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**Interested? Contact Caroline Wadzeck
936-402-3797 or cwadzeck@hotmail.com**

Historical Society

The Society meets in Parker Hall at 6 P.M. the last Monday of each month for a historical program presented by guest speakers. The program is preceded by a Society business/project status meeting and followed by refreshments.

Newsletter or Website Contact Information

Editor: Janette (JC) Goulder-Frick
<http://daytonxhistory.com>

Rent Parker Hall For Your Event

To reserve Parker Hall, contact:
Lee Krigar at 936-776-1161
or **936-257-0330**; or
Felix Skarpa at 936-776-1039.

Old School Museum

The Old School Museum is located next to Parker Hall at 111 West Houston St. in Dayton and is open Saturdays from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M.

Dayton History News

East Texas Colonization

The Galveston Bay & Texas Land Company (GBTLC) was founded on October 16, 1830 in New York to acquire Mexican lands allocated to empresarios Joseph Vehlein, David G. Burnet, and Lorenzo de Zavala.

The Vehlein/Burnet/Zavala colonization contracts covered 3.7 million acres in an area now referred to as East Texas.

GBTLC was a real-estate firm which sold “scrip” that allowed settlers to move into the areas allotted to the empresarios.

The Mexican government had authorized these empresarios to bring settlers to Mexican Texas under the Coahuila and Texas Colonization Law of March 24, 1825.

Joseph Vehlein was a German merchant from Mexico City who received three different empresario contracts for 100, 200 and 300 families, respectively.

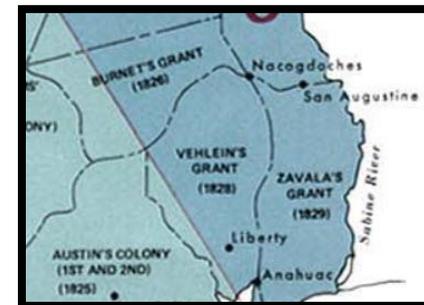
His domain included what is now Liberty County. It bordered the Austin grant at the San Jacinto River to the west, the Zavala grant to the east, and the Burnet grant to the north.

Empresarios did not own the land and could not issue titles. Their reward was 23,000 acres after 100 families settled.

Mexico’s general land commissioners could issue titles but only after a minimum of 100 families had settled in a colony.

On September 27, 1830 (2 weeks before the founding of GBTLC), Jose Francisco Madero was appointed general land commissioner of Texas.

He arrived in Vehlein’s domain on March 2, 1831 and issued land titles mostly along the lower Trinity River and established a



SE Texas empresario grants

municipality known as Villa de la Santisima Trinidad de la Libertad (i.e., Liberty which included West Liberty – aka Dayton).

The Liberty Municipality was an expansive territory located between the San Jacinto River (west), Sabine River (east), Gulf of Mexico (south) and Nacogdoches Municipality (north).

His surveyor was Jose Maria Carbajal who was responsible for marking off the *leagues* – 4428.4 acres of grazing land for cattle raisers only and *labors* – 177 acres of cropland for farmers only.

Once surveyed, colonists could then select vacant tracts and pay the required fees to the state, surveyor, land commissioner and the clerk who wrote the deeds on paper and recorded the payments.

They also accommodated settlers (aka squatters) who arrived before empresario contracts were initiated.

By 1849, Galveston Bay & Texas Land Company had sold scrip for 10,216,635 acres worth 5 to 10 cents per acre.

East Texas Colonization Roots of Revolution

In 1830, Mexico's minister of foreign relations, Lucas Alaman y Escalada, issued the *Law of April 6, 1830* which was designed to stop the flood of immigration from the United States to Texas and to instead stimulate European and Mexican colonization.

Its intent was to suspend existing empresario contracts and was one of several factors leading up to the Texas Revolution.

When the Mexican government failed to recognize titles allocated by the Galveston Bay and Texas Land Company (GBTLC), settlers and squatters who had arrived in the East Texas coastal area prior to 1828 petitioned the Mexican commander-in-chief of Coahuila and Texas for land titles and organization of a local government.

This was the trigger for Jose Francisco Madero's designation as the general land commissioner assigned to provide land titles to residents of the Trinity River area and to establish the Libertad Municipality.

Madero went first to the Austin colony in January 1831. While there, he had a run-in with the federal military commander at Anahuac, John Davis Bradburn, who arrested Madero and his surveyor, Jose Maria Carbajal, claiming that they were in violation of the *Law of April 6, 1830*.

State authorities appealed to Bradburn's superiors resulting in the release of Madero and Carbajal who quickly issued titles to residents along

the Trinity River who had arrived prior to 1828 and he established the Villa de la Santisima Trinidad de la Libertad municipality. Madero then returned to his home near the Rio Grande River.

The underlying issue was that Bradburn represented the Mexican Centralist administration which believed in a strong central government and weak states while Madero represented the Mexican Federalists who valued states' rights.

For a man who only stayed in the Liberty Municipality for 2 months, Madero certainly made an indelible mark on local history.

In November 1831, General Manuel de Mier y Teran, commandant of the eastern interior provinces, visited and insisted that the city hall functions at Liberty be moved to Anahuac.

He ordered the inspection of land titles and of the licenses of the Anglo-American lawyers practicing there.

The tension just kept building over the next 4 years and on October 2, 1835, a skirmish occurred in Gonzales, Texas when Mexican soldiers attempted to retrieve a cannon they had given to settlers for protection from Comanche Indian raids – thus igniting the Texas Revolution.



*per Liberty, Liberty County, and the Atascosito District by Miriam Partlow

First Land Owners*

Colonists in Vehlein's (aka Libertad, Atascocito) domain to whom Madero issued land titles in 1831 included*:

Trinity River West Bank N->S (Dayton+)

- Whitlock, William
- Swail, William
- Everett, William
- Munson, Henry W. (Elizabeth)
- Duncan, William
- Williams, John A.

Old River West Bank (Winfree)

- Griffith, Henry

San Jacinto River East Bank (Crosby)

- Jackson, Humphrey

Trinity River East Bank N->S (Liberty+)

- Knight, James
 - Green, Amos
 - Robeson (Robinson), James
 - Johnston, Hugh B.
 - Hardin, Augustin B.
 - Hardin, Franklin
 - Strong, Samuel
 - Coronado, Jose
 - Hardin, Benjamin W.
 - Orr, George
 - Morton (Martin), James
 - White, Matthew G.
 - Minche (Minchey), David
 - Harris, William
 - Self, Jacob E.
 - Dunman, Joseph
 - Spinks, Baker M.
 - McFaddin, James
 - Barrow, Solomon
- Liberty (Town) E->W*
- Dever, Philip P.
 - Berry, John
- Unknown*
- Nash, Thomas (Hannah)

Colonists Letter*

The November 1827 letter sent by colonists requesting land titles began as follows:

Most Excellent Honorable President:

The inhabitants who are settled on the Trinity and San Jacinto Rivers and their tributaries within the ten littoral leagues on the coast of Texas, and who have not received legitimate possession of lands, with due respect represent to Your Excellency that the majority of them settled here before the general colonization law of August 18th, 1824, was published; that they have opened up great cultivated fields through hard work in heavily timbered lands; that they have built good houses and have a considerable number of cattle; that they have devoted themselves to the planting of cotton, cane, and corn; and to the raising of cattle; that they emigrated to this country with their goods and families, relying upon the offers of the general colonization law of the 4th of January, 1823, with the desire of settling permanently under the auspices of the Mexican Nation; that since their establishment in said country they have made every effort that was in their power to maintain the rights of their adopted country, as is apparent in the conduct which they observed in the Nacogdoches expedition; that in their present situation they are disheartened because up to the present time they have not received the legitimate possession of the lands which they occupy and have improved by hard work, under the assurances of the offers of the first colonization law of the 4th of January, 1823 ...