Bend Trilogy*, 30-31; Bureau of the Census, *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*, Refugio, Texas; Roll: M432-914; Page: 228; Image: 103.
- ⁵¹ Huson, *A Texas Coastal Bend Trilogy*, 12-13; Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870*, Subdivision 4, Refugio, Texas; Roll: M593-1602; Page: 135; Image: 271.
- ⁵² Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 555; Huson, *A Texas Coastal Bend Trilogy*, 95-97; Guthrie, *Texas Forgotten Ports*, 57.
- ⁵³ Guthrie, *Texas Forgotten Ports*, 58-59.
- ⁵⁴ Guthrie, *Texas Forgotten Ports*, 61-62; Bureau of the Census, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*, Lamar, Refugio, Texas; Roll: M653-1303; Page: 132; Image: 264; Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870* Subdivision 4, Refugio, Texas; Roll: M593-1602; Page: 136; Image: 272; Ancestry.com. *1860 U.S. Federal Census - Slave Schedules* [database on-line]. Provo, UT,

USA: The Generations Network, Inc., 2004. Original data: United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. M653, 1,438 rolls.

⁵⁵ Bureau of the Census, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*, Lamar, Refugio, Texas; Roll: M653-1303; Page: 131; Image: 263; Roll: M653-1303; Page: 132; Image: 264; Roll: M653-1303; Page: 132; Image: 265.

⁵⁶ Huson, *A Texas Coastal Bend Trilogy*, 12-13.

⁵⁷ Bureau of the Census, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*, Lamar, Refugio, Texas; Roll: M653-1303; Page: 132; Image: 265; Bureau of the Census, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*, Copano, Refugio, Texas; Roll: M653-1303; Page: 133; Image: 266.

⁵⁸ Ancestry.com. *1860 U.S. Federal Census - Slave Schedules* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: The Generations Network, Inc., 2004. Original data: United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. M653, 1,438 rolls; Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870*, Subdivision 4, Refugio, Texas; Roll: M593_1602; Page: 136; Image: 273.

⁵⁹ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 569; Huson, *A Texas Coastal Bend Trilogy*, 107-109.

⁶⁰ Huson, *A Texas Coastal Bend Trilogy*, 113.

⁶¹ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 571; Huson, *A Texas Coastal Bend Trilogy*, 107-112. *Handbook of Texas Online*, "Wood, John Howland," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/WW/fwo9.html>; *Handbook of Texas Online*, "Vineyard, John W.," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/VV/fvi29.html>; Bureau of the Census, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*, St Maries, Refugio, Texas; Roll: M653-1303; Page: 140; Image: 280.

⁶² Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 570.

⁶³ Huson, *Refugio*, vol. 1, 572.

⁶⁴ Huson, *A Texas Coastal Bend Trilogy*, 112-113.

⁶⁵ Guthrie, *Texas Forgotten Ports*, 52.

⁶⁶ Guthrie, *Texas Forgotten Ports*, 44-53.