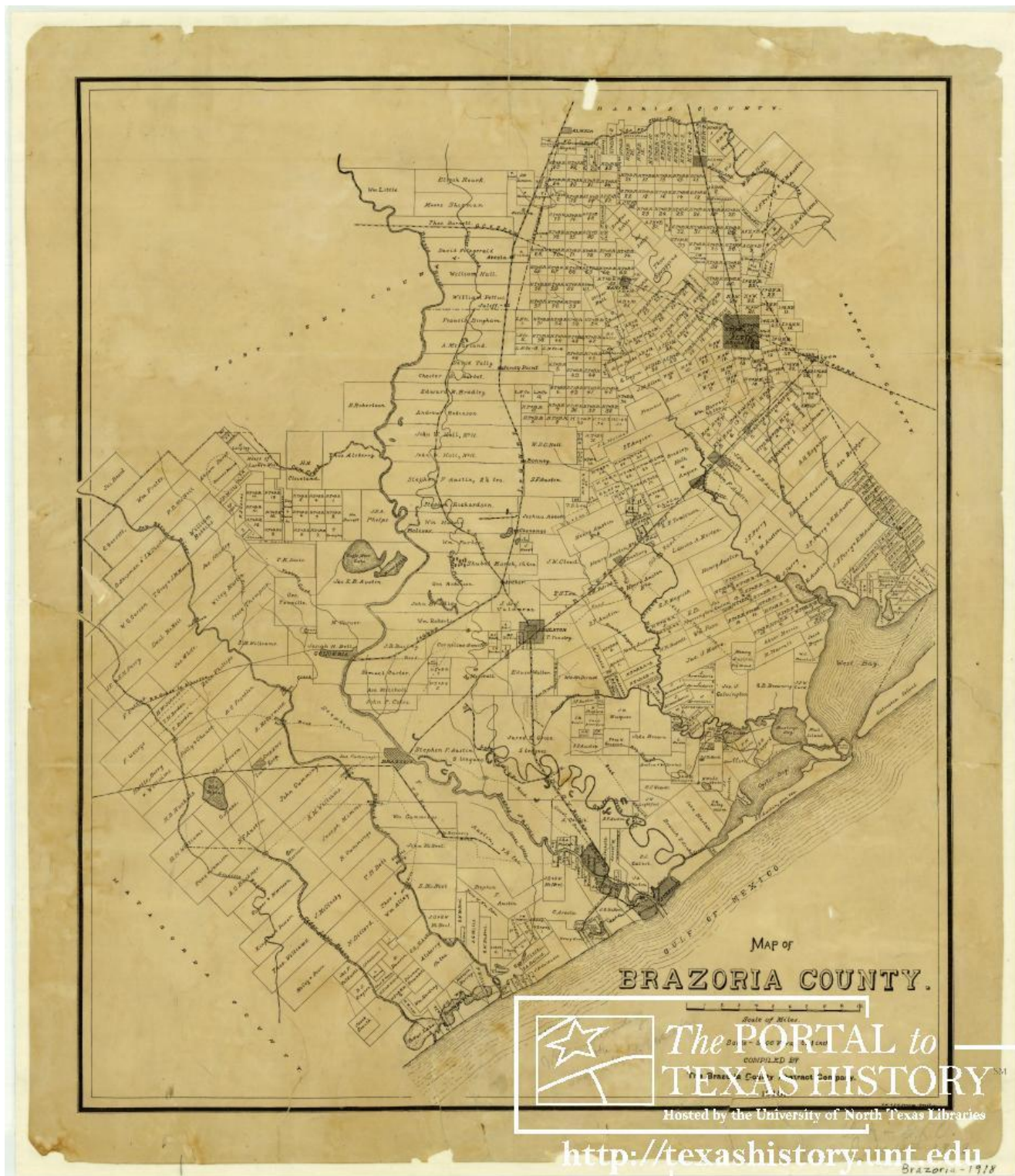
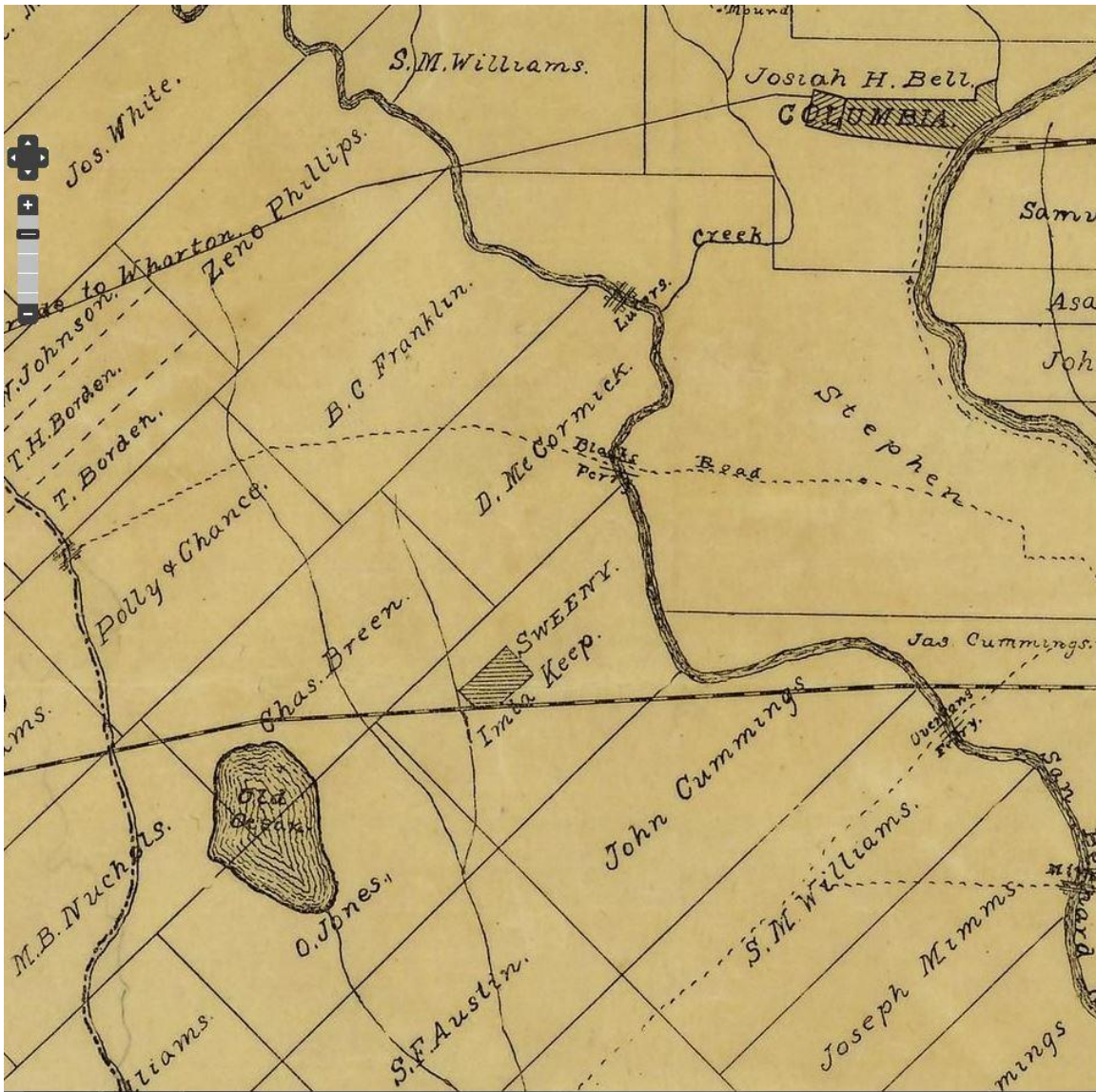


OLD OCEAN FADES INTO HISTORY

Work in progress. Inputs welcome. Basil Shannon
basil_shannon@yahoo.com





From <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hlo12>

"OLD OCEAN, TEXAS. Old Ocean is on State highways 35 and 524 five miles northwest of Sweeny in southwestern Brazoria County. The site was located on or near the land grant patented by Joseph H. Polley and Samuel Chance on July 27, 1824, and became known as Chance's Prairie, a name that has survived to the present. Original patentees in the vicinity of Old Ocean Lake (later Old Ocean Swamp), three miles to the south, included Mills M. Battle, M. Berry, Thomas H. Borden, Charles Breen, Benjamin C. Franklin, Freeman George, Henry W. Johnson, Oliver Jones, Imla Keep, David McCormick, Zeno Philips, Thomas Walker, John Williams, and Robert Harris Williams. William Burrell Sweeny(1810-1840), one of the early settlers on Chance's Prairie, arrived in Brazoria County in 1832. His father John Sweeny Sr,

mother, two sisters, six brothers, and their slaves, reportedly numbering 250, arrived the next year and settled on the Breen league, along the southern boundary of Polley and Chance's land. On March 25, 1835, Polley and Chance sold 2,319 acres to Sweeny for \$1,950. Eventually the six surviving children of John Sweeny, Sr., who died in 1854, owned adjoining plantations in the area. Others living on Chance's Prairie before the Civil War included Sampson Brown, a slave born in Maryland and bought by Joseph McCormick in 1837. After emancipation Brown traveled a circuit in Milam and Fort Bend counties as a teacher and preacher. Prince Monroe, another slave belonging to Joseph McCormick, managed McCormick's plantation for the better part of twenty years. After the war the post office for Chance's Prairie was located in the commissary on the John Sweeny Jr plantation. Chance's Prairie had a reported population of eighteen in 1880. Around 1906 the area had four schools for black children and employed four teachers; the combined enrollment was 199. James (Jim) Abercrombie discovered oil nearby in 1934, and a government oil refinery was constructed to make high-octane gas. It was closed at the end of World War II. The oilfield was named Old Ocean, and by 1936 the name of the community had been changed to Old Ocean. The 1936 county highway map **(see map below)** shows a nearby school, the Bethlehem Church a mile west on State Highway 35, and numerous buildings and dwellings at the site. The community had a post office by 1945 and a population of 800 and four businesses in 1947. Old Ocean had 1,000 residents and nine businesses in 1964 and 900 residents and eight businesses in 1972. In 1974 the community had two churches. The population was reported as 915 from the 1970s through 2000. Nineteen local businesses were in operation in 1982 and eight in 1992. By 2000 the number of businesses had increased to twenty-one."

OIL FIELD IN ANCIENT SEA

OLD OCEAN — "Old Ocean Was In Ancient Sea" is the title of an article that appeared in a Dallas newspaper a few years ago.

The article was written by Frank X. Tolbert and quoted some opinions concerning Old Ocean credited to a Houston woman.

Mrs. Catherine Bannister, who is closely allied with the past history of Sweeny and Old Ocean, received about a dozen copies of the article which is as follows:

"OLD OCEAN, TEXAS, which is in Brazoria County, has a most fascinating name, I think. Only I'm appalled by the ignorance of the Old Oceanites about their town's past," writes Mrs. Ruth Davis of Houston.

"I make it a point to stop for gas there every time I'm driving between Houston and Corpus Christi. And I've yet to find a service station attendant there who can tell me why Old Ocean was so titled. It is about 30 miles from the Gulf of Mexico, as the gulls fly."

Well, Mrs. Bannister, an erudite Old Oceanite, has the answers, however. She has been the postmaster there since 1944.

She is also a descendant of one of the Brazoria County's first Anglo-American settlers, John Sweeny. She lives in a restored mansion which Sweeny built in Republic of Texas days.

"Just south of the town is an oilfield in what geologists say was the bed of an ancient ocean. Jim Abercrombie of Houston and his associates named it the Old Ocean Field," explains Mrs. Bannister.

"The town of Old Ocean got its start when a big refinery was put in here during World War II. We got our post office during the war. An earlier settlement here was called Chance's Prairie," she said.

Mrs. Bannister says some 6,000 acres once made up the plantation of the John Sweeny family, encompassing the area from Matagorda County to take in the town of Sweeny and beyond.

John Sweeny's son was the first postmaster there, and the town of Sweeny was named for her grandfather.

Since the plantation home has been marked with a state medallion designating it among the significant historic homes, Mrs. Bannister plans to open it for tourists visits, perhaps

FROM MAXEY BROOKE WRITINGS TITLED SWEENY-OLD OCEAN:

"When John Sweeny brought his family to Texas in 1837 (1833?), he bought the north one-third of the Polly and Chance League and established a plantation. His operation was self-contained, including a cotton gin built about where the Phillips Clubhouse is now located **(1936 map below denotes a sawmill at this location. Cotton gin more logical. Catherine Bannister also said cotton gin.)** . On down the road, approximately half-way between East Columbia and Matagorda, was a commissary that also served as the local mail depot , watch was called Chance's Prairie.

When the mail boat docked at East Columbia, a rider would take the mail down the McGrew Bend road to Chance's Prairie. After spending the night at the Sweeny Plantation , he would go on to Matagorda the next day, meet the mail boat there, and then reverse the process. There seems to be no record of when the last mail delivery was made to Chance's Prairie, but it was never taken off the official list of post offices.

In 1938, Harrison & Abercrombie built a gasoline plant, and Sweeny had a payroll.

The gasoline plant needed a local post office. Gene Chambers, an Abercrombie lawyer, found the Chance's Prairie post office had never been officially shut down. He petitioned the government to reopen it and to name it Old Ocean after the oil field. The post office was opened in 1944, with Mrs. Katherine Bannister, a direct descendant of John Sweeny, as postmistress. She continued in that position until 1968. The post office has been moved twice -- in 1949 and 1970.



POST OFFICE. Apparently 1970 version

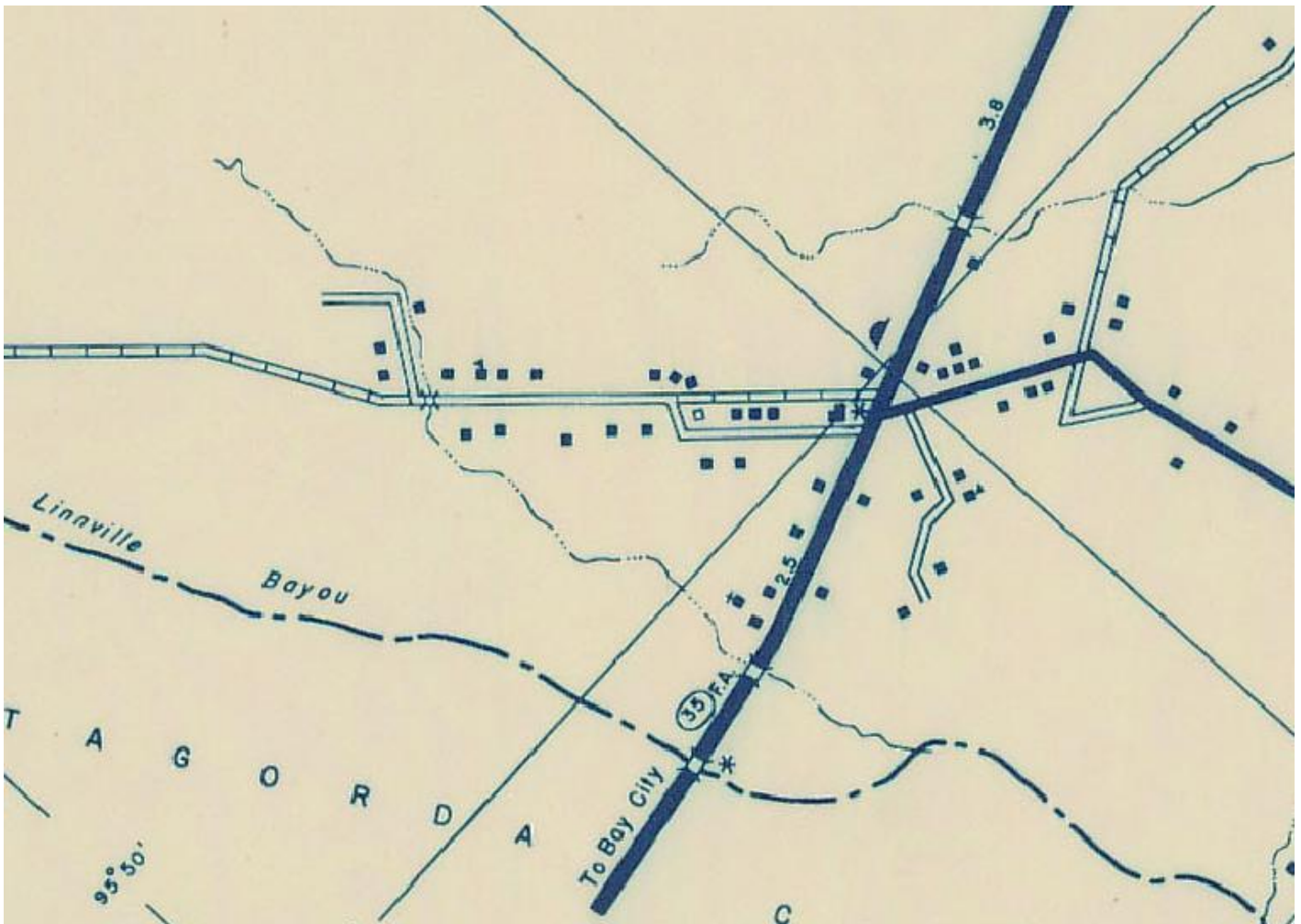
Even before oil was discovered in 1934 and the plant was built in 1938, Old Ocean served as something of a community center. The first store there was built by a Mr. Blake in 1929, and was later sold to W.W. Mercer. The highway was paved about 1926, and was one of the first sections of paved road in Brazoria County."

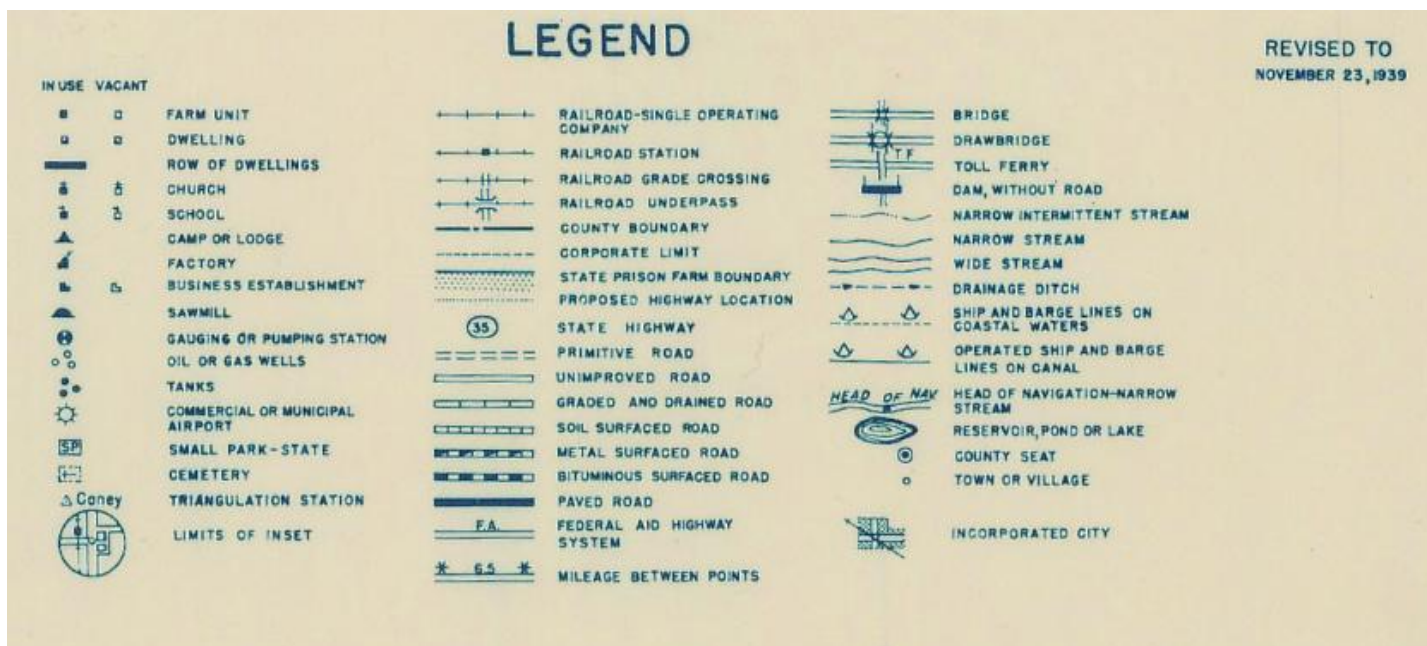


Route from Henry Hanson's dad Henry Anton Hanson.

GOOGLE EARTH

Old Ocean area 1936 (revised 11/23/1939) Brazoria County map:





The school is to the left marked by dark square with a triangle flag above it. Bethlehem Church (square with a cross on top) is shown on 35 toward Bay City on right before Linnville Bayou. A sawmill (half circle with line across bottom) is shown on 35 toward West Columbia. Maxey Brooke said this was a cotton gin. Sweeny plantation house not marked?

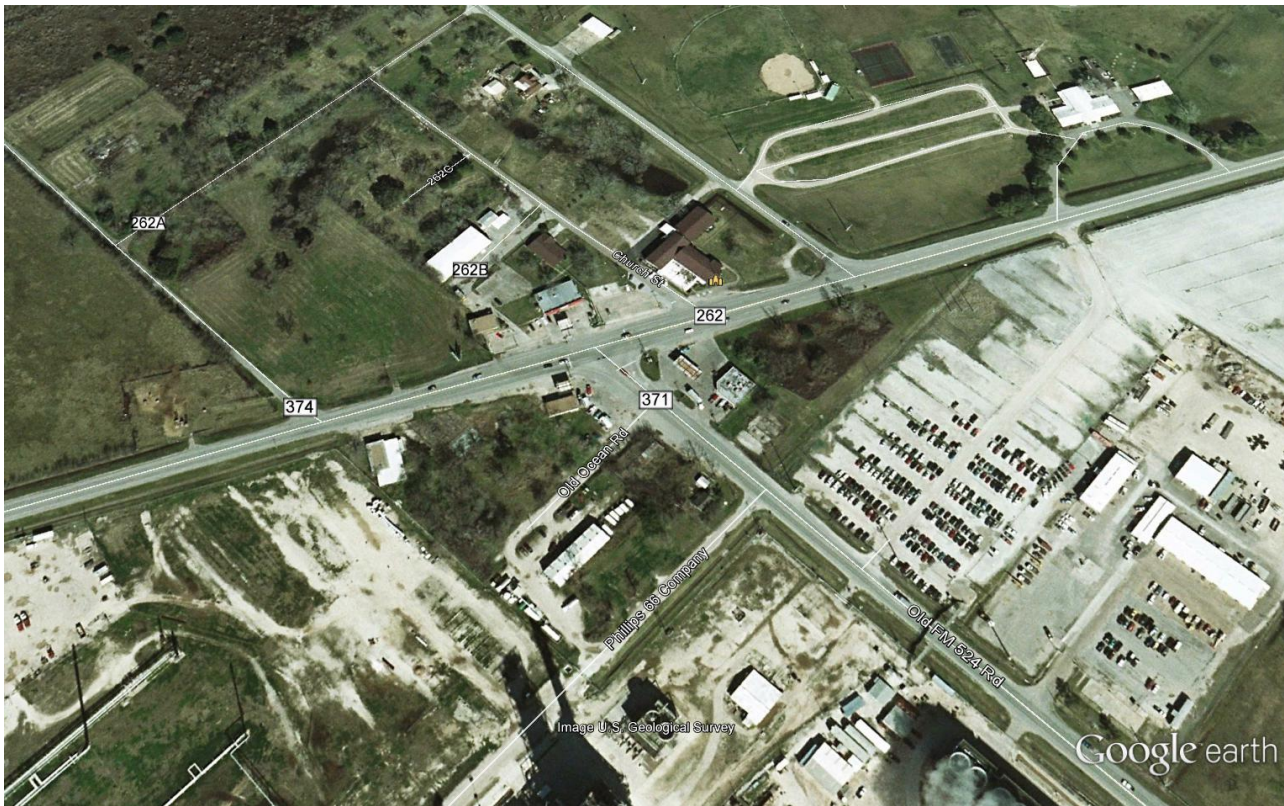




1945 Old Ocean



1995 Old Ocean



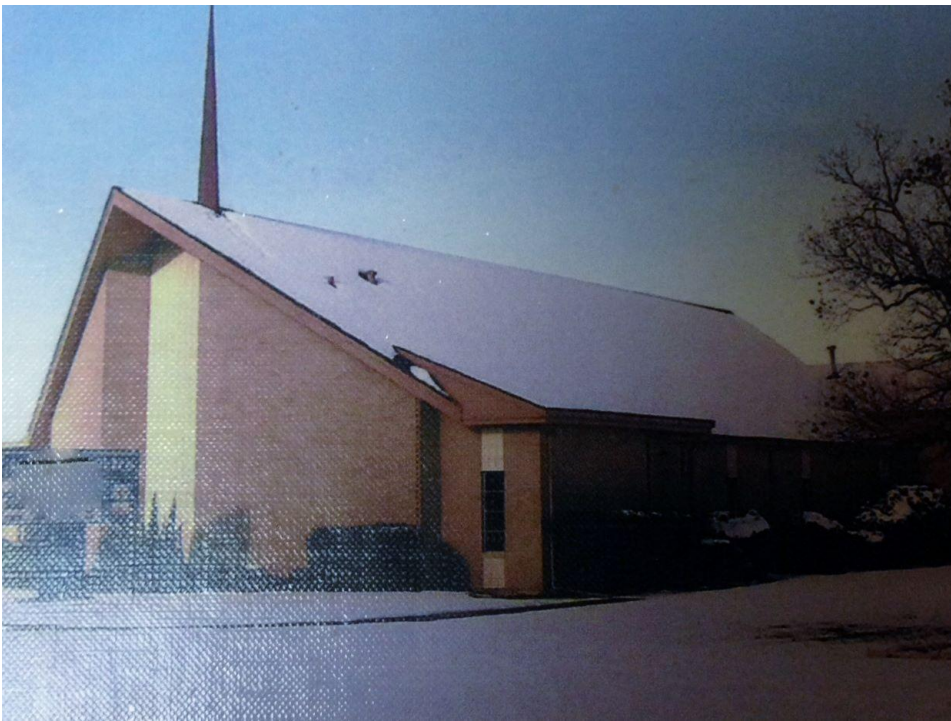
2004 Old Ocean



2008 Old Ocean



2011 Old Ocean



First Baptist Church Old Ocean , founded in June of 1944 by the Rev. M.L. Pendue.



Phillips 66 service station

MEMORIES

Basil Shannon... I remember 3 grocery stores. In the early 50s, I stocked shelves at Dunham's for 50 cents an hour. There were two others. One behind the Phillips station and the other across the road. Names?

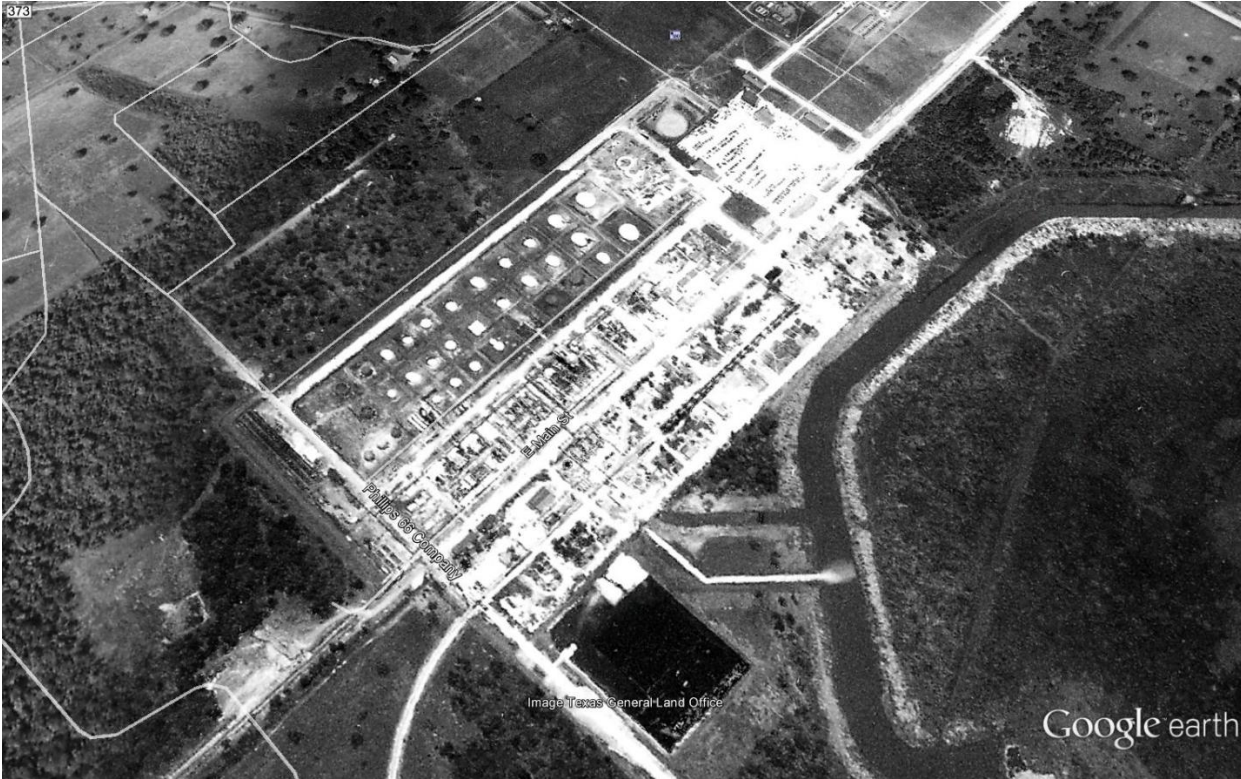
Darla Huff Williams... Bulls (Buck) behind station and Franks across the road. Another small grocery on Hwy 35 down from Dunhams toward Bay City.

Pat Patterson... Ronnie Griffin ran the hardware store after Mr. Huston died, I believe.

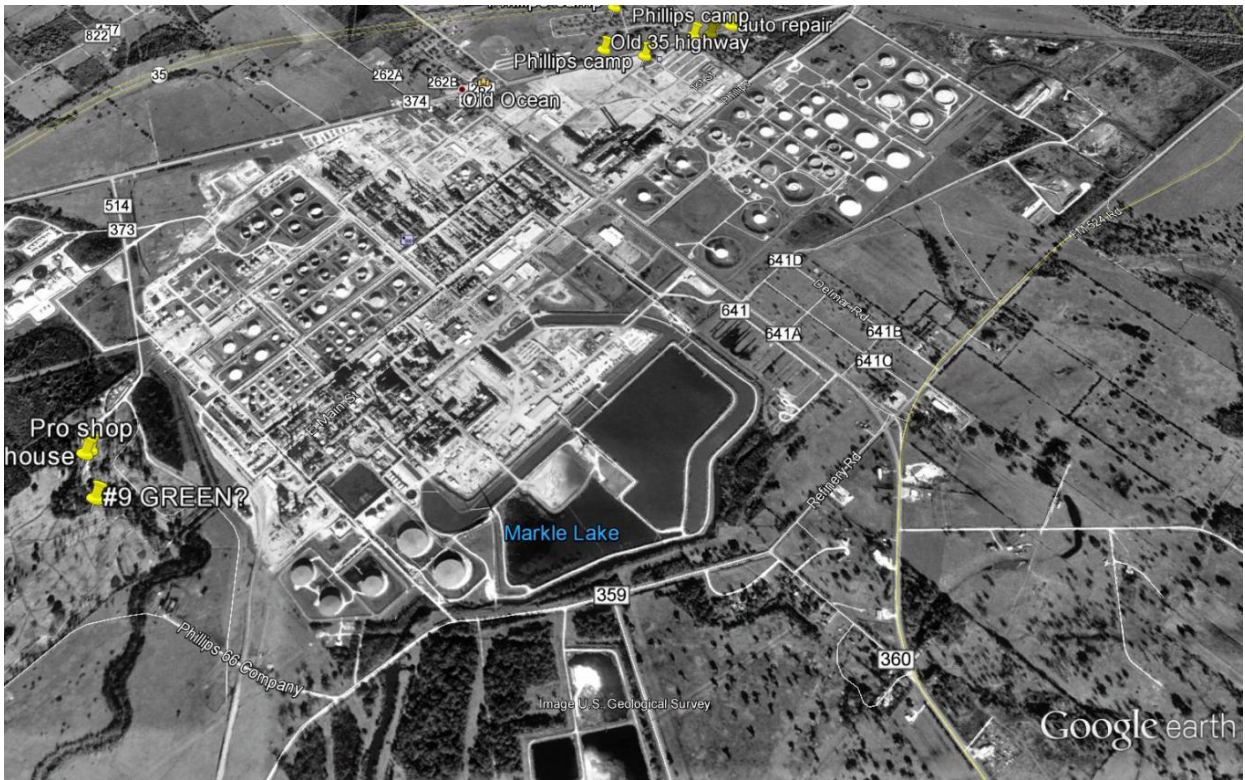
Rosalyn Ward Franke Traylor ... There was a cafe next to Bul's grocery store, Cardella or Kardella was the name of the woman who owned it, but I do not remember the husband's first or last name. There was a big juke box in the place.

REFINERY

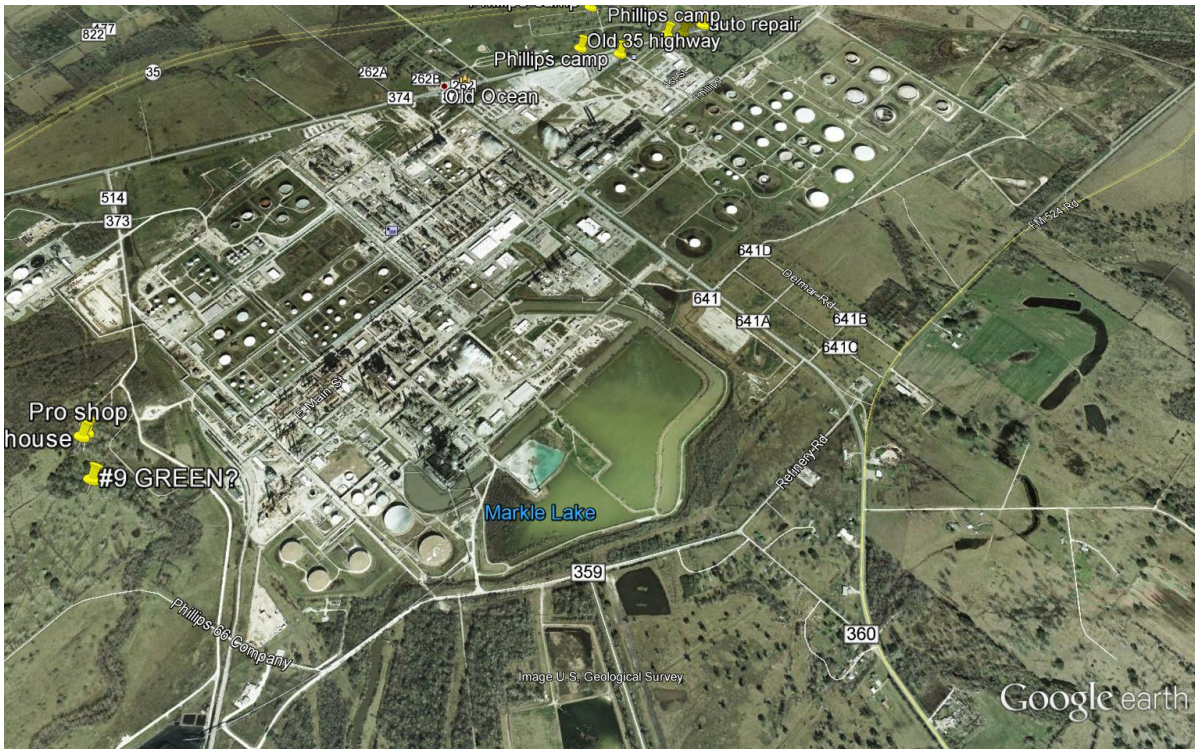
These are some aerial & satellite images of the refinery that has shaped the Old Ocean area. More is to be written about history of the oil industry in the Sweeny/Old Ocean area.



1945 Refinery



1995 Refinery



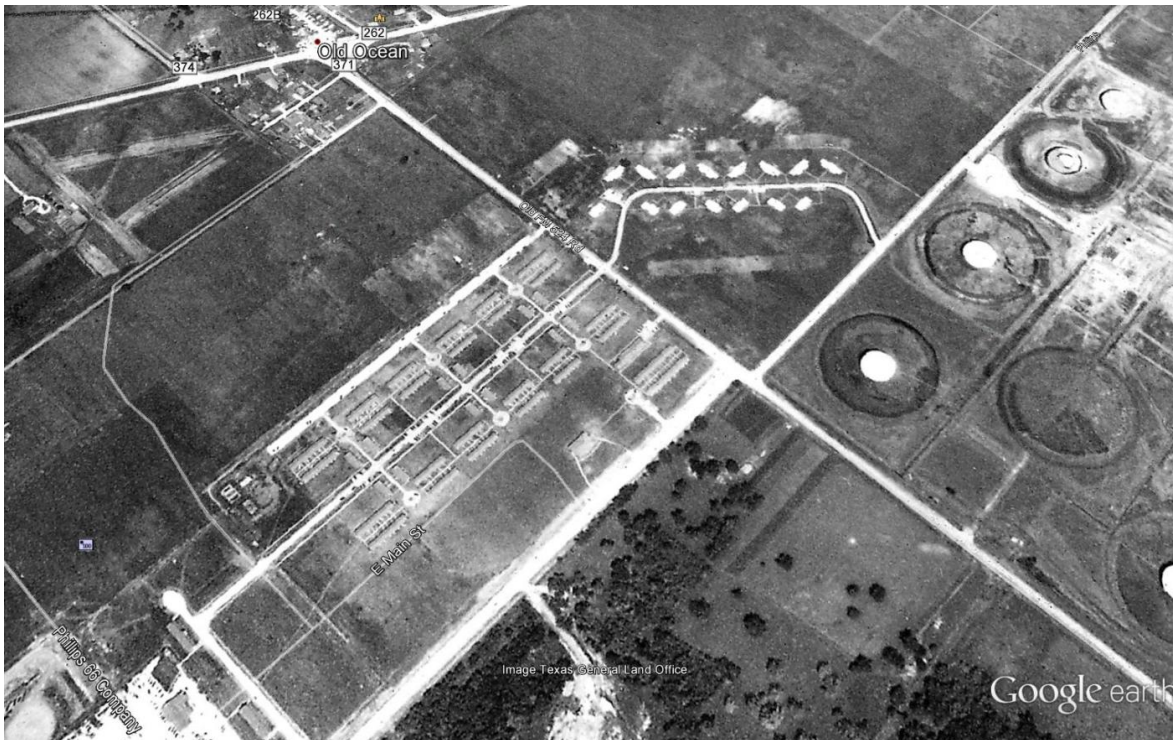
2004 Refinery



2013 Refinery

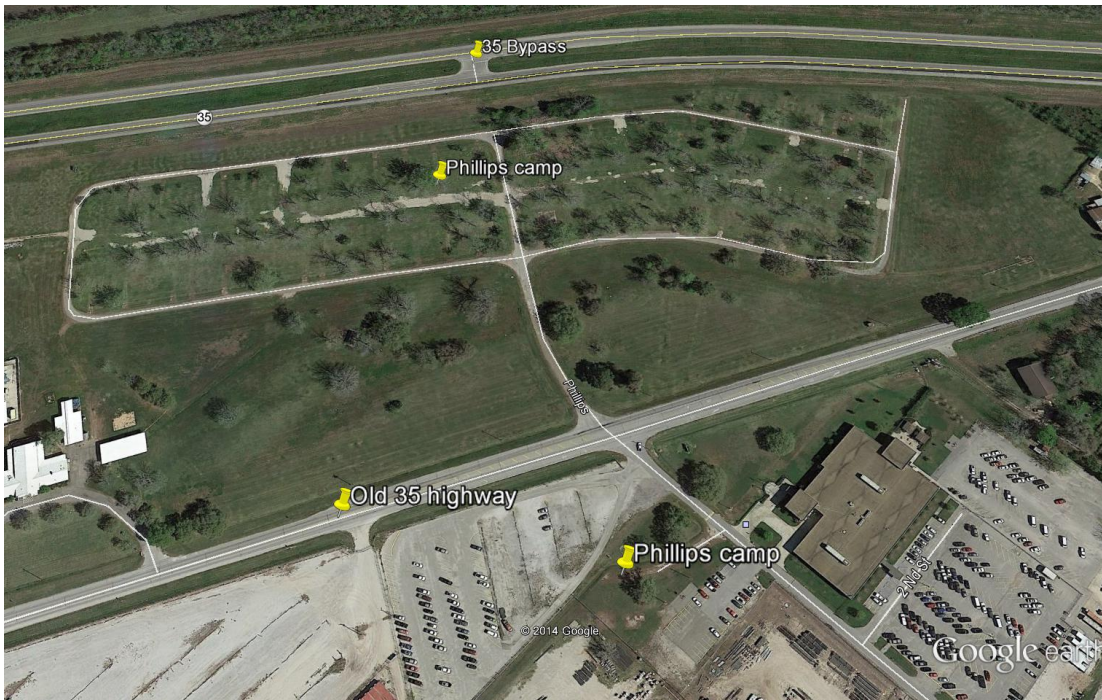
THE YELLOW HOUSES AND THE WHITE HOUSES

The Yellow houses were very basic small row apartments built in the 40s to house refinery workers. The rows faced each other with a sidewalk down the middle. Each unit had a clothes line in the very small front yard space. Editors note: I used to deliver newspaper from my motor scooter there riding down those sidewalks as I threw them. The kids used to string ropes between the clothes line poles across the sidewalk nearly taking off my head. The White houses across the highway were more upscale. Management?

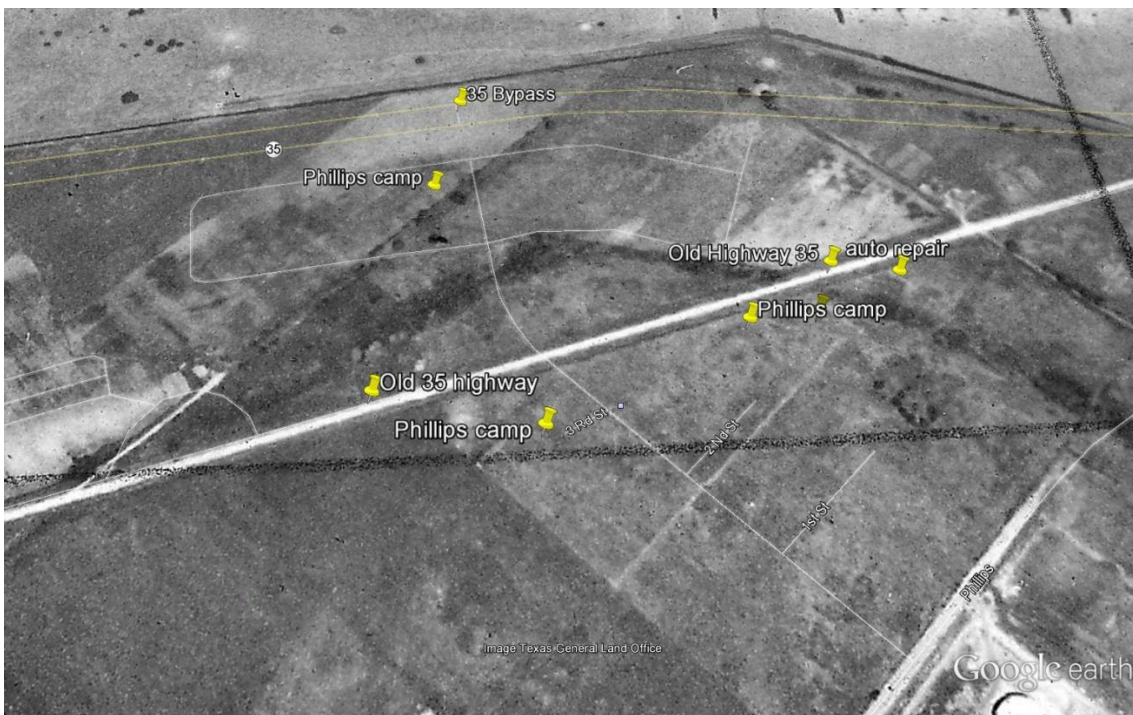


PHILLIPS CAMP OLD OCEAN

In order to provide housing for a rapidly expanding work force, Phillips built _____ two & three bedroom houses in Old Ocean. Families started moving in 1948. Over the years, many hundreds of families lived there until they were torn down in _____. A few were moved to lots on Highway 35 on the left going toward West Columbia. Still there or replaced?



TODAY Phillips camp

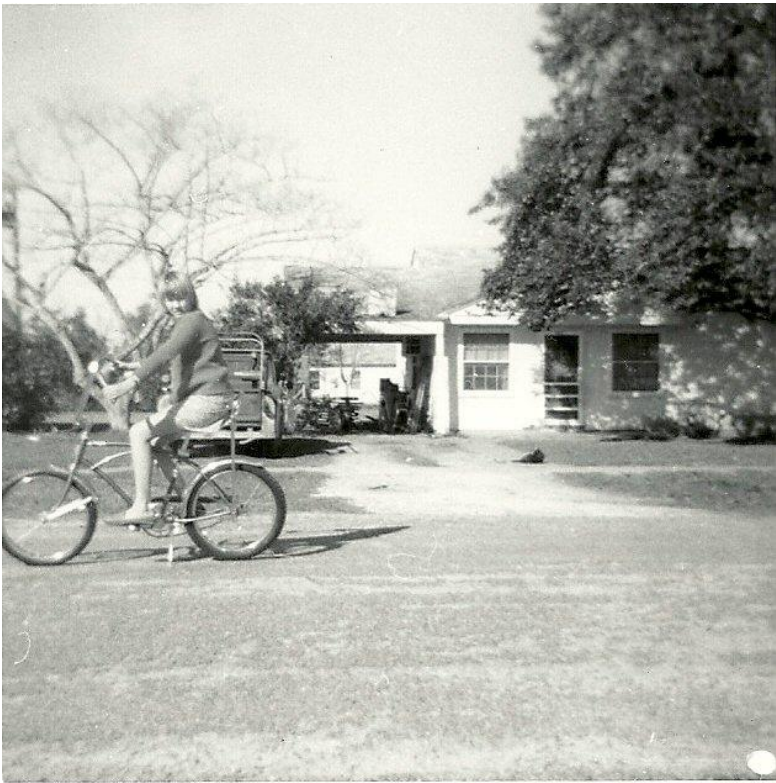


1945 Phillips Camp not yet built



2006 Before the bypass. Shows 6th street.







MEMORIES

Linda Mercer Clemons...We had a special group of people in the "Phillips Camp." I heard that prior to our moving there (1948), Sweeny people were concerned that a bunch of **riff-raff** (a real word?) would invade their area. However, I think we "Phillips Camp" residents improved the quality of the school district--not to mention how much money the residents and refinery added to the school's coffers.

Jim Culpepper...I have a number of vivid memories while living in the Phillips Camp. First, for all practical purposes, about the largest home was about 1,000 square feet. Two bedrooms, one bath and no A/C until the early 1950's. Second, during the summer, kids got up early in the morning, played all day with kids from both sides of the camp and wherever you ended up at noon, that is where you had lunch at one of your friend's home. No one ever gave a second thought about your being kidnapped. No one ever locked their home or car. Families ate dinner or supper together every evening. I remember running up and down the streets yelling, "The War Is Over". It

was the Korean conflict and it ended June, 1950 when I was almost 10. I remember the impact of polio and Darby Trotter's wife dying of the dreaded disease and my mom being there when she died. I remember the "Iron Lungs" and some of the people from Old Ocean Camp being put in one to help with polio. I remember mowing our lawn and neighbor's lawns with a "push mower" and how it helped me get in shape for the football season. I vividly remember my dad sitting on the sofa in the evening with only his boxer shorts and a T-shirt on watching the 12 inch Philco black & white TV and when one of my parents friends would drop by, he never bothered putting on some pants because it was just too hot in the home even with a fan.

Finally, I can't recall what hurricane was coming, but I do remember all of those in the Phillips Camp going over to the refinery and bunking down for a couple of days and thinking it was the greatest thing ever!

Nancy Boden Grisham...Do you all remember when we all got to go to the Phillips offices because of a hurricane scare and that supposedly was the safest place to go? We had a 24 hour slumber party. The kids had great fun but I think the adults were so frightened.

SULFUR DITCH

The sulfur ditch, close to the Phillips camp, carried smelly waste water from New Gulf Sulfur in New Gulf and dumped it into the San Bernard River. Underground sulfur was melted with super hot water and solidified in building sized blocks. Once a thriving company town, New Gulf like Old Ocean, has faded into history and little remains today. Google it.

In the early 50s, small boys from the Phillips camp crossed the ditch by going over a wooden flow control gate to explore deeper into the woods beyond. No video games and smart phones were needed to keep them amused in those days. They played outside and brought home a live skunk suspended on a pole like great white hunters.



1944 Ariel photograph Google Earth



<http://newgulftexas.com/> for more information & pictures.

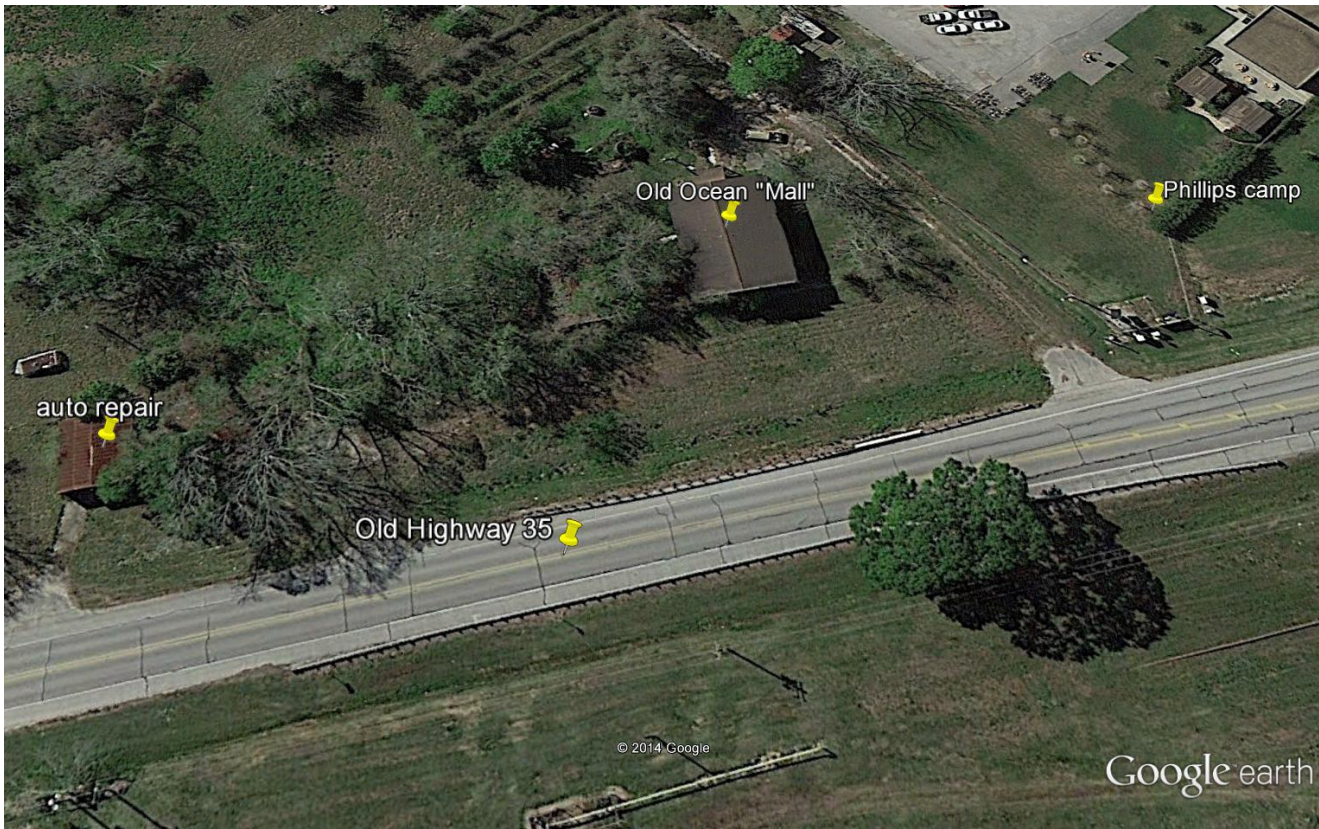
The ditch has been unused for many years. This recent satellite view suggests that a settling pond has been constructed.



OLD OCEAN MALL

LeMaster Center, herein referred to as the "Old Ocean Mall", was located adjacent to the Phillips camp and was probably built about the same time (1948). It contained a drug store?, grocery store later turned furniture store, Huston Hardware, Nash Barber Shop, beauty shop which even had a Merle Norman Cosmetic Studio for a while, a beer joint called Agnes's, an auto repair garage and four apartments upstairs. Mr Huston and the Cummings family lived there at one time. Later the barber shop & hardware store moved to "down town" Old Ocean.

As of 2014, some of the long abandoned buildings are still there on old Highway 35 next to the Phillips fence. The Phillips camp was on the other side of that fence.



1945 Old Ocean Mall and Phillips camp not yet built



1995 Old Ocean Mall. Could not find any other historical views until present.

MEMORIES

Basil Shannon.... In 1948, my family arrived from Oklahoma and waded thru the mud to get into our brand new home in the Phillips camp. The driveway had yet to be installed Sometime about 1950 a traveling carnival set up behind the "MALL". I still remember a guy who folded up newspapers, tore out sections, died the edges blue and them opened it up to make a beautiful design. I was just a little kid.

Mr LeMaster had the gas station at Sugar Valley on Highway 35 where you turn right to go to Wharton. I remember he drove a Cord, the old car with the exhausts coming out of the hood and running back and seeing it in front of the Mall about 1950. That old car sat out in the weeds behind that gas station for many years and might still be there. Many years later in my travels around the country I ran into a guy from Sugar Valley who remembered that car. Pretty obscure place.



Cord similar to what LeMaster drove. His unrestored.

JOHN SWEENEY JR PLANTATION



JOHN SWEENEY, JR PLANTATION

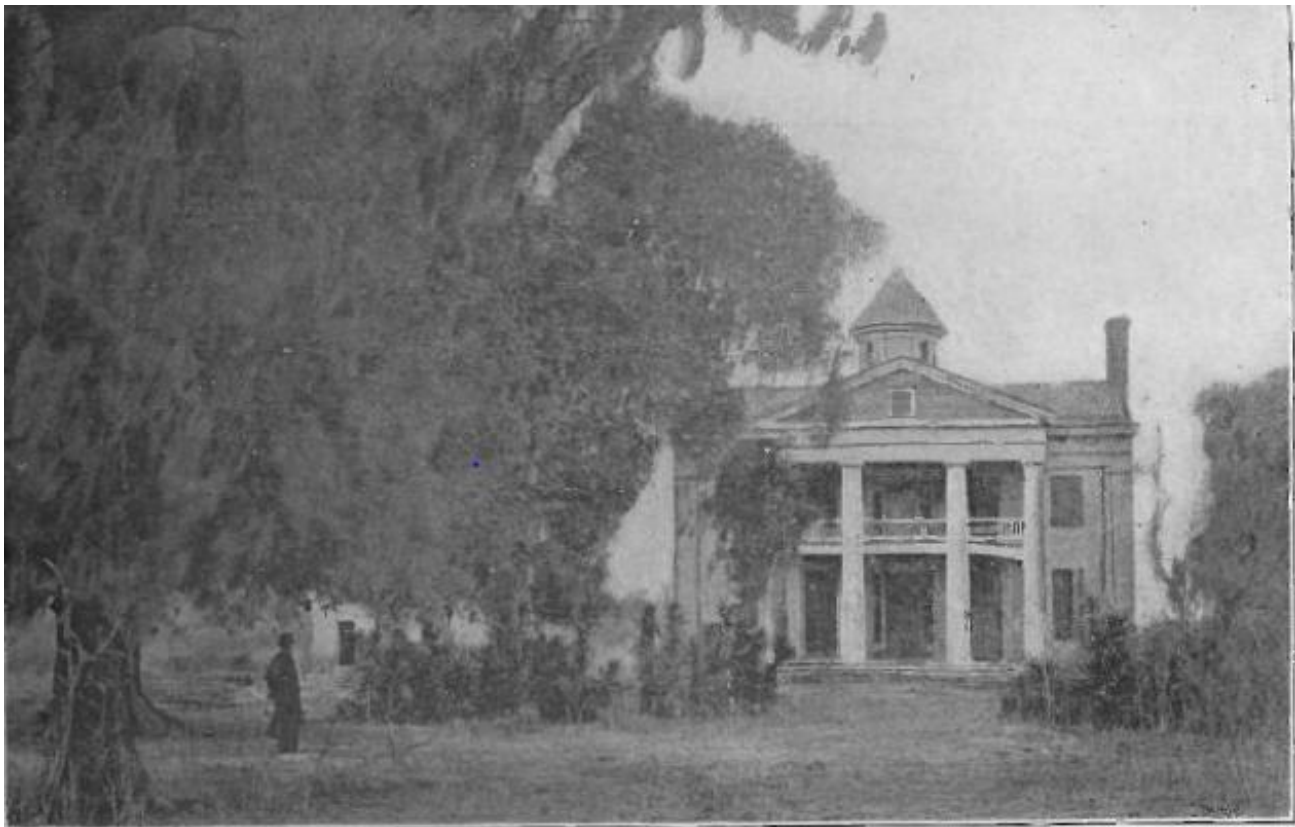
www.bchm.org



BUILT BY SLAVE LABOR 1836-1837

John Sweeny Jr Plantation house before John & Catherine Bannister remodel. Notice the bell in the line drawing, in this picture and then later ones. What happened to the bell? (Photo Lisa Bannister)

Notice the house is simple, unlike our vision of how an old southern plantation home should look. For instance:



PLANTATION HOME OF MAJOR ABNER JACKSON, of Brazoria County
As it appeared in 1890. Now in Ruins. Constructed in 1851.

Photo from The Old Plantations and their owners Brazoria County Texas by Abner Strobel



Later pictures. Wonder what happened to that bell? Photos Lisa Bannister



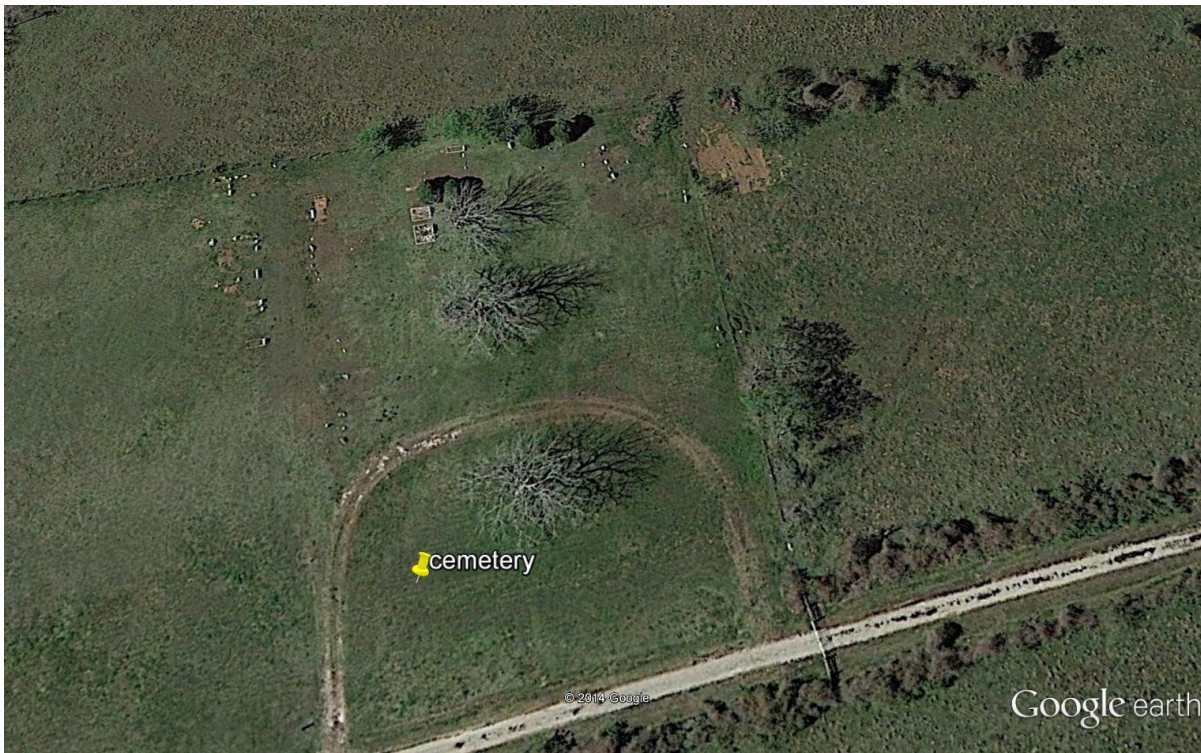


November 2011 satellite pass. House since torn down

From Lisa Bannister: And you may know that the old plantation house has been demolished recently ☹. The historical land marker is still there, and of course the slave cemetery, to mark the 'spot', but that's all. I try to be like Uncle John and accept and "let it go", but it still gives me a little sadness. I can only wish and hope that Phillips first called in a great salvage team to give some parts of the old house a chance to live on. But the heirs who had a say said okay, and none of the family besides me (that I'm aware of) ever went to check on the house or see it.. and I only could once a year.

You probably know that the “tree” that was in front of the plantation house did not make it thru the droughts a few years ago, and that Philips had it removed and let some famous wood carver create a dedication piece that was donated to the museum. I thought it was going to the Brazoria county museum, but turns out it was the Sweeny town museum.

WHO HAS THE CARVING????????



Cemetery

John Howard Bannister (1922-2011), son of Old Ocean postmistress Catherine Bannister (1898-1970), was the last of the Sweeny descendants to actually live in the John Sweeny Jr plantation home adjoining Old Ocean.

The following article was published in 1990 when the land was sold and he left the home for the last time.

Plantations Slip Into Texas History

By ROBERTO SURO, Special to **The New York Times**

Published: **February 27, 1990**

"John Holland Bannister enjoyed one last glance at the white clapboard house that his great-grandfather built with a crew of slaves in 1837 in the Texas wilderness.

Then he turned to look at the huge oil refinery and petrochemical complex that has grown and grown in recent years so that now it looms over his ancestral home. A deep rumbling like distant thunder came from the maze of pipes and machinery until one of the many metal towers spewed out a big plume of smoke.

"It's just time to load up and leave," Mr. Bannister said. A few weeks ago, he reluctantly sold the last 840 acres of his great-grandfather's plantation, which once encompassed 25,000 acres, to the Phillips Petroleum Company. State officials believe that only a handful of parcels once owned by the original settlers of Texas are still in the hands of their descendants, and now there is one less.

Plans for an Incinerator

Phillips plans to build a toxic-waste incinerator less than a mile from the Osage orange tree, still standing, that the master of the plantation, John Sweeny Jr., climbed in 1865 to tell his slaves they were free.

Along much of the once lonely Texas Gulf Coast, the petrochemical industry has expanded beyond its old enclaves in cities like Houston and Beaumont, taking advantage of low prices for its chief raw material, crude oil. A similarly rough passage has occurred in many other parts of the country when auto plants and other producers sought open frontiers in rural areas.

"It is a matter of old ways giving way to new ways," Mr. Bannister said.

As he spoke, the moving crew packed a Bible dated 1788 and chairs that slaves crafted from the wood of trees felled nearby. Each time a cardboard box was carried away, one of the many thin strands that bind America's present to its past was being broken.

"There are still some of the old families, proud of their heritage, who stay on around here, but a lot of them have moved off and gone on as industry has moved in," said Linda Wood, the research librarian at the Brazoria County Historical Museum.

Family Came to Texas in 1832

In 1832, Mr. Bannister's great-great-grandfather, John Sweeny **Sr**, father of the man who would build the clapboard house, left Tennessee with his nine children and bought into the vast real estate development that Stephen F. Austin established as a colony before Texas declared independence. Now all that is left of the Sweeny Plantation, which produced sugar and cotton, is the old house and a slave cemetery.

The Phillips Sweeny Complex covers more than 3,300 acres, employs 1,200 people and produces more than 4 million gallons of gasoline a day among other things. Through the sheer weight of its presence, the plant came to exercise a claim on the land that eventually overpowered John Sweeny's heirs.

With the noise of the plant all but drowning out his voice as he stood in his own yard, Mr. Bannister said, "It is too big to fight, and I am too old to fight it."

Mr. Bannister, 67 years old, spent much of his childhood on the Sweeny Plantation, about 60 miles southwest of Houston. "I used to ride my horse all over the county," he recalled, "having lunch with one family or another, and I would go into the woods a lot hunting with my grandfather *****."

***Wesley Mastin Holland (1862-1930). Grandmother Mussetta Sweeny Holland (1874-1925)**

In 1940, he left to go to college, then to war, then on to a career selling drilling equipment in oil fields around the world. **In 1981, prosperous and retired, he returned with his wife, Nancy, to the 840 acres that his family still owned, the rest having been sold off by various relatives over the years starting in the mid-19th century..**

'The Place Had Changed'

"I was starry-eyed with all these nostalgic dreams of coming back to live the life of the country gentleman here, but the place had changed," he said.

A small refinery built by the Federal Government to make aviation fuel in World War II was bought by Phillips in 1949. It grew gradually at first and then very rapidly in the 1980's.

"I didn't realize how much the old times were gone," Mr. Bannister said. "Even the people had changed. They all have a connection to the plant because someone in the family works for Phillips, and all they want is more industry."

Living in Phillips's shadow, Mr. Bannister gradually became more concerned about the environment. Three years ago, he helped organize a community protest that persuaded Phillips to quiet noisy operations, especially at night. In 1988, he raised the alarm over a leak of fluoride gas that turned hayfields and trees brown. Most recently he questioned the safety of the proposed toxic-waste incinerator at a town meeting.

Little Support From Neighbors

Yet he drew little support from his neighbors and concluded that not much could be accomplished. When 23 workers died in an explosion last October at another Phillips petrochemical complex on the outskirts of Houston, he decided, "people were not meant to live next door to a great big time bomb."

Phillips had repeatedly offered to buy the Sweeny land, and Mr. Bannister's brother and a cousin who held the title with him were willing to sell. Mr. Bannister insisted that the oil company sign a pledge to maintain the old plantation house and the slave cemetery in their present condition with two acres of open land around each. In turn, Phillips obligated Mr. Bannister not to disclose the sale price or anything about the sale other than the pledge.

Mr. Bannister did not show a hint of sadness as he prepared to leave. Both he and his wife are excited about their new life in San Saba, a rural community in the Texas hill country. "The air is clean," he said. "There won't be any industry, at least not in my lifetime."

Photo (Not available on Internet): John Holland Bannister standing in the slave cemetery on the plantation his great-great-grandfather carved out of the Texas wilderness in the 1830's. In the distance is the oil refinery to which he is selling his land. (The New York Times/Sam Pierson); map of Texas showing location of Old Ocean (The New York Times)"

Note: Mr. Bannister died 16 Apr 2011 in San Saba, Texas. Could not verify if he ever went to Sweeny schools. His brother did.

The Victoria Advocate - Feb 13, 1990



Associated Press Wirephoto

John Holland Bannister has signed the papers to sell 840 acres of the once-sprawling Sweeny Plantation to Phillips Petroleum Co.

Brazoria Family Sells Firm Part Of Texas History

OLD OCEAN (AP) — Brazoria County's last family-owned plantation house has been sold.

The Sweeny Plantation, once part of a 50,000-acre parcel given to John Sweeny by Stephen F. Austin in 1823, now is owned by Phillips Petroleum Co.

"It is hard to leave it, but times have changed," said John Holland Bannister, whose family has owned the property for 157 years. "This has turned into an industrial county. History has lost a lot of its meaning."

Bannister, a retired oil company executive and the great-great-grandson of John Sweeny Jr., signed papers last month to sell the remaining 840 acres of what was once the sprawling Sweeny Plantation.

The land, now located across the road from Phillips' Old Ocean refinery, was part of the original plot given to the elder Sweeny, one of the area's first white settlers.

Sweeny divided the 50,000 acres among his nine sons with John Jr. receiving a 15,000 allotment that became the Sweeny Plantation that featured a large home and a cemetery still used by descendants of the plantation slaves.

Bannister, who moved from Houston in 1961 to manage the home site, vowed he would stay on the land. Three years ago, he sparked a community effort to monitor the refinery's operations after residents said the company's flares boomed like low-flying jets and often rattled them out of bed at night.

In 1988, a fluoride release turned nearby hayfields and shrubbery brown, discolored several trees and required some nearby residents to seek medical treatment. And then there have been complaints of industrial odors.

Phillips has tried to resolve the problems, but Bannister finally admitted some of the nuisances

are part of living so close to the plant.

"I don't think they can do any more than what they have done," Bannister said. "The general aggravating factors remain, and it's disheartening to live with it because it's not getting any better. Phillips has done everything physically possible."

Phillips is expanding its ethylene operation in Old Ocean and plans to build a toxic waste incinerator less than a mile from Bannister's home.

When the Phillips plant in Pasadena blew up last October, killing 23 workers, Bannister said he knew he had to leave.

"That brought the danger factor to the forefront," Bannister said. "We couldn't ignore it anymore."

So Bannister and his wife, Nancy, will pack up and move to San Saba, a city of 2,800 in central Texas.

"This was the last of it," Bannister said. "Now it's all gone."

Phillips officials plan to maintain the house and the cemetery — together located on a four-acre tract — through historical groups, but have not planned what to do with the remaining property, said spokesman Mark Kendall.

"We knew when we took on the obligation that the historical things will have to be cared for properly," Kendall said.

While neither side will discuss terms of the deal, Bannister said he hopes people will understand why he sold the land.

"This isn't the sleepy, historical county where I grew up," said Bannister, whose relatives sold off adjoining land parcel by parcel to the refinery. "I suddenly realized that this is one of the biggest industrial counties in the state, and here we are living on a little island.

"I realized that it was time to get out and go where life is still slow."

THE OTHER SON OF CATHERINE BANNISTER,

INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE SIDE

THIS FORM SHALL BE USED FOR ALL BIRTHS IN TEXAS. THIS FORM CANNOT BE USED FOR A BIRTH IN ANOTHER STATE.

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS
STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH

1. PLACE OF BIRTH
STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF Harris

CITY OR PRECINCT NO. Houston

2. FULL NAME OF CHILD Wesley Martin Bannister

RESIDENCE OF THE MOTHER
STREET AND NO. 816 West Alabama CITY Houston COUNTY Harris STATE Texas

3. SEX Male 4. TWIN, TRIPLET, OTHER None 5. NUMBER, IN ORDER OF BIRTH 2 6. LEGITIMATE? Yes 7. DATE OF BIRTH October 11, 1936

8. FULL NAME John Howard Bannister 14. FULL MAIDEN NAME Catherine Holland

9. POSTOFFICE ADDRESS 816 West Alabama 15. POSTOFFICE ADDRESS 816 West Alabama

10. COLOR OR RACE White 11. AGE AT TIME OF THIS BIRTH 42 (YEARS) 16. COLOR OR RACE White 17. AGE AT TIME OF THIS BIRTH 38 (YEARS)

18. BIRTHPLACE (STATE OR COUNTRY) Kewanee, Illinois 19. BIRTHPLACE (STATE OR COUNTRY) Houston, Texas

13A. TRADE, PROFESSION OR KIND OF WORK DONE Salesman 13B. INDUSTRY OR BUSINESS IN WHICH ENGAGED Tex. Rubber Spec. Co. 14A. TRADE, PROFESSION OR KIND OF WORK DONE Housewife 14B. INDUSTRY OR BUSINESS IN WHICH ENGAGED Home

20. NUMBER OF CHILDREN BORN TO THIS MOTHER INCLUDING THIS BIRTH 2 21. NUMBER OF CHILDREN BORN TO THIS MOTHER AND NOW LIVING 2

SIGNATURE OF INFORMANT Catherine H. Bannister ADDRESS OF INFORMANT 816 West Alabama TEXAS

22. MEDICAL ATTENDANCE

I HEREBY CERTIFY TO THE BIRTH OF THIS CHILD BORN ALIVE AT 10:00 A. M. ON THE ABOVE DATE.

AND THE PROPHYLACTIC USED TO PREVENT OPHTHALMIA NEONATORUM WAS _____

DATE June 6, 1939 SIGNATURE Fred B. Smith POSTOFFICE ADDRESS Houston

23. FILE NUMBER 4643 FILE DATE June 6, 1939 SIGNATURE OF LOCAL REGISTRAR John Allen POSTOFFICE ADDRESS Houston

AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF Harris

Before me on this day appeared Catherine H. Bannister known to me to be the person whose name is signed to the above certificate, who on oath deposes and says that the facts stated in the foregoing certificate are true and correct to the best of her knowledge and belief, and that this certificate is filed for the purpose of correcting the original record of the birth of Wesley Martin Bannister (Name appearing on original certificate)

Signature Catherine H. Bannister

Corrects spelling on MASTIN

Wesley Mastin Bannister (attended Sweeny High School), was what could be termed a "mover & shaker" out in California. He was mayor of Huntington Beach, ran for state insurance commissioner three times and headed up the Metropolitan Water Board of Southern California, a very powerful organization in water starved California.

Wesley was known by "Judge" while at Sweeny High School. His daughter Lisa Bannister relates: "Daddy was nick-named "Judge" at a very young age... when he was 2-3 he used to follow his granddaddy (the Judge Wesley M Holland) around, so they always said here comes Judge and little Judge... and that nick-name stuck... even thru college and young married years. It wasn't until he really embraced politics that he started to use "Wes" instead"

His 2009 obituary:

Wes Bannister Bids the Final Farewell

Wes Bannister. He ran for insurance commissioner, he was a mayor, insurance broker, and dedicated public servant but mostly he was a family man and friend. Wesley Mastin Bannister passed away at his home in Huntington Beach after a long illness. He was 73. According to his friends-and there were many-he was his "devious" self to the end. When a broken vertebra as the result of spinal cancer put him in a neck brace during his last week, he quipped: "Now I'm going to be in a neck brace for the rest of my life."

His life was full of hard work, public service, and a healthy dose of politics. As an insurance broker, he was dedicated to his clients. Bannister Insurance started as a little upstairs office off of Brookhurst and Talbert in Fountain Valley. As it grew, it moved to Huntington Beach industrial park on Chemical Lane and was there until Nov 1997 when moved it to 17th Street in Huntington Beach where it is still located.

Wes's 'from the trenches' knowledge of the insurance industry was second to none. He entered the state-wide spotlight when he ran as the Republican candidate for insurance commissioner-in 1990 and again in 1994.

He also dedicated his time to numerous boards and commissions and other elected offices - not the least of which was mayor of Huntington Beach.

Wes was born in Houston Texas in 1936 to John Howard Bannister and Catherine Holland Bannister. John Howard was an oil man and **Catherine was a US Postmistress and genealogist in Sweeney/Old Ocean, Texas.**

He attended **Sweeney High School**, Kemper Military School, West Point, and the University of Houston.

Wes met his wife Elizabeth Ann “Betty” Rogers, also from Houston, when he was a student at the University of Houston. They got eloped to Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Wes and Betty moved to Midlane in Houston, then Littleton, Colorado then to Amarillo Texas, Albuquerque New Mexico, and finally to Huntington Beach in 1969.

He is survived by his wife, Betty, and two children Lisa aka Alice Elizabeth Bannister, and Douglas Mastin Bannister. Douglas married to Kristie Diane Lundquist Bannister in 1991. A third child, Catherine Ann Bannister Paugh, died in 1997. He was also blessed with two grandchildren: Kaitlyn Michelle Bannister and Brent Douglas Bannister.

A Busy and Successful Life

Wes served as a captain in the U.S. Army and was honorably discharged. Insurance and public service became his life. After moving to Huntington Beach in 1969, he opened his brokerage in Huntington Beach in 1974. He did more than sell a product. He was dedicated to his customers developing products for them that fit their needs. He also managed the day-to-day and financial operations of the firm, now run by his children.

Wes was always involved. As a result of the wildfires a few years ago, he personally got involved and helped several families resolve their claims. He was active with the Julian Medical Foundation helping to get funding and programs in place for the small town. In 1987, Wes was appointed to the 10-member governing committee of the California Fair Plan, an insurance provider of last resort for homeowners in high fire-risk areas. Multiple Governors have reappointed him ever since.

His dedication to Huntington Beach was just as strong. Starting in 1986, he served as a city council member and mayor of Huntington Beach from 1989 to 1990. He also served as an elected official as one of the largest special districts in the United States. His crowning glory was perhaps his time spent on California’s water woes. He served as an elected official of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, the largest water district in the world from 1993 to 2006. **In 2005, he was elected chairman of the 37-member board where he oversaw 1,900 employees and a budget of \$2 billion.**

“Water is about as political as it gets,” Bannister told Workers’ Comp Executive in 2005. As the recent battles in Sacramento demonstrate, he was right.

Gilbert Ivey, assistant general manager and chief administrative officer for MWD, says Wes was adored for his hard work and vision.

“He was a tremendous leader and a visionary for sure. He clearly had views outside the box...to help push the water industry forward,” Ivey says. “He wanted to make the water district more responsive to the customers. He was quite a strategic thinker.

“His biggest push was trying to straighten out the Northern California water supply (the Bay Delta), making sure we had a reliable water supply for Southern California. He was very well liked and really cared about all the employees at the Metropolitan Water District,” Ivey says.

Race for Insurance Commissioner

Steve Poizner Of all the offices he pursued, one eluded him: insurance commissioner. He ran in 1990 as a Republican, winning the primary and then losing narrowly to John Garamendi. He tried again in 1994, this time losing the primary to fellow republican Chuck “Chick” Quackenbush. Quackenbush would eventually resign in disgrace. In 2002, Wes threw his hat into the ring a third time, but unfortunately it was not the charm. He lost in the primary to Gary Mendoza.

“I knew and appreciated Wes as someone I could count on to tell me what he really thought and why about any subject,” Insurance Commissioner Steve Poizner tells Workers’ Comp Executive. “Wes was a leader not only in California’s insurance issues but also in water policy. His knowledge of water issues helped to guide California water policy in a rational way.

John Garamendi“ He had that rare down home ability to understand things and to be able to explain them in a way everyone could understand. He will be sadly missed by us all,” Poizner says.

Wes was respected by his opponents on both sides. Industry sources speculated that because of Quackenbush, voters were leery of candidates associated with the industry, despite Wes’ impeccable credentials and honesty. Democrat Congressman and former insurance commissioner John Garamendi recognizes Bannister for just those traits:

“One of the real joys of a political campaign is to have an opponent that you not only respect but come to value as a close and dear friend,” Garamendi tells Workers’ Comp

Executive. "Wes was one of a kind. For more than twenty years I knew Wes as an extraordinary leader not only in the insurance community but on water policy and recycling. He helped to create the recycling that is so critical to California's future. I will miss him greatly, and I join his family and friends in mourning his passing."

RESIDENTS OF THE JOHN SWEENEY PLANTATION HOME

Abt 1938-1970. John & Catherine Bannister

Lisa Bannister, granddaughter of Catherine Bannister (1898-1970), says her father's family moved into the house when her father was about 2 or 3 which puts it about 1938-1939. House remodeled in 1947

????? House rented out. Chuck Cahoon lived there and claimed it was haunted.

1981-1990 John Holland & Nancy Bannister (1922-2011)

The house has been torn down.

For a more detailed look at the demise of many old plantation homes in Brazoria County download this 1926 book. **GOOD READ** if you are interested in Brazoria County history wherein Austin's original 300 settlers settled the land, prospered and built beautiful plantation homes only to lose it all after the Civil War.

" Perhaps no man living is better qualified than he to write this story. It was only after repeated urging that he consented to do so. He and his loved ones felt the full force of the blow of the war between the States and Reconstruction. From affluence in 1861 to poverty in 1870, Mr. Stobel's mother (her husband and brother dead) left the Lake Jackson Plantation with \$2.50 and a railroad ticket for St. Louis in 1870 to seek employment."

Note that there are historical errors in his writings on the John Sweeney Plantation.

THE OLD PLANTATIONS and THEIR OWNERS BRAZORIA COUNTY TEXAS

By
ABNER J. STROBEL
Chenango, Brazoria County, Texas

