Transcription of editorial article in Brazosport Facts, 4-May-1975, page 26

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**FACTS EDITORIAL**

**Dramatic story of first clash**

Six year before the decisive Battle of San Jacinto in 1836, Brazoria settlers tried to get arms out through the Brazos mouth to help jailed Texans at Anahuac. To do it they were forced into a skirmish that ended with the Mexican Fort Velasco captured and its garrison decimated.

It wasn't a major conflict, but it began an irreversible course by dissident settlers, leading to Texas’ revolution and independence. Thousands of visitors have delighted over the whimsical account published by the Brazosport Chamber of Commerce.

This event is the key episode in a drama entitled "Birth of a Giant". It is an outdoor drama, now in rough draft stage. It's not likely to be developed much farther until there is more progress in the financing of the amphitheater in which the historical drama would be presented.

It would be highly appropriate if this dramatization could begin during the American Bicentennial next year. This isn't likely without some unexpected source of help, such as a similar effort in Galveston received from the Moody Foundation. Financing at this time is near the bottom of a big uphill climb to the half million dollars it would take to go first class on the outdoor theater.

The site would be at the dead end of the Old Brazos, with seating that would use the slope upward to Highway 288. The stage would be near the water's edge.

It's a good location. Nothing out of harmony with the theater is likely to be built, for all of the waterfront down to the Velasco Blvd. bridge is publicly owned by the city, the school district and the drainage district.

At the nearby Brazosport High School there is more than ample parking for the 2,000 seat proposed capacity of the theater. These areas are almost totally unused during the evenings for the two summer months during which the plays would be presented. For the remainder of the year this facility would be available for other county events.

Once begun, similar outdoor dramas have enjoyed a huge success, more than paying their own way. Most famous has been the Cherokee tragedy, "Unto these Hills”, in North Carolina. Its author and planner was Dr. Hermit Hunter, dean of the Southern Methodist University School of Arts, who is also writing "Birth of a Giant".

A series of events led to this outdoor drama development. At the beginning was the discovery of some pre-Civil War artifacts at Surfside, near the Freeport Coast Guard Station. Some excavation convinced members of the local professional engineering society that this was the remains of Fort Velasco. Their first thought was to restore it to its original form, as a tourist attraction. This gained force when it tied in with the Corps of Engineers requirement that moving the jetty would involve some recreational facilities. The drama was developed as revenue producer to help pay for the restoration.

Restoring the old fort is still a project of the Society of Professional Engineers, but Surfside was discarded as the site because of the lack of available land.

One of the eventual prospects at the plans now is that when both projects are completed, a might first read the Chamber’s colorful version of the Battle of Velasco, then visit the restored fort at Surfside to gain a mental picture of the setting for the historical event, and finally attend the drama that is built around the battle.

It is a huge undertaking, and the goal looks a long way off at this time. But Brazosport is reaching a stage of growth in which it shows increasing interest in the nature and quality of the development. In this atmosphere, such a plan is possible.

*Transcribed by Chris Kneupper, 18-Sep-2019, from microfilm at Angleton branch of Brazoria County Library System*