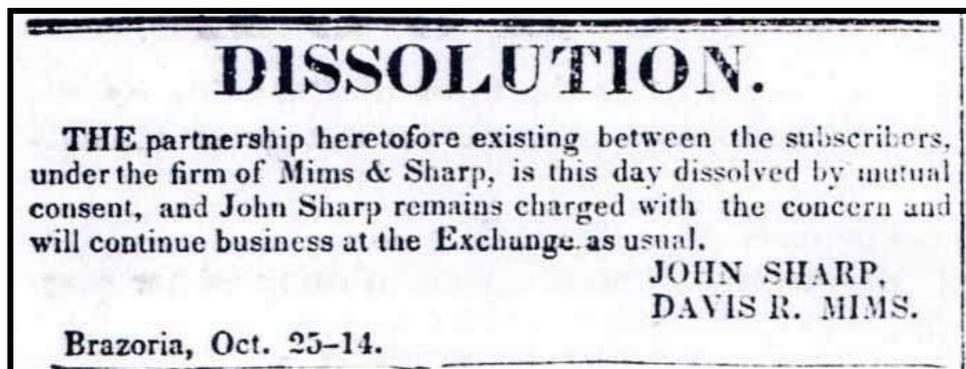


John Sharp Merchant of Velasco
Brazosport Archeological Society

According to Stephen F. Austin's Register of Families John Sharp, a single man from Scotland entered Texas in 1833.¹ John Sharp settled in Brazoria located on the west bank of the Brazos River about 18 miles from the Gulf of Mexico. There he went into the mercantile business with Davis R. Mims in the Exchange building. By October of 1834 the partnership of Mims & Sharp broke apart while Sharp continued the business.



John Sharp joined Theodore Bennet in business under the style of Bennet & Sharp by June of 1835. Theodore Bennet had entered Texas as a merchant in 1831 with his family. Sharp also became the Postmaster for Brazoria.³



On August 9, 1835 John Sharp was one of the signers of a petition calling for a general convention of the people of Texas to “quiet the present excitement” against Mexican rule. He participated in the siege at Bexar in the fall of 1835. November 28, 1835, he and seven other citizens of Brazoria County petitioned the provisional government of Texas to fortify the east

¹ Williams, Villamae, ed., *Stephen F. Austin's Register of Families, 1984*, Ingmire Publications, St. Louis, Missouri, 1984.

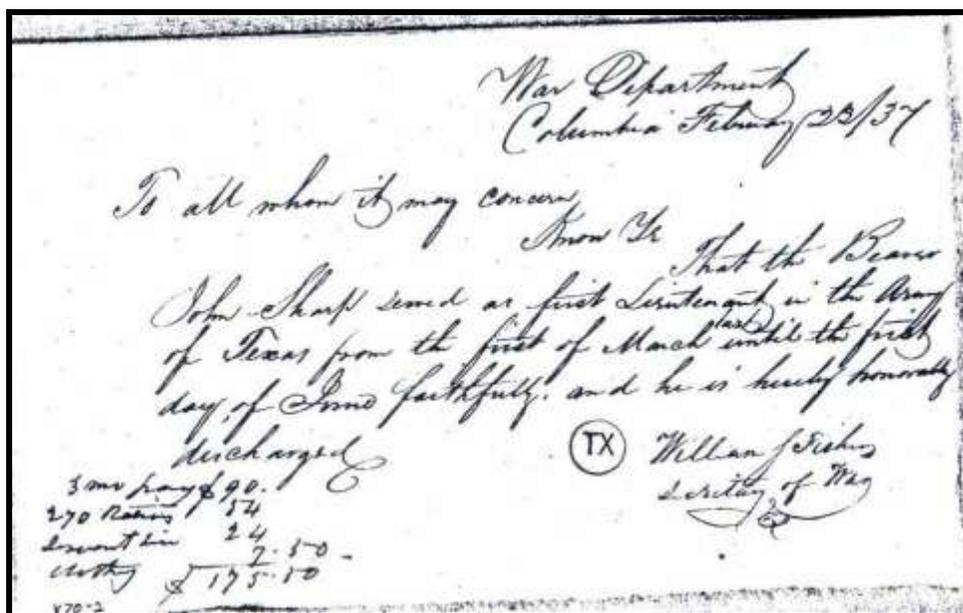
² *The Texas Republican*, November 1, 1834, Brazoria, Texas

³ Creighton, James A., *A Narrative History of Brazoria County*, Texian Press, Waco, Texas, 1975, pp. 114-115.

⁴ *The Texas Republican*, June 27, 1835, Brazoria, Texas

end of Galveston Island, the mouth of the Brazos River, and the entrance to Matagorda Bay against Mexican naval forces.⁵

On March 24, 1836 John Sharp was elected first lieutenant of Captain Rober J. Calder's Company K of Colonel Burluson's First Regiment, and immediately returned to Brazoria County as a recruiting officer. He returned to the army and fought at the Battle of San Jacinto.⁶ Serving until the first of June 1836, Sharp mustered out and returned to Brazoria.



October 25, 1836 Sarah Jane Wharton Calvit married John Sharp.⁸ She was the daughter of Alexander and Barbara M. Calvit of the Evergreen plantation. They would make their home in Velasco at the mouth of the Brazos River. Located on the east side of the mouth of the Brazos River, Velasco, Texas had been the location of an early salt works owned by Asa Mitchell and the Mexican fort seized by the Texians in 1832. The Velasco Association had formed thereafter in 1833 and started to promote their would be port.

After the victory at San Jacinto, David G. Burnet's ad interim government moved to Velasco in May 1836. Along with Burnet, Secretary of State James Collinworth, Secretary of the Treasury Bailey Hardeman, Secretary of War Mirabeau B. Lamar, Attorney General P. W. Grayson, and Mexican President Santa Anna, with several of his officers, sailed to Velasco on the *Independence*. Velasco being one of the few locations in Texas that had even the most rudiment of accommodations had several boarding houses and two hotels.

⁵ *Handbook of Texas Online*, Thomas W. Cutrer, "Sharp, John," accessed August 30, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/on:ine/articles/fsh05>

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Republic of Texas Claims, Texas State Archives, <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/apps/arc/reclaims/>

⁸ *The Telegraph and Texas Register*, November 2, 1836, Columbia, Texas

General Santa Anna along with several of his officers was held prisoner in Velasco in at least two different locations. Gabriel Nunez Ortega in his diary wrote: "We were given a small house, very dirty and without hope of means of living. In the evening they sent us from a hotel a piece of fried fish, coffee and very ugly bread". I.C. Hoskins, who was in partnership with Jeremiah Brown in the American Hotel, submitted a bill for the boarding of Santa Anna and suit.

56 Republic of Texas by S. C. Hoskins	
net. To Boarding Genl Santa Anna and suite from 10th May to 1st June 22 days at \$8.75 per day	\$191.50
Deduct one days Board	8.75
	\$182.75
We do hereby certify that S. C. Hoskins of Velasco did furnish Board for Genl Santa Anna & suite from 10th May to 1st June 1836	
TX	E. J. Lowry Theodore S. Lee

9

General Santa Anna and his officers were confident of returning to Mexico after his signing the Treaty of Velasco and had boarded the *Invincible* in anticipation. General Thomas Jefferson Green returning from New Orleans via Galveston in an excerpt from his journal recalled:

June 1, 1836—Arrived at Velasco on board the steamer *Ocean*, in company with the schooner *Pennsylvania* and 230 of my brigade. . . Upon my arrival, I found a large number of the citizens of the country in great excitement about Santa Anna's being sent home to Mexico, he being at that time on board the *Invincible*, in the offing, ready to sail. . . the people of the country believed him faithless, and clamoured violently against his sailing. . .

. . . the next day, he (President Burnet) issued an order to Captain Jeremiah Brown, of the *Invincible*, to bring the prisoner on shore. Santa Anna returned for answer that he would never leave that vessel alive. A second order was issued, and a similar reply provoked. . .

Three o'clock, P. M.—We arrived on board the *Invincible*, where we found the prisoner in a state of extreme agitation, lying in his berth upon his back, alternately raving like a madman and crying like a child; now denying that he had any agency in the massacre at Goliad; anon, threatening to take his own life sooner than go ashore, to be delivered up. . . The prisoner continued to act this strange part for about two hours; stating meanwhile, that he had taken largely of opium, and would soon die. . . the prisoner continued lying upon his back in his berth, and his respiration seemed to me exceedingly difficult. After waiting some

⁹ Original at the Texas State Archives. Copy from Brazoria County Historical Museum

minutes longer, I called the surgeon of the *Invincible*, and requested him to feel the prisoner's pulse, and report his true situation. He complied with my request, and reported his pulse to be perfectly healthy in it vibrations, when I again intimated to the prisoner the necessity of going ashore. He begged twenty minutes' longer respite; upon which I announced to the captain that it would be necessary to send forward his master-at-arms, and have him ironed without delay. When the irons were brought within his view, the prisoner immediately jumped up, adjusted his collar, put on his hat, and stated his readiness to accompany us. . . I took his arm, desired him to be composed, and conducted him to the captain's gig-boat, into which we descended, in company with Mr. Hardeman, Colonel Almonte, and Captain Brown, and rowed for the shore. . . On reaching the mouth of the Brasos River, Santa Anna took fresh alarm at a body of Texian soldiers and citizens whom he saw collected upon the beach on the Velasco side, and threatened to drown himself if the boat was not pulled over to the western bank. . . We continued our course up the river, passing the schooner *Pennsylvania* and the steamer *Ocean*, from both of which vessels we were cheered. Landing at Quintana, upon the western bank, we met President Burnet, and surrendered the prisoner to him. . .

It was now near night, and having ordered my cabin on board the steamer to be put in readiness for the reception of the prisoner, we continued to walk until our supper was announced. . .

At half past six our supper was served. . . It consisted of an abundance of good beefsteaks and gravy, served in a bright tin pan, with good bread, and, what was remarkable in this stage of our Revolution, a knife and fork each. The tin pan was set upon a narrow bench, and my august guest and myself straddled said bench—inward face!--with our knees touching, we cutting, sopping, and eating a bountiful meal out of said tin pan! . . .¹⁰

General Green would leave shortly and a force under Captain William Patton took charge of the prisoners. Patton transferred them to Velasco on June 9. Later D. Ramon Martinez Caro Secretary to General Santa Anna described being held “in the second story of a house whose first floor was a restaurant.”¹¹ This was after June 1st and we do not have a subsequent bill from Hoskins but there is the possibility that this is the Brown - Hoskins Tavern. Patton moved the prisoners once again on June 15, 1836 upriver to his plantation near Columbia.

Although later declared void by the Mexican government, the Treaty of Velasco effectively ended the hostilities between Mexico and Texas. Also, because the treaty was signed at Velasco, the town enjoyed the status of being the “first capital,” although it was never recognized as such.

The status of the garrison at Velasco for a couple months is uncertain. In September, after the elections for the first constitutional government of the Republic had been held, Captain Martin K. Snell's¹² Company E, First Infantry moved to Velasco from Brazoria.

¹⁰ Green, Gen. Thomas J., *Journal of the Texian Expedition Against Meir*, The Steck Company, Austin, Texas, 1935, pp.484-486

¹¹ López de Santa Anna, Antonio, D. Ramon Martinez Carol, Vicente Filisola, José Urrea, and José María Tornel. *The Mexican Side of the Texan Revolution <1836>*. Translated by Carlos E. Castañeda, P. L. Turner Company, Dallas, Texas, 1956, p.134.

¹² Martin K. Snell private in the New Orleans Greys fought at the siege of Bexar and San Jacinto. He commanded a detachment of the First Texas Infantry honor guard at the funeral of Stephen F. Austin [Dixon and Kemp: 105] In 1857 he was the proprietor of the Caldwell Hotel, Caldwell, Texas. Later he was killed in Hempstead, Texas.

After the seat of government was transferred to Columbia, affairs at Post Velasco were mostly routine. The usual garrison at the post seems to have been one company, normally three officers and 56 men. The unpaid, underfed and badly clothed soldiers under Snell's command became unruly in March, 1837. Captain Snell accosted Lieutenant James T. Sprowl outside a Velasco billiard hall and grog shop owned by H. N. Wolcott (Block 11), where he had gone without permission:

Criminal Case 23

Republic of Texas

vs.

Captain Martin K. Snell

Port of Velasco March 25, 1837

Testimony of Capt. James T. Boylan

. . .he was standing in the street near the end of the store of Wolcott and Moore 24th—with Capt. Thompson and Capt. Snell and Capt. Snell asked the witness if he would hear an order he was going to give to Lt. Sprowl we went in front of the house Capt. Snell asked Ser Ferguson if he would as Lt. Sprowl to come out of the house he done so whereupon Sprowl came out to where were was Snell asked Sprowl if he had executed the order he had given him Sprowl answered he had not but was looking about to see if he could find the men that he was ordered to arrest. Capt. Snell asked Sprowl if detailed the five men that he had ordered him to do he Sprowl said that Snell had ordered him to go by himself. Snell told that he had ordered him to detail five men and to go then and get them Sprowl said he would not that he was not a corporal he Sprowl asked Snell what he meant if intended to trifle with him. Snell said no but he intended to arrest him Sprowl then struck Snell with his right hand and knock him down and got on Snell with his knees on his breast and his hands about his neck witness states that Snell called for assistance and he the witness took Sprowl off Snell Sprowl at the same time had taken Snell's sword from him and after being separated and some distance apart Sprowl make a jab at Snell with the sword and in coming together Snell fell and Sprowl over him as an ____Snell then called for some person to take the large man off him witness states he took Sprowl by the arm and told him to get up and let Snell alone he Sprowl got up and asked to witness what he mean Sprowl then walked off behind witness while Capt. Snell was in front of the witness after Sprowl had gone behind witness he saw Snell with a pistol pointed towards where the witness was and also Sprowl instantly the pistol fired witness turned his head and saw Sprowl fall and an examination found Sprowl was shot

Snell was relieved of command; he was tried and though found not guilty, did not return to Post Velasco. He was succeeded by Captain Adam Clendenin of the First Artillery.

Early in 1837 William Fairfax Grey arrived at Velasco recording his harrowing experience in crossing the bar at the mouth of the Brazos, February 21, 1837:

...After standing off and on for some time, the Captain concluded he had passed the Brazos, and put back. About 4 o'clock we descried the houses of Velasco and Quintana, and shortly after we were off the mouth of the river. The wind set strongly on shore, the surf ran high, with a great noise, and we now knew that it was these same breakers we had heard at daybreak, having been off the mouth of the Brazos. The Captain concluded that the pilots could not come out, and determined to run in without one. He mistook the

pass, and ran his vessel on the bar, where she thumped awfully. The squaresail sheet parted and the sail fell on the deck, the jib sheet also parted, the vessel rolled on the bar, broached to, and several swells dashed over her broadside and was near sweeping the decks before the mainsail could be lowered. It was an awful moment; the Captain himself quailed, and the boldest held his breath for many others had been before. The wreck of the *Flora*, of Middleton, lay a few hundred yards from us, having foundered on the same bar a few months before. By great exertion the mainsail was lowered, she obeyed the flying jib, and again got before the wind, and after a few more shakes which made her crack, she passed over the bar, and we floated under easy sail into the Brazos, passed Velasco, and rounded to at Quintana at sunset....¹³

Another immigrant to Texas at this time was Henry C. Wilcox. The following letter of Henry C. Wilcox to his parents following his arrival in Velasco in 1837 on file at the Brazoria County Historical Museum Library:

Velasco, July 18th, 1837

Kind and Affectionate Parents:

Seated in my tent I improve this opportunity to inform you that our health is remarkably good at present. We landed at Velasco on the 11th inst. but I did not get all my goods & provisions on shore until this morning...

...He anchored outside the bar at the Port of Velasco & refused to land our goods until compelled by the passengers. We arrived before Velasco on the 2nd of July & I went on shore in a jolly boat with three sailors & the Captain. There is a terrible surf on the Coast of Velasco at this season of the year, owing to the periodical winds blowing directly on shore. I was the first person that set foot on shore from the *Belvidere* & I received much praise for my presence of mind for the sailors were very much frightened & I assure you I was very thankful to get my feet once more on Tera Firma.

The 9th of July will be a day long to be remembered by all the passengers of the Brig *Belvidere*. The yawl-boat started for the shore with Mrs. Rawley & her daughter, Mrs. Ward & her father and infant child. The vessel lay about one mile from shore & when they had gotten one-half that distance the breakers became rough & Mrs. Ward lost her presence of mind & sprang up & stumbled against Mrs. Rawley which caused one of the sailor's oars to catch the boat & the passengers were all drowned.

...the morals of the country are not as good as I wish they were. There have been several murders committed before we arrived & there was a duel fought within 2 rods of our tent & one of the parties was shot thru the breast. He lived a short time & died uttering the most fearful curses...

One of the murders mentioned may be the court martial of Joseph McFifers for the murder of ? Lee aboard the schooner *Pennsylvania* on the night of June 4, 1836. The two men in a state of intoxication had scuffled until McFifers struck Lee twice in the face and then took out his Bowie knife and stabbed him (Thomas Jefferson Green Papers). More likely the murders in reference took place in 1837. Francis Adams was shot by Robert Hodge in the house where they both lived in Velasco March 11, 1837 (Testimony was not on microfilm due to the poor quality of the original documents, Criminal Case 4, Brazoria County Courthouse, Angleton, Texas). On March 24, 1837, Captain Martin K Snell killed Sergeant Sprowl (previously discussed). James

¹³ Gray, William Fairfax. *The Diary of William Fairfax Gray, from Virginia to Texas, 1835-1837*, 1965, Fletcher Young Publishing Company, Houston, Texas, 1965, p. 209

McHenry was shot by Moorehouse Hill in Hill's store in Velasco June 15, 1837. Testimony by Thomas P. Crosby states that he heard Hill shout "...get out of my house, you are a thief..." before the fatal shot.¹⁴

The duel took place on the beach at Velasco, July 18, 1837 between Lt. William Redfield and Dr. Alexander Lynch, both of the Texas Army.

Criminal Case 30

Republic of Texas

vs.

Lieutenant William Redfield

Testimony of Joseph Calahan...Lt. Redfield...threatened to pull Dr. Lynch's nose...Lt. Redfield stated that Dr. Lynch was inattentive to his duty and there had been five men died for want of his attention...

Lt. Redfield suggested that they go down to the beach and settle their differences. Dr. Lynch replied that he would only upon a formal challenge. Lt. Redfield asked Captain Clendenin (Captain Adam Clendenin of the First Artillery was dishonorably dismissed from the army for allowing the duel to take place.) to be his second and they drew up a written formal challenge which was delivered to M. Washington, Dr. Lynch's second.

Testimony of Franklin C. Gray...he went on the Beach at the Place or within twenty paces of where the fight took place at Velasco on the morning of the 18th Inst. On his arrival there he saw Wm. Redfield and Alexander Lynch occupying their stands about ten Paces Distant he further states that he saw the pistols placed in their hands by their seconds they then discharged their pistols at each other and Alexander Lynch fell he further states that he saw Dr. Lynch afterwards and saw that the Ball had taken effect by entering the right side...

Testimony of Robert D. Moore ...morning of the 18th he saw Dr. Lynch Wm Redfield in company with several others pass his house going down to the beach After their passing Jas Sovereign came to his house and stated there was going to be a Duel between Doctr Lynch and Lieut Redfield he then states that he saw them on the beach through the spy glass from his gallery that he saw Capt. Clendenin and I M U Washington sitting on a log on the Beach each one of them to appearance loading a Pistol he further states that he saw Doctr Lynch standing on the Beach but could not see Lieut Redfield he occupying a position behind the crowd of spectators he further states that Washington hand Doctr Lynch a Pistol and in a few minutes he heard the report of the Pistols but did not see who was shot until they came of the ground he further states that he saw the wound which Doctr Lynch received being in the right side with a ball and passed nearly through to the left side...

Testimony of Charles P. Green (brother of Thomas J. Green)...went down on the beach where they were and saw M Washington and Capt. Clendenin loading each one a Pistol after a few words they Washington and Clendenin handed the Pistols to Doctr Lynch and Lieut Redfield who had previous taken their Stations, the word was given but not recollected by whom they both fired nearly at the same time

¹⁴ Criminal Case 24, District Clerk's Office, Brazoria County Courthouse, Angleton, Texas

Doctr Lynch advanced forward or fell and observed that he was shot through he was immediately taken and brought to the American Hotel¹⁵ in this place where he lived until about 10 o'clock P.M....

Each of the first hand witnesses concluded that the transaction so far as they saw was fair according to the practice of dueling.¹⁶

In the spring of 1837 John Sharp had been in New Orleans and on April 8 boarded the *Julius Caesar* seeking passage to Velasco. On the 12th they were overhauled by the Mexican brig of war *General Tehran*. As the *Independence* neared Velasco she was intercepted by the Mexican vessels *Vencedor del Alamo* and *Libertador* on the 17th of April. Captain Wheelwright, his officers and crew along with William H. Wharton were incarcerated in Matamoros where John Sharp had also been sent. It would several months before they were able to return to Texas.¹⁷

The post at Velasco seems to have been closed shortly thereafter. The great storm of October 3-5, 1837, known as Racer's storm, destroyed Fort Travis, Galveston may have damaged Fort Velasco as well. When in 1839, the army again stationed troops at Velasco, there was no fort. The following newspaper account reveals that the mouth of the Brazos did not suffer quite as much as Galveston:

Mr. Editor:—Sir, in looking over the Telegraph of the eleventh in speaking of the injury done at Velasco by the late storm, I see two or three errors, which I hope you will correct in your next. The first is that four houses were blown down; there were only two in Velasco, and two in Quintana. The next is that the whole country for several miles was inundated. I would only remark that a large portion of the inhabited part part of Velasco, was at least three feet above the water, extending from the river to the mouth of Oyster creek. The next is that all the vessels in the port here, were driven ashore; this is also an error; the schooner James W. Caldwell lay during the gale at anchor in the middle of the stream in perfect safety, and was not driven ashore at all. I hope you will correct those errors in your next. I state the above as facts, being at Velasco during the gale and was an eye witness to all the facts as above stated. Yours, &c.
J. C. HOSKINS.
Major Bingham's, October 14, 1837.

18

James Morgan wrote encouragingly to Samuel Swartwout of New York City, who had purchased town lots from Thomas J. Green in Velasco:

Dec. 21, 1837

...Velasco, I think was benefited by the great gale in as much as there was not a general overflowing of this place & there was at Galveston or nearly so--It has strengthened confidence in

¹⁵ American Hotel was the tavern run by I. C. Hoskins and Jeremiah Brown in Block 11.

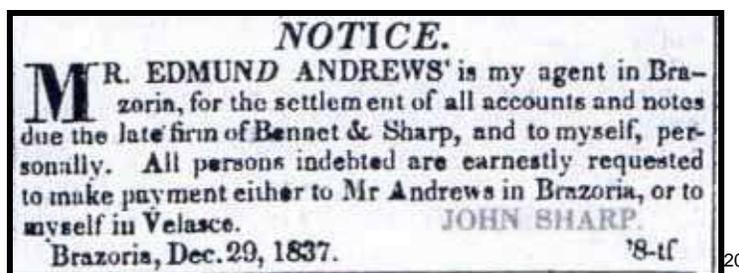
¹⁶ Criminal Case 30, District Clerk's Office, Brazoria County Courthouse, Angleton, Texas

¹⁷ Hill, Jim Dan, *The Texas Navy, State House Press, Austin, Texas 1987, pp.74-80.*

¹⁸ *Telegraph and Texas Register*, October 11, 1837

the friends of Velasco & from the local advantages that place promises, it must go ahead—I am strongly inclined to the opinion that it will be the seat of Govt. at some day...¹⁹

At the end of 1837 John Sharp was selling out his interests in Brazoria:



The end of war revitalized the Velasco Association, which began to promote real estate in Velasco for the next several years. John Sharp, Thomas Jefferson Green, Charles P. Green, Thomas G. Masterson, Branch T. Archer, and Edwin Waller were close business associates or had family ties with William H. and John A. Wharton and all were instrumental in the Velasco Association.

John Sharp operated under the partnership of Sharp & Company whose silent partner was John A. Wharton until his death December 1837. Wharton owned 1/3 *league* of land just upriver from the Mitchell *labor* while Fredrick J. Calvit (brother of Alexander Calvit) owned 1 *league* just east of the Mitchel *labor* to the bank of Oyster Creek and reaching the Gulf.

After the death of his wife, Sarah Wharton Green on March 11, 1835, Thomas J. Green left Florida. Leaving his small son (Wharton Jackson) with his maternal uncle Joseph Wharton in Tennessee, he arrived in Texas in time to offer his services to the Texas Army. On October 3, 1836, he was elected to represent Bexar County in the Texas House of Representatives, and the following year he won election to the Senate of the Second Congress, but his seat was declared vacant after the session opened. Thomas J. Green and his brother Charles P. Green operated under the partnership of C. P. Green & Company.

Edwin Waller and Thomas G. Masterson operated under the firm of Waller & Masterson.

Branch T. Archer was the private physician of the Wharton's and become a life-long friend of Thomas J. Green. With Giles M. Stone the partnership of Archer & Stone primarily tried to promote the Archer *league*, land on the east side of Oyster Creek with frontage along the Gulf.

During the last month of 1836 John A. Wharton and William H. Wharton began to sell interest in the town of Velasco. James Gholson and William W. Grathney each bought 1/16th of the town of Velasco for \$1200 each. In March C. P. Green purchased 1/16th and by mid-March

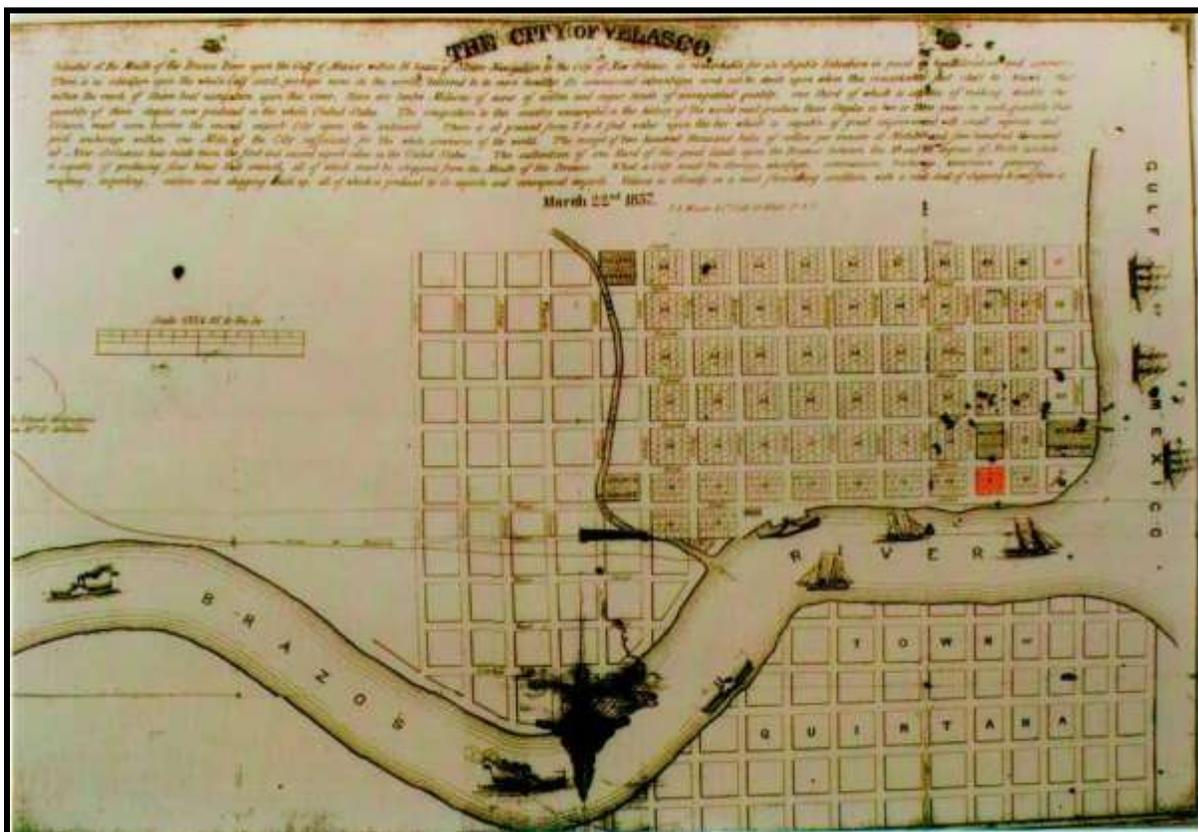
¹⁹ Bass, Ferris A. & Brunson, B. R., *Fragile Empires*, Shoal Creek Publishers, Inc., Austin, Texas, 1978, p. 57.

²⁰ *Telegraph and Texas Register*, February 10, 1838, Houston, Texas

he and Thomas J. Green were in New York City buying merchandise for their partnership, C. P. Green & Co., and promoting Texas and Velasco. Samuel Swartwout wrote to his friend and business associate Colonel James Morgan of Texas:

...Genl. Green and his brother are here-He has purchased the fine Charleston Boat of 500 tons. For 60,000 Dollars to ply between N. Orleans & the Brazos, touching at Galveston. . .Green will leave here with the Steam boat abt. the 10th of April..²¹

It was on this trip that the Green brothers probably had the P. A. Mesier Lithograph made of the city of Velasco in order to promote their business dealings which included dry good sales in Nashville, Tennessee and Velasco.



As in previous years, the Velasco Association continued to promote the town with a grand balls and gala celebrations. On January 11, 1838, “Branch T. Archer and others” sent invitations for the “Velasco Anniversary and Association Balls” to be held at the Archer House in Velasco. The invitations were sent to notables across the land, including the president and vice-president of the Republic, and were signed by the 30 “managers” of the association, most of whom were well known throughout Texas. In the Mirabeau Lamar Papers is his personal invitation from the Velasco Association:

²¹ Bass, Ferris A. & Brunson, B. R., *Fragile Empires*, Shoal Creek Publishers, Inc., Austin, Texas, 1978, p. 37-38.

The pleasure of your company is respectfully solicited to the Anniversary Ball, Washington's Birth Day, on the 22d, and an Association Ball on the 23d of February next, at the "Archer House"

Velasco, January 11, 1838.

MANAGERS

B.T. Archer	A.S. Johnson
W.H. Wharton	F.A. Sawyer
T.J. Green	A. Thruston
James Collinsworth	R.E. Handy
Thos. F. M'Kinney	Henry Austin
Patrick H. Jack	Thos. Wm. Ward
Jeremiah Brown	Wm. S. Fisher
Edwin Waller	M.B. Lamar
Felix Huston	T.J. Rusk
J.A. Wharton	Henry Smith
W.D.C. Hall	W.W. Gwathney
M. Baker	G. M. Stone
Anson Jones	C.L. Durocher
John Sharp	I.W. Burton
W.G. Hill	S.R. Fisher

Not all of those listed under managers were actually members of the Velasco Association but were honorary members. Using the names of influential personages was a promotional technique often used by the association and often attracted families and investors throughout the country. Mary Austin Holley was visiting the Perry family during her third trip to Texas during this same period. She detailed her plans to attend the event in a letter to her daughter, Harriette:

There is to be a great Ball at Velasco tomorrow [February 22, 1838] night—being the period of the races. All the world, who can move, wind & weather permitting are to be there. It rains to day, however. We are goingin a small covered wagon (without spring seats)..to Quintana—on this side of the river--& stop with our bandboxes, at Mrs. McKinney's. Everything available for dresses in Texas has been bought up for the occasion. Confectionery & ornaments &c&c are to be brought by the Columbia from N Orleans. The gentlemen dress remarkably well—The clothes being all brought from N York ready made & of the newest fashions. I expect it will be a great occasion one at least I have never seen. The steamboat plying constantly on the Brazos, will fetch and carry the people. They have only to ride to some convenient landing to embark.²²

Mary Austin Holley attended the Ball - February 22 & 23, 1838 recording her evenings in her diary:

²²Letter Mary Austin Holley to Harriet Brand, February 21, 1838, Hatcher, Mattie Austin, *Letters of an Early American Traveller*, Southwest Press, Dallas, Texas, 1933, p. 73.

22nd

Thursday

Pleasant. Went to Quintana in the wagon—E.—H.—, Mrs. Perry, J. Bryan & myself stopped at Mrs. McKinney's. Met there Mr. St. John & Mr. N. Williams. Ball at Velasco this evening—Went over in a skiff after dark. Returned at midnight—Quite a genteel ball. The first opening of the new house which is in the form of an L – being a long room with wings—one for dancing, the other for supper—at which the ladies, 60 in number, were seated. Supper handsome—dressed cakes & sugar pyramids—other confectionary, oranges brought from N Orleans—much order & taste. The rooms new & painted white, have a neat appearance. The ball room was brilliantly lighted by rows of sperm candles over the doors, windows & all round. Mirrors were ranged at each end under which were hair sofas. Round the ceiling were flags festooned displaying the Texas Star, which also waved from the centre cake on the supper table. Had the music of 2 violins mingled with the roar of the sea, upon which you look from the gallery of the house.

23rd

The young ladies returned home after they left Mr. McKenny & the rest determined to attend another ball at the same place this evening. I accompanied them—with Judge & Mrs. Franklin & Miss McConnel. The ball was much the same thing but pleasanter. A piano was in the room, upon which I, very glad to see one, played for the waltzes. Mrs. Wharton invited me to return home with her tomorrow.²³

Another who seems to have attended the balls at this time was R. J. Clow. From Jeremiah Brown's Probate Case #39 a bill from R. J. Clow gives a little more information about the cost of the evening. The ball tickets and other bills are from the Brown-Hoskins Tavern.

A handwritten bill from R. J. Clow to J. B. Hoskins for 1838. The bill lists various expenses, including ball tickets, meals, and other items, with corresponding amounts in dollars and cents. The total amount due is \$38.25.

Date	Description	Amount
1838	Feb 23 rd 1/2 Ball Ticket	8-00
	25 th 1/2 do do	8-00
	" 1/2 Day Board	2-00
May	15 Board & Bar Bills	11-00
	1/2 Ball Ticket	8-00
June 9	1/2 Dinner	75
July 5	1/2 Breakfast	1-50
11	1/2 e. Diet	5-00
17	1/2 Dinner	4-25
26	1/2 Dinner	4-25
	Prof Balance of J. B. Hoskins	38-25
	Left with Martin Clow	38-25
	Balance	0-00
	Balance	0-00

²³ Holley, Mary Austin, *The Texas Diary, 1835-1838*, The University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1965, p. 60.

Based upon the report of the secretary of the Velasco Jockey Club they also had commemorated President Washington's birthday with a race on the 22nd of February. This series of gala events seemed to produce the desired effect for members of the Velasco Association since Thomas Jefferson Green, President of the Velasco Association, sold the Archer House to A. E. C. Johnson and Samuel Early for \$16,000 February 24, 1838. This was by far the most expensive piece of property sold by the Association. Johnson and Early immediately went to work trying to promote their enterprise. Along with an advertisement for horse races at the New Market Course at Velasco. (Located in the big bend of the Brazos just above the mouth of the old river in what is now Dow Chemical Plant A) is their add in *The People*, April 18, 1838:

The undersigned proprietors having purchased the "Archer House," are refitting it in the most costly style, and from the handsome manner in which the experiment meeting of the 21st February passed off, they have the fullest assurance that the coming one will challenge the most fashionable "fetes" in much older countries.

A new course will be complete in a few days within the circle of the Brazos, unsurpassed in natural beauty and arrangement by any upon the continent; and steam boats will be in readiness at the lower wharves to convey passengers to the course, one mile up the river.

The members of the club will be furnished by the proprietors with badges of membership, and all members will be entitled to enter for the purse at \$10 less than non subscribers, and have free access to the course.

On Monday, Wednesday & Friday evenings, will be furnished splendid Balls at their Drawing Rooms, one of the proprietors having gone to New Orleans at present to complete the arrangement for the same.

On the evening of the second day's race, at 4 o'clock, the proprietors have given \$100 for a splendid "Regatta," to come off under the superintendance of a committee of six captains. The starting place, Brownsville, upon the Brazos, and the goal at the "Velasco Hotel." Entrance \$10.

The ladies may have a splendid view of this fête from the Archer House Observatory.

The proprietors are determined that nothing shall be wanting on their part to complete the most splendid and refined amusement, and they have the greater assurance of realizing more than public expectation, when assisted by nearly all the prominent gentlemen of this republic; for in this, all concerned, feel that they do more towards elevating the moral character and dignity of this young people than any other gain—the most lucky may enjoy.

JOHNSON & EARLEY,
Proprietors.
Velasco, March 2, 1838—14

VELASCO RACES.

The spring meeting over the New Market Course, Velasco, (Texas) will come off in the first week in May, with the following purses, viz :

FIRST DAY.

Monday—Match Race between Col. Hall's Jack the Devil, and Col. Moore's Tallahassee, for 6,000 DOLLARS!—one mile out.

SECOND DAY.

Tuesday—Jockey Club Purse \$300; two mile heats. Entrance \$50.

THIRD DAY.

Wednesday—Jockey Club plate, value \$200; best three in five. Entrance \$30.

FOURTH DAY.

Thursday—Jockey Club Purse \$400; three mile heats. Entrance \$50.

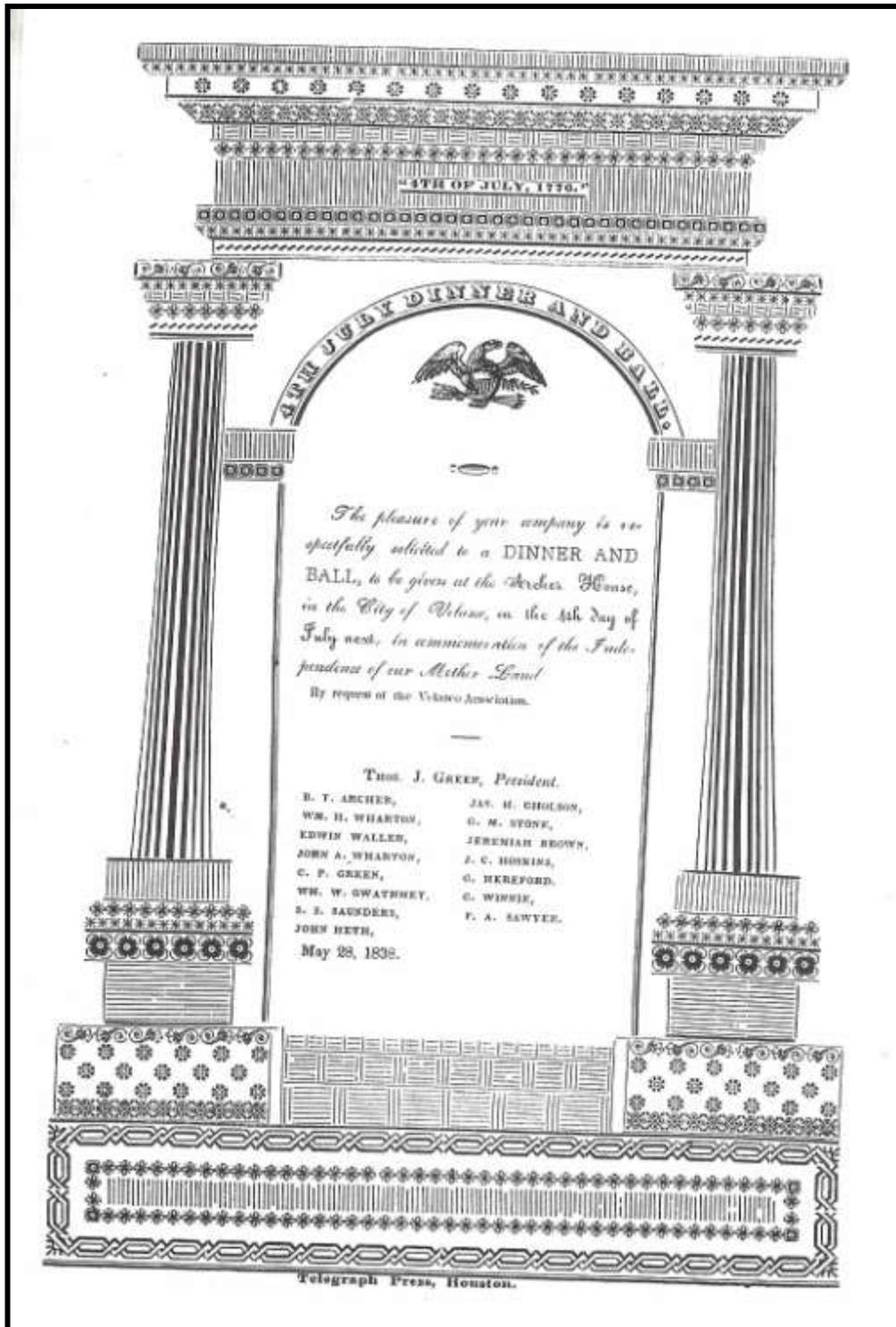
FIFTH DAY.

Friday—A Brilliant, valued at \$600; two mile heats. Entrance \$100.

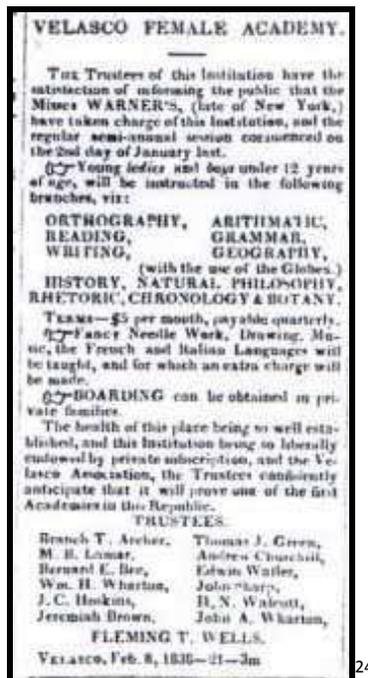
SIXTH DAY.

Saturday—Handy Cap Purse, \$200; mile heats. Entrance \$30.

An additional ball was planned by the Velasco Association for July 4, 1838.



In addition to the business and social activities of the association, the group also promoted the education of the community at this early date:



24

Based upon deed transactions Thomas Jefferson Green was the President of the Velasco Association from August 1837 through August 1838. Edwin Waller was then elected President of the Velasco and Calvit League Association with the first deed bearing his signature in September 1838. The Calvit *league* was adjacent to Asa Mitchell's *labor* and seems to be an expansion in the ambitious plans of the local entrepreneurs. Ambrose Crane from St. Marks, Florida (General T. J. Green had immigrated to Texas from St. Marks, Florida, and probably had an influence on Ambrose Crane and his family coming to Velasco) was elected president in October 1839, and issued deeds from November 1839 until October 1840 at which time the association essentially ceased to function.

Early in 1839 Thomas Jefferson Green owned several race horses. Letters from Branch T. Archer and Green to Dr. Ashbel Smith indicate their enthusiasm for the sport:

Velasco, Feb 17, 1839

My Dear Dr.

Our spring meeting of the Jockey Club commences on the 29th inst—I write you to come to see us on that occasion—our house is yours—Many fine women & horses are in attendance all ready—Be sure to come. Dr. Archer & myself will be certain to expect you—

Your friend truly
 Thos. J. Green

²⁴ *Brazos Courier*, April 18, 1838, Brazoria, Texas

Velasco, Feby 19, 1839

[] Friend

We shall have one week of racing and frolic in this town (commencing on the twentieth of next month) and Genl Green, and myself are keeping first rate bachelors quarters. Enough to say, we shall be extremely happy to have you with us, during the sports of the week. You shall have a bed, a plate, and a stall for your horse—which is enough for a bachelor. Though, if we have other comforts, you shall divide equally

I will assure you a display of fashion and beauty; you may find a wife among our girls.

Respectfully your Friend & Svt

B.T. Archer

General Green enjoyed success on the racing circuit during 1839:

Winning horses in 1839 at *two mile heats*:

“Coloradian” [Colorado] owned by Gen. Thomas J. Green, prize 250 p., wt 73 lb., beat “Milam” at Houston, Texas, on April 17, 1839. “Coloradian” listed as a 3 year old.

“Colorado” owned by General Thomas J. Green, 3 years old, (prize 400 p., wt. 83. Beat “Kleber” in the time of 3:55-3:56 at Velasco, Texas on April 30, 1839.

“Colorado” owned by General Thomas J. Green, prize 2900s. (?), 97lb. wt., time 4:17-4:12-4:19, beat “Sam Houston” at Galveston, Texas on December 24, 1839 [racing journal *Spirit of the Times*, April 4, 1840].

In June 1839, Peter and Mary MacGreal purchased the Archer House due to financial difficulties of the previous owners. They began to advertise their hotel and the opening of a stage line between Velasco and Galveston:

ARCHER HOUSE
VELASCO.

THE public are respectfully informed that this HOTEL is now open for the accommodation of boarders.

Families and persons desirous of spending the summer months on the sea shore, will find the situation of the ‘Archer House’ not surpassed by any on the Gulf of Mexico—being but three hundred yards from the sea beach, which affords most delightful bathing.

Travellers will find an excellent STABLE, and well supplied with corn and hay. Every attention will be paid to the comfort and accommodation of visitors.

RATES OF BOARD.

\$37 50 per month,
10 50 per week, Current money.
2 00 per day.

The above are the charges for board since the opening of the ‘Archer House’ under the control of the subscriber; and any person who has represented the charges as being greater, have knowingly, willfully and maliciously lied.

PETER MAC GREAL.
Velasco, July 30, 1839 2:51

²⁵ *Brazos Courier*, December 3, 1839, Brazoria, Texas

Whereas John Sharp had been commissioned to inspect the facilities on both sides of the Brazos for the location of the customs house he submitted his report and a follow up letter to Mirabeau B. Lamar:

Velasco July 30, 1839

Your Excellency

Some time last spring I recd. From Hon. R. G. Dunlap thru Secy of th Treasury a commission for the location of the Custom House for the Port of the Brazos. I accordingly reported in favour of Velasco—not on account of its being in any way naturally a better harbour or having any advantages Quintana did not posses, but that in Velasco there was a great deal more business done than in Quintana, there being but one commercial house in the latter while here at that time there were twelve...

Within a few days I have learned that Col. W. T. Austin has received a similar commission....As this matter has created some little excitement here, I should feel gratified to be informed on the subject.

Respectfully Your Obr. Servt.

John Sharp²⁶

Official documents do not list twelve merchants in Velasco but several are listed in tax records:

W. J. Drennan & Co. [William R. Smith part interest with W. J. Drennan]

Cottonett & Durocher [Felix Cottonett & Charles L. Durocher]

John Sharp & Co.

Swiler & Young [Joseph Swiler & Reuben Young]

Waller & Masterson [Edwin Waller & Thomas G. Masterson]

²⁶ *Papers of Mirabeau Bonaparte Lamar*, Vol. III, Gulick et al eds., Von-Boeckmann-Jones Co., Austin, Texas, p. 53.

List of Merchants, Tavern Keepers, and Dry Shops in Bogoria County

Address	Occupation	What kind of liquor	Amount paid at the ...	Collector
Adrianus Brouwer	Merchant	Marion	50	50
Amicus & Co	Tavern Keepers	Vilasco	50	50
Edmund Doraust	Merchant	Bogoria	50	50
C. W. Bradford	Merchant	Marion	50	50
Geo Brown	Dry Shop	Columbia	100	100
C. H. Bennett	Tavern Keepers	Bogoria	50	50
Sam Brownell	Merchant	Columbia	50	50
W. M. Brown	Dry Shop	ditto	100	100
Samuel Cook	Merchant	Marion	50	50
A. P. Coffin & Co	Dry Shop	Bogoria	100	100
Martin Cook & Co	Merchant	Marion	50	50
Art's Cochran	Dry Shop	Marion	50	50
W. G. Brown & Co	Merchant	Vilasco	50	50
C. G. De Hall	Tavern Keepers	do	50	50
Edmund & Vanden	Merchant	do	50	50
Geo. A. Elliott	Tavern Keepers	Quintana	100	100
John Parks & Co	Merchant	Marion	50	50
Edwin Barry	Dry Shop	Vilasco	100	100
John Abner	Dry Shop	Bogoria	50	50
Wm. G. Ryan	Tavern Keepers	Marion	50	50
Wm. H. Burton	Merchant	ditto	50	50
J. L. Jones & Co	Merchant	Quintana	50	50
J. P. Lee	Dry Shop	Vilasco	100	100
Chas. Snow	Tavern Keepers	Bogoria	50	50
John W. Wainwright	Merchant	Marion	50	50
Peter McNeal	Tavern Keepers	Bogoria	100	100
J. Phillips	Merchant	ditto	50	50
W. Robinson	Tavern Keepers	Columbia	100	100
Edw. & W. H. ...	ditto	Quintana	200	200

List of Merchants, Tavern Keepers and Dry Shops in Bogoria County

Name	Occupation	What kind of liquor	Amount paid at the ...	Collector
Geo. H. ...	Merchant	Vilasco	50	50
Wm. G. ...	Merchant	Marion	50	50
Benjamin ...	do	ditto	50	50
Chas. & ...	do	Vilasco	50	50
J. M. ...	Dry Shop	ditto	100	100
J. L. ...	Merchant	Marion	50	50
Wm. ...	Merchant	Vilasco	50	50

The above is a true list of all the Merchants, Tavern Keepers and Dry Shops who are trading in Bogoria county, and none of them under another name.

Bogoria October 17th 1839
 A. J. C. ...
 S. W.

In January, 1840, a curious traveler, William C. Sheridan, an English diplomat visited Velasco and recorded in his travel diary the intimate detail of the social life of the port before the financial disasters of the year. This provides an insight into the everyday life of many of the citizens of Velasco rarely found including John and Sarah Sharp:

Jan.

20th

...We are now in sight of land—houses are to be seen & a schooner at anchor...The boat arrived in due course of time & proved to contain no less personages than the Harbour Master & Pilot M^r Thompson & his friend a M^r Metcalfe...they acquainted us with a very curious fact i.e. that we were not at Galveston—the place of our destination, & we supposed we were, but off a small town called Velasco, having a population of about 300 souls...”The Hardy Pilot” took the ship to about three miles from shore, nearer than w^h we could not approach, and the anchor being dropped & sails furling amid the usual & general discharge of “damns” & “Blasts”...

23rd This was a most beautiful day, & after Breakfast Seymour & I put to sea in the jolly boat. After an animated pull of 3 miles or so & having passed the wreck of a vessel that had bumped on the Bar we got into smooth water & the Mouth of the river Brazos. On landing we were received by the whole male population of Velasco headed by the cheerful Thomson with his coat off & a cigar in his mouth. By him we were introduced to General Green a man of very respectable appearance and intelligent phiz...The General shook us warmly by the hand, as also Mess^{rs} Sharp (the Actg American Agent) Potter &c—gentlemen moving in the first circles of Velasco. At the suggestion of our gallant friend, we adjourned to his mansion, where to my intense delight we were speedily roasting before an immense wood fire...M^r Sharpe was so urgent in his solicitations for our society at his house to dine, that the General who had killed a fatted calf for the like ceremony, waived his claim, & agreed with us to feast at M^r S’s at half past one—such being the approved feeding hour of Velasco.²⁷

Accordingly, after a stroll on the beach, we presented ourselves at Sharpe’s dinner table. There were present M^{rs} Sharpe—a young lady, with beautiful eyes & an agreeable expression of countenance, but with a mouth of such dimensions, as entitles it to be compared only with the orifice thr’ w^h Harlequin jumps in the Pantomimes. With her was associated Miss Warner,—a moderately beautiful maid—with good appetite & a red face—who we afterwards discovered to be the school mistress of the town...The dinner, w^h M^{rs} Sharpe with her own hands, assisted the servants to place on the table, consisted of some fat pork, a wild Turkey, fried liver, turnips, sweet potatoes, pickles, peach jam & other dainties. Everything was very good particularly the wild Turkey. The practise here--& a very dangerous one—is to feed oneself chiefly with the knife. The size of M^{rs} Sharpe’s mouth made me easy enough about her but I trembled for the rest of the company. However practise had made perfect & the repast concluded without an accident. Our drink was water & a wine w^h they called Sherry, but w^h tasted something like Chilli vinegar & Bilge water—however it is not fortunately for us the custom to imbibe after dinner—coffee being instantly brought & the table cleared...

Velasco is by no means a gigantic town, as it numbers no more than between 20 & 30 irregularly built huts & houses. Nor does it afford much gratification to a lover of the Picturesque situated as it is on a low sandy beach w^h soon merges into a flat shrubless, prairie extending as far as the eye can reach. There are a few houses on the left side of the river, one of w^h is tenanted by no less a person than my friend Thomson, but the greater part locate on the right. Green’s dwelling being by far the best. No church as yet “with silent finger points to heaven”...As some sort of recompence there is a Court House, on the top of w^h floated the Yankee Colors as well as those of Texas. In front of this is “the Battery” as they think fit to term it, consisting of an old brass 18

²⁷ John Sharp’s home was in Block 31 and General Thomas Jefferson Green’s home was one block toward the Brazos River in Block 28.

pounder with a touch-hole equivalent in circumference to the mouth of M^{rs} Sharpe--& 3 other small ones whose united ages amount to a greater number, than my arithmetic will permit me to calculate...

24th Friday being a propitious day, Ramsey & I went on shore—and having introduced him to the Velasconians & accepted the Generals invitation to dinner, (as also did Hamilton & Walcott) we fell to at the fashionable hour. The feast at w^h also my friend Sharpe & a D^r Smith (with a most horrible twang) was precisely similar to that of w^h we had partaken at Sharpes—viz.—Pork & Turkey—the drinkables being no better than at that gentlemans house.

There were oysters also...a huge, long, ill-shaped shell-fish--a gigantic species of the Mangrove oysters of the W. Indies...The evening however was destined to be productive of intense diversion to me, for lo! & behold the hospitable Green had invited all the elite of Velasco to his house.

Before 9 o'clock there were about a dozen women, many of them very pretty & all well-dressed, vulgar & awkward; and about the same quantity of men, with better manners & conversation than I could have anticipated. To every one of the ladies separately were we introduced, after w^h everybody sat in a circle around the room, the women on one side & the gents on the other. However after a few light pleasantries...The chill was thrown off, & all parties got on very well. And now, after a little pressing, the fair Miss Warner was led to the Piano by the gallant General, & amidst a profound silence performed, & not very badly...Merited applause followed w^h stimulated Miss W. to further exertion & a duet on the instrument between herself & a dear little German woman named Seffield—the dancing mistress of Velasco) ensued. Vocal music then took the lead...the Beloved Seffield afterwards sat down & sung two or three songs remarkably well, besides w^h she rejoices in the possession of a very good voice...

...active exercise was recommended by the General, & various strange quadrilles, cotillions &c were performed. In a moment of temporary insanity I consented, on condition M^{rs} Seffield taught me, to be instructed in the mysteries of a Kentuckee Reel—w^h I at length accomplished amid the roar of laughter of the whole company...At half-past one this agreeable party dispersed, & I discovered that Beds were among the scarcities of Velasco, as I had to share mine with Walcott, who snored like an asthmatic Walrus.

25th Went on board after breakfast (at w^h was the catfish cut in fids & fried) to prepare the banquet to w^h Ramsay had provoked the first families the place. At 1 ½ they came, & among the fashionables present we observed M^{rs} Sharpe, the Misses Warner & Work & two young ladies one with a red nose & the other with a black gown in w^h she mourned the loss of a brother...The males comprised our distinguished friend the General together with the euphonius firm of Smith, Green, Podder & Sharpe, & the illustrious Thompson...In about five minutes the ladies began to look Blue & giggle hysterically, a certain sign that the motion of the vessel was anything but a sedative. The[y] fought bravely against the foe, but he was too strong & they were vanquished...

...The fair haired Warner! She, thy lyre Velasco, tunes to melody. The foe advanced, but with White handkerchief she poked him back—Then sent some “bitters” (they whom the fragrant Shaddock & pregnant grape produce) to complete the rout—Alas! Who can controul fate. The brave bitters met an increased & increasing force, & were driven back, retreat disastrous followed & the fair haired maiden yielded...(McClure)...leads the gulping sufferer to the starboard gangway...Her followed, the maiden of the ruby prow, or red snout, ...I shall content myself with the simple statement that they were all very sick & stowed away in the different births Mess^{rs} Work & Smith were also taken “wuss” & refused to be comforted with dinner. To this the survivors did ample justice & after it many cordial toasts were drank...

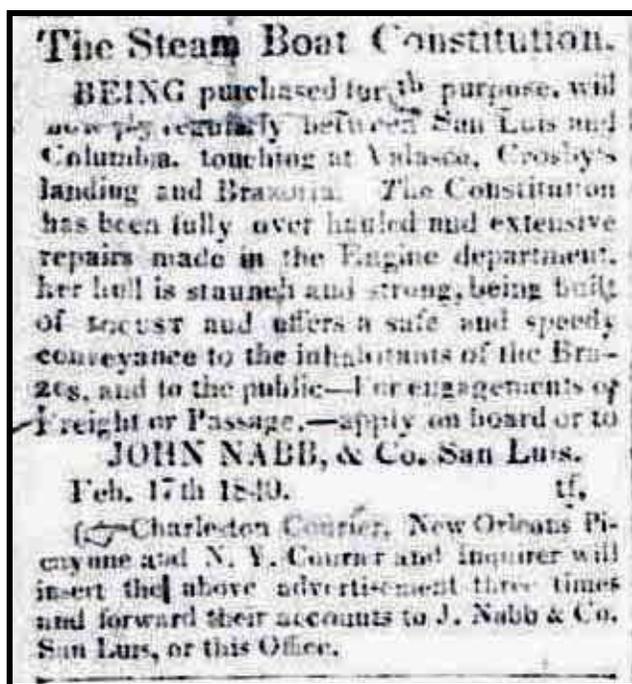
Feb

3rd We lay patiently off Velasco till this day... We found the valorous Green also bound to our destination— Viz: Galveston and crossing the river we embarked on board the Constitution Steamer—Cap Boylan...I had an opportunity of looking at my fellow passengers.

The first that struck me was a gentleman apparently of about 40 years, attired in a frock coat made out of a scarlet blanket with a black edging, & picking his teeth with a Bowie Knife. In this unpretending employment was engaged no less a personage that M^r McKinnie of the firm of McKinnie & Williams, the Barings of Texas...

To return however to the Constitution. She was an old, battered broken Rig {?}—pressure boat, which having been wrecked on the coast near Galveston had been left to the Elements. The Enterprising McKinnie however had redeemed her, patched her up, placed her under the skilful hand of Boylan...& sent her to plough the river Brazos, bringing the cotton there from to Galveston. We brought the largest cargo ever got over the Bar at Velasco, as they told us—viz. about 300 bales.²⁸

This description of the steamboat *Constitution* by W. C. Sheridan may be more realistic than an add placed in the newspaper by the ship's investors:



29

Miss Elizabeth Warner had an add for the fall semester of 1839, but in February 1840 the Reverend Francis Rutherford took out an add indicating both Miss Warners may have returned to New York by early-1840. By mid-1840 the Velasco Institute also shut down and Rutherford opened a private school for boys on his own.

²⁸ Pratt, Willis W., ed., *Galveston Island or A Few Months Off the Texas Coast*, University of Texas Press, Austin, Texas, 1954, pp. 11-30.

²⁹ *Brazos Courier*, March 24, 1840

School for Females at Velasco.

THIS institution will be opened for the ensuing session, on the first Monday in September next.

For Reading, Writing Arithmetic, and other English branches, per session of five months, - \$15 00
 For the French & Italian languages, 20 00
 For Music on the Piano, - 20 00

Good board can be had at from twenty to twenty-five dollars per month.

The trustees have engaged the services of Miss ELIZABETH WARNER as principal of said school, who, from long experience in teaching, together with a fine education, makes her every way qualified for the station. The trustees will have a strict regard to the management of the school.

Branch T Archer,	}	Trustees.	Wm H Jack,
Thos J Greene,			Heman Waal,
Ths G Masterson,			Wm T Austin,
W D C Hall,			Ambrose Crane,
H N Walcott,			John Sharp,
John Work,			Wm R Smith,
Peter MacGaal,			Mosley Hooker,
Philis Hoadly,			Edwin Waller.

Velasco, August 11, 1839 27f

Velasco Institute.

THE Trustees have engaged the services of the Rev. FRANCIS RICHMOND, assisted by Mrs. RICHMOND, in permanently establishing a literary institution of a high order, for both sexes.

There will be three Departments--the Primary, Junior and Senior Departments. The studies pursued in each as follows:

Primary Department--Reading, Spelling, Writing--the first lessons in Geography, Grammar, History, Arithmetic, Botany, and Astronomy.

Junior Department--Reading, Spelling, Writing, continued--the second lessons in Geography, Grammar, History and Arithmetic, Rhetoric, Logic and Elocution--the elements of the Latin and Greek Languages.

Senior Department--Reading, Spelling and Writing continued--Geometry, Algebra, Mensuration, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Botany, Ancient and Modern History, Latin and Greek, Declamation and Composition.

The first session of the institution will open on Monday the 10th February.

The Trustees have also engaged the services of Col. SEXTON and lady, who will give lessons in Music, Drawing, Painting, and the Modern Languages.

Terms--Twenty five dollars per session of five months, in the ordinary branches, and thirty dollars in the higher branches taught.

The teachers come highly recommended.

Ambrose Crane,	}	Trustees.	John Sharp,
Joseph Reese,			R. M. Potter,
Philis Hoadly,			H N Walcott,
John Work,			F. J Huskins,
J. P. Caldwell,			

Velasco, Feb 1, 1840 62f

Velasco had reached its zenith and was now headed toward financial ruin on all fronts during the later part of 1839 into the early 1840's. All the merchants listed in the tax return for Velasco in 1839 were in trouble during this time. Edwin Waller and Thomas G. Masterson ended their partnership July 12, 1839. The partnership of Swiler & Young ended March 2, 1840 when Reuben Young was accused of swindling his partner Joseph Swiler.

Samuel H. Perkins wrote to his wife in Bridge Port, Mississippi concerning his mercantile enterprise during this period:

Velasco, Texas, May 3rd, 1840

...In the winter season it must be bleak and cold, at this place, as it has the gulf on one side and no timber on the other to shelter it from the northern winds. Times are very dull in Texas and money very scarce. Goods are selling lower in Galveston and Houston than they can be bought in any part of the United States. I have seen several person whose notes andI hold but have been unable to

³⁰ *Brazos Courier*, December 3, 1839, Brazoria, Texas

³¹ *Brazos Courier*, March 10, 1840, Brazoria, Texas

collect a cent from any of them...Ours is the only goods in this place. [Family File 23, Brazoria County Historical Museum, Angleton, Texas]

Financial problems also began to trouble Peter and Mary MacGreal, the new owners of the Archer House. The *Brazos Courier*, March 10, 1840 has an add listed from late in 1839:

FOR SALE OR RENT

The Archer House—Velasco

This establishment will be sold or rented for a term of years, together with all the furniture, stables, &c. &c.

The Archer House is one of the best finished Hotels in Texas—well furnished and prepared fully for the accommodation of boarders. The situation is delightful; and, in consequence of the great immigration to the Brazos valley, the new Seat of Government, and upper country, is one of the best positions in Texas for a hotel.

Terms will be very reasonable. Texas Promissory Notes or Funded Stock will be taken. Possession will be given immediately, if required. For further particulars apply on the premises.

Velasco, Dec. 7, 1839

Financial shortfalls early in 1840 did not restrict the celebrations and festivities planned as the association invited President Mirabeau Lamar to attend a dinner in Velasco, *Brazos Courier*, July 28, 1840:

Velasco, July 15, 1840

To his Excell'y M. B. Lamar

Sir—The undersigned committee on behalf of themselves and the citizens of Velasco and its vicinity, in approbation as well of your administration of the government as your individual worth, heartily welcome your arrival, and desire that you will name a day when it may suit your convenience to partake with them of a public dinner at the Archer House.

The most valued rewards of the patriot who loves his country and respects himself, is—first, the approbation of his own conscience; and next, the gratitude of those whom he may serve. That it is and will continue to be your Excellency's enviable lot to enjoy both the one and the other, is gratifying in highest degree to your obedient serv'ts.

Thos.J. Green

Ambrose Crane

John Sharp

Wm. J. Russell

Peter MacGreal

R. M. Potter

F. J. Haskins

John W. Harris

Velasco, July 15th, 1840

To Messrs T.J. Green, John Sharp and others.

Gentlemen

Your very kind note of this morning has been received desiring to know at what time it would suit my convenience to partake with you of a public dinner at the "Archer House," and at the same time in flattering terms expressing your approbation of my administration as well as my individual worth.

My anxiety to reach Austin, (from which my absence has been protracted) will constrain me to decline the honor which your kind partiality had contemplated for me.

Be assured, gentlemen, that manifestation of regard and kindness like the present, carry with them a most grateful influence—an influence to confirm in doubt and to inspire in danger; and when relieved from the cares and anxieties of public service, we can recur to them with equal pride and pleasure.

Be pleased, gentlemen, to accept for yourselves individually and for the citizens of Velasco and its vicinity, the warm assurance of my high appreciation of the compliment intended, and my most grateful recollection of their former confidence and regard.

Your obedient servant,

MIRABEAU B. LAMAR

Velasco, July 16, 1840

Mr. Weir—His Excellency, President M. B. Lamar, arrived in our town on yesterday, and was warmly greeted by his numerous friends and fellow citizens. You will see from the following correspondence, he declined a public dinner. Several of his old friends and neighbours dined with him at General Green's, and evening was closed with the merry dance by a large party of gentlemen and ladies.

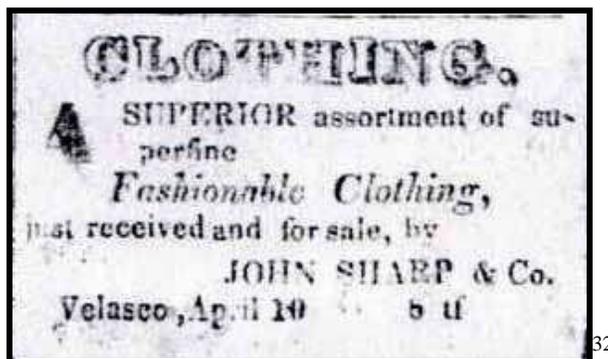
During the evening Gen'l Green being called on for a sentiment, said he would cheerfully give one which he felt confident every person in his hearing would most cordially approve, and proposed:--The continued health, happiness and prosperity of Mirabeau B. Lamar, our patriotic President—who has never failed to exert his opposition to every vice, every abuse, and every species of corruption.

The President being called upon for a response, addressed the company in a most eloquent and feeling manner, which done equal honor to his head and heart. The committee very much regret have not procured a copy for your paper.

Very respectfully,

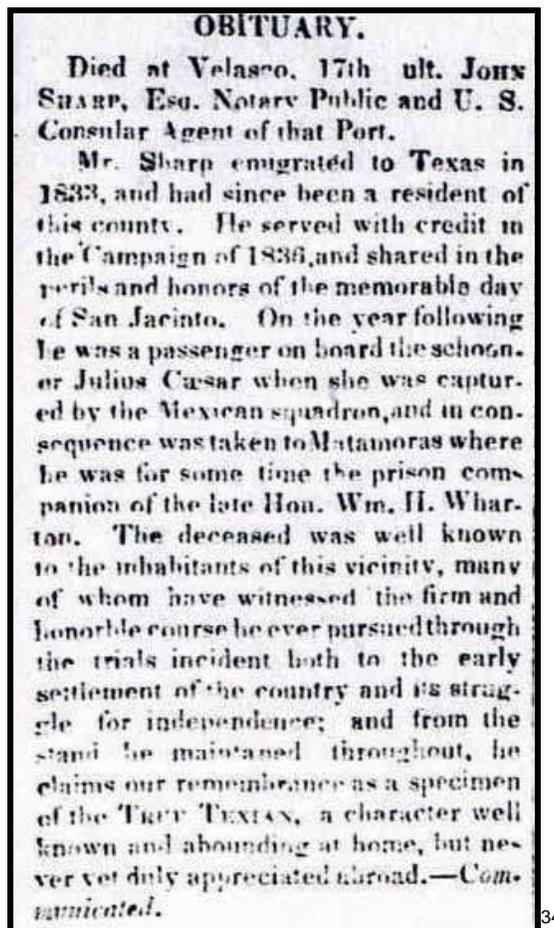
Your obedient servant.

John Sharp was still doing business in Velasco in early 1840:



32

According to Dr. William A. Shepherd he attended John Sharp daily from the 13th of July until his death on the 19th of August and submitted a bill accordingly but did not list any medications or the cause of death.³³



34

³² *Brazos Courier*, March 31, 1840, Brazoria, Texas

³³ John Sharp Probate Case 489, County Clerk's Office, Angleton, Texas

³⁴ *Brazos Courier*, September 1, 1840, Brazoria, Texas

It is unfortunate that John Sharp's place of burial was not given in his obituary. It is possible he is buried at Velasco or at the Evergreen plantation, the home of Sarah Calvit Sharp's parents. She would remarry a few years later.

The inventory of John Sharp's estate lists a dwelling and 2 lots valued at \$5706.75. Lot 2 in Block 31 was the location of his home. He had been consigned lots 2 and 9 in Block 31 in June 1, 1838 in consideration of the improvements he had placed on the property valued at \$1000 by Thomas J. Green. He also owned Lot 10 in Block 14 on which his storehouse was located. The inventory listed for his business included dry goods of all sorts including many pieces of chinaware.

6 doz. Dinner Plates
 8 doz. Soup Plates
 6 doz. Breakfast Plates
 1 Bowl & Ewer
 6 Bowls
 1 Pr. Tureens
 1 Teapot
 6 Sugar Bowls
 Steak Dish
 Little Cups & Saucers³⁵

These are only a small sample of the items auctioned off to the residents of Velasco at probate sale. Some of the items found at Velasco over the years could have been imported by John Sharp.



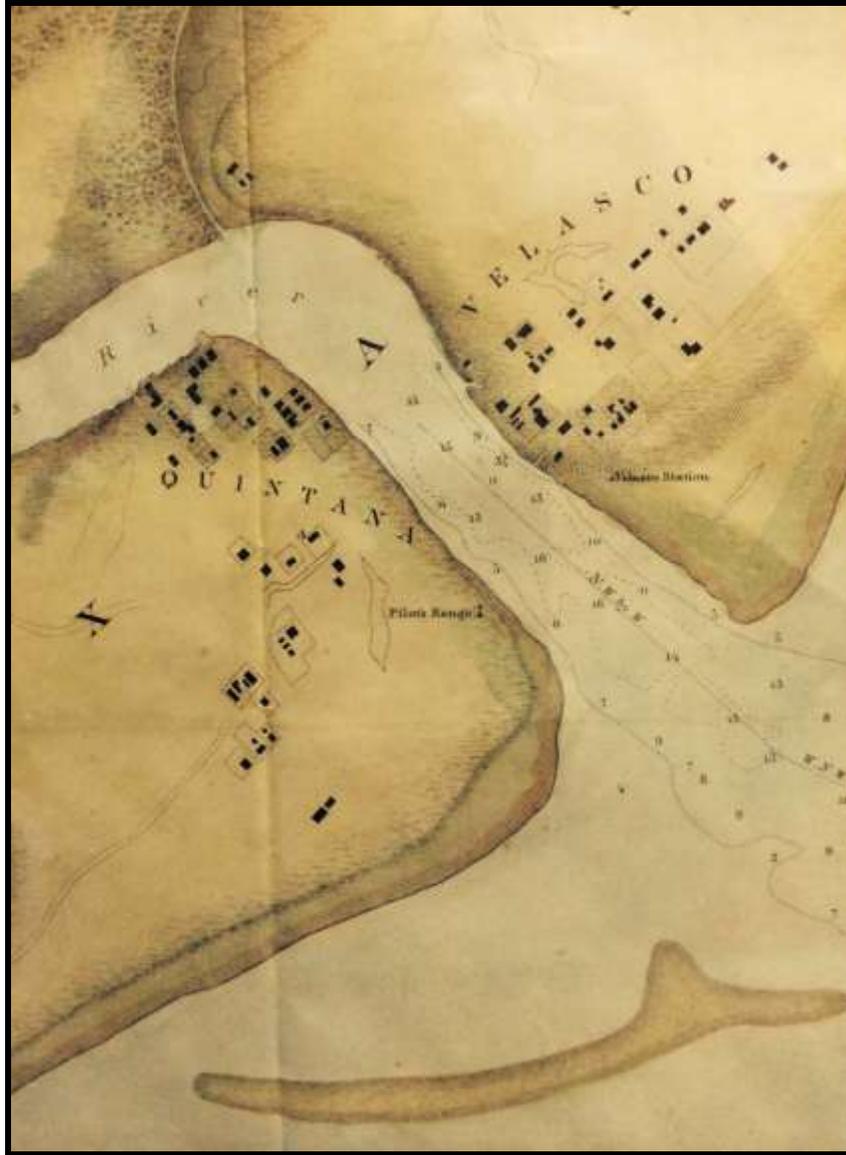
Hand Painted Cup From Velasco Shore

³⁵ John Sharp Probate Case 489, County Clerk's Office, Angleton, Texas



Velasco Hand Painted

Velasco would never grow to the size envisioned by the Velasco Association but by the 1850's there were still many dwellings in the town. Confederate troops were stationed in Velasco during the Civil War but the town dwindled in size after the war and the hurricane of 1875 demolished most of the standing structures at that time.



Quintana & Velasco, Texas Entrance to Trade on the Brazos River
1858 Bache Map