

# JCHC JOURNAL

J E F F E R S O N   C O U N T Y   H I S T O R I C A L   C O M M I S S I O N

## KANSAS CITY. PITTSBURG & GULF RAILROAD TRANSLOADING PIERS AT PORT ARTHUR, TEXAS

BY LES MCMAHEN

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

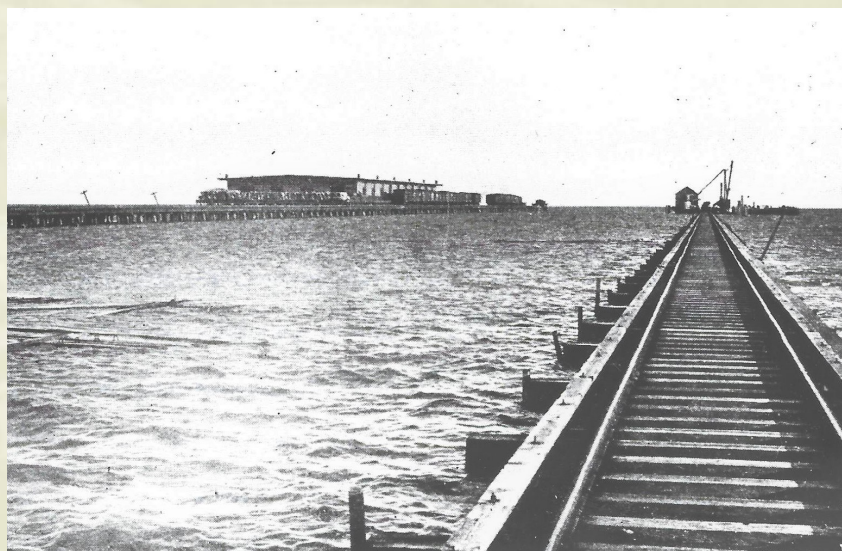
- July 20, 2022  
3:00pm
- September 21,  
2022 3:00pm
- November 16,  
2022 3:00pm

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The following account is based on information from a paper entitled "Excerpts From Early Port Arthur Herald Articles Describing The Export Pier" which is in the possession of the Port Arthur Library History Center, and in which events were not chronologically listed.

Plans for a unique system of transloading piers at the townsite of Port Arthur were first conceived by the Kansas City, Pittsburg & Gulf Railroad (later the Kansas City Southern Railway) in early 1897.



Close up of merchandise export pier and warehouse, circa early 1898  
(Port Arthur Library History Center collection)

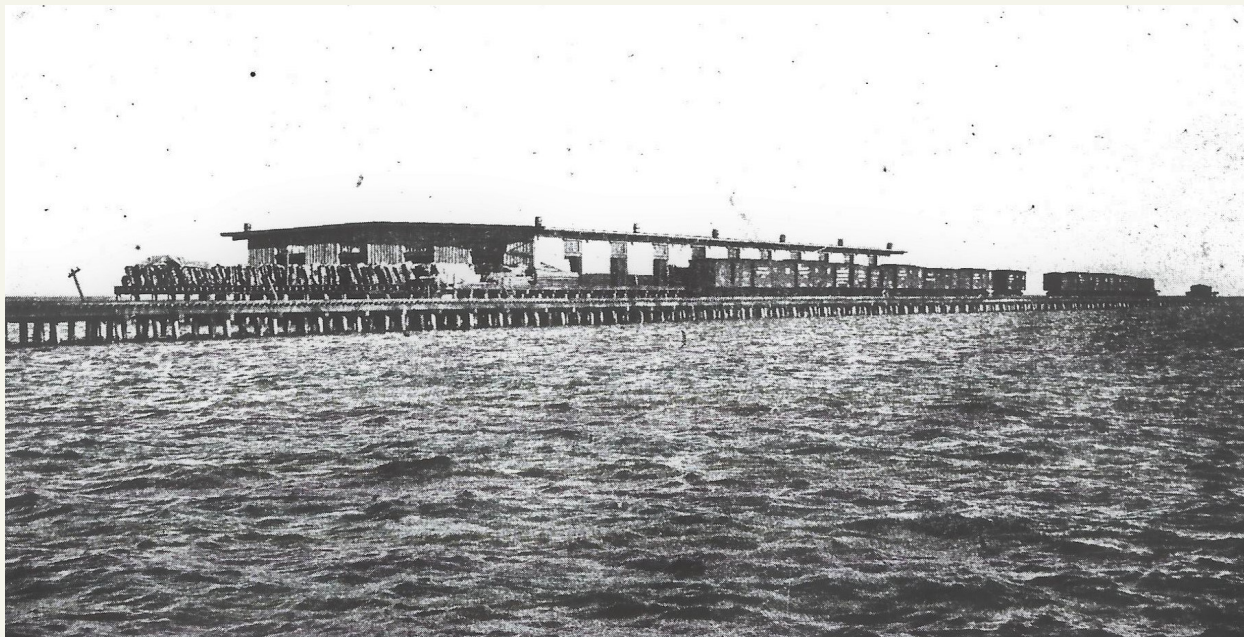
**KANSAS CITY, PITTSBURGH & GULF  
RAILROAD TRANSLOADING PIERS AT PORT  
ARTHUR, TX, CONTINUED**

In early July 1897, work began on the first pier which would extend into Sabine Lake west of the foot of Houston Avenue and which would be served by rail extending from the KCP&G yard in that area onto the pier. The first pier was intended for the receipt and unloading of granite stones for construction of the Sabine Pass jetties in conjunction with the digging of the new Port Arthur Canal. At the end of the first day of work, 300 feet of piling were in place. By July 22, 1897, 2,500 feet of pier had been completed and 2,000 feet of rail had been laid on it.

The first shipment of material off the pier on August 5 1897, was two carloads of coal that went by lighter to the dredge FLORIDA working on the new Port Arthur Canal. Also, the boiler for the steam-powered derrick, installed at the end of the pier for hoisting granite stones off railroad cars and onto lighters for the trip to the jetties, arrived and was put in place on August 6, 1897.

On September 9, 1897, granite stones for the jetties began to arrive at the pier and the new 25-ton capacity derrick was put to work.

In early October, 1897, planning began for a new 2,100-foot merchandise export pier with a 100-foot by 1,000-foot warehouse on one side. The new pier would be 200 feet east of the first pier and would branch off from it rather than having a separate service track. The first pilings for the export pier arrived on October 28, 1897, and the pier was completed by the end of November, 1897. Construction of the warehouse, which was reduced to 300 feet in length, began on December 2, 1897 and was completed by December 23, 1897.



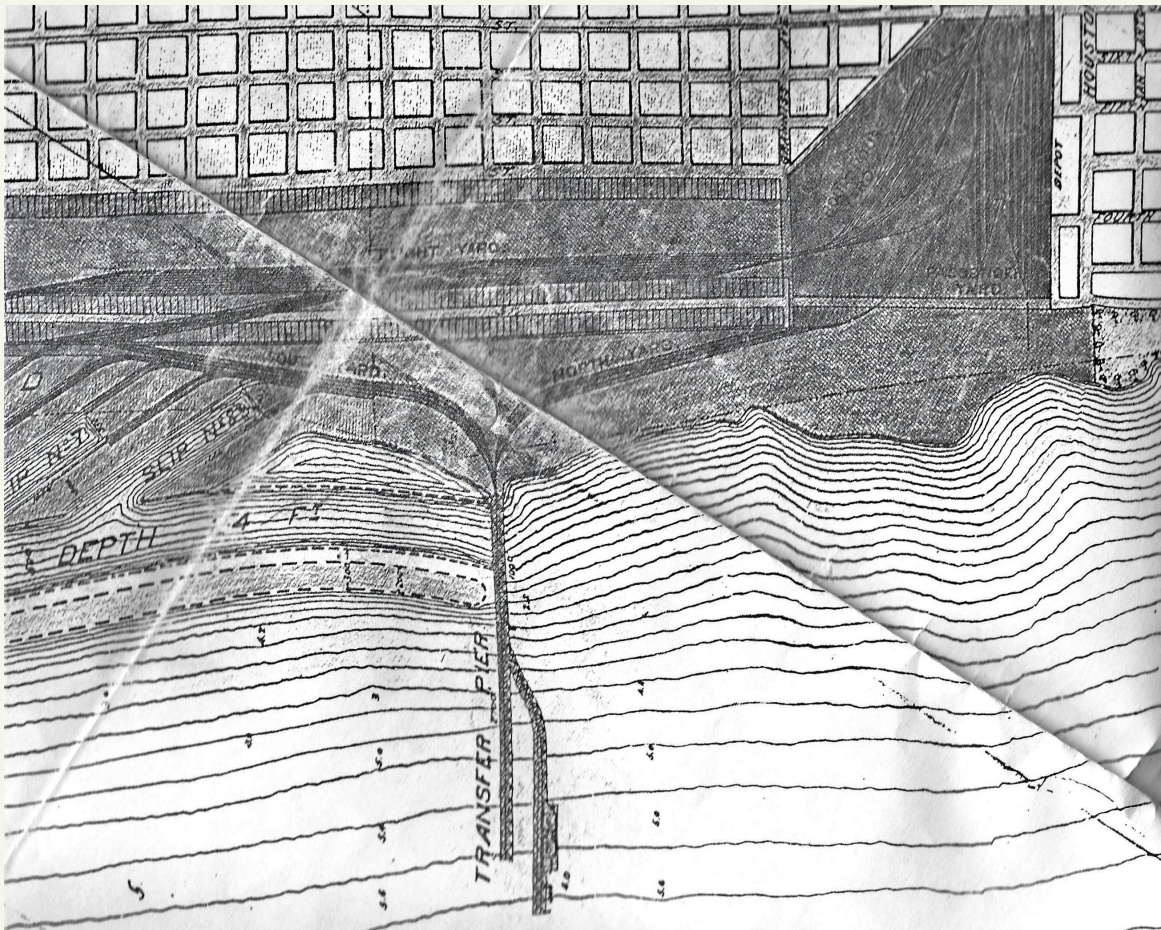
Closeup of merchandise export pier and warehouse, circa early 1898  
(Port Arthur Library History Center collection)



Merchandise began arriving at the export warehouse on January 6, 1898, and which was quickly filled with flaxseed oil cakes, bagged flour, lard in cans, meat in boxes, and bales of cotton. On February 2, 1898, the first load of merchandise began to be transferred from the warehouse by lighters to the ship DRUMELZIER anchored at Sabine Pass.

By late February, 1898, the number of lighters in use had been increased due to an uptick in the amount of merchandise that was being exported. In April, 1898, some merchandise began to be unloaded directly to the lighters rather than being unloaded into the warehouse then being re-handled to load onto the lighters.

Sometime after July, 1898, the granite stone unloading pier was abandoned in favor of unloading the stones onto barges in a slip at the upper end of the new Port Arthur Canal. Likewise, by the end of September, 1899, the merchandise export pier was no longer used as a shipping point, but it continued to be used as a storehouse for cargo awaiting shipment from Port Arthur. No exact date of abandonment of the merchandise export pier is known, but it would have been quickly supplanted by the warehouse complex constructed on either side of Slip No. 3 at the upper end of the new canal.



1897 map showing the relationship of the KCP&G tracks to the stone unloading pier and the merchandise export pier in Sabine Lake (*Port Arthur Library History Center collection*)

## MARKER SPOTLIGHT

### THE HUGHEN SCHOOL

2849 9th Avenue, Port Arthur; TX 77642

Since 1937, the Huguen School and other related facilities have provided assistance to individuals with disabilities. The school grew out of a vision by the Rotary Club of Port Arthur to start a movement in the interest of children with disabilities. In 1933, the Port Arthur Society for Crippled Children organized, and in 1936, the society was incorporated. In 1937, the society started a school in St. Mary's hospital. By the end of the year, the community constructed a building at this location. First called the Spastic School, the institution was renamed for benefactor and businessman Thomas W. Huguen and his wife Juliet. To meet community needs, the institution added services, including physical, occupational and speech therapy programs. Additions to the campus allowed special needs students from outside the area to live at Huguen School. The Port Arthur Society for Crippled Children also advocated for change in state legislation, promoting the Texas state education act of 1945, which became law and played a major role in education of children with special needs. Other facilities were later added through donations given during fundraising campaigns. Famed entertainer Bob Hope participated in a telethon co-sponsored by the Fraternal Order of Eagles, which raised \$1.2 million to erect a high school on the campus. The school was named for Hope, who also appeared at other Huguen Center fundraisers. By the mid-1980s, funds were donated to construct the Hebert Adult Vocational Training Center to help adults with physical disabilities gain skills to advance their careers. Today, the facilities of the Huguen Center continue to offer needed assistance and care to children and adults with physical disabilities. (2010)



Roger Cowles/The News

Miss Texas 2010 Ashley Melnick, to the left of the marker, joins Huguen Center Board Chairman Randy Sonnier, to the right of the marker, and other board members and dignitaries Sunday in applauding the unveiling of the Texas Historical Marker about the Huguen Center's 75 years of history. The marker is on the grounds of the Huguen Center on Ninth Avenue.

*Photo Credit: The Port Arthur News*

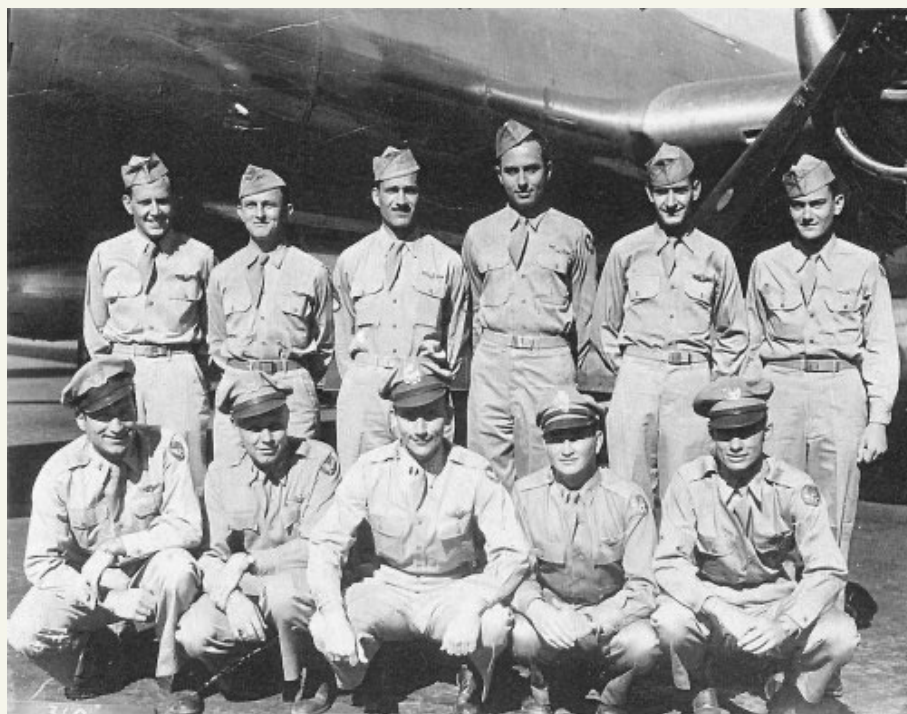




## CAPTAIN EUGENE S. LAND AND THE CITY OF BEAUMONT

BY KATE HAMBRIGHT

The "City of Beaumont" (nicknamed the "Southern Comfort") was named for the hometown of its first pilot and commander, Capt. Eugene S. Land. Eugene Stuart Land was born on November 24, 1916 in Beaumont, the son of Amos and Mary Cooper Land. Eugene was a graduate of Beaumont High School, attended two years of Lamar College, and was working for the Magnolia Petroleum Company when he registered for the draft on October 16, 1940. He subsequently enlisted in the U. S. Army Air Corps on April 6, 1942 and married his wife, Mary Jane Dear, in Pecos, Texas on May 2, 1943 while in service. Mary lived with his parents in Beaumont. Capt. Land served more than three years in service, including six months overseas, and earned the air medal and an oak leaf cluster. Although somewhat of a maverick, crewmembers later described Captain Land as very strict, very disciplined, and someone who demanded excellence. However, he also earned the respect of everyone with whom he came in contact. His crew benefitted from his strong leadership and came through the war unscathed. Following WWII, Eugene rejoined his wife Mary in Beaumont. He then attended UT, obtaining a BBA, and moved to Houston, where he worked in banking as a consultant in mergers and acquisitions. Capt. Land died on November 16, 2008, and is buried in Corinth National Cemetery in Corinth, Mississippi.



Crew of the B29 superfortress "City of Beaumont." Capt. Eugene Land, kneeling, front row, third from left (center).

*[Photos courtesy of 39<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group (VH) Association website]*

## CAPTAIN EUGENE S. LAND AND THE CITY OF BEAUMONT, CONTINUED



The B29 superfortress "City of Beaumont" of the 20<sup>th</sup> Air Force's 39<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group (VH), 61<sup>st</sup> Squadron, which flew 17 missions against the Japanese between May 26-August 29, 1945, during WWII. Fifteen of those missions were at night. The 39<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group was stationed on Guam. Capt. Eugene S. Land, far right.

*[Photos courtesy of 39<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group (VH) Association website]*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**July 7th**– Movies by the Decade: Citizen Kane. Join the McFaddin-Ward House on the lawn for Movies by the Decade, a free summer series showcasing films of yesteryear. Gates open at 7:30pm and film begins at dusk.

**July 9th**– Volunteer Day at the John Jay French Museum. Join us on Saturday, July 9th at 8 a.m. to lend a hand in helping us paint the fence surrounding the museum. Learn more about the historic structure and Beaumont Heritage Society's plans for our new fiscal year. We will provide snacks and water!

What to wear: Work clothes, a hat, and sunscreen

What to bring: Paintbrush

**July 13th**– Save Our Children's annual "Know Your Courthouse" tour. 8:00am-4:00pm beginning in the Jury Impaneling Room of the Jefferson County Courthouse.

**July 14th**– Coffee and Spindletop: An Online Conversation. Join Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown staff for an online discussion about Spindletop, Oil, Gladys City, early 1900's and more. Event is from 6:00pm-7:00pm. Link can be found at [www.lamar.edu/live](http://www.lamar.edu/live)

**July 21st**– Movies by the Decade: Singin' in the Rain. Join the McFaddin-Ward House on the lawn for Movies by the Decade, a free summer series showcasing films of yesteryear. Gates open at 7:30pm and film begins at dusk.

**July 21st**– Heritage Happy Hour: Join us for our next Heritage Happy Hour on July 21st, 2022 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Art Museum of Southeast Texas. Enjoy craft beer showcased by Giglio Distributing Co., wine, and a one-night-only showing of Florence Chambers' artwork in the newest AMSET educational space, made possible by the C. Homer and Edith Fuller Chambers Foundation.

**July 30th**– GC Food Truck Night and Gusher Reenactment. Food trucks will be available at Gladys City along with entertainment and a gusher reenactment at 7:00pm. Food trucks available from 4:00pm to 8:00pm

## GET IN TOUCH

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409-835-8701

[Www.facebook.com/FRIENDSofJCHC](https://www.facebook.com/FRIENDSofJCHC)