

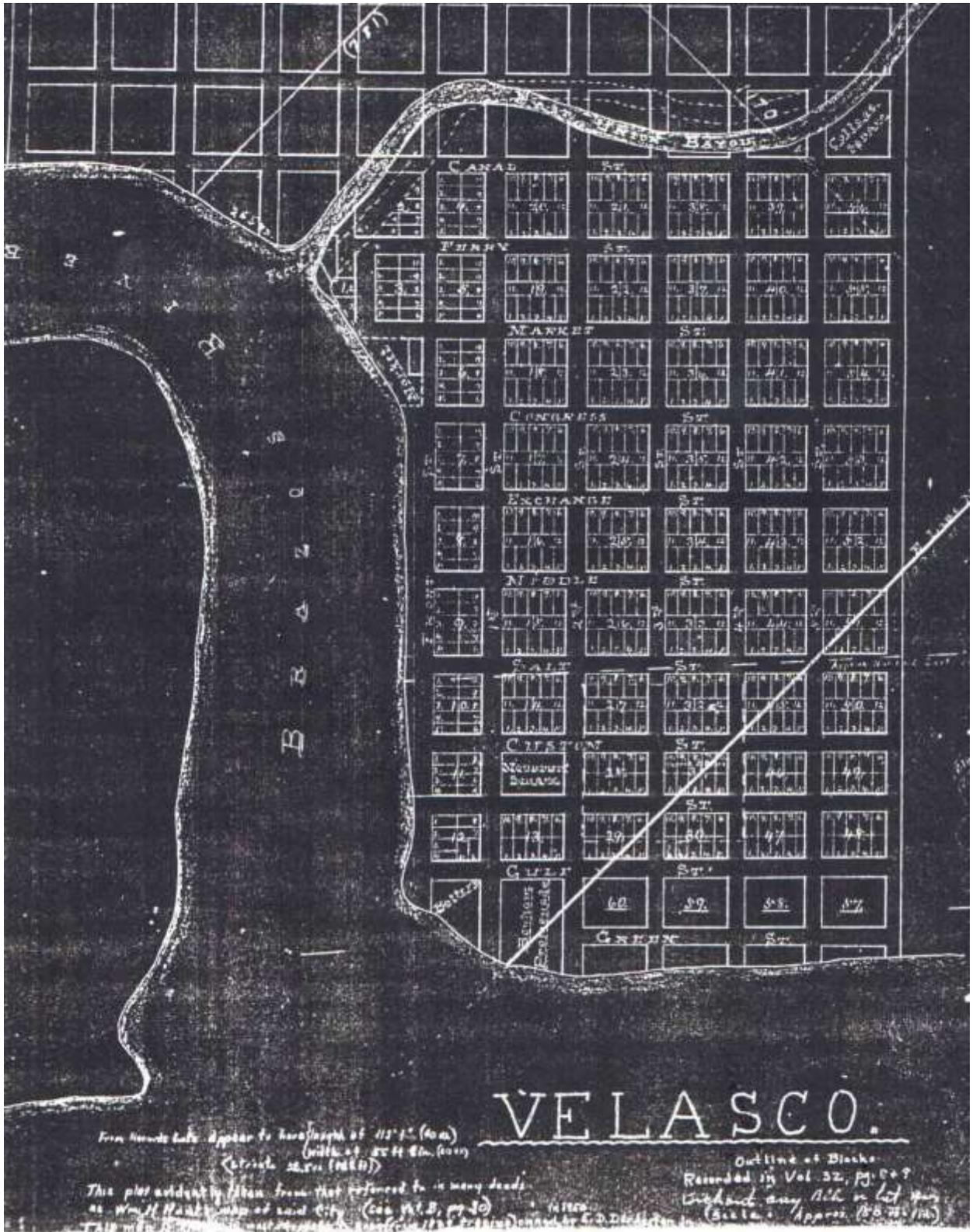
Velasco
Archer House- Herndon Beach Home, ca. 1838, Block 13, Lots 4, 5, 6, and 7

Archer House- Herndon Beach Home, ca. 1838, Block 13, Lots 4, 5, 6, and 7

Chain of Title

February 24, 1838	C 368/69	Thomas J. Green Pres. Velasco Association to A.E.C. Johnson and Samuel H. Early
April 8, 1839	C 292/93	Hugh MacGreal leased to Mary Caroline MacGreal
June 4, 1839	C 369/70	Robert J. Calder Sheriff Brazoria County to Peter and Mary Caroline MacGreal
May 5, 1840	B 10/11	Robert J. Calder Sheriff Brazoria County to Elisha M. Pease
January 9, 1845	B 439	Peter and Mary Caroline MacGreal to Charles James O'Connor
November 25, 1845	D 11/12	Charles James O'Connor to D. Hardeman
July 1, 1852	F 343/44	James Spann mortgage to George Williams and Mason B. Browning of Quintana
September 18, 1855	G 398/400	H 409/11 S.L.S. Ballowe Sheriff Brazoria County to John H. Herndon
September 6, 1881	U 11/12	W. H. Sharp Sheriff Brazoria County to Robert A. Shapard

On February 24, 1838, Thomas Jefferson Green , President of the Velasco Association conveyed to A. E. C. Johnson and Samuel Early the property known as the Archer House with lots 4,5, 6, and 7 in Block 13 and in addition (*the said Archer House having been built in that part of said street by mistake*) and lots No. one and ten (10) in Block No Twenty Nine being given up by the proprietors of said town as certain ----- of said Second Street (according to P.A. Masier & Co. Lithographic Map of 22 March, 1837 for \$16,000. This places the Archer House on the edge of Block Thirteen and extending into Second Street. On April 8, 1839 Mary Caroline MacGreal wife of Peter MacGreal bought out the lease of Hugh MacGreal for \$4000. Hugh MacGreal had leased the Archer House from James M. Howard and William Ryon who in turn had leased the property from Johnson and Early. Thomas A. Hereford and John M. Foster won separate suits against Johnson and Early in 1839. The sheriff was *unable to find either of said defendants or any person who would pay said debts*. Therefore he put the property up for public auction and Peter and Mary Caroline MacGreal bought the property for \$6334 on June 4, 1839. It was also disclosed during this transaction that Johnson and Early may not have actually resided in Velasco but were leasing the property to Howard & Ryon a business partnership in Velasco. Palmer and Baker won suit against Peter MacGreal in 1840 causing a foreclosure and public auction of the property once again. Elisha M. Pease bid \$300 May 5, 1840. The chain of ownership breaks down at this point. No change of title from Pease to MacGreal was located but on May 11, 1845 Peter and Mary MacGreal convey to Charles James O'Connor *the "Archer House" with the four lots immediately adjoining said "Archer House" and not including ...the two lots near what was called the "Old Fort"*. This was in trade for a house built in Brazoria for O'Connor by James and John Harding valued at \$500 and \$100 cash. O'Connor on November 25, 1845 turns the property over to D. Hardeman *reserving the brick contained in the cistern on said premises which are to be removed in a reasonable time*. D. Hardeman paid \$50 in cash, \$150 in groceries in the city of New Orleans and \$375 on Marshal and James of New Orleans. Thus with credit in New Orleans it is doubtful that O'Connor returned for his bricks. Again there is a break in the chain of title as the next transaction located is James Spann entering into a mortgage agreement with Williams & Browning, a partnership located in Quintana for \$1333.13 on July 1, 1852. During this conveyance it is mentioned: *the "Archer House" now kept as a hotel by A. G. Key*. In 1855 Williams & Brown won a suit against Spann. At public auction on September 18, 1855 John H. Herndon purchased the Archer House property for \$480. Part of the transaction stipulates: *the Archer House now kept as a hotel by A. G. Keyand the following Negro slaves to wit one Negro woman slave Violet 21 years and her two Negro children boy Jim about three years old and infant child girl Harriet about seven months old*. The slaves were not part of his purchase. Herndon continued to own the Archer House through the Civil War and maintained the property as a family beach home. After the Civil War Moses Taylor an agent for the Texas Land Company purchased much of the Herndon property in 1872. The major portion of his town lots Herndon held until his death. In 1881 in order to pay debts against his estate Lots 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 plus other town lots were sold at auction for \$200 to Robert A. Shapard indicating the structure had been destroyed or heavily damaged in the 1875 hurricane..



Copy of William H. Hunt Map Brazoria County Historical Museum

Shortly after the Battle of Velasco in 1832 the Velasco Association formed and started to advertise for the sale of lots and construction of a hotel in the *Constitutional Advocate and Texas Public Advertiser* published in Brazoria, June 15, 1833:

Hotel At Velasco

The Velasco Association feeling the importance and necessity of a Hotel of extensive accommodations in the Town of Velasco, have determined to open subscription books for the purpose of effecting that object. They believe that a suitable house with Billiard Tables attached, Boats for pleasure and oystering, a Seine for fishing, a Bath House, Livery Stable, &c., &c. would not only add greatly to public convenience, but prove a source of profit to the Stockholders. They are aware of the many inducements that would draw company to this desirable place – it is notoriously one of the healthiest places in the country. Convalescents, men of pleasure, from all parts of the country would pass much time there, lured by the advantages of sea air, sea bathing, the pleasure of sailing, fishing and oystering &c. &c. Many persons from New Orleans and other parts of Louisiana, who would now spend their summers at the north, would find it equally healthy and agreeable, nearer and cheaper to visit Velasco. On the arrival of vessels, passengers would doubtless find pleasure in the comforts and conveniences of a well conducted Hotel, and Being desirous of visiting other sections of the country, would render the Livery Stable very profitable to the stockholders. It is the intention of the Association to keep the subscription books open until such an amount be subscribed as will be sufficient to erect a building equal in every respect to the best Hotels in the U. S. of the North. A large amount of stock already taken, and the Association being desirous of erecting the buildings as soon as possible, requests all those who wish to obtain stock, or to favor the plan, to make early application to the secretary in Brazoria, or N. Townsend, Esq. San Felipe. Public notice will be given as soon as the contemplated amount be taken, and the Stockholders will elect a Committee to draft a plan and superintend the erection of the buildings.

By Order of the Association

L. C. Masson, Sec

Brazoria, March 23, 1833

The fruition of this request did not occur until after the Texas Revolution. Other taverns and hotels were established in Velasco earlier but in honor of Branch T. Archer the “Archer House” had its inaugural opening in February 1838. Mary Austin Holley visited Velasco January 27, 1838, and recorded in her diary:

27th

We crossed over to Velasco. Went shopping (they have one store), visited the Archer House, a fine hotel. Large 2 story with gallery painted, white, looks well. Had a commanding view. Met Gen. Green the master spirit here who attended us in our walk—pointed to the graves of those who fell in the first battle for Independence—Looked at the old fort—the work of the Mexicans—Velasco looks quite the place.¹

¹ Bryan, J. P., ed., *Mary Austin Holley The Texas Diary 1835-1838*, The University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1965, pp. 53-54.

Invitations and announcements for the inaugural gala at the Archer House were sent out earlier in the year. In the Mirabeau Lamar Papers is his personal invitation from the Velasco Association:

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 and a little name dropping wouldn't hurt the cause.

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

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.²

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, the American Hotel.

A handwritten bill from R. J. Clow to I. C. Hoskins & Co. for the year 1838. The bill lists various expenses including ball tickets, board, and lodging. The total amount is \$45.50, with a balance of \$38.25 and a balance due of \$2.00.

Date	Description	Amount
1838		
Feb 22 nd	To Ball Ticket	8.00
23 rd	To do do	8.00
"	To 1 Day Board	2.00
May	To Board & Bar Bill	11.00
	To Ball Ticket	8.00
June 8	To Dinner	1.00
July 5	To Breakfast	.75
11	To 2 Dicts	1.50
17	To Dinner	1.00
26	To Board Lodging	4.25
	Total	\$45.50
	By Balance of I. C. Hoskins	
	Acpt with Martin Clow	\$7.25
	Balance	\$38.25
	Balance Acpt	2.00
	Total	\$36.25

R J Clow
To I. C. Hoskins & Co.

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² Ibid., p. 60.

This gala event 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 is their ad in *The People*, April 18, 1838:

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 6000 DOLLARS.

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 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.....

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.

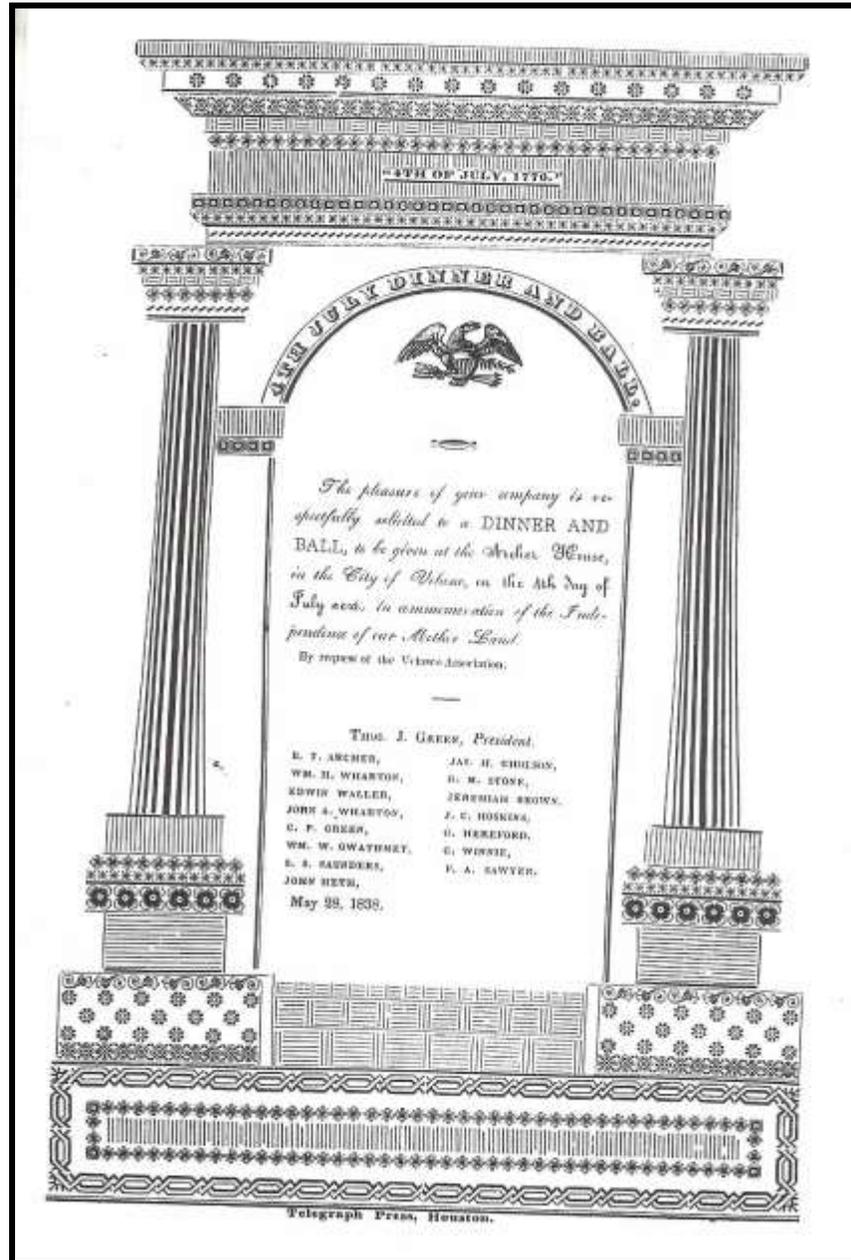
On the evening of the second day's race, at 4 o'clock, the proprietors have given \$100 for a splendid "Regatta," to come off under the superintendance of a committee of sea captains. The starting place. Brownsville, upon the Brazos, and the goal at the "Velasco Hotel." Entrance \$10.

The ladies may have a splendid view of this fete 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 & Early
Proprietors

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



April 8, 1839 Mary Caroline MacGreal bought out the lease of Hugh MacGreal on the Archer House for \$4000. Hugh MacGreal leased the property from James M. Howard and William Ryon, who held a lease from Johnson and Early until July 19, 1840. Thomas A. Hereford and John M. Foster won separate suits against Johnson and Early in April 1839. Johnson and Early left the county and Sheriff Robert J. Calder seized the Archer House and put the property up for public auction. Patrick and Mary MacGreal bought the Archer House for

\$6334 on June 4, 1839. The *Brazos Courier* published in Brazoria December 3, 1839 carried several advertisements by Peter MacGreal:

Archer House
Velasco

The public are respectfully informed that the House 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 control of the subscriber: and any person who has represented the charges as being greater, have *knowingly, willfully, and maliciously lied.*

PETER MACGREAL

Velasco, July 30, 1839

Velasco & Galveston Stage

The Public are respectfully informed that a Stage will be ready at all times to carry passengers from the Brazos to St. Louis or West End Galveston.

The stage will leave Velasco with passengers going on the steam packet, and be at St. Louis on the arrival of the packets, to carry passengers from Galveston to Velasco.

Travelers and persons destined for the City of Austin, (new seat of government) will find this route shorter and speedier than from any other point on the Gulf. Beside the advantage of seeing the richest and finest portion of Texas. Travellers will find on the Brazos greater facilities for visiting any part of the interior.

PETER MACGREAL

Archer House

Velasco, Sept. 10, 1839

Financial problems also began to trouble the new owners. The *Brazos Courier*, March 10, 1840 has a “for sale” ad 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, is 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

Again the property is seized by Sheriff R. J. Calder due to suits lost in January 1840 by MacGreal and put up for public auction, *Brazos Courier, March 3, 1840*:

SHERIFF SALE

J.H. Polly, adm'r Gerron
Hinds, Palmer, Baker &
Co. and Kissam & Co. Dist Court

vs

Peter MacGreal

BY virtue of 4 writs of execution to me directed by the clerk of the District Court of the county of Brazoria, I shall offer for sale at the courthouse door in the town of Brazoria, on the first Tuesday in March 1840, the following property situated in the town of Velasco, viz:

Lots 4, 5, 6, and 7, in block No.13—Also that part of Front or Second Street upon which the

ARCHER HOUSE

is situated, between blocks Nos. 13 and 29, together with all the improvements thereon.

Levied on as the property of Peter MacGreal to satisfy four judgments in favor of J. H. Polly, Adm'r. Gerron Hinds, Palmer, Baker & Co, and Kissam & Co.

Terms of sale—Cash, with appraisalment

R. J. CALDER, Sh'ff

January 17, 1840

The sale in March took place but there was no bidder on the property. Again the property was put up for public auction and was sold May 5, 1840 to Elisha M. Pease for \$300. Peter MacGreal was able to retain the property but the transactions for his ownership have not been located.

Celebrations and festivities were still being planned, *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.

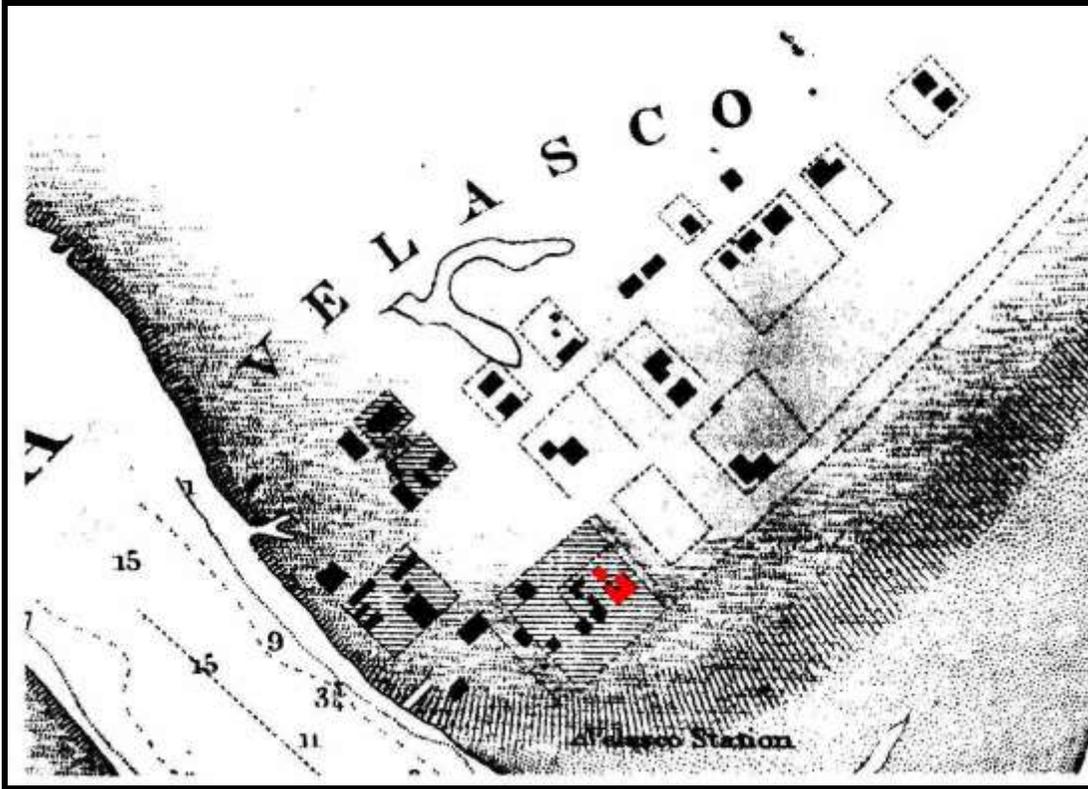
During the evening Gen'l Green being called on for a sentiment, said he would cheerfully give one which he felt confident every person in his hearing would most cordially approve, and proposed:--The continued health, happiness and prosperity of Mirabeau B. Lamar, our patriotic President—who has never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

Evidently Peter MacGreal continued to operate the Archer House until he and his wife moved to Brazoria in 1845 to concentrate on his law practice. On May 11, 1845, Peter and Mary MacGreal conveyed to Charles James O'Connor *the "Archer House" with the four lots immediately adjoining said "Archer House" and not including the two lots near what was called the "Old Fort"* for a home in Brazoria and \$100 cash. O'Connor sold the property on November 25, 1845 to D. Hardeman *reserving the brick contained in the cistern on said premises which are to be removed in a reasonable time*. The chain of title is lost until James Spann entered into a mortgage agreement with George Williams and Mason B. Browning, a partnership located in Quintana for \$1333.13 on July 1, 1852. During this transaction it is mentioned that *the "Archer House" now kept as a hotel by A. G. Key*. James Spann had listed himself as "Landlord" in the 1850 Census. In 1855 Williams and Browning won a suit against Spann. At public auction on September 18, 1855 John H. Herndon purchased the property for \$480. During this transaction A. G. Key is noted as keeping the Archer House as a hotel. Key must have leased or operated the hotel for the various owners 1845 until 1855.



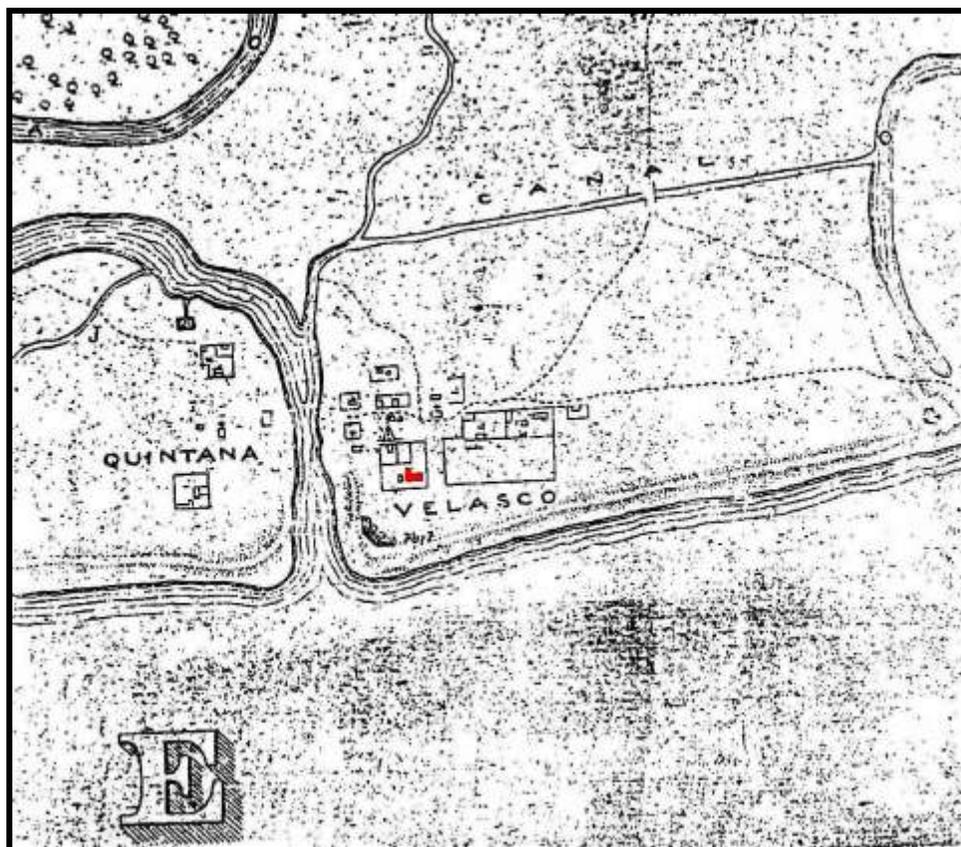
Portion of “Preliminary Chart of Entrance to Brazos River” topography drawn 1852 (Bache 1858)

John Hunter Herndon arrived in Houston January 1838 from Kentucky. Settling in Richmond he practiced law and invested his money in many large tracts of land. On August 27, 1839 Herndon married Barbara Makall Wilkinson Calvit at Evergreen Plantation (part of present day Clute). Many more of the town lots of Velasco were accumulated through continued purchases in the 1840’s and 1850’s. Herndon operated the Evergreen Plantation and maintained his beach home at Velasco. He also owned vast acres of land in Fort Bend, Matagorda, Guadalupe, and Medina Counties. In the 1860 Census he listed his real-estate value at \$1,605,000 and personal estate at \$106,050:

Jno. H. Herndon	46 M Ky.
Barbara M.	39 F La.
James C.	17 M Tx.
Alex C.	14 M Tx.
Robt. S.	12 M Tx.
Cornellia	10 F Tx.
Florence	8 F Tx.
Sarah J. (sister of Barbara)	41 F Miss
F. J. Calvit (uncle of Barbara)	72 M Miss

During the Civil War John H. Herndon saw limited service in a local militia from Fort Bend and Brazoria Counties receiving the rank of Colonel.

Commodore H. H. Bell, U.S. Steam Sloop *Brooklyn*, wrote in his private diary June 1, 1863: *Saw in the river at Velasco one steamer and one schooner. A newly built fort on the Quintana side, and 100 tents adjacent.....On the Velasco side the battery is not so prominent; situated near the water and to the south of the white house with colonnades, some 40 or 50 men were assembled there in the rear of the fort.*³ This because of its proximity to the Civil War era fort was the Herndon home.



After the Civil War John H. Herndon sold most of his properties and holdings in Velasco in 1872 to Moses Taylor, a New York agent for the Texas Land Company. The lots in the town proper were held until Herndon's death, February 6, 1878 in Boerne, Texas. In 1881 the Lots 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 of Block 13 and additional lots were auctioned off to settle debts against his estate to Robert A. Shapard for \$200. The low price indicates that the structure had been destroyed or heavily damaged in the 1875 hurricane. An article from *The Galveston Daily News*, September 21, 1875:

The News is indebted to Rev. I. G. John for the following information:

Our party from Galveston, consisting of myself, Dr. E.P. Angell and family, several ladies and gentlemen, in attendance on a camp meeting, found a refuge at the house of Rev. P E. Nicholson on Oyster Creek, four miles from Velasco. At that point the water was five feet higher than ever known before. Thirty three persons found refuge in his house—Mr. John Hudgins and family having reached there on a raft, coming two miles across the prairie, crossing Oyster Creek three times. When the storm subsided we could see but three houses in Velasco standing, **Major Herndon's residence swept away.** Could learn nothing of Quintana, but could see by glass that

³*Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War Of the Rebellion*, Vol. 20, p. 758

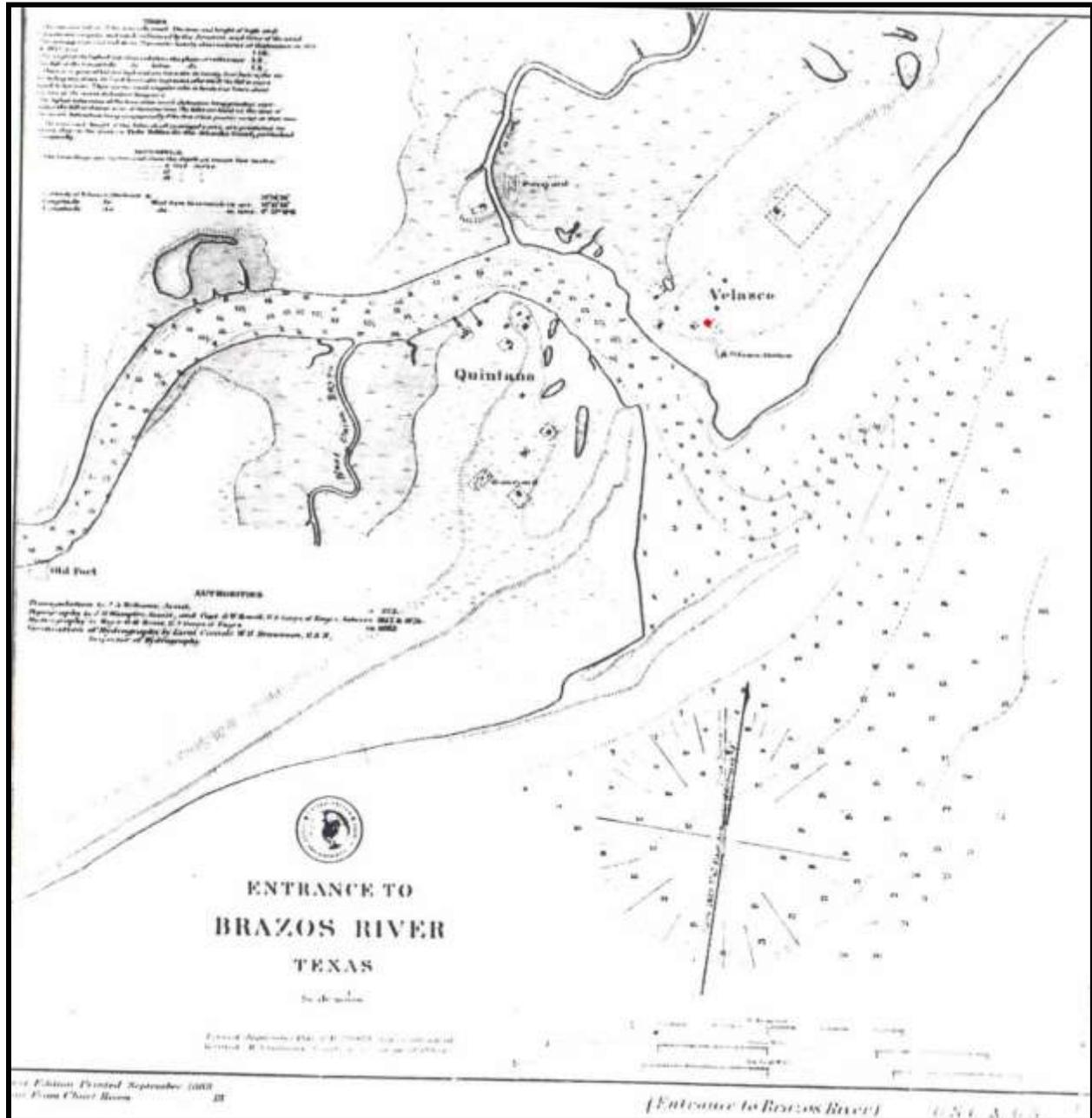
few houses were gone. No lives lost in Velasco. On our return we found Fred Reeves's house on the canal swept away. Also Corrigan's at Christmas Point. We learned after we reached San Luis Island that Reeves was at Corrigan's in the storm, and that he and the whole family hung in the salt cedars all night. At Velasco Capt. Lyons hung 11 hours in a tree. At Follet's, on the east end of the Velasco Peninsula the water was 33 inches higher than in the storm of 1867. All government property saved. The old Follet House, which for 30 years has been a land mark on the coast, was swept away. Frank Holt's house on the peninsula also gone. Mr. Follet has lived on the coast since 1839, says that large logs had drifted from above—logs which had been left by storms before the settlement of the country—which fact indicates that the water was as high, if not higher, than in any storm that has swept our coast within the knowledge of the oldest inhabitant.

We learned as we were leaving Oyster Creek that Herndon's and Mrs. Wharton's sugar houses, eight miles from the mouth of the Brazos, were swept away. **The water was six feet higher at that point than ever known before.** A number of boats were carried across the prairie, some within two miles of the Oyster Creek timber. We heard of the loss of but one life, an oysterman called Tony, who was at Corrigan's at Christmas Point.

At 3 A.M. Friday, while the storm was at its height, a skiff with nine persons in it, three women and three infants endeavoring to reach Mr. Nicholson's where our party were, was swamped within about three hundred yards of the house, A rescue party, consisting of Mr. Nicholson, Dr. Angell, Revs. Williamson and Phair, went out and found them clinging to some tress, with the swell sweeping over their heads. After a desperate effort all were saved.

At every point from the mouth of the Brazos we found the people in great destitution, some living on the potatoes which must soon rot from the effects of salt water. Mr. Nicholson leaves today at 12m. Provisions of any kind will aid the sufferers, and Mr. Nicholson will faithfully attend to their distribution among the families who need aid.

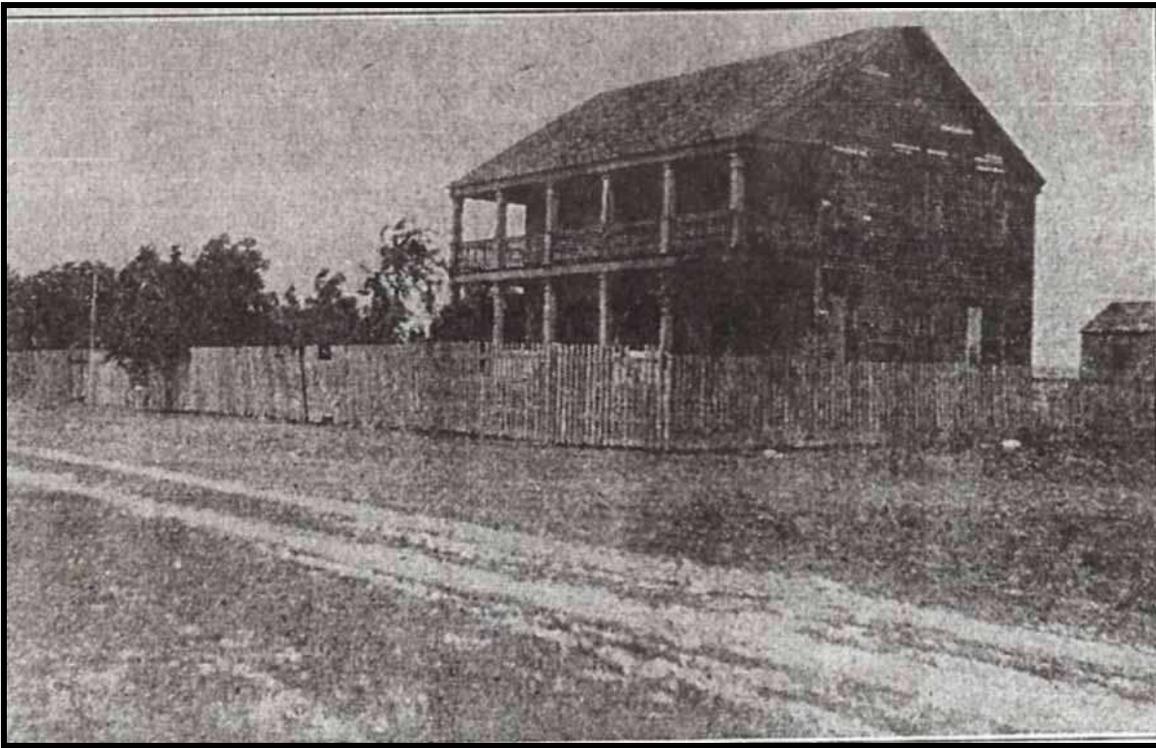
However, an 1888 map shows a structure in the vicinity of the north end of Block 13.



Anne A. Fox et al noted that according to the Goode maps from the 1880's that a house was located in the vicinity of the Herndon property. Do not have a copy of the Goode maps at present.⁴

⁴ Fox, Anne A. et al, *Cultural Resource Survey Freeport Harbor, Texas Navigation Improvement Project Brazoria County, Texas*, 1981, p.37.

In an article “Capitols of the Lone Star”, *National Republic*, September 1932, is a photograph with the title “Former Capitol of Texas at Old Velasco”, which curiously matches the description of the Herndon mansion. No date is given with the photo.



In an article in the *Houston Chronicle*, January 1, 1932 is the following description of the Herndon beach home:

On a sandy ridge in the neighborhood of the coast guard station, stands a clump of gnarled salt cedars and the crumbling ruin of a huge brick cistern. They are all that remain of the palatial summer home of the Herndons...

During slavery days this spot was occupied by a stately white mansion, surrounded by wide porches and supported by solid colonial columns. It was the tallest house along the coast and could be seen so far that it became a landmark, and sailors steered their course by its coat of snowy gleam.....

The house contained 12 large rooms. Those of the lower floor were connected by folding doors so that they could be thrown into one huge ballroom.....

The house was surrounded by salt cedars and oleanders. Hidden among the shrubbery was an icehouse with concrete walls.....

Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 12, and 14 in Block 568 of present day Surfside should contain the remnants of the 1838 Archer House-Herndon Home, kitchen along with stables, and ice house. Based on the proximity of the 1832 Mexican Fort as reported in the deed records Lots 10, 12, or 14 could also be the location of part of the 1832 Mexican fort.