

BEAUMONT\*

COUNTY SEAT OF JEFFERSON COUNTY. SETTLED IN 1825 AS TEVIS BLUFF; INCORPORATED AS BEAUMONT DEC. 16, 1838. EARLY TRADING POST, RIVERBOAT PORT, LUMBER, RICE AND RANCHING CENTER. NEAR SITE OF SPINDLETOP GUSHER, WHERE OIL BECAME AN INDUSTRY, USHERING IN THE MODERN PORT AND SHIPYARDS, AND A VAST INDUSTRIAL AND CHEMICAL COMPLEX.\*\* (1967)\*\*\*

FILE COPY-DO NOT REMOVE

\*3/4" lettering

\*\*1/2" lettering

\*\*\*1/4" lettering

2 MARKERS

- 1) AT CITY LIMITS ON Hwy 28769-96N
  - 2) AT S CITY LIMITS ON Hwy 287-69-96
- BEAUMONT

RECEIVED  
READY FOR

FEB 27 1967

SOUTHWELL ORDER  
TEXAS HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

APPROVED  
T.L.  
2-26-67

APPLICATION FORM  
OFFICIAL TEXAS HISTORICAL MARKER

1215

County Jefferson Town Beaumont Date Sept. 29, 1966

This marker is for (Title or Subject) Beaumont (John Connally Marker)  
2 markers: (1) At City Limits on Highway 287-69-96 north  
Marker is to be located (2) At South City Limits on Highway 287-69-96.

(BE SPECIFIC AS TO ADDRESS, LOCATION OF SITE)

Present Owner of Property State highways

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Who is responsible for Marker erection, Property maintenance? The city of Beaumont, or the State Highway Department -

Who prepared the history? Mrs. Will Wilson, with assistance from City Manager and City Clerk, of Beaumont  
Address 140. N. Caldwood Drive

Attach History with Reference Data for Authenticating this Subject (2-3 Pages)

Attach the Suggested Inscription for the Marker

(Copy must meet State requirements; the Texas State Historical Survey Committee reserves the right to change the suggested inscription.)

If this is an Application for a Building Medallion, enclose Picture of structure.

Do you desire to be contacted Re Final Inscription: Yes XX No \_\_\_\_\_

Who is to be recognized as the Sponsor of this marker?

Name City of Beaumont, Texas

Address \_\_\_\_\_

This application has been submitted by:

Name Mrs. Will E. Wilson

Address 140 N. Caldwood Drive  
Beaumont, Texas

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**BEAUMONT, TEXAS**

"WE ARE INFORMED THAT A TOWN HAS LATELY been laid out of the tidewater of the river Neches, at a place known as Tevis Bluff, 30 miles from Sabine Bay. Its situation is said to be one of the most delightful in Texas and it has already commenced improving at a rapid rate. It is spoken of as a town which promises to be one of considerable importance. It has received the name of BEAUMONT, which from the description of the place, strikes our fancy as very appropriate.

Telegraph and Texas Register  
San Felipe de Austin  
Monday, October 26, 1835

The first(?) land grant by the State of Coahuila and Texas was issued to Noah Tevis and was comprised of 2,214 acres along the Neches River, within the present limits of Beaumont. The City of Beaumont was established on December 16, 1838 by the Third Congress of the Republic of Texas and consisted of 200 acres and a population of less than 100 persons. By 1876, four saw mills were in operation in the Beaumont area and it became an industrial city.

Beaumont fronts on the Neches deep ship channel 20 air miles from the Gulf of Mexico at latitude 30° 4' 50" North and longitude 94° 5' 40" West. There are several stories regarding the origin of the city's name. One account suggests that Henry Millard, a local administrator in 1835, named the village for his brother-in-law, Jefferson Beaumont. Another account claims the name honors a pioneer local family of Beaumonts. Still another says it is a word of French origin meaning "beautiful knoll, hill or mountain", specifically applying to the elevation immediately southeast of Beaumont later known as Spindletop. *of the more accurate data in Mrs. Spindletop*

On January 10, 1901 at 10:30 a.m., the Lucas Well at Spindletop blew in from a depth of 1020 feet with oil shooting 200 feet into the air. It ran wild the first nine days gushing an estimated 800,000 barrels of oil before being capped. In subsequent years, six major refineries were constructed in the Beaumont area to convert the petroleum and natural gas, produced locally and transported here by pipeline and ship, into consumer products. This was the beginning of the oil industry in Texas.

During World War I, shipyards were established at Beaumont. During World War II the synthetic rubber and petrochemicals industries had their beginnings here. Now there are more than 20 large chemical plants in operation.

Timber production in the area for lumber, plywood, paper and pulp manufacture is substantial. Rice production grosses farmers \$12 million annually in Jefferson County of which Beaumont is the County Seat. A network of fresh water canals supply industry and irrigation needs. Sulphur and salt brine as well as petroleum from Spindletop continue to be important raw resources for the refineries and petrochemical plants.

Prepared by: Industrial Department  
Chamber of Commerce  
P. O. Box 3150  
Beaumont, Texas 77704  
713 Terminal 8-6581

1215

A BRIEF HISTORY OF  
BEAUMONT, TEXAS

A Brief History of Beaumont, Texas  
by Mrs. Will Wilson

Beaumont began as a ferry crossing on the Neches River when Noah and Nancy Tevis selected a bluff on the west bank of the river as a homesite, and built a log cabin and began operating a ferry across the river. Tradition says that they were the first settlers in Jefferson County, arriving from Tennessee about 1825. They received the first grant of land from the State of Coahuila and Texas issued in Jefferson County, and this grant is now the site of a large portion of present day downtown Beaumont. This grant was not made until 1835.

One report said that there were seven houses and one trading post in Beaumont in 1830\* but in 1836 Col. William Fairfax Gray reported in his diary that there were only 3 or 4 houses and a customs house.\*\* This discrepancy may be the result of the dual nature of the settlement, one part being called Tevis Bluff and the other, a mile away being called Santa Anna. Both were later included in Beaumont ( a deed in December of 1837 describes the land as being in a town "formerly called Santa Anna, but now known as the town of Beaumont". Vol. A. p. 300 of Deed Records). Certainly the group of men who served under Capt. Hargroves in the "Beaumont Militia" in 1836, numbering 62, indicates a larger settlement, although not all were necessarily from the town.

During the "Runaway Scrape", hundreds of fleeing Texans made their way to Beaumont (this was the occasion of Col. Gray's visit) and were stranded there on the flooded banks of the Neches. The boats from the ferries had been taken to the lower bluff on Lake Sabine, which was across the lake from the Louisiana (and hence the United States). Here many of them received the word of victory at San Jacinto.

In 1835 Noah Tevis sold some of his land to Henry Millard and Joseph Grigsby. Noah Tevis died, and in 1837 his widow, Nancy, joined with Millard, Grigsby, Thomas Huling, and J. P. Pulisfer to lay out the city, which was named Beaumont after the family of Millard's late wife Mary De Beaumont Millard. The town was incorporated in 1838.

Jefferson County had previously been established by the Republic of Texas, with its seat at Jefferson in present Orange County. In 1838 the seat of the county was moved to Beaumont, which has been the county seat since then.

Sailing Boats came up the river to Beaumont, docking at the wharfs behind the stores on Water Street. Roads were built to Louisiana, to Jasper, to Woodville, to Liberty, and to Sabine Pass. The first industry was cattle raising. Hides and tallow were shipped out of Beaumont, and later cattlemen began to drive their cattle to the markets in Louisiana, and a well known cattle trail passed through Beaumont, the Opelousas trail, with crossings at Tevis and Colliers Ferries.

\*Beaumont, American Guide Series, p.37

\*\*Diary of Col. William Fairfax Gray, p. 168

An industry grew up in the making of split cypress shingles, and soon a larger lumber industry developed. The Lumber industry dominated East Texas for the last half of the century. Lumber was cut in the forests along the Neches and floated down to Beaumont, where sawmills and allied industries were established. Riverboats engaged in a busy trade between Beaumont and Sabine Pass, which was a port of ocean-going steamers of the Morgan Line and others.

When the Civil War came, Beaumonters joined other Texans in the war. Beaumont itself became a distribution center for supplies which slipped past the blockade at Sabine Pass, and were shipped to the railroads at Beaumont. An armory was set up in the local court house, and local cattlemen became commissary agents for the Confederate government. Spindletop Hill became the camping ground for hundreds of soldiers who were stationed to protect the railroad and southeast Texas from invasion through Sabine Pass.

After the Civil War, Beaumont became the hub from which several railroads were built to service the growing lumber industry, and carry its products to far-off markets.

The lumber industry spurred the growth of Beaumont into a busy city of 10,000 souls. Stores, hotels, opera houses, and saloons soon lined its muddy streets, flanked by plank sidewalks. Log cabins gave way to handsome mansions with Greek columns or Victorian turrets. Beaumont had several short-lived newspapers, but finally got a permanent one with the founding of the Beaumont Enterprise in 1880.

Travelling ministers and priests on horseback served the "alligator circuit" until the first resident minister came to Beaumont in the 1850's. Baptists and Methodists together built the first church in 1874, followed by a Catholic Church in 1879, and Episcopal and Presbyterian churches in 1881.

Early schools were held in the homes of various citizens who employed governesses or tutors for their children and those of their neighbors. A few private schools were opened by individuals. Formal education was launched with the founding of the Beaumont Academy in 1879.

Overnight in 1901, this busy, prosperous town was catapulted into national fame by the discovery of oil at Spindletop. On January 10, 1901, the Lucas Gusher roared into existence, and the result changed the fuel oil industry and the concepts of oil geology. Spindletop turned a modest but steady oil industry in Texas into a rapidly expanding giant. The oil industry still dominates the economy of Beaumont. Six major refineries and innumerable allied industries now compose a huge industrial complex in the Beaumont area. The Port of Beaumont has expanded to handle the shipments of oil, as well as lumber, grain, cotton, and other east Texas products and goods.

#### References:

Beaumont, The American Guide Series, Anson Jones Press  
The Story of Beaumont, Florence Stratton  
The Diary of Col. William Fairfax Gray

County Records

Beaumont Enterprise and Journal