

The City of Goose Creek

Baytown, Harris County, Texas

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I. CONTEXT

Goose Creek stream first appeared on Stephen F. Austin's 1830 map of Texas³ and forms the drainage basin for a large part of today's city of Baytown. Local lore says the name came from hundreds of geese that once frequented the creek. But according to John Gaillard, whose family settled on the creek in 1868, "I never saw but one goose on the creek since I first came here January 8, 1868 from Natchez, Mississippi where I was born, and that one was crippled."⁴ Austin probably didn't name the creek, but the stream gave its name to the community that grew up along the east bank which, in the 19th century, had been home to many prominent Texas pioneers. Harvey Whiting moved to the area in 1833 and was issued a large land grant on the east side of Goose Creek.⁵ This tract of land extended from today's South Main Street west almost to Goose Creek stream and north past today's Baker Road. He built his house on the bank of Goose Creek stream and planted an avenue of live oak trees in the early 1840s. One of those trees still stands in the middle of today's Texas Avenue,^a and several others still stand just to the northeast. In 1841, Whiting divided his property and deeded tracts to his children and wife. One of those tracts went to his minor children Henry and Melissa.⁶ In the 1841 presidential election for the Republic of Texas, the polling place for Precinct No. 5 was at Benjamin Page's house on Goose Creek stream.⁷ But the best known local man was Ashbel Smith, who arrived in Texas shortly after the battle at San Jacinto and was named as Surgeon General of the Republic of Texas. While he was serving as Secretary of State of the Republic of Texas, he purchased a plantation on the east bank of Goose Creek stream⁸ and named it Headquarters. The plantation

^a "Harvey Whiting, who lived near the present town of Goose Creek, set out a number of live oak saplings around his home early in the 1840s. Still standing in the center of Texas Avenue, with the pavement passing on each side of it, is one of the Whiting oaks, now more than 100 years old." *Harris County, Republic of Texas, 1839-45*, Harris County Historical Society, Herbert Fletcher, editor. The Anson Jones Press, 1950, p16-17. "

Also, "Tories in Texas", an essay written by Andrew Forest Muir for the magazine *Historia*. Muir's manuscript is held by the Fondren Library at Rice University and references the Fletcher book and also has a handwritten note "There are two others north of Texas Avenue & west of Whiting Street."

See Appendix, Image 2.

eventually totaled 500 acres. His log house, located just north of today's West Main Street, served as the precinct voting place from 1845 until he bought Evergreen Plantation, just to the east, and moved there in 1849. He served as Harris County Superintendent of Schools for several years and was named as the first President of the Board of Regents of the University of Texas. In March 1860 the State Legislature established the Texas Medical College in Houston with Ashbel Smith elected as the first Vice President⁹ and "Old Red," the first building of the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, built in 1891, was named in his honor.¹⁰ He also served as head of the Board of Commissioners that established Prairie View A&M in 1881.¹¹

After the death of her husband, Mary Jones purchased the 500-acre Headquarters Plantation from Ashbel Smith.¹² She was the widow of Anson Jones, the last President of the Republic of Texas, and her children all lived and grew up at Headquarters. Her youngest son, Cromwell Anson Jones, was the first elected Harris County Judge from 1876 to 1883.¹³

In 1853, Thomas Chubb purchased 100 acres at the mouth of Goose Creek¹⁴ and built his homestead called Pleasant Hill.¹⁵ He would later establish a Confederate shipyard at a place that would become known as Busch Landing. Chubb also purchased a 293-acre tract further north on the creek from Melissa and Gilbert Brooks, the daughter and son-in-law of Harvey Whiting.¹⁶ After the end of the Civil War, Chubb didn't stay long at Goose Creek; in 1865 he sold the property to John E. Franks¹⁷ and moved back to Boston, Massachusetts.¹⁸

Other people living nearby were Henry Flavel Gillette,^a Superintendent of the Bayland Orphan Home¹⁹ and Sam Houston, General of the Texian Army at San Jacinto and twice

^a Henry Flavel Gillette, (1816–1896). In 1866 he was one of a group of men who met in Houston and laid plans for establishing an orphans' home. When, on January 15, 1867, the board of trustees was organized, he was elected superintendent of Bayland Orphans' Home, which he served as manager for fifteen years. After severing his connection with the institution, Gillette spent his declining days at Bell Prairie, where he died on April 25, 1896. <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/gillette-henry-flavel>

President of the Republic.^a David G. Burnet, the first president of Texas, lived just up the road overlooking the bay that bears his name.^b

Thomas Benjamin Gaillard moved to the Goose Creek neighborhood with his family from their war-devastated Adams County, Mississippi plantation in 1867 and purchased a farm at the mouth of Goose Creek stream. He was a Harvard-educated lawyer and deeply interested in education. He convinced Mary Jones to donate a parcel of land to build the first Goose Creek school and, in later years, three of his daughters became school teachers and his son, John I. Gaillard, was heir to the homestead that would become the Goose Creek oil field.

Early industries in the Goose Creek neighborhood were timber cutting and brick making. Early deeds reserved timber rights until the property was paid for. This timber was used for firing steam boilers and much of it was shipped to Galveston for heating and cooking purposes. Over the years there were at least three brick yard locations on Goose Creek. Valentine Dalton²⁰ had a yard at his property on the west bank in 1842 and, later, Samuel Page had one at the former Chubb ship yard and Thomas Edgar had one just to the north where the Baytown Green Center is located on West Main Street today. The Dalton brickyard was probably closed by 1849 when Dalton divorced and moved to Galveston. The Edgar and probably the Page yards were destroyed in the 1875 hurricane.²¹

Drilling for oil at Goose Creek began in 1905 and, three years later, the first producing well came in on property owned by Minnie Gaillard. Drilling continued through the years and a town had formed on Miss Annie Schilling's two-and-a-half acres on Tabb's Bay. As early as 1908, there were rumors that Standard Oil Company might build a refinery at Goose Creek. The following "Personal Notes" are from a 1908 newspaper called the *Goose Creek Weekly Bite*:²²

"Mr. Lee Blaffer, the well-known driller and society man, was with us for a few hours last

^a Sam Houston (March 2, 1793 – July 26, 1863) was an American soldier and politician. His victory at the Battle of San Jacinto secured the independence of Texas from Mexico in one of the shortest decisive battles in modern history. He was also the only governor of a future Confederate state to oppose secession (which led to the outbreak of the American Civil War) and to refuse an oath of allegiance to the Confederacy, a decision that led to his removal from office by the Texas secession convention. <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fho73>

^b David Gouverneur Burnet (April 14, 1788 – December 5, 1870) was an early politician within the Republic of Texas, serving as interim President of Texas (1836 and again in 1841), second Vice President of the Republic of Texas (1839–1841), and Secretary of State (1846) for the new state of Texas after it was annexed to the United States of America. <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fbu46>

Saturday. Lee is a pleasant gentleman to meet. ... Mr. Walter Sharp and Mr. Bill Farish, prominent citizens of Humble, were here last week. Come again, boys! ... It is rumored hereabouts that the Standard Oil Company will build a monster refinery at Goose Creek. This shows how the big fellows are watching our oil field."

In 1913 a post office named Goose Creek was established with Wesley M. Bell as the postmaster.²³ It was first located in his store and later moved to a small tin building, only about 7' x 8',²⁴ but adequate for the population of about 100 people. None of the residents or businessmen owned their property and a provision of their leases was that if the property was ever wanted for drilling, they had 24 hours to move, but the provision seemed to be more a formality than a mandate. On August 23, 1916 a well came in producing 10,000 barrels per day. Immediately, more than 5,000 people from oil fields in the surrounding area moved to Goose Creek where their children overwhelmed the one-room school. Attendance in Cora Lazenby's class jumped from twenty pupils at the end of the spring term to sixty in September, and two hundred by Christmas.²⁵ When C.T. Rucker signed a drilling lease with Miss Annie, the lease clause about moving was not enforced, and people continued living among the derricks. At least they did until December 9, 1916, when the Rucker well No. 1 came in as a gasser, reported to be making 50 million cubic feet of natural gas per day.²⁶ The derrick was demolished, pipe was scattered and, when fires for cooking and heating were banned, the residents vacated the town. Most of them moved about a mile up the road where a new town had been formed, and they loaded up the post office and took it with them. But another town site had been laid out even further north. In 1878, Ashbel Smith had given 800 acres to his niece, Jessie Hull²⁷ and, in 1892, she sold the land to Thomas Wright.²⁸ In September 1916, George and Anna Allen Wright had worked with developer W.E. DeFee and dedicated a 20-acre tract of land for another new town and named it Goose Creek.²⁹ They called it DeFee's townsite, or more commonly, just New Town. On September 26 Jacob Deckard purchased the first lot on Main Street, today named West Sterling Street. A few months later, the Wrights dedicated another 20 acres.³⁰ The forty acres of New Town Goose Creek consisted of the 12 blocks bounded by today's North Main & Third streets and Texas Avenue & Jack Street. After this town was established, the original town of Goose Creek on Tabb's Bay became known as Old Town and the area between them where most people lived became known as Middle Town.

II. OVERVIEW^a

In the summer of 1917, W.T. Terry purchased 95 acres in the Harvey Whiting League from Price Pruett³¹ and 54.08 acres in Wm Scott League from George Wright.³² With his business partners, H.E. Dunseth and G.A. Dutton, he had it surveyed and subdivided in August. They chartered the Goose Creek Realty Company on September 22, 1917 with \$10,000 of capital stock³³ and dedicated the new town of Goose Creek on November 5, 1917.³⁴ This new town completely surrounded the new town recently dedicated by George and Anna Allen Wright and, for a while, they called that one "Old New Town."^b

Although there was another street that carried the name, the real main street in New Town was Texas Avenue, named for the Texas Company (later Texaco). Other streets were named for companies in the oil field: American, Republic, Humble and Gulf Streets and Pearce Street, named for the Pearce brothers who had a machine shop. And still other streets were named for area pioneers: Ashbel, Gaillard, Jones, Pruett, and Whiting. Deeds in the business district required that "there shall never be erected thereon any house, building or other improvement, save such as may be constructed of brick concrete or other materials and character of construction ordinarily classed as fireproof." This requirement continued through subsequent owners³⁵ but it wasn't until 1932 that the Goose Creek City Council codified fire zone limits within the city.³⁶ Like many towns in the South at the time, all the deeds in new town Goose Creek stipulated that "until after January 1, 1935, said lots shall not be sold or rented to any person not of the white or Caucasian race."³⁷ At the time, there was a community of Black families living on the prairie just north of town in the vicinity of today's Martin subdivision just east of Lamar Elementary,³⁸ but they didn't own their land and would soon have to move when the city expanded north.

^a After consolidation of the Tri Cities of Goose Creek, Pelly, and Baytown in 1948 more than 50 street names were changed because of duplicate names. In this narrative, the current street names are used, but before 1948, East and West Sterling Street was named East and West Main Street, and North and South Main Street was named North and South Goose Creek Street. Contemporary end note references reflect the original names.

^b "New Townsite – Goose Creek's new townsite- the fourth one in the history of the town, has been surveyed off, the streets graded and it is beginning to take on the aspects of a town. The Dayton-Goose Creek railroad has been graded up to the new town, which is north of 'Middletown' and west of 'old Newtown'." Gulf Coast Oil News, September 8, 1917, p6.

Due to the explosive growth in the student population at Goose Creek, Cedar Bayou Independent School District was formed in 1917³⁹ from the former Harris County School District 15. The first school in New Town Goose Creek opened in 1917 on West Main Street (today's Sterling Street) where the K'neseth Israel Synagogue stands today.⁴⁰ It was a former bunk shack donated by Gulf Production Company and was used for grades 1-6. In 1919, Goose Creek ISD was formed from part of Cedar Bayou ISD and also absorbed Wooster School District 38. The YMCA building on the corner of Gaillard and Pearce streets was leased for classes in 1919.⁴¹

Rev. James W. Anderson moved to the Goose Creek neighborhood in January 1918 and started a Baptist church in the Queen Theater in Middle Town. After it burned to the ground a month later^a he built a frame church⁴² on Texas Avenue at Second Street.⁴³ At the time of incorporation in 1919, it was the only established church that existed in New Town Goose Creek. The church was moved to a lot on West Pearce Street in 1928 and later moved to a new building on West Sterling Street and renamed the church Memorial Baptist.⁴⁴

After the drastic increase in population following the 1916 oil gusher,⁴⁵ a new Goose Creek Post Office was desperately needed. But a permanent office would not be built at Middle Town⁴⁶ because, just like Old Town, the entire settlement was located on ground where drilling could begin at any time. E.C. Slaughter was named the new Goose Creek postmaster in August, 1917 and after Humble Oil & Refining Company President Ross S. Sterling completed the Dayton-Goose Creek Railroad into New Town the following April, the 7'x9' post office building was dragged to a lot on East Sterling Street between North Main and First Street. The train would be able to carry mail straight to New Town, with no delays because of transportation. The pre-planned move was made overnight so they wouldn't have to be handing out mail while it was taking place. A new post office with 600 lock boxes was planned on Texas Avenue,⁴⁷ just east of Ashbel Street next to Guaranty State Bank.⁴⁸ It remained at this location until 1937 when a new

^a The (Queen) theater name was derived by a comparison of several sources. The April 21, 1917 *Gulf Coast Oil News* stated that there were three theaters in Goose Creek and the Feb 11, 1918 *the Houston Post* reported a fire that burned the Queen Theater along with several other buildings. The history of Memorial Baptist Church states that Anderson moved to Goose Creek and began preaching in an old theater that burned down in February 1918. After that, he held meetings in the Dixie Theater that later became Central Baptist Church; [The Houston Chronicle, Sep 10, 1918, p11](#).

Goose Creek Post Office^a was opened on Defee Street.⁴⁹ That office remained in use until it was replaced in 1985.⁵⁰ The building on Defee remains in use today as the Baytown Historical Museum.

In February 12, 1917 C.C. and J.T. Goolsbee of Warren and A.L. Clarke of Goose Creek had chartered the Goose Creek Mercantile Company with capital stock of \$10,000. For the first year in business they were located in Middle Town but on March 16, 1918, they purchased a lot in the Goose Creek townsite and moved their store next to East Sterling Street between North Main Street and First Street.

In March 1918, a group of residents from the Goose Creek Civic League had applied to the Harris County Commissioners Court to incorporate as the city of Goose Creek. They intended for the entire New-Middle-Old Towns to be included, but for some reason, that proposal didn't go anywhere. In December the Goose Creek Civic League held a town meeting to discuss incorporation again, but this time, it only included Middle Town and Old Town.⁵¹ The political intrigue can only be imagined because on December 16th, before anything could happen with that proposal, W.T. Terry presented a petition signed by 56 persons "asking for an election to determine whether or not the town of Goose Creek be incorporated for municipal purposes" and Harris County Judge Chester H. Bryan ordered the election be held January 28, 1919.⁵² The city limits was to only include land purchased from Pruett and Wright (meaning the Wiggins land in Middle Town was not included) and extended west to the big oak tree that still stands on Texas Avenue.⁵³ The results of the election were 35 for Incorporation and 0 against. W.E. Bussey was elected Mayor and the two Commissioners were E.C. Slaughter and L.F. Smith⁵⁴ and the vote was confirmed by County Judge Chester H. Bryan on February 17, 1919.⁵⁵ Over the next few months, the new city set about forming a government. J.M. Johnson was the city secretary; W.C. Stovall was appointed tax collector; Fatty Ashwood was the city scavenger, or garbage collector; S.T. Deason was city attorney; and Dr. Lilly was appointed city health officer.⁵⁶

^a Built in 1936-37 as the Goose Creek Post Office, this structure served as the area's main postal facility for almost fifty years. Designed by architect Louis a. Simon, the early international style building features an interior fresco mural commissioned as part of the Federal Arts Program of the Works Progress Administration. After the post office moved from this building in 1985, it became the home of the Baytown Historical Museum. Recorded Texas Historic Landmark - 1988

One of the first acts of the council was to instruct City Marshal C.S. Gibson to “get busy and pick up a few of the speeders who are trying their speed through the city limits.” They had a lot of problems with jitneys (what they called taxis) tying up parking spots.⁵⁷ They also had problems with livestock roaming the streets.⁵⁸ In 1921, Mrs. J.A. Hester was on her way to town when Mr. Roberts attempted to dodge some horses in the street. In some way the cars collided near Loomis Hardware, damaging both cars considerably.⁵⁹ Raymond Fayle was paid \$17 for feeding and taking care of one “outlaw hog.” Stray dogs were a constant problem which fell to the responsibility of the City Marshal. Most of the business district was still wood-frame construction so they passed a fireworks ordinance.

Fraternal and service organizations were always a vital part of life in Goose Creek. The International Order of Oddfellows (IOOF) and Rebekahs were among the first, organized before the city was chartered. Their first lodge was on Wright at Second Street and in 1922 they erected a new lodge building at the corner of Texas Avenue and Jones Street.⁶⁰ The chapters are inactive but the building on Texas Avenue is still standing. The Masons chartered at Goose Creek in 1923.⁶¹ The Masonic Hall, also used by the Order of the Eastern Star, still stands on Texas Avenue at Gaillard Street⁶² although they meet elsewhere today. Other organizations of note in early Goose Creek were the Veterans of Foreign Wars (1922), Optimist Club (1925), Rotary Club (1928), Lions Club (1928), and the Kiwanis Club (1946). They are all still active chapters today.

On May 9, 1919, Frank Boyer began publishing the *Goose Creek Gasser* as a weekly newspaper⁶³ in the office on South Main Street.⁶⁴ By 1923 it had become a semi-weekly publication and, in 1925, combined with the *Democrat* and the *Consolidated* newspapers to become the *Semi-Weekly Tribune*,⁶⁵ and then *The Daily Tribune*. Still later, on July 19, 1931, the paper was renamed as the *Tri-Cities Sun*.⁶⁶ After completion of the Hog Island Morgan's Point ferry in 1933, the name of the paper was changed again. The editorial on Page 1 of the newly-renamed *Daily Sun* stated that "Beginning today the Tri-Cities Sun becomes 'The Daily Sun of Goose Creek, Baytown, Pelly, La Porte, and surrounding area,' the change of name typifying the broadened territory being served by this daily newspaper as a result of the opening of the Tabb's Bay highway project."⁶⁷

By mid-1918, a new 50,000 gallon concrete water tower had been completed near the intersection of Pearce and Commerce Streets and work had begun on a modern water and sewerage system.⁶⁸ This installation was particularly needed to combat the typhoid epidemic that had been running rampant in the area due to shallow water wells. The concrete tower stayed in use until early 1928 when it was replaced by a 60,000 gallon steel tower.⁶⁹ The Goose Creek Light and Power Company was chartered in November 1919, by W.W. Sloan, R.S. Sterling, and T.D. Joiner, Jr. with capital stock of \$75,000.⁷⁰ On January 27, 1920, the Goose Creek City Council granted the company a franchise to do business in the city,⁷¹ and sometime before 1923, the utilities were combined into the Goose Creek Lighting and Water Company. Houston Lighting & Power Company purchased the company and took over operations in 1925.⁷² The Goose Creek neighborhood received its first telephone line in 1911 when William Truxaw extended service from Crosby to A.W. Fayle's store at Busch Landing. He extended the line to the oil field south of Middle Town in 1912⁷³ and, in June 1918, the Goose Creek Telephone Company purchased a lot on N. Main Street at Texas Avenue⁷⁴ and built a new office.⁷⁵ They stayed there until 1924 when the office was moved to a lot on N. Ashbel Street⁷⁶ where it remained until after consolidation in 1947.⁷⁷

Before the year's end in 1919, the city of Goose Creek was looking to expand. On November 25th, the City Commissioners voted to annex an approximately 95-acre tract of land just south of the city limits. Some landowners there had signed a petition asking to be annexed and had voted in favor of annexation.⁷⁸ But when word leaked out of the impending action, landowners living further south saw it as a threat. A group of businessmen led by Fred T. Pelly organized their own petition drive and presented it to the Harris County Commissioners Court a few days before the Goose Creek annexation.⁷⁹ The subsequent election in Middle Town resulted in the incorporation of the city of Pelly on December 6, 1919.⁸⁰ The confusion and legal action over which city actually ruled the area and to which city taxes would be due would rage for more than three years until May 14, 1923 when the Goose Creek City Council voided the annexation.⁸¹ This action also set the stage for mutual mistrust between the two cities that would continue for the lifetime of both cities, almost thirty years.

Camp Logan in Houston had been built as an army training camp at the beginning of World War I and after the war ended, it was dismantled and the YMCA building was moved to Goose Creek in late 1919. The YMCA opened in January 1920 and had a gymnasium, showers,

classrooms and a movie projector.⁸² By the Fall school term, scholastic population of Goose Creek had grown to the point that the Board of Directors agreed to let the school board use the building and in 1921 the building was remodeled to add more classrooms.⁸³ It continued in use as a school until the new brick schools were built in Pelly in 1923.

The Goose Creek Amusement Company opened the Oiler Theater on Commerce at Defee Street in early 1920. At the time, there were two movie houses just to the south in Pelly; the Cozy and Dixie theaters, but the Oiler was the first movie house in Goose Creek. They showed movies as well as hosting vaudeville performers.⁸⁴ The theater was a wood-frame building and it burned to the ground in June 1921,⁸⁵ but it was rebuilt and opened three months later in September, with a movie titled "Reputation."⁸⁶ The Oiler would continue in use for several more years, eventually being replaced in 1927 by the Texan Theater on Texas Avenue. After the Oiler closed as a theater, it was used for wrestling matches and church services and, eventually, a furniture warehouse. The building was finally destroyed by fire in 1974.⁸⁷

The Goose Creek branch of the Harris County Public Library was opened in 1921 in the office of the *Goose Creek Gasser*, but it was soon realized that the space was too small. They moved to the YMCA and when the new school buildings were completed in 1923 they moved there and remained until the summer of 1924. When school closed for the summer, the library was moved again to the Pruett building on Texas Avenue with the agreement that they could stay there until the space was rented. After several more moves the frustrated librarian asked Humble Oil & Refining Company President and future Governor of the State of Texas, Ross S. Sterling, if his company could help pay rent on another location. But Sterling had a different idea and immediately began to plan the Goose Creek library building. When it opened on August 11, 1925, it was the first branch library building of a county library system in the State of Texas.⁸⁸ The library building stood on Texas Avenue⁸⁹ until the new Sterling Municipal Public Library opened in February 1963.⁹⁰

Henry Cathriner bought the first lots on Texas Avenue on April 24th, 1918,⁹¹ and built a brick building which was the first home of Citizens State Bank.⁹² By 1926 he had opened his Ford dealership there. His building is still standing and is the oldest structure on Texas Avenue, today occupied by Bay Vending Company. The name "Cathriner" still shows on the building cornice on the Pearce Street side. Next to Cathriner's building was the DeLuxe Theater, built in

1929.⁹³ In 1940 the theater was completely remodeled and reopened as the Palace Theater. The building was demolished in the 1980s along with all the other buildings on the block on the south side of the street (except Cathriner) which, in 1926, were A&P Grocery Store, Ira Guberman's Dry Goods, Wallace Jewelry Store, Busch & Casey Grocery Store, Herring's Drug Store, and Harvey Hardware.

Goose Creek Mayor W.E. Bussey bought the corner lot right across the street in November 1918 where he started the Goose Creek Undertaking Company. In 1926 there was only a filling station on the north corner of Commerce and Texas Avenue but a couple of years later it was demolished and Claude Smith built the brick building which is still standing. There are four storefronts in that building and, in 1929, they were occupied by The Dollar Store, Shotwell's Store, Hamilton's Plumbing, and Lewis Barber Shop. Other buildings on the north side of the block dating from the mid-1920s were Woolworth & Co (Baytown Art League), Ilfrey Hardware, The Variety Store, American Barber Shop (still there), Beall's Grocery Store, E. Aron's Clothing Store (Max Altman's from 1942 to 1948, Umbrella Alley today), Goose Creek Pharmacy, the U.S. post office, and Security State Bank.⁹⁴

On the north side of Texas Avenue between Ashbel and Gaillard were L&K Dollar Store built by Ira Guberman (today's Love & Restoration), T.L. Culpepper Furniture Co, Texan Sweet Shop and Texan Theater (Wasabi Sushi Bar and Sabor of Mexico ice cream parlor), Kilpatrick's Smart Shoppe (which has housed several restaurants over the years), the Original Culpepper's Furniture Co (Goose Creek Emporium), and Lambright Garage (Dirty Bay), all built before 1926. All the buildings on the south side were demolished in the 1980s and included Citizens State Bank which most people remember as Max Altman's, the Brooks Building, Bernstein Bros, Tri-City Café, and the Blue Bird Lunch Stand. City Park is there now. The bank was the only building built before 1926. The Economy Grocery Store (today's TSO) with the Masonic Hall upstairs and the Goose Creek Library (demolished in 1963) were built around 1924 between Gaillard and Jones and the Oddfellows Lodge (still there, it's the white building) was across the intersection. Right across Texas Avenue from the library was Fred Dittman's car dealership. The Gulf filling station sat caddy-corner at Pruett. The city limits ended at the big oak tree just past Whiting Street.⁹⁵

The Goose Creek Chamber of Commerce was organized late in 1921 with three stated goals; to deepen Goose Creek for navigation, establish a system of free mail delivery, and acquire a commercial telegraph system. In response to a petition circulating at the time, they were also fervently against changing the name of the city to Baytown.⁹⁶ By mid-1924 had a membership of 150⁹⁷ and, in June, they held their first trade day that drew about 250 guests from the surrounding territory.⁹⁸ As early as 1929, the Goose Creek C. of C. was advocating for consolidation of the Tri-Cities of Goose Creek, Pelly, and Baytown to also include the city of Stewart Heights to the north of Goose Creek.⁹⁹ They were also pivotal in establishing the Goose Creek airport, the Goose Creek Hospital,¹⁰⁰ and publication of the City Directory. By this time, population of Goose Creek proper was near 8,000.¹⁰¹ After resisting a name change in 1922, the Goose Creek Chamber of Commerce endorsed changing the name of the city to Southport¹⁰² in 1930 and even got it on the ballot¹⁰³ but was voted down in a general election. In 1932, the Chamber was lobbying for a state highway to run from the Houston-Shreveport State Highway through the Tri-Cities to connect with Galveston.¹⁰⁴ This came to fruition in 1933 with the completion of the Tabb's Bay Causeway Project,¹⁰⁵ the Hog Island Ferry,¹⁰⁶ and the ultimate completion of the route through the Tri-Cities as Texas Highway 146 in 1937.¹⁰⁷ Throughout the Great Depression, the Chamber worked to bring jobs to the area. They were instrumental in the WPA curb and gutter project in 1938,¹⁰⁸ and that year began lobbying for a tunnel to replace the ferry on Highway 146.¹⁰⁹ In 1945 the Chambers of Commerce of Goose Creek, Pelly, and Baytown consolidated into the Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce.¹¹⁰ After the new city charter was approved in January 1948 changing the name of the city, the Chamber became the Baytown Chamber of Commerce¹¹¹ and remains active to this day.

Like most principal streets at the time, Texas Avenue was paved with oyster shell,¹¹² and all the other streets in town were paved with dirt. Dust and mud were major problems even with the shell so in 1923 the citizens of Goose Creek approved a \$100,000 bond election for street paving.¹¹³ This project put asphalt topping on the principal streets and oyster shell on all the other streets within the city limits.¹¹⁴ This was great for traffic and dust but it aggravated a water runoff problem for merchants. Beginning in 1929, another street improvement project was initiated for installing curbs and gutters to improve drainage. According to the plan approved by city council, property owners could secure construction of sidewalk, curb and gutter at a cost of \$1.60 per foot. If only a curb and gutter were desired it would be 80 cents a foot.¹¹⁵ The

following year city council discussed curbs and gutters for an additional 19 blocks in the business section¹¹⁶ and this is when the blue and white tile street markers were placed at intersections on curbs along Texas Avenue,^a Pearce, and Defee Streets. On W. Texas Avenue, they were all removed in 1974, and only a few are left elsewhere. None of the other streets in town were marked at all¹¹⁷ so, while the curb and gutter work was being done,¹¹⁸ street markers made of steel were being installed elsewhere in town.¹¹⁹ When the depression hit in 1933, the Works Progress Administration, a New Deal program which provided employment to millions of people who would have otherwise been unemployed during the depression, took over the project. Under the WPA the only cost to property owners was the price of materials. A curb built in 1938¹²⁰ at the corner of Pearce and Gaillard streets still displays the WPA stamp.¹²¹

For the first seven years of Goose Creek's existence as an incorporated city, there was no organized fire department. When the Oiler Theater burned down in 1921 citizens from all over town responded to put the fire out, but not before it destroyed several businesses.¹²² So, in August 1925, 20 men met to form a volunteer fire department. They elected C.H. Hale as interim fire chief and arranged for the La Porte Fire Department to give a demonstration. The Goose Creek Volunteer Fire Department was officially organized in November 1925 with L.D. Epperson elected as chief over a 23-man team.¹²³ Shortly afterwards, they got their first truck, a Seagraves triple combination hose, pump and chemical truck and for the time being, they kept it in the Oddfellows Hall on Texas Avenue.¹²⁴ When the new city municipal building was built in 1928, it was built large enough to house two fire trucks¹²⁵ with rooms upstairs for city administrators, the Red Cross, the Chamber of Commerce, and the fire team.¹²⁶

Goose Creek received light rail for passenger service in 1927. There had been talk of establishing an interurban system into Houston as early as 1917,¹²⁷ but it wasn't until Harry K. Johnson finally completed the Houston-North Shore Railway that it came to fruition. Later bought by Missouri Pacific, it ran from the main depot on Texas Avenue in Goose Creek through Pelly, Baytown, Highlands, and several other towns, finally arriving in Houston. The repair facility was just to the south at the west end of East Republic Street. At the height of operation,

^a "On motion of Commissioner Thibodaux, seconded by Commissioner Martin and unanimously carried, the City Manager was instructed to look into the matter of marking the name of the streets which have recently been paved and those that are about to be paved, with tile lettering in the curb at each street intersection, and if the costs were not prohibitive, to proceed with the work of having the street names so designated." Goose Creek City Council Minutes Apr 28, 1930, p150. See Appendix, Image 16.

the line had seven single cars, each powered by a 600 volt 40 hp motor from the electrical cables stretched overhead, and ran every 30 minutes. In 1948 the electric cars¹²⁸ were replaced by gasoline rail buses and the operation continued until it was finally shut down in 1962.¹²⁹

The Harris County jail and courthouse at Goose Creek had been built in 1917 when the sudden influx of thousands of oil field workers had brought lawlessness to the area. Within three months of its opening, it had to be enlarged. After the peak of drilling ended in 1920, the facility had returned to adequacy, but by 1925, a new jail was badly needed.

People today take "green space" for granted but before 1930 Goose Creek had no city park. That year, the Goose Creek Park Commission was formed with 25 citizens appointed by Mayor Powell. Mrs. Tom Pruett was elected president¹³⁰ and a month later a site of city owned land was designated as Goose Creek's first city park. The initial development included the planting of 200 rose bushes¹³¹ and when time came to prune the plants, the cuttings were handed out for free at city hall.¹³² The next Goose Creek city park was on the bank of Cedar Bayou. In 1946, Rosa Kilgore donated a tract of land to the citizens of east Harris and west Chambers counties,¹³³ known today as Roseland Park.

In the early days of the Tri-Cities, doctors had their own practices and were on call 24-7. Finally, in 1919, they formed the Goose Creek Medical Society and were able to establish regular office hours, but the nearest hospital was in Houston. The Humble Company had a hospital for employees and admitted the public when space allowed, but by 1929 it was still the only hospital in the area and its service was increasingly limited by its size. So, in December of that year, the Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce decided to establish a new hospital to serve residents of east Harris County from Lynchburg to Crosby to Cedar Bayou.¹³⁴ The Goose Creek Hospital was chartered on January 13, 1932 by Doctors William N. Brooks, Lawson A. Hankins, and Charles H. Langford.¹³⁵ The twelve-room hospital with a five-bed capacity opened on the second floor of the Guberman Building in January 1932.¹³⁶ Dr. Nichols Dudley maintained a clinic on Ashbel Street just north of the building,¹³⁷ enlarging it and rebranding as an ENT hospital in 1930.¹³⁸ The hospital in the Guberman building served its purpose, but the Tri-Cities were growing rapidly and by the end of 1933 plans were being made for a larger facility.¹³⁹ In 1935 the partners bought the Hines Hotel, a boarding house run by Mrs. Nettie Hines, on Defee Street¹⁴⁰ and completely remodeled it, enlarging the building for eleven more beds and adding brick veneer covering the entire structure.¹⁴¹ The opening of the Lillie Duke Hospital on Pearce

Street the following year¹⁴² provided additional much-needed bed-space for the community and was undoubtedly welcome news for the beleaguered physicians. When Drs. Neal and Ben Ammons opened their dental clinic across Defee Street from the Goose Creek hospital in 1938,¹⁴³ the area was becoming a true medical center, with three hospitals and several clinics all within walking distance. Dr. Spear opened his dentist office just south of the big oak tree in 1946.¹⁴⁴ Although not in the business district, construction of the San Jacinto Memorial Hospital was begun on Decker Drive in 1946¹⁴⁵ with the facility opening in 1949.¹⁴⁶

By 1944 Texas Avenue was again badly in need of repair so, in February, plans were made to carry out a topping project from the big oak tree to Goose Creek Street. Since Texas Avenue had been designated a county highway after Market Street was built, crews from the city and county would work together to spread 10 carloads of crushed rock¹⁴⁷ and spray a thin asphalt topping. They figured it would take a week to do the job.¹⁴⁸ As it turned out the crews (even Pelly helped) swarmed the job and completed it in just one long day in June.¹⁴⁹ It was really an impressive outcome considering the constrictions and rationing imposed by the war effort. But the topping did not perform as advertised. Within a couple of months they started looking into a different topping¹⁵⁰ and, after trials of different materials on other streets,¹⁵¹ concluded that concrete was the best paving solution. So in July 1945, the citizens of Goose Creek overwhelmingly approved a \$600,000 bond election with \$300,000 earmarked to pave forty blocks with concrete and 29 miles of secondary streets with asphalt topping. While the streets were torn up, another part of the project was to install water and sewer piping beneath the road.¹⁵²

By 1947 a ten million dollar building boom had started on Texas Avenue.¹⁵³ That year Texas Hardware (Executive Catering) and Hemphill Pontiac (The Avenue Loft Apartments) were built west of the big oak tree to anchor the business district on that end¹⁵⁴ and both buildings are still there.

Annexations

Stewart Heights had become an incorporated city in 1928, but they voted to dissolve the charter in 1930 and several times over the next few years Goose Creek had considered annexation of the community. Plans in 1933 were called off due to the Great Depression and another plan in 1937 broke down as well. But in November 1940, the city of Goose Creek

annexed Morrell Park & Stewart Heights.¹⁵⁵ Morrell Park extended all the way to Goose Creek stream, forming a north arm that surrounded a 300-acre tract of unincorporated land on the east side of the creek between Park Street and today's Bicentennial Park. The city of Goose Creek annexed this territory in January 1945,¹⁵⁶ setting the stage for a future annexation of Busch Terrace just across the creek. Most of Busch Terrace no longer exists; just a few streets and a few houses east of the refinery, but in 1945 it was an up-and-coming subdivision that provided a contiguous path to a future annexation of the unincorporated town of Baytown. Goose Creek didn't jump the stream that year because of laws limiting the annual annexation to a percentage of the city's area.

But what Goose Creek's annexation mostly accomplished was to prompt Pelly to re-charter as a Home Rule City.¹⁵⁷ That designation allowed them to annex territory without consent of the residents, and that is exactly what they did on December 9th, 1945 when they annexed the entirety of Baytown and Busch Terrace. The move was highly unpopular among Baytown residents. In a formal statement, Eddie Cleveland, the mayor of Pelly, attributed the action as fear of Goose Creek because the recent annexation by that city created a feeling that Pelly would be encircled. Immediately after the annexation, C. Q. Alexander, the mayor of Goose Creek, appeared at a Pelly City Council meeting and asked that the city of Pelly withdraw its city limits from Goose Creek stream so the city of Goose Creek could annex that territory.¹⁵⁸ Goose Creek had also filed a lawsuit claiming that Pelly's charter at the time did not permit the annexation of the Hill of Rest Cemetery and Lee High School in 1928. Goose Creek proceeded to annex that land¹⁵⁹ and Pelly filed suit. The case would be settled the following year when the Court of Civil Appeals in Galveston ruled in Pelly's favor.¹⁶⁰

Goose Creek came up swinging in January 1946 when they annexed a large tract of land on the east side of town from Texas Avenue to Fayle Street all the way to Cedar Bayou, continuing north to Cedar Bayou Road.¹⁶¹

Then it was Pelly's turn, so they grabbed Lee Heights and Gulf Hill, which had been surrounded by the Baytown annexation, and all the land between the city and the newly completed Texas Highway 146 in July.¹⁶² Meanwhile, the Baytown Water District's board had filed suit¹⁶³ and a year-long court fight followed over whether a city could annex a water district since the problem had no precedent.¹⁶⁴ The court finally ruled against Baytown in October 1946.

Another annexation by Pelly in November of that year boosted the city's population even more.¹⁶⁵ An annexation by Goose Creek in January 1947 didn't add many residents or much territory, but did bring Roseland Park and what would later become Eva Maud Subdivision into the city.

Consolidation and a New City Charter

After unsuccessful attempts in 1929,¹⁶⁶ 1931,¹⁶⁷ 1939,¹⁶⁸ and 1944,¹⁶⁹ Goose Creek and Pelly finally consolidated by popular vote on March 7, 1947.¹⁷⁰ Out of 1643 votes cast, 1347 were for consolidation with only 280 against.¹⁷¹ Pelly had the greater population because of the annexations,¹⁷² so the city of Goose Creek was dissolved and was annexed by Pelly. With Eddie Cleveland as mayor, Pelly became the second largest city in Harris County. *The Daily Sun* had a contest to guess the total combined population and Claude C. Foster won the \$100 prize with a guess of 20,983.¹⁷³ In recognition of its demise, the doors of Goose Creek City Hall were draped with black crepe as the city council convened its last meeting to count consolidation ballots.¹⁷⁴ Two months later the city of Pelly annexed three additional tracts of land.¹⁷⁵

Lots of folks in the former Tri-Cities refused to acknowledge that they lived in Pelly. *The Daily Sun* continued to show Goose Creek as the home of record. No maps were made showing the city of Pelly in 1947 but, for the next ten months, it was the second largest city in Harris County. Before consolidation, the three towns had had their own post offices and, in the interim, they continued to use the former city names in the addresses. There were 83 streets in the Tri-Cities with duplicate names¹⁷⁶ (Baytown, Pelly, Busch Terrace and Wooster all had an Avenue A) and, in anticipation of a single post office, all these duplicate streets had to be renamed. Veteran directory compiler Herbert Page said it was the toughest job in his 32 years in the business. Besides the street names, about 18,000 residents' addresses were changed to correspond to the uniform numbering system used by the postal department. So even if your street name didn't change, your house number probably did. The intersection of Texas Avenue and N. Main Street was designated as the hypothetical center of the new city and became the basic reference point. It would take Page until July 1948 to finish the job.¹⁷⁷ Goose Creek was mostly spared from the street renaming, with only a few streets involved. ~~The original~~ Goose Creek Street became North and South Main Street and East and West Main Street became East and West Sterling Street.

On January 24th 1948, people went to the polls again to vote on a new city charter. The name of Goose Creek had been a bone of contention from the early days of the community.^a There was a petition circulated in 1921 advocating that the name be changed to Baytown.¹⁷⁸ In 1930, ridicule of the name and wide publicity brought about through Ku Klux Klan activities in the early 1920s prompted civic leaders to try to change the name.^b Suggested names were San Jacinto, Bayport, and Southbay.¹⁷⁹ The Chamber of Commerce had endorsed changing the name to Southport¹⁸⁰ and even got it on the ballot¹⁸¹ but was voted down. Almost nobody, including Fred Pelly himself, wanted to keep Pelly as the new name. A few folks, mostly from Goose Creek, wanted Goose Creek as the name. But a straw poll had shown overwhelming support for adopting Baytown as the name of the new city. There was a huge turnout despite the weather; the morning temperature was 19.8 degrees. By noon the voting had picked up and by four o'clock, polling places were running short of ballots. The city had originally ordered 1,500 but upped the order to 2,000 at the last minute. Even that wasn't enough, so they had to order another 500 ballots from the printers. The measure passed by 1,888 to 254. The two precincts in old Baytown passed by a 24 to 1 margin and even the Pelly precinct passed by 193 to 108.¹⁸² And interestingly, residents living in Goose Creek before March 1947 could claim to have lived in three cities, Goose Creek, Pelly, and Baytown, without ever having moved.

Over the next few years the business district on Texas Avenue in old Goose Creek began to outshine those in Pelly and old Baytown, and in the 1950s, the Pelly and old Baytown business districts began to fall into decay as shoppers turned their attention to Texas Avenue.¹⁸³ Through the 1960s and 1970s, the old Goose Creek business district was a thriving hub of activity with the Brunson Theater, two banks, and numerous stores doing business. That all changed beginning in the 1980s when the San Jacinto Shopping Mall opened five miles north of town. Stores that had anchored Texas Avenue moved north and even the Brunson Theater finally closed. Today, many of the brick buildings have been demolished and others shuttered, but the renovation of the Brunson Theater as the Baytown Tourism Department and the opening of the

^a "This pursuit of petroleum turns up some funny names. There's Goose Creek for instance. But Doodle Hill has 'em all beat. It takes the cake." *Fuel Oil Journal*, June 1916, p69.

^b "Vaudeville performers years ago introduced the name Goose Creek into their programs and brought laughs to hundreds throughout the nation. "'Goose Creek named for Tiny Stream ...,'" [The Houston Chronicle, May 21, 1937, p17.](#)

Tax Office at the location of the old Citizens Bank building bring hope for new development on Texas Avenue.

The name of Goose Creek still figures prominently into the fabric of Baytown today. The school district, originally named Goose Creek ISD, became Goose Creek Consolidated ISD when it merged with Cedar Bayou ISD in 1954. One of the high schools is named Goose Creek Memorial, and another retains the Gander as its school mascot. The Goose Creek Country Club retained the name until it closed in 2014. The Goose Creek Masonic Lodge #1192 is still an active chapter. The Goose Creek Hike and Bike Trail following the stream is in under continual development and several subdivisions in Baytown bear the name. The Goose Creek oil field is still known by that name in oil circles and the time-honored Goose Creek stream still courses through the middle of the city.

III. SIGNIFICANCE

Goose Creek appears as the name of a stream on Stephen F. Austin's 1830 map of Texas and provided the name for the community that grew on its east bank. For a number of years the community of Goose Creek had an outsized role in local history as the voting place for much of east Harris County. After oil was discovered in 1908 the population began to grow and, in 1913, a post office named Goose Creek was established in the town, located among the derricks on Tabb's Bay. A series of oil well blowouts in 1916 forced the residents to flee, moving to two towns to the north that became known as Middle Town and New Town. A six-room former bunk-shack opened as a school in New Town in 1917. The Goose Creek Post Office was moved to Middle Town and moved again to New Town after the Dayton Goose Creek Railroad was completed in 1918.

New Town was incorporated as the City of Goose Creek on January 28, 1919 and Middle Town was incorporated as the City of Pelly on December 6, 1919. Baytown, the third community of the Tri-Cities, remained unincorporated. Students from all three towns attended the same high school but each had its own churches, parks, ruling councils, business districts and competition between them could best be described as a mutual distrust. Ross S. Sterling, president of Humble Oil and Refining Company and later Governor of Texas, was a major benefactor of Goose Creek, bringing in the railroad, building a library, and later selling town lots through his company, Sterling Properties. A very active Chamber of Commerce was instrumental in bringing in an airport, hospitals, and State Highway 146. By the late 1930s, Goose Creek was becoming a true medical center, with three hospitals and several clinics, all within walking distance. The business district on Texas Avenue was becoming a showplace with an active business community drawing in shoppers from the surrounding area.

After World War II ended in 1945, the three towns' Chambers of Commerce consolidated, becoming the Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce. A few months later, the city of Pelly annexed unincorporated Baytown, starting a string of annexations by Pelly and Goose Creek that culminated in a vote for consolidation of the two cities in 1947. Another vote in 1948 established Baytown as the name for the new city. The old Goose Creek business district became the de facto center of commerce of Baytown for the next thirty years until the retail and business sector moved north to newer parts of the city.

IV. DOCUMENTATION

History of Goose Creek Texas, 1917-1934, unpublished, by Katherine Adele Spence, who was a teacher at C. Anson Jones Elementary in 1934. This history was collected in preparation for a History Pageant put on by the schools in Goose Creek ISD. In Mrs. Spence's words; "I was assigned the time from 1919 to 1934 (seventeen years). I gathered all my information from personal interviews with every old-timer who lived through all of the old boom days. Every old timer would send me to someone else to find out something new and different." Courtesy of the Baytown History Museum.

Sterling Municipal Public Library, Baytown Texas is a resource for historical material such as City Directories back to 1929, Telephone books, and a large collection of photographs and other research materials.

[Goose Creek City Council Minutes](#), 1919-1947. Hosted by the City of Baytown,

The History of Baytown by Margaret Swett Henson. (Bay Area Heritage Society, Baytown, Texas; 1985.)

The Baytown Sun was started as a weekly publication, *The Goose Creek Gasser*, in 1919. By 1928, the paper was operating under the name *Daily Tribune*. In 1931 it became *The Daily Sun*. After the towns of Baytown, Goose Creek and Pelly incorporated into one city, with Baytown being the chosen name, the paper was given its current name, *The Baytown Sun*.

<http://www.baytownhistory.org/images/BaytownSunMarkerApp.pdf>

The Houston Chronicle is the largest daily newspaper in Houston, Texas, United States. As of April 2016, it is the third-largest newspaper by Sunday circulation in the United States, behind only The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times. With its 1995 buy-out of long-time rival *The Houston Post*, the *Chronicle* became Houston's newspaper of record. Archival issues dating from 1901 are available online at [NewsBank](#).

The Houston Post, founded in 1880, was a newspaper that had its headquarters in Houston, Texas, United States. In 1995, the newspaper shut down, and its assets were purchased by the *Houston Chronicle*. Archival issues dating from 1880 are available online at [NewsBank](#).

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V. APPENDIX

Goose Creek Mayors¹⁸⁴

W.E. Bussey, 1919-1922
C. I. Fortinberry, 1923-1926
H. W. Kilpatrick, 1927-1928
J.W. Powell, 1929-1930
C.R. Myers, 1931-1934
J.H. Meek, 1935-1944
C. Q. Alexander, 1945-1947

Schools from 1917-1948, Goose Creek ISD, 1919-1954

The Barn, (grades 1-6), 1917-1923
The YMCA, (grades 7-11), 1919-1923
Goose Creek Ward School (C. Anson Jones grammar school, actually in Pelly), 1923-198?
Goose Creek High School (aka Anson Jones Sr Hi, actually in Pelly. Remodeled and renamed as Horace Mann Jr High in 1928), 1923-1995
Robert E. Lee High School, actually in Pelly, 1928-Present¹⁸⁵
Lee College, began in Pelly moved to Baytown in 1948, 1934-Present¹⁸⁶
Ashbel Smith Elementary, 1929-Present
Lamar Elementary, 1929-Present
Alamo Elementary, 1929-Present, (built in Stewart Heights, annexed by Goose Creek)

Churches from 1917-1948 (dates are first meetings, not charter dates)¹⁸⁷

First Baptist (Memorial Baptist), 1918¹⁸⁸
First Presbyterian, 1922
Grace Methodist, 1921
K'nesseth Israel Synagogue, 1929^a
Primitive Baptist, before 1929
First Episcopal, 1918
First Christian, 1921
Church of Christ, before 1939
Assembly of God, before 1929
Trinity Tabernacle, before 1939
Redeemer Lutheran, 1925
Tri City Baptist, 1938
Stewart Heights Baptist, 1940
Church of the Nazarene, 1942

Theaters¹⁸⁹

^a In response to area population growth following the early 20th century Goose Creek oil field boom, twenty incorporating members formed the K'Nesseth Israel congregation in 1928 to serve the area's Jewish residents. They hired Houston architect Leonard Gabert to design this synagogue, which was completed in 1930. Outstanding features of the structure include its barrel vault roof, round-headed stained glass windows, and arched brickwork entry. Recorded Texas Historic Landmark - 1991

Oiler Theater, 1919-1927
Texan Theater, 1927-1953
DeLuxe Theater, (renamed the Palace in 1940) 1929 -1949

Postmasters¹⁹⁰

Wesley M. Bell, 1913-1916
Ezra H. McKay, 1916-1917
Eddie C. Slaughter, 1917-1923
Frank Boyer, 1923-1924
M. Ardella Grant, 1924-1925
Tom Pringle, 1925-1928
Sam'l Hain (acting PM), 1928-1929
Florence E. McElhany, 1929-1932
Warren M. Carroll (acting PM), 1932
Florence E. McElhany, 1933-1934
Doris F. Flowers (acting PM), 1933
Florence E. McElhany, 1934-1939
Elinor M. Thomas (acting PM), 1939
Elinor M. Thomas, 1940-1947
Napoleon B. Ballard, 1947-1948

(Continued on separate pdf document)

Endnotes

- ¹ Sponsored by The City of Baytown
- ² Member, Harris County Historical Commission.
- ³ <https://bostonraremaps.com/inventory/1830-stephen-austin-map-of-texas/>
- ⁴ "Goose Creek named for Tiny Stream ...," [*The Houston Chronicle*, May 21, 1937, p17.](#)
- ⁵ Whiting's land grant can be downloaded from the Texas GLO website. Click [Archived Record](#).
- ⁶ HCDB Vol G, p199, Harvey Whiting to Henry and Melissa Whiting, Jan 1, 1841
- ⁷ "Election Notices," [Telegraph and Texas Register \(Houston, Tex.\), August 18, 1841, p3.](#)
- ⁸ HCDB Vol J, p386, L.P. Whiting etal to Ashbel Smith, April 5, 1845.
- ⁹ *The Weekly Telegraph* (Houston, Tex.), Vol. 26, No. 6, Ed. 1 Tuesday, April 24, 1860 Page 1 of 4.
- ¹⁰ [Old Red Medical Museum](#), UTMB Health.
- ¹¹ [Ashbel Smith, M.D., University of Texas System](#)
- ¹² Mary Smith McCrory Jones (1819–1907) was the last First Lady of the Republic of Texas as wife of Anson Jones, the last president of the Republic. She was the first president of the newly founded Daughters of the Republic of Texas in 1891. <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fjo93>
- ¹³ The office of County Judge was created in 1866 [The Laws of Texas, 1822-1897 Volume 5, p888](#), and Cromwell Anson Jones was the first elected Harris County Judge. [Harris County Elected Officials, 1837 – present](#), p30. Harris County Archive.
- ¹⁴ HCDB Vol R, p256, Bradford Nash to Thomas Chubb, Jul 18, 1854
- ¹⁵ HCDB Vol T, p294, Thomas Chubb declaration of Homestead, Sep 24, 1856
- ¹⁶ HCDB Vol Z, p637, Gilbert Brooks to Thomas Chubb, Jan 19, 1863.
- ¹⁷ HCDB Vol 2, p255, Thomas Chubb to John E. Franks, Aug 1, 1865.
- ¹⁸ *Boston Traveler*, September 6, 1867, p2.
- ¹⁹ [The Bayland Orphan Home](#), State of Texas Historical Marker, by Trevia Wooster Beverly (downloads as pdf)
- ²⁰ "35,000 Choice Brick," *The Morning Star*, January 22, 1842, p3.
- ²¹ "Two Old Residents," [Galveston Tribune, June 8, 1899, p2.](#)
- ²² "Personal notes from the *Goose Creek Weekly Bite*," Oil Investors Journal, July 6, 1908, p17. No copies of any issues of the *Goose Creek Weekly Bite* are known to exist.
- ²³ "Texas Postal Changes," [The Houston Post, January 26, 1913, p2, c4.](#)
- ²⁴ "Goose Creek Needs a New Post Office," [The Houston Post, March 11, 1917, p15, c1.](#)
- ²⁵ "Big Gasser Gave Kiddies Vacation," [The Houston Post, February 11, 1917, p10.](#)
- ²⁶ See Appendix, Image 1.
- ²⁷ HCDB Vol 19, p36, Ashbel Smith to Jessie Hull, March 16, 1878, 800 acres
- ²⁸ HCDB Vol 60, p553, Jessie (nee Hull) Humason to Thomas Wright, Sep 13, 1892, 800 acres
- ²⁹ HCDB Vol 370, p116, George Wright Townsite Dedication, Sep 26, 1916.
- ³⁰ HCDB Vol 377, p233, Ann Wright Townsite Dedication, Feb 9, 1917.

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- ³¹ HCDB Vol 392, p29, Price Pruett to W.T. Terry (Goose Creek Realty Co), Jun 19, 1917, 105 acres. This deed was revised to show the 10 acres previously sold to Ross Sterling for his railroad.. HCDB Vol 402, p44.
- ³² HCDB Vol 391, p232, George Wright to W.T. Terry (Goose Creek Realty Co), Jul 24, 1917, 54.08 acres.
- ³³ "Corporations Chartered," [The Houston Post, September 23, 1917, p23.](#)
- ³⁴ Harris County Map book 5, p57. November 5, 1917.
- ³⁵ HCDB Vol426, p415. This clause is repeated in all deeds in the business district.
- ³⁶ Goose Creek City Council Minutes, October 7, 1932, p117.
- ³⁷ HCDB Vol 413, p92, Goose Creek Realty Company to Mrs. A.M. Stone
- ³⁸ *History of Goose Creek Texas, 1917-1934*, Unpublished, by Katherine Adele Spence. Courtesy of the Baytown History Museum.
- ³⁹ "Cedar Bayou Independent School District," [The Laws of Texas, 1917-1918 \[Volume 18\] p 977.](#)
- ⁴⁰ "City News in Brief," [Houston Chronicle, October 25, 1917, p15.](#)
- ⁴¹ Goose Creek ISD minutes,
- ⁴² "Roof is Now On," *Gulf Coast Oil News*, July 6, 1918, p10.
- ⁴³ HCDB Vol 427, p94, George Wright to J.W. Anderson, July 14, 1919.
- ⁴⁴ *A History of Memorial Baptist Church*, by Samuel B. Hesler, 1993.
- ⁴⁵ "Goose Creek Could not Contain Oil Men's Rush," [Houston Post, September 8, 1916, p1.](#)
- ⁴⁶ "Goose Creek Needs a New Post Office," [The Houston Post, March 11, 1917, p15.](#)
- ⁴⁷ "Goose Creek may be Without Water," [The Houston Post, September 7, 1917, p13.](#)
- ⁴⁸ Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps – [Goose Creek, 1926, Sheet 2](#)
- ⁴⁹ "Goose Creek's New Post Office," [Houston Chronicle, March 24, 1937, p4.](#)
- ⁵⁰ "Post Office opens September," [The Baytown Sun, March 20, 1985, p9.](#)
- ⁵¹ "Citizens or Goose Creek ...," [The Houston Chronicle, December 16, 1918, p3.](#)
- ⁵² "Order calling Election Incorporation Goose Creek; "HCCC, Vol T, p527;
- ⁵³ "Order & Notice calling election," HCCC, Vol T, p554. See Appendix, Image 3.
- ⁵⁴ "Order Canvassing Returns," HCCC, Vol T, p555;
- ⁵⁵ Harris County Commissioners Court Minutes Book, Volume T, Page 556.
- ⁵⁶ Goose Creek City Council Minutes, July 17, 1919
- ⁵⁷ Goose Creek City Council Minutes, May 27, 1919
- ⁵⁸ See Appendix, Image 5.
- ⁵⁹ [Goose Creek Gasser, September 10, 1921, p7, c2.](#)
- ⁶⁰ See Appendix, Image 12.
- ⁶¹ "Goose Creek Masons Install New Master," [Houston Post, January 7, 1923, p6.](#)
- ⁶² See Appendix, Image 13.
- ⁶³ [Goose Creek Gasser \(Goose Creek, Tex.\), August 20, 1921, p4, c1.](#)
- ⁶⁴ See Appendix, Image 6.

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- ⁶⁵ "First Paper of Tri-Cities Sun Appears Today," [*The Houston Post*, July 19, 1931, p10.](#)
- ⁶⁶ "Publishers Desire to Aid Development of Eastern Harris County," [*Tri-Cities Sun*, July 19, 1931, p1.](#)
- ⁶⁷ "The Sun's Broader Scope," [*The Daily Sun*, August 15, 1933, p1.](#)
- ⁶⁸ "Water Supply and Sewerage System for Goose Creek," *Gulf Coast Oil News*, June 8, 1918, p9.
- ⁶⁹ "Contract is Let for City Hall at Goose Creek," [*The Houston Chronicle*, January 18, 1928, p15.](#)
- ⁷⁰ "Goose Creek Charter Granted," [*The Houston Chronicle*, November 20, 1919, p2.](#)
- ⁷¹ Goose Creek City Council Minutes, Jan 27, 1920.
- ⁷² "Announcement," [*Semi-Weekly Tribune*, May 12, 1925, p7.](#)
- ⁷³ "A Line to Goose Creek," [*The Houston Post*, July 7, 1912, p16.](#)
"East Harris County Loses Pioneer," [*The Daily Sun*, March 17, 1948, p1.](#)
- ⁷⁴ HCDB Vol 404-153, Goose Creek Realty to Crosby Telephone Co
- ⁷⁵ "Call up the Past in Old Directory," [*The Baytown Sun*, August 8, 1991, p13.](#)
- ⁷⁶ Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps – [Goose Creek, 1926, Sheet 2](#)
- ⁷⁷ Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps – [Baytown, 1948, Sheet 2.](#)
- ⁷⁸ Goose Creek City Council Minutes, Nov 25, 1919
- ⁷⁹ HCDB Vol U, p28, Nov 20, 1919
- ⁸⁰ Harris County Commissioners Court Minutes Book, Volume U, Page 29.
- ⁸¹ Goose Creek City Council Minutes, May 14, 1923
- ⁸² "Many Events Planned at Former 'Y' Hut of Goose Creek Association," [*Houston Post*, January 18, 1920, p24.](#)
- ⁸³ "Y.M.C.A. Board Meets," [*Goose Creek Gasser*, September 10, 1921, p10.](#)
- ⁸⁴ "Wanted," [*The Houston Post*, December 14, 1920, p16.](#)
- ⁸⁵ "Goose Creek Fire Damage Amounts to \$25,000," [*The Houston Post*, June 19, 1921, p2.](#)
- ⁸⁶ "Oiler to open Sept. 18th," *Goose Creek Gasser*, December 3, 1921, p3. Held by the Baytown History Museum.
- ⁸⁷ "Echoes of the Past Buried in Ashes Today," [*The Baytown Sun*, August 6, 1974, p1.](#)
- ⁸⁸ "Libraries in Goose Creek," [*Semi-Weekly Tribune*, May 12, 1925, p30.](#)
- ⁸⁹ See Appendix Image 11.
- ⁹⁰ "New Library to Open Sunday," [*The Baytown Sun*, February 24, 1963, p1.](#)
- ⁹¹ HCDB Vol 401, p391, Goose Creek Realty to Henry Cathriner, April 24, 1918.
- ⁹² "Citizens Bank Grows up with Baytown," [*The Baytown Sun*, March 31, 1991 Page: 56.](#)
- ⁹³ "De Luxe Theater Opening July 1," [*The Houston Chronicle*, June 14, 1929, p2.](#)
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- ⁹⁵ Goose Creek City Directory, 1929.
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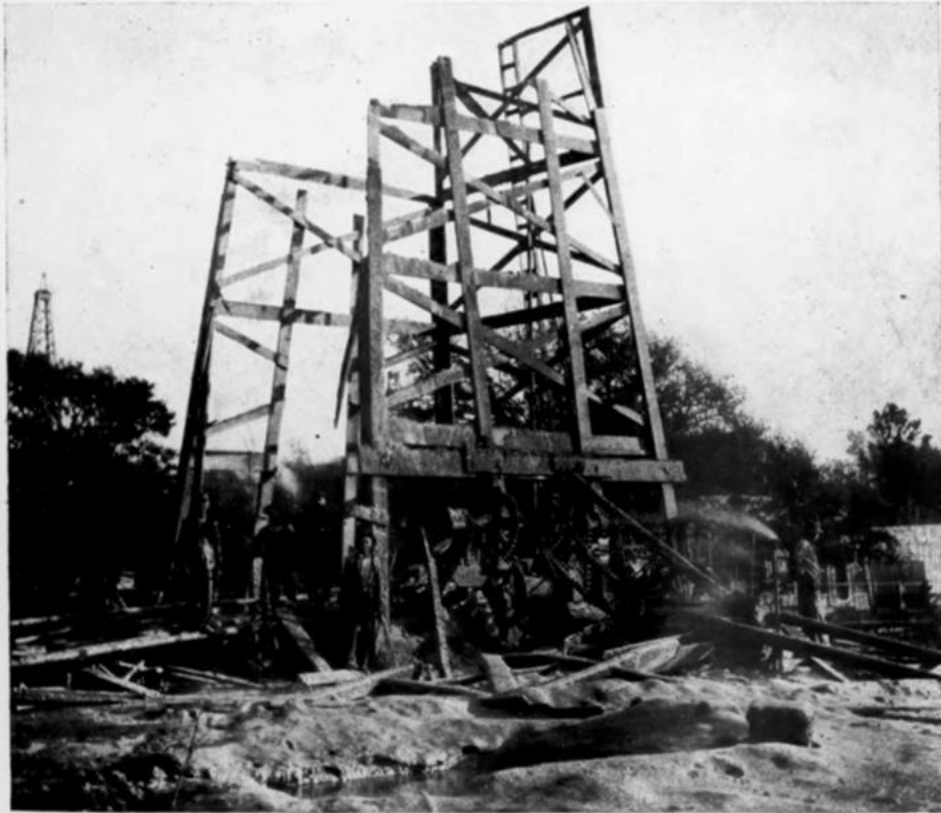
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- ⁹⁹ "Merger Vote for Tri-Cities is Proposed," [*Houston Chronicle*, October 25, 1929, p31.](#)
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- ¹⁷⁹ "Goose Creek Committee Discusses Names for the City," [The Houston Chronicle, August 8, 1930, p23.](#)
- ¹⁸⁰ "May Change Name of Goose Creek," [Brownwood Bulletin \(Brownwood, Tex.\), September 3, 1930, p9.](#)
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- ¹⁸² "Big Majority Favors Name of Baytown," [The Daily Sun, January 26, 1948, p1.](#)
- ¹⁸³ See Appendix, Image 20.
- ¹⁸⁴ Derived from the Goose Creek City Council minutes.
- ¹⁸⁵ Recorded Texas Historical Landmark, Texas Historical Marker Number 16880
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- ¹⁸⁷ Derived from city directories or church histories
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- ¹⁹⁰ [Postmaster Appointments for Harris County, Texas](#), 1913 to 1928
[Postmaster Appointments for Harris County, Texas](#) 1928 to 1948

The City of Goose Creek - Appendix

Wreck of Gasser, Townsite No. 1, Goose Creek Field



With almost volcanic fury, the earth belched a volume of gas that hurled piping skyward like straws before the wind, while the air was filled with slivered derrick timbers, rocks, mud and water, which fell in showers about the stampeded villagers, who vacated without legal process to enforce the 24-hour notice.

Image 1. On December 9, 1916, this oil well blowout drove residents of Old Town Goose Creek from their homes and businesses. They moved north to towns that became known as Middle Town and New Town. *Gulf Coast Oil News*, Dec 30, 1916



Image 2. The Big Oak Tree on Texas Avenue was planted by Harvey Whiting in the early 1840s. Through the 1940s it marked the west end of Goose Creek and is still a landmark on Texas Avenue today. This photograph was taken about 1931. Sterling Municipal Public Library.

The City of Goose Creek - Appendix

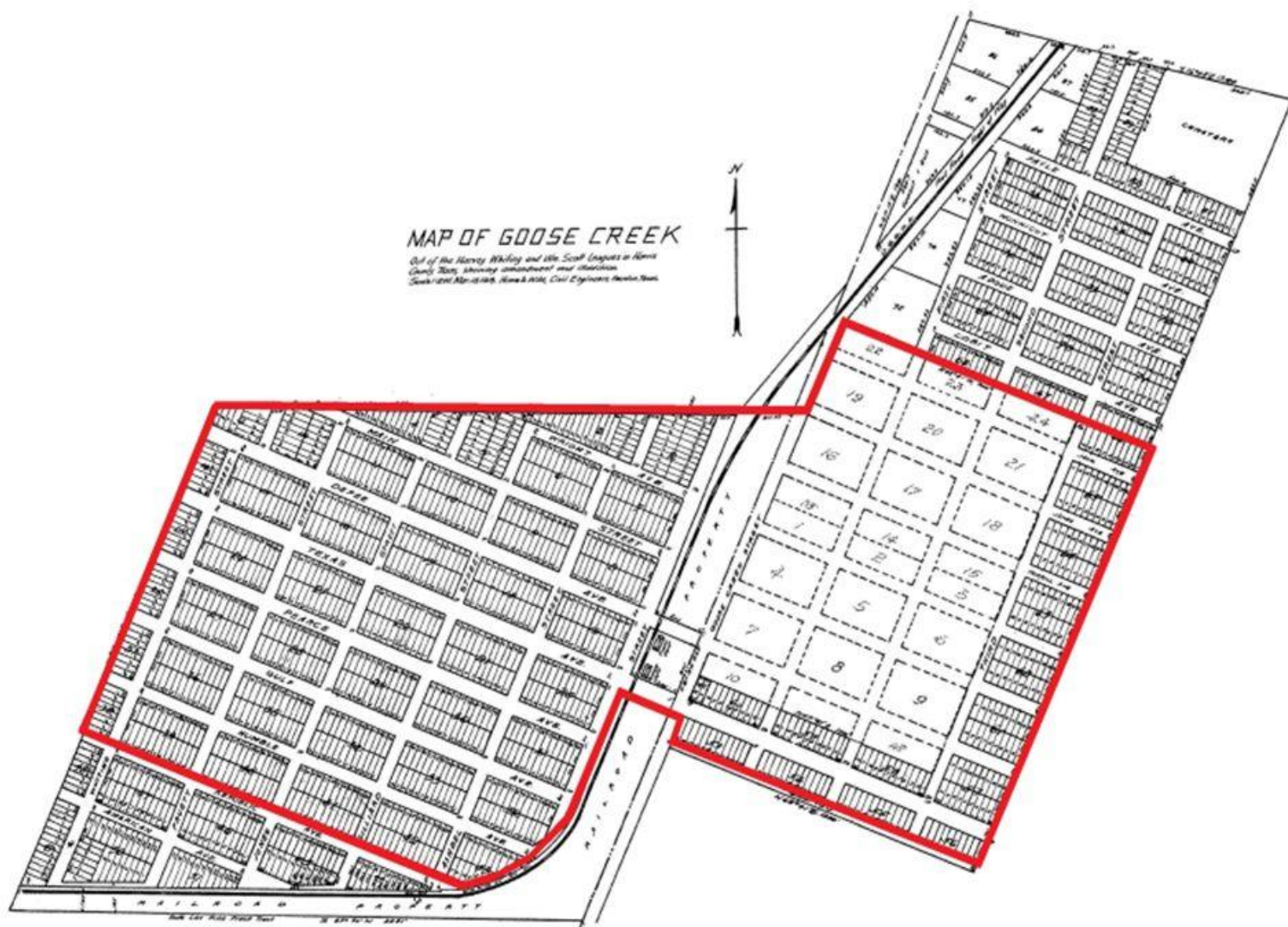
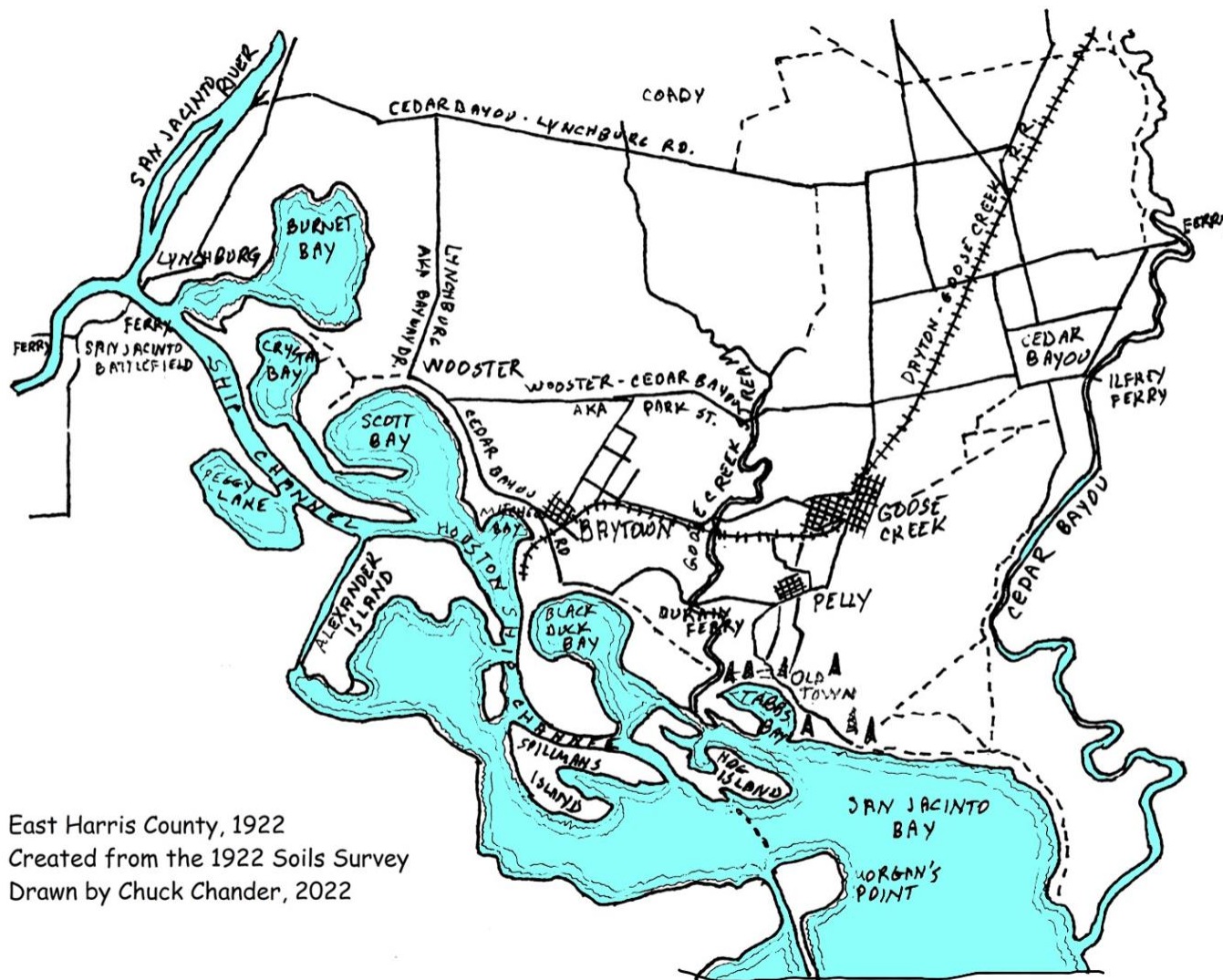


Image 3. Goose Creek map dated May 25 1917. The original 24 blocks of New Town are shown by the dashed lines. Blocks 1-12 were opened on September 26, 1916 and Blocks 13-24 were opened on February 9, 1917. The remainder of Goose Creek town site was opened as far west as Jones Street on November 5, 1917 and extended to Whiting Street on May 25, 1918. The city limits of Goose Creek when it was incorporated on January 28, 1919 are shown in red. Harris County Archive, Map Book 5, p59.

The City of Goose Creek - Appendix



East Harris County, 1922
 Created from the 1922 Soils Survey
 Drawn by Chuck Chandler, 2022

Image 4. By 1922 Goose Creek was a growing planned city. Pelly had a larger area and greater population, but the only streets that had been laid out were in the Middletown subdivision.

The City of Goose Creek - Appendix



Image 5. Guaranty State Bank was built on the corner of Texas Avenue and Ashbel Street in early 1919. Bay Area Historical Society.



Image 6. This photograph was taken in 1921 from Pearce Street looking north up Main Street. The first building on the right is the Goose Creek Tribune, which was probably the office of the earlier *Goose Creek Gasser* as well. The filling station on the left side is on the corner of Texas Avenue and the Goose Creek Grain Company, today Jack's Hardware, can be seen behind it just to the left. From the collection of Kay Hester.

The City of Goose Creek - Appendix



Image 7. This view from 1921 is looking east on Texas Avenue from Ashbel Street.



Image 8. The Oiler Theater was built in 1919 and burned in 1921. This picture was taken after it was rebuilt in 1921.

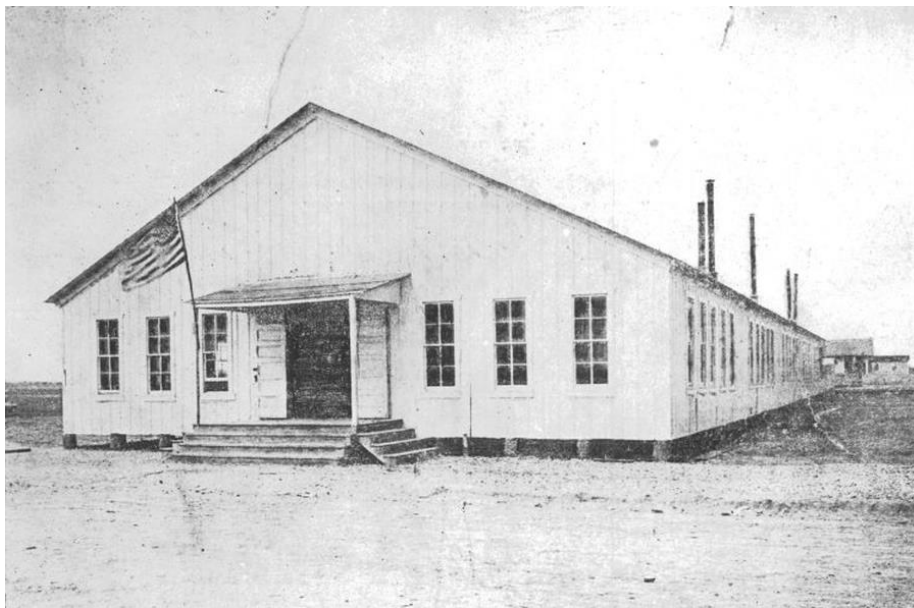


Image 9. The first school in what would become the city of Goose Creek was held in a former oil field bunk house where K'nesseth Israel synagogue stands today. Everybody just called it "The Barn." This photograph is from the 1919 school yearbook.

The City of Goose Creek - Appendix



Image 10a. This series of five photographs was taken about 1923 from the concrete water tower located at the west end of East Pearce Street. This view is looking south down Main Street towards Pelly and the Goose Creek oil field. The large pipe lay-down yard was on property owned by Ross Sterling and further south was the Roberts McDonald Lumber Company. Courtesy of Denise Reineke Fischer.



Image 10b. This is looking southwest. The intersection on the right is Commerce and Humble streets. Houses on Humble and Gulf streets were built by those oil companies as employee housing. The building at the end of the rail spur was the old Goose Creek school house. It had been built in the 1880s but was actually within the Pelly city limits.

The City of Goose Creek - Appendix



Image 10c. This view looks west down Pearce Street. At the end of the street is the Price Pruett home. The two-story brick building on the right is the Carl Dittman building with the Baltimore Hotel on the other side of Ashbel Street. The large two-story building further right is the Citizens State Bank on Texas Avenue.



Image 10d. Henry Cathriner's Ford dealership is on the corner of Texas Avenue and Commerce Street. That building still stands. The Pruett garage is across the street and the Oiler Theater is barely visible on the far right.

The City of Goose Creek - Appendix



Image 10e. Looking up North Main Street has Aron's Furniture on the corner where Wilkenfeld's furniture store would later be located. The Telephone exchange is across the street where Baytown Little Theater stands today. The large building on the far left is Goose Creek Grain Company, later to be Jack Heard's hardware store and is still standing.



Image 11. Ross Sterling built the Harris County Public Library at Goose Creek in 1925. It served the city until the new Sterling Library opened in 1963. From the collection of the Harris County Public Library.

The City of Goose Creek - Appendix



Image 12. The Oddfellows Lodge, built in 1922, is still standing on Texas Avenue at N. Jones Street. Bay Area Historical Society.



Image 13. The Masonic Lodge, built in 1923, is still standing on Texas Avenue at S. Gaillard Street. Bay Area Historical Society.

The City of Goose Creek - Appendix



Image 14. The Goose Creek Municipal Building, built in 1928 is still standing on South Main Street. The fire trucks were kept in the first floor garage and the city offices, Red Cross, and the Fire Department had rooms on the second story. Bay Area Historical Society.



Image 15. The Houston-Northshore Railway, started operations to Goose Creek on June 12, 1927. On September 25, 1948, the last electric car made the run, having been replaced by gasoline rail buses. By that time, the Tri-Cities had merged, the new city charter changing the name had been voted in, and the sign on the old Goose Creek terminal station now read Baytown. The terminal station is still standing on Texas Avenue. From the collection of Paul L DeVerter II.

The City of Goose Creek - Appendix



Image 16. This is the only intact Texas Avenue marker and one of only a handful of markers remaining from the 1930 curb and gutter project. It is located at N. First Street.



Image 17. This imprint from the 1938 curb and gutter project is at the southwest corner of Pearce and Gaillard streets. Photographs by author.



Image 18. The second floor of the Guberman building on the corner of Texas Avenue and Ashbel Street was Goose Creek's first Hospital. The Culpepper building to the left was later remodeled with a second story. The Texan Theater next to it opened in 1927. Almost all the buildings in this photograph are still standing. Bay Area Historical Society.

The City of Goose Creek - Appendix



Image 19. During World War 2, several hundred local men served in the armed forces and 86 died in the conflict. This B-24 Liberator heavy bomber was in a squadron commanded by Maj. Henry Dittman in 1943. He was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross for his part in a top secret mission at the beginning of the war. Bay Area Historical Society.



Image 20. After consolidation, and particularly beginning in the 1950s, Texas Avenue in old Goose Creek became the preferred shopping and business district in Baytown. This photograph was taken after consolidation on March 10, 1947, but before the new charter changed the name to Baytown. The caption was added later. Bay Area Historical Society.

The City of Goose Creek - Appendix

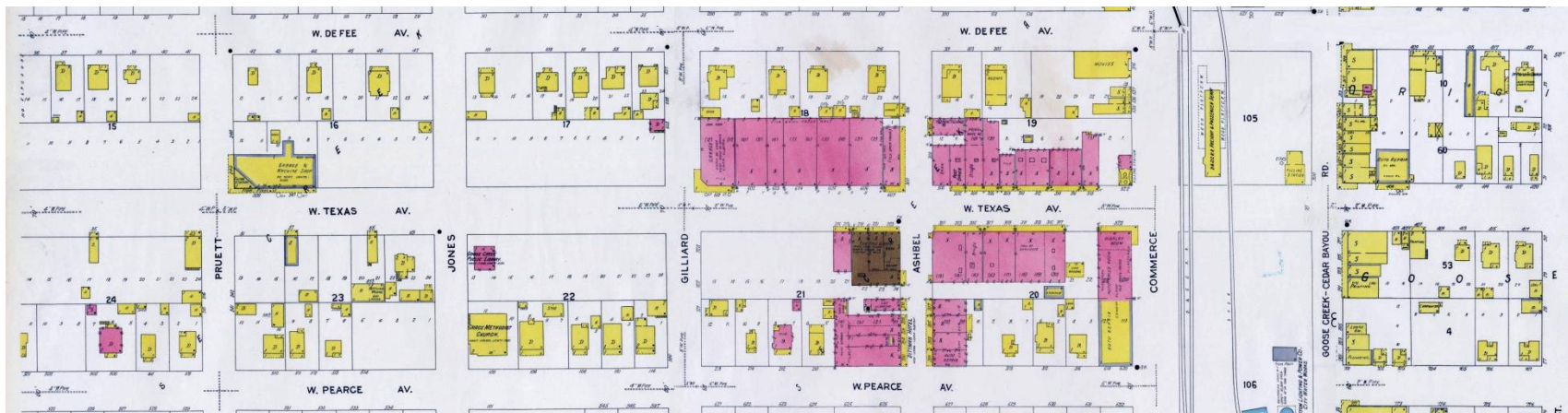


Image 21. Sanborn Map, Goose Creek, 1926. The maps on this and the next page were assembled from multiple maps to demonstrate the growth of the Texas Avenue Business District. Masonry brick buildings are pink, reinforced concrete buildings are blue, other fireproof construction is brown, metal-clad frame buildings are yellow with grey outline, and wood frame buildings are yellow.

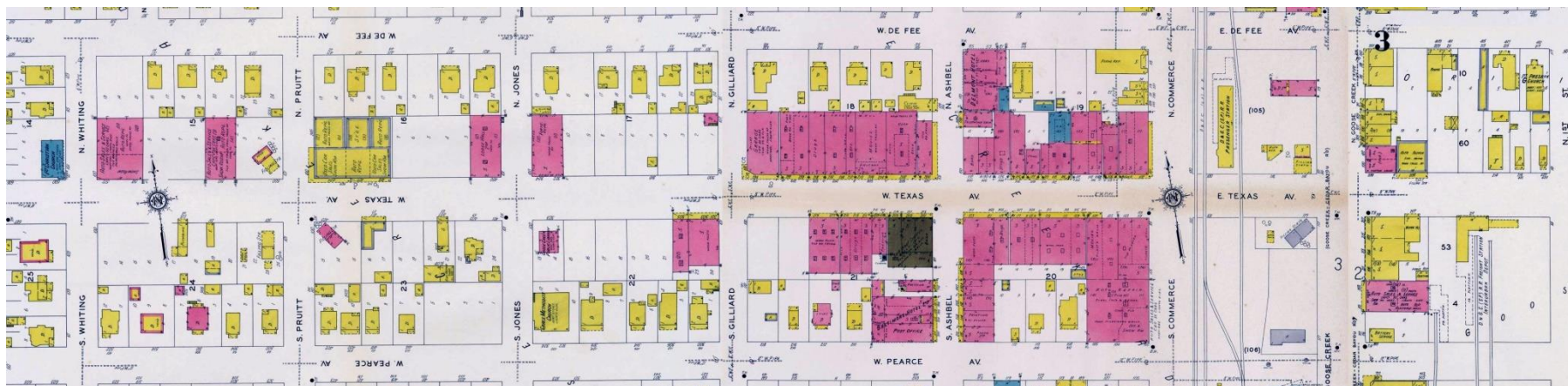


Image 22. Sanborn Map, Goose Creek, 1931

The City of Goose Creek - Appendix

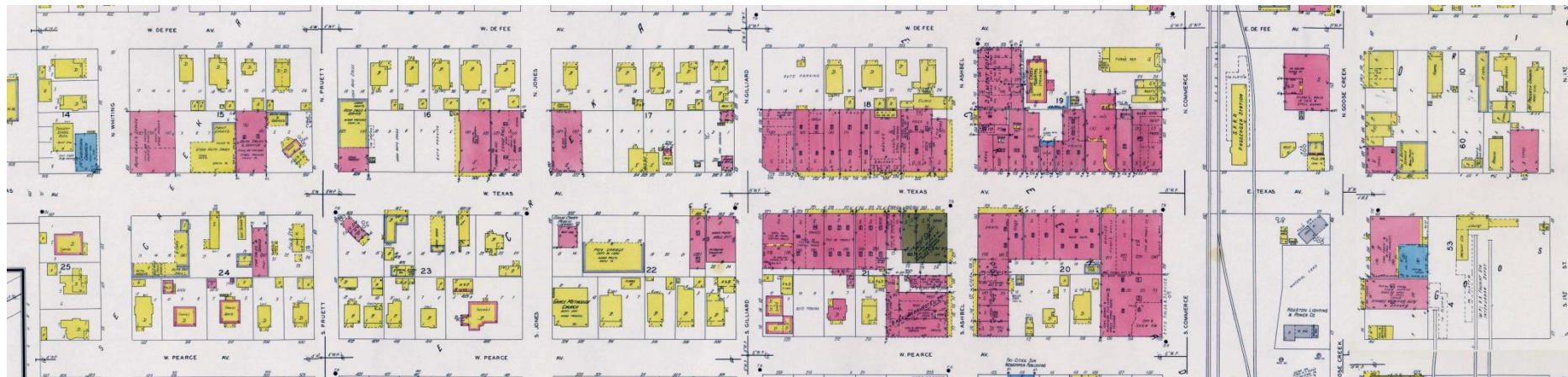


Image 23. Sanborn Map, Goose Creek, 1939



Image 24. Sanborn Map, Baytown, Post-Consolidation, 1949. By 1970 the Texas Avenue block between Gaillard Street and Jones Street had been filled with brick and tile buildings (See Image 25).

The City of Goose Creek - Appendix

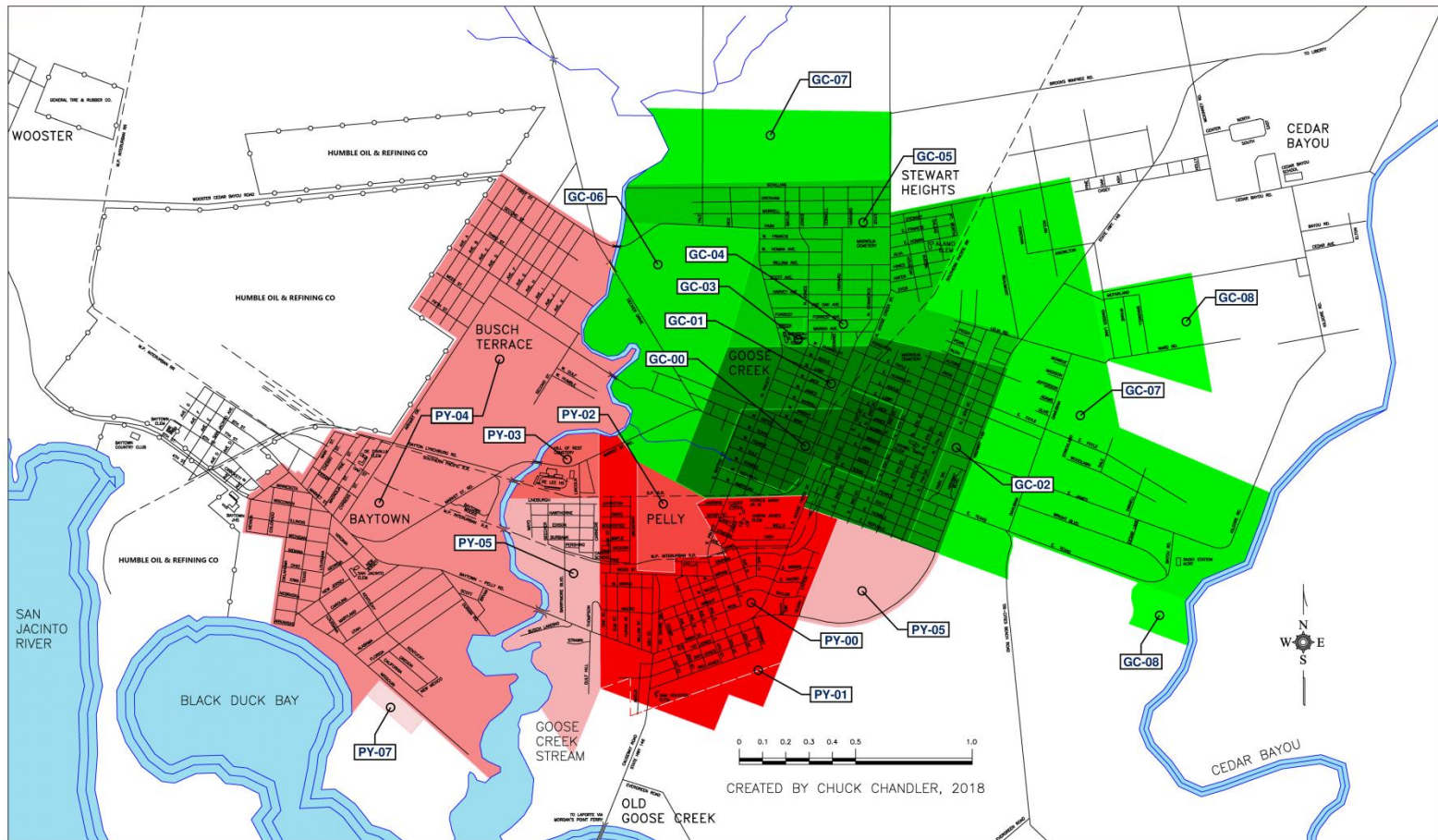


Image 25. Google Earth Image, Baytown, 2019. The buildings on the south Side of Texas Avenue between Commerce and Ashbel Streets were razed in the 1980s. The buildings on the south side of Texas Avenue between Gaillard and Ashbel Streets and on both sides of South Ashbel Street were razed in 2008. The buildings in 2008 can be seen on [Google Street View](#).



Image 26. The buildings that existed during the time Goose Creek was an incorporated city are outlined in yellow. Buildings that existed prior to 1973 (50 years old) are in blue. Buildings that have been demolished are in red. The old Citizen's Bank building in red on the south side of Texas Avenue was condemned and has recently been replaced with a building of similar appearance.

The City of Goose Creek - Appendix



BAYTOWN, TEXAS

THIS MAP SHOWS PELLY, TEXAS ON MARCH 6, 1948, THE DAY BEFORE THE NEW CITY CHARTER CHANGED THE NAME TO BAYTOWN. STREETS BUILT AFTER THAT DATE ARE NOT SHOWN. STREET NAMES SHOWN ARE PRIOR TO THE 1948 RENAMING. ALL ANNEXATIONS BY PELLY AND GOOSE CREEK FROM THE BEGINNING ARE SHOWN.

PELLY ANNEXATIONS IN RED

NO.	DATE	AREA
PY-00	1919-12-06	INCORPORATION
PY-01	1925-04-03	REDREW SOUTH LINE
PY-02	1928-03-24	PRODUCERS AND ASHBEL SMITH OIL CO
PY-03	1928-06-06	CEMETERY, HIGH SCHOOL
PY-04	1945-12-09	UNINCORPORATED BAYTOWN & BUSCH TERRACE
PY-05	1946-07-27	LEE HEIGHTS, GULF HILL, HUNTER TRACT
PY-06	1947-03-07	CONSOLIDATION WITH GOOSE CREEK
PY-07	1947-04-23	ISENHOUR BAYSHORE

REFERENCES: GOOSE CREEK AND PELLY CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAPS, 1926, 1931, 1938 & 1948
 HARRIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT MINUTES
 1948 BAYTOWN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MAP
 GOOSE CREEK DAILY SUN NEWSPAPERS
 HARRIS COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT
 1948 BAYTOWN CITY DIRECTORY
 HARRIS COUNTY DEED BOOKS

GOOSE CREEK ANNEXATIONS IN GREEN

NO.	DATE	AREA
GC-00	1919-01-28	INCORPORATION
GC-01	1923-06-27	EXPANDED BOUNDARY
GC-02	1930-06-10	EAST TO TENTH STREET
GC-03	1934-12-03	LAMAR SCHOOL TRACT
GC-04	1939-11-08	LEAVINS ADDITION
GC-05	1940-11-12	MORRELL PARK & STEWART HEIGHTS
GC-06	1945-01-05	WEST TO GOOSE CREEK STREAM
GC-07	1946-01-01	EAST TO CEDAR BAYOU

Image 27. Annexations by Goose Creek and Pelly