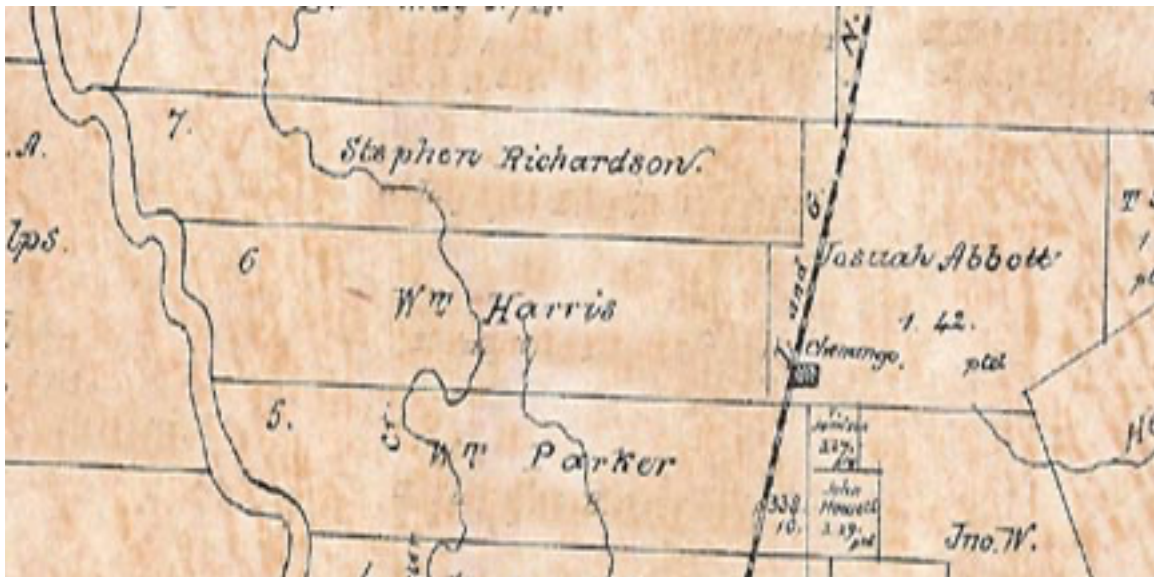


Chenango Plantation
Brazosport Archaeological Society

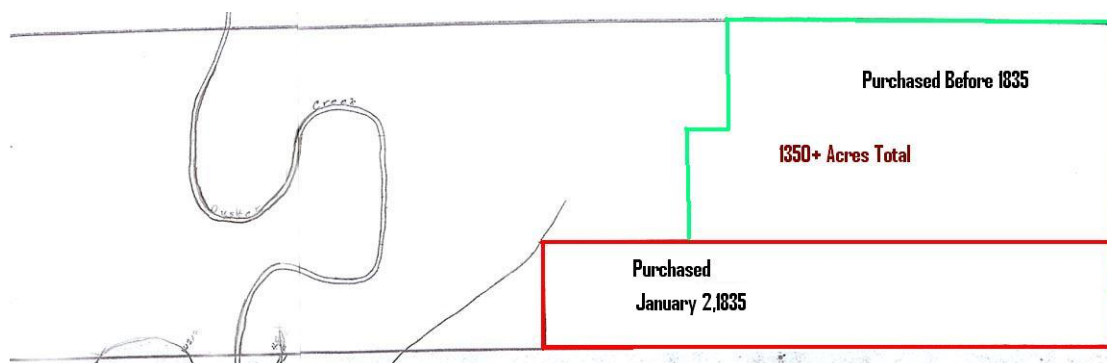
Benjamin Fort Smith moved to Brazoria County, Texas from Mississippi in 1832 and bought two tracts of land in the William Harris League east of Oyster Creek comprising ~1300 acres. Producing corn and cotton using African slaves he smuggled from Cuba he established his plantation Point Pleasant. The plantation became a way station for African slaves illegally brought from Cuba by the notorious slave smuggler Monroe Edwards who owned the plantation for a short period changing the name to Chenango according to tradition. In 1839 while living in Galveston, Texas James Love, noted jurist and legislator, acquired the property, which had grown to ~3400 acres in the William Harris, Joshua Abbott, Stephen Richardson, and William T. Parker Leagues through the transactions of several previous owners. He and his co-investor, Albert T. Burnley of New Orleans, ran the plantation in absentia until 1852 when William H. Sharpe of Louisiana acquired Love's interest having bought Burnley's share in 1850. James Love financed and built the first sugar mill on the property 1849-1852 while William Sharpe improved the mill by adding steam power. With a slave labor force Chenango Plantation was a consistent producer of sugar during the 1850's. Sharpe developed a partnership with William J. Kyle and Benjamin F. Terry of Fort Bend County while he and his family managed Chenango through the Civil War. A mortgage foreclosure forced a public auction of the property to Henry H. Williams and John L. Darragh of Galveston in 1869. William Sharpe and his son Henry, member of Terry's Texas Rangers during the Civil War, stayed on the plantation as managers for Darragh. The Williams family later assumed total control and in 1884 sold the property to A. C. Barnes. The 1900 hurricane leveled most of the structures on the property. Various groups and land developers have purchased the property over the years. The most complete ruins of a sugar mill in Brazoria County are associated with the Chenango Plantation.



Texas General Land Office 1879
(Chenango Station on the International & Great Northern Railway is not Chenango Plantation)

William Harris of Maine received from the Mexican Government the grant for his league of land on the east side of the Brazos River along Oyster Creek July 10, 1824. The 1826 Census of Austin's Colony listed him as a farmer and stock raiser aged between twenty five and forty. He had a wife, Ruth¹, one son and a daughter. While he was in Brazoria County in the middle 1830's he did not settle on his league of land. Early on he sold several tracts from the league.

Benjamin Fort Smith² of Hinds County Mississippi moved to Texas in late 1832 and became a citizen in 1833. Benjamin Fort Smith acquired ~600 acres previous to 1835 and January 1835 he bought another 781 acres south of his original tract from Jared E. Groce [Brazoria County Deed Record C: 207/08]. Benjamin F. Smith would make this ~1300 acres his home, Point Pleasant Plantation.



Eastern Portion of the William Harris League
Abstract 71

His sister Sarah David³ married Joseph R. Terry in Kentucky April 17, 1816. Sarah and Joseph Terry reportedly separated about 1833 because of Joseph's insistence on running a gambling house in Jackson, Mississippi. She accepted her brother, Benjamin's proposal to bring her children, move to Texas and reside on his plantation.

In the winter of 1833-34 Ben F. Smith made a trip to Cuba to procure African slaves to work his lands. Importation of slaves from Africa was illegal and his vessel which landed on Galveston Bay was seized and half of his cargo confiscated. While making his way from Galveston Bay to his plantation Smith became lost and approached the home of Dr. Pleasant W. Rose ~25miles north of his home:

February, 1834

One cold day we could see in the direction of Galveston Bay a large crowd of people. They were coming to our house...When they got near our house there were three white men and a large gang of Negroes. One man came in and introduced himself as Ben Fort Smith. He said he lived near Major Bingham's, and that he was lost and nearly starved. He asked father to let him have two beeves and some bread...One man made a fire near some trees, away from the house. As soon as the beeves were skinned the Negroes acted like dogs, they were so hungry. With the help of father and uncle, the white men kept them off till the meat was broiled, and then did not let them eat as much as they could eat...

¹ Daughter of Alexander Hodge.

² B. January 2, 1796 Logan County, Kentucky D. July 10, 1841 Grimes County, Texas, Father David Smith Mother Obediance Fort

³ B. Jan. 2, 1793 D. Summer 1836

After dinner, Mr. Smith explained to father how he came to be lost on the prairie...The Negroes were so enfeebled from close confinement that they could not travel. He rested one day, and would have reached home the next night if he had not got lost...

Uncle James guarded the Negroes. They did not need watching, for after dark they went to sleep and did not wake till morning. They were so destitute of clothing, mother would not permit us children to go near them. Next day they cooked their meat before they began eating.

...After three or four days, he (Harvey Stafford) and Frank (Terry)⁴ returned. Mr. Smith's body servant, Mack, came with them and brought a wagon and team and clothing for the Negroes. Mack made them go to the creek, bathe, and card their heads. After they were dressed, he marched them to the house for mother and us little girls to see...They did not understand a word of English. All the men and boys in the neighborhood came to see the wild Africans.

...He (Ben F. Smith) had a large scaffold built over a trench and made fire under it. He butchered the beeves and dried meat over the fire. After a few days he sent Frank Terry and Mack home with the Negroes...⁵

During the revolution Benjamin F. Smith participated in hostilities at Gonzales and the siege of Bexar. In November 1835 he left Texas to recruit in Mississippi. Returning in March 1836 he reentered the army as a private and fought in Henry W. Karnes' cavalry company at San Jacinto. August 1, 1836 he submitted his resignation to General Thomas Rusk which was accepted:

1 August 1836

Camp Coletto

... cannot permit this occasion to pass without expressing to you my entire approbation of your official conduct as well as of your Brave and Chivalrous bearing before the enemy on the plains of San Jacinto...

General Thomas J. Rusk⁶

September 1836 Monroe Edwards bought the plantation, 17 African slaves, and the cotton & corn crop for \$35,000 from Benjamin F. Smith [Brazoria County Deed Record A: 23/24]. Smith moved to Houston, where he built a hotel early in 1837 while his sister Sarah Terry and her children moved north to a tract of land in the McFarland League to establish her plantation.

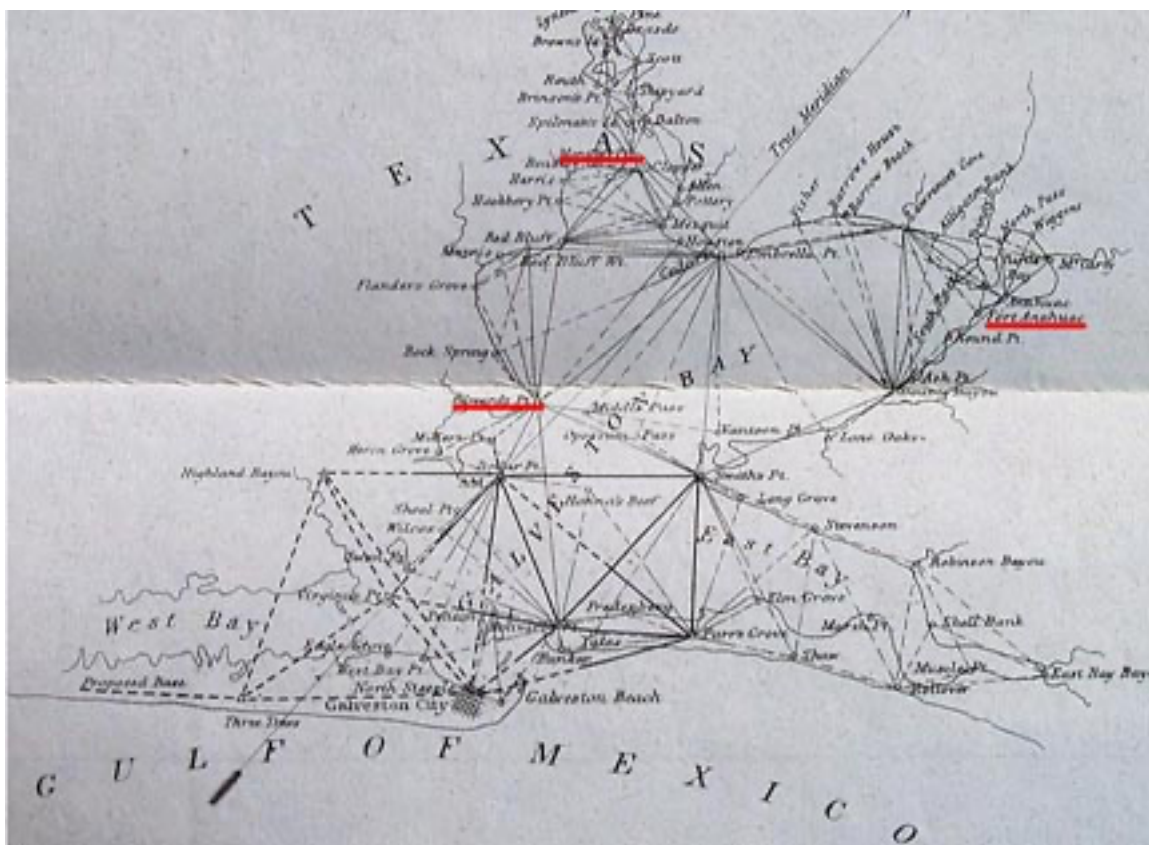
Monroe Edwards⁷ was born in Danville, Kentucky. His father, Moses Edwards moved the family to Edwards Point or Redfish Bar on the west side of Galveston Bay in 1823. He began working as clerk for James Morgan, a local merchant who operated a mercantile at Morgan's Point on San Jacinto Bay ~1825. The Mexican authorities imprisoned him with William Barrett Travis, Patrick C. Jack, and others in 1832 at Fort Anahuac. This disturbance led to the Battle of Velasco at the mouth of the Brazos River in June 1832.

⁴ Son of Sarah David Terry

⁵ The Reminiscences of Mrs. Dilue Harris I, Southwestern Historical Quarterly Online, Volume 004 Number 2, pp.85-127

⁶ Correspondence of the Texas Revolution

⁷ B. 1808 Danville, Kentucky D. Sing Sing Prison, New York 1847



1848 Coastal Survey Galveston Bay

The lucrative slave trade caught the attention of Monroe Edwards and in the spring of 1833 he and his partner Holcroft landed a shipment of African slaves at Edwards Point. They had purchased 196 African slaves at \$25 each and sold them for \$600 each, realizing a profit of more than \$100,000. The event was acknowledged by the Convention of 1833. The convention noted that a vessel had arrived in Galveston Bay, “direct from the island of Cuba laden with negroes recently from the African coast,” the convention resolved that, “we do hold in utter abhorrence all participation, whether direct or indirect, in the African Slave Trade; that we do concur the general indignation which has been manifested throughout the civilized world against that inhuman and unprincipled traffic; and we do therefore earnestly recommend to our constituents, the good people of Texas, that they will not only abstain from all concern in that abominable traffic, but that they will unite their efforts to prevent the evil from polluting our shores; and will aid and sustain the civil authorities in detecting and punishing any similar attempt for the future.” At this time slaves could be purchased for \$200 in Cuba and sold for \$600-800 in Texas. Several “good” citizens of Brazoria County including General James Fanin, Sterling McNeel, and Benjamin Fort Smith along with Monroe Edwards continued to smuggle slaves into the county. Edwards’ brother-in-law Retson Morris lived at Edwards Point after the death of Moses Edwards. A second cargo was landed at Edwards Point in February 1834. This group of slaves could be the same slaves owned by Benjamin F. Smith⁸.

⁸ Eugene C. Barker writing an article on the African slave trade in Texas noted three prominent citizens landed this cargo in 1834 and at the time of his article he would not divulge the names although we know Benjamin Fort Smith was one of them.

The schooner *Dart*⁹ sailed into Galveston Bay in March 1836 with 90 African slaves from Cuba. These were delivered to Retson Morris, bringing to 122 the number of Negroes in his care. Shortly before the Battle of San Jacinto, at the approach of the Mexican army, the Texas war schooner *Flash* removed most of the slaves to Galveston Island.

On March 2, 1836 the customs collector at Velasco, William S. Fisher, wrote Provisional Governor Smith:

The schooner Shenandoah entered this port on the 28th ult. and proceeded up the river, without reporting. I immediately pursued her... We overhauled the vessel that night, and found that the negroes had been landed—the negroes were, however, found during the night. The negroes I have given up to Mr. Edwards (the owner) on his giving bond and security to the amount of their value, to be held subject to the decision of the government...The number of negroes landed from the Shenandoah is 171.

Monroe Edwards had entered into partnership with Christopher Dart of Natchez, Mississippi to supply funding for this last cargo of slaves. In return, he was to share in ownership of the plantation and Negroes. Edwards left the plantation in charge of his brother, Ashmore, while he traveled to the United States during the revolution. Monroe journeyed to New Orleans where his charm and polish made him a favorite in the Crescent City. Traveling on to Mobile, Alabama he planned a slightly more extended visit to that city than he actually paid. He had to leave there somewhat suddenly for reasons of health after having become involved in an affair which was displeasing to certain Mobile citizens.

On to Charleston, Baltimore and New York, and then back to Baton Rouge Edwards traveled. In Baton Rouge he met a gambler whose amazing resemblance to Christopher Dart precipitated a most cunning plan.

For some time Monroe had been telling Dart that as soon as the revolution in Texas ended, they would dispose of their smuggled slaves and split the profit. With the revolution over he returned to Chenango with a new scheme in mind. In a letter to Dart, he urged that he should visit Texas and make a thorough inspection of their land and slaves. Dart agreed and wrote back his acceptance of the kind invitation, along with the date his boat would dock at the port of Galveston.

Always the gentleman, Edwards was on hand to meet his partner there, registering for the two of them at the that city's finest hotel, introducing Dart to the society and pleasures of the fabulous city, and making plans to spend several days there rather than rush immediately into business.

Hidden in the crowds on the dock, another man took note of Dart's arrival with a great deal of interest. It was the gambler who bore such an uncanny resemblance to Monroe's partner.

Taking note of Dart's attire, his gestures, his manner of speaking, the gambler purchased clothing as nearly as possible duplicating Dart's. He then took his purchases to his room in another hotel and began practicing in front of a mirror, waiting to be called on stage by Monroe Edwards.

Monroe watched carefully for his opportunity, and saw it the next day when Dart asked to be excused so he might catch up on some correspondence in his room. Edwards hastily contacted his gambler friend who donned the new clothes and joined Edwards at the hotel lobby.

The resemblance was so great that none of the people who had already met the Mississippian had any idea they were now talking to someone else. As the imposter and Monroe

⁹ Schooner *Dart* was owned by Christopher Dart of Natchez, Mississippi.

chatted of inconsequential matters to Captain Peyton R. Splane; recently a member of the Texas army, Monroe produced a couple of documents and waved them languidly. Casually as though the instruments were of little or no importance, he asked if the Captain would witness them.

“Glad to do it,” that gentleman replied, “Always glad to be of service.”

Handing the documents to Captain Splane, Monroe continued the conversation. Without bothering to read the instruments, Captain Splane signed them. Within a few minutes, the signatures of John F. Pettus and Ashmore Edwards were added in a similar manner.

The Baton Rouge gambler had done his part. Monroe paid him the balance of the \$1,000 he had promised for the impersonation, the gambler resumed his own clothing and his own identity, and headed back for Louisiana.

The real Dart completed his letter writing, and returned to Monroe’s side in the hotel lobby, leaving only one witness to the little drama wondering what was going on.

That was the clerk who had stopped at Dart’s room on a minor errand and had noticed the gentleman had taken off his shirt and was writing at a table. Returning immediately downstairs, the man was almost sure he saw Dart talking fully clothed, with Captain Splane and Edwards. For a few minutes he wondered about the oddity of the situation and then dismissed it as of no importance.

After a visit of several days at Chenango, Dart returned to Natchez, convinced his partner was a prince of a fellow and an astute businessman, and that Chenango Plantation and its slaves represented a fine investment.

In January 1838, Monroe Edwards decided to make plans for a trip to Europe. Being a prominent and highly respected plantation owner, and a man with elevated standards, Monroe intended to see the continent first class. As a preliminary to his voyage, he took a trip to Washington. There the minister of the Republic of Texas to the United States agreed to help him. The minister obtained letters from some of the most outstanding men in the country introducing Monroe Edwards to high statesmen and noblemen of England. Monroe felt the need of a military title to lend dignity and weight to his reputation. He chose the title of Colonel and began portraying a hero of the Battle of San Jacinto for his interested new acquaintances.

His introduction to the society of Europe was described in an issue of the *National Gazette*, several years later: “He was not only a colonel but a Texas colonel, and one of the first of those strange savages who had beaten the Mexican Napoleon in the battle of San Jacinto. The Texas colonel soon became the rage in fashionable circles, and if the desire had been great to see one of those semi-barbarians of whose atrocities the Europe and world had heard so much, the surprise, after he was seen, was in due degree the greater to find him, instead of a monster in the garb of Captain Kidd, a very elegant gentleman, with a skin transparent with cosmetics, and a grace that appeared to be native to the air of courts.”

Edwards was entertained and feted, taken to sites of interest, and introduced with a note of triumph. Over and over he was asked to tell about Texas’ war for independence, which he did with modest references to his own heroic part. He hosted gala dinners and exclusive suppers, entertaining royally, with no thought to expense-or at least no thought that showed through that carefully pleasant mask.

He attended the coronation of Queen Victoria, no mean accomplishment for a man apprenticed to a merchant in a foreign county only a few short years before. It was shortly after that social triumph that his brother Ashmore wrote, urging that he return immediately to Brazoria County. Christopher Dart was attempting to rob Monroe of his estate.

Though they hated to see him go, his British friends agreed that a man must protect his interests and bade him goodbye. One of the most prolonged and tearful of those farewells came from a lady of quality with whom Edwards parted in Leicester Square. As a parting gift, she forced upon him a large and expensive diamond.

When he returned to Brazoria County, Monroe Edwards shed both his title and his brilliant military record contacting Ashmore at once to learn what had happened in his absence. The news was not heartening. He found that Dart was in the republic and that he had filed claim to the bulk of Monroe's estate.

Ashmore was indignant at the very thought of Dart's duplicity, explaining that the property was under sequestration and that Dart had accused Monroe of attempting to defraud him of his interest in their partnership land and slaves.

Edwards hired John C. Watrous, who had only recently retired as the attorney general of the Republic of Texas and John W. Harris, outstanding Brazoria lawyer, to defend his claims. Feeling that he had thus aligned himself with the best possible legal counsel, he proceeded to spend little time worrying about the out come of the trial.

Public sympathy seemed to be on Monroe's side. Those suspicious about Monroe remembered a court suit brought by Robert Peebles in 1837, concerning an African slave named Fagbo.

Edwards admitted selling the slave to Peebles at a price of \$1,200. He had given Peebles a warranty that the slave was sound, but Peebles charged that Fagbo had consumption at the time of the sale and was "afflicted with a disease in its nature incurable...that the slave has been valueless ever since the purchase and that in nursing and attending the slave" he had incurred an additional expense of \$100.

Though Monroe denied all allegations concerning the ill health of the slave, the jury, with I. D. Patton as foreman, gave Peebles a judgement of \$1,200 plus interest from the date of sale. The incident had not ruined Monroe's reputation but had made local citizens a little cautious in dealing with him.

In the days after his return to Brazoria County he came to notice one of the slaves at Chenango, a beautiful and seductive girl of 15 years who bore the name of Kitty Clover. Kitty was the illegitimate child of a Spanish grandee in Cuba and a slave, and a story in an old copy of the *National Gazette* gave this description:

"Her plump limbs being already touched with a voluptuous finish that would have made her a fortune as a model artiste, and had been gifted by nature with a Caucasian skin. As it was, her pelt was but little darker than a golden brown...She had no blushes to suppress, and her civil dependence left without condition to make or calculations to consider. She gave nothing but what would become the windfall of some sooty Tarquin, and exchange she got ease, luxury and a celestial lover. Who could blame her for the bargain?"

When the trial began, Brazoria Countians crowded the courtroom to see Dart take the stand as first witness in the case. Dart's attorneys were the firm of Jack and Townes of Brazoria, experienced and well known. Their fee was to be five per cent of the judgement or two and a half per cent of any compromise settlement. As earnest money for that fee, Dart mortgaged 10 of the Chenango slaves to them.

Edwards' attorneys showed two bills of sale bearing the signature Christopher Dart. One of them conveyed Art's interest in the partnership lands, the others his half interest in the slaves, to Edwards. The signatures of Captain Peyton R. Splane, John F. Pettus and Ashmore Edwards were inscribed on both bills of sale.

“Is that your signature?” the attorney demanded. With shaking hands, Dart accepted the instrument from the attorney and looked at it long and hard. His expression became stricken as he answered in a low voice, “I believe it is.” Horrified, his attorney said “Then we abandon the case.” “No,” said Dart quickly. “No. I didn’t mean that I signed it. I never signed such an instrument as that. It’s a forgery!”

Ashmore Edwards took the stand. “Yes, I signed the instruments as witness,” he testified. “Dart was present then and When Capt. Splane and Mr. Pettus signed them. I saw them sign in his presence.”

His testimony carried the ring of truth, for Ashmore Edwards believed it to be true. He was as much fooled by Monroe’s trick as everyone else had been and had not the slightest suspicion that the man with Monroe when the witnesses signed those papers was a gambler from Baton Rouge.

Sitting with his attorneys, Dart had picked up the instruments and was examining them again. Suddenly he made a small exclamation, and began to whisper to his counsel. Dramatically, the lawyers jumped to their feet, asking Judge Franklin for a recess.

“Important evidence has come to our attention,” they explained, approaching the bench. “We should like to have time to plan our procedure in the light of this new evidence.”

Dart had recognized the paper used in the bills of sale as a special foolscap he used only for letter writing. With that discovery came the suspicion that the documents were actually letters from which all the writing except the signature had been erased chemically, with bill of sale written later.

There were two men in Brazoria County in that day who might qualify as experts on chemicals and who might be able to throw light on the possibility that Dart’s theory was correct. One of those was Dr. Charles B. Stewart. The other was Edmund Andrews, proprietor of a stationery and book store in Brazoria. Both gentlemen were called to testify.

Andrews was called to the stand. Despite vigorous objects by Edwards’ attorneys, the court ruled that he could apply certain chemical tests to the documents. Conferring hurriedly with Edwards his lawyers could do nothing to prevent the chemical tests after the court had ruled. With a growing conviction that their case was lost, they watched faint spidery lines, clearly distinct from the bill of sale become apparent as Andrews applied his tests. Dr. Stewart then took the stand, agreeing with Andrews that there had been writing on the paper before the bill of sale, and that the original writing had been removed by chemical means.

Despite the eloquent pleas of Edwards’ attorneys, the jury returned a verdict against him. The partnership property of Dart and Edwards was valued at \$99,088. Judge Franklin handed down a judgment directing that Dart hold the property until he realized from it the amount due him.

Worse things were in store for Monroe Edwards. The following day, still smarting from the loss of this suit, he and his brother Ashmore Edwards were arrested in Brazoria by County Sheriff Robert J. Calder. Both were charged with forgery, and in Monroe’s case bond was denied and he was placed in jail in Brazoria.

Without hesitation, Kitty Clover made plans to help her master as best she could. She borrowed clothes from one of the male slaves at Chenango and disguised herself as a boy, leaving Chenango Plantation at midnight for Brazoria.

To the surprise of the jailer there she announced, “I’m one of Massa Edwards’s boys. I’d like to see him. My name is Henry Clover.”

Apparently without suspicion, the jailer unlocked the door of Edwards's cell to admit "Henry" and authorities decided to allow Edwards to keep his slave with him as a personal servant.

Still working in behalf of their client, Edwards' attorneys journeyed to San Antonio, securing there a writ of habeas corpus to have the prisoner brought before the judge of that district. At the hearing, the judge would decide whether to admit Edwards to bail.

The hearing was held within a few days, Edwards traveling to San Antonio with his attorney John C. Watrous and with his servant "Henry". The hearing was decided in his favor, and \$5,000 bond was set with Colonel Louis P. Cook, Secretary of the Texas Navy, becoming Edwards' security.

Edwards and his attorney John C. Watrous decided to remain in San Antonio for a few days, but Edwards sent "Henry" back to Brazoria with the plaintiffs, explaining that he wanted to send a message to his brother. Actually, he had instructed Kitty Clover to discover the plans of the prosecution and report them to him.

Kitty learned from a servant of one of the lawyers that there would be two new warrants for forgery issued against Edwards when he returned to Brazoria, and that he would again be jailed. She also discovered that two important witnesses had arrived to testify at Edwards' trial. The first was Captain Peyton R. Splane, one of the witnesses to the bill of sale. The other witness was the hotel clerk who had seen Dart sitting shirtless in his room writing letters one minute, and completely dressed, talking in the hotel lobby with Edwards and Captain Splane, the next minute. The clerk had long since put the puzzling incident from his mind, but reports of the Dart-Edwards trial had recalled it. Sure now that the man he had seen in the hotel lobby was an imposter, the clerk's testimony was sure to send Edwards to prison.

According to the plan she and Edwards had made in San Antonio Kitty secured a horse and traveled to an inn about 40 miles from Brazoria, where she waited for her master to arrive. Slipping a note to Edwards as he passed through the stable, Kitty waited there until he had an opportunity to read the message and come back outside. Without pausing he whispered that they would leave at midnight.

Kitty had the horses saddled when Monroe left the darkened inn. They rode off toward the San Bernard River, concealing themselves in the woods the next day and waiting for darkness before riding on to Chenango Plantation. They approached cautiously, checking for any sign of activity that would mean authorities were waiting for them. They stopped long enough to pack food and clothing and a bag of gold Monroe had hidden for emergencies.

Then they rode off toward the southwest, leaving Monroe's lands and slaves anchored by the court judgment, an unpaid note of \$35,000 slave purchased in Havana, and his appearance bond forfeited.

With his slave girl mistress still disguised as a boy, Edwards headed to New Orleans and then Natchez. After a short visit with his family, Monroe and Kitty moved on toward the north. Looking up a wealthy planter he had known earlier, Edwards was introduced to Ohio's best known and most influential abolitionists. He listened to their arguments, and slowly allowed himself to come to their way of thinking concerning the horrors of slavery. Giving all indications that he was a dedicated convert, he announced his intention of freeing the 169 slaves he owned in Texas, as well as his personal servant Henry Clover.

He had the necessary papers drawn up and by that time was held in high esteem by his abolitionists friends that one of them was only too happy to cash a check for Edwards in the amount of \$2,000.

This meant a quick move to New York before the check could bounce back. Again passing himself off as a Texas colonel with a brilliant war record, he made this period pay well, using his ability as a draughtsman in enough forgeries to finance the best passage to London.

Before the European voyage, Edwards had written letters of inquiry on a host of different subjects to several dignitaries and politicians. His plan of receiving the replies bearing the signatures of such persons as Daniel Webster, Martin Van Buren John Forsyth and others worked well. He then proceeded to use his knowledge of chemical ink erasure to rid the paper of all except the signatures, and to write in glowing introduction of Colonel Monroe Edwards to high ranking Britishers. With these documents he and Kitty left for England.

Monroe Edwards was again the fabulous Texas colonel, wined and dined and even introduced on the floor of Parliament. His English friends lauded him for having emancipated 200 Africans held captive in Texas and helped him arrange for several loans, for which he gave as security forged bonds and receipts upon a bank in the United States.

General James Hamilton, Texas minister to England and France, put up with the situation for some weeks, growing more and more suspicious of Edwards. Finally, he decided to write back to Texas for information concerning the colonel.

After receiving notice General Hamilton wrote a letter to Edwards: "I hope you will spare me the pain and necessity of a more detailed and public statement of your recent history in Texas."

Edwards made plans to leave as soon as possible, but a voyage would take money. Therefore, he planned a last touch to end his English social career. News of his past had preceded him, however, and he was ordered from the office of Lord Brougham. That gentleman, one of Edwards' closest friends in England, informed him that he now knew Edwards was an imposter.

Forced by approaching motherhood to resume the dress of a woman, Kitty Clover was sent back to the United States on the ship *Ontario*, listed as servant of Colonel J. S. Winfree and lady in January 1841.

Edwards had provided ample funds for her to live well until he could join her, and had entrusted them to Winfree. Edwards' friends were not all honest, however, and Winfree kept the money for himself. Without funds, Kitty entered the charity ward of Bellevue Hospital in New York, where she gave birth to a child. Arriving several months later, Edwards located Kitty through Winfree. He stayed in New York before moving to Philadelphia. Kitty followed him in a short time, and she and the child were installed with a Negro family there. Despite the loyalty and devotion she had always shown, it was Kitty's presence in Philadelphia which was to prove the downfall of Monroe Edwards.

Monroe Edwards assumed the name of John P. Caldwell during his stay in Philadelphia while forging documents attesting to his ownership of a large and prosperous plantation. In this way he obtained a loan of \$25,119.52, and when the financial geniuses found they had been led down the garden path, they offered rewards totaling \$25,000 for the apprehension of the responsible parties.

Monroe's partner in the deal was Alexander Powell, and what with the reward and the cry over their activities, the two decided a trip was in order. Edwards suggested that Powell travel to Europe, and he would visit his old stomping ground of New Orleans. Powell left for Boston to get a ship for Europe, and Edwards decided to pay a short visit to New York before heading south.

On the day Powell's boat was due to sail, Monroe wrote an anonymous letter to the New York office of the bankers from whom he had obtained the generous loan, suggesting that they might be interested in Alexander Powell and listing the name of his boat. He thought the boat would have already sailed, and this would throw police well off his own track. To his consternation, however, he learned that departure of Powell's boat had delayed. Quickly he sent a second anonymous letter to the bankers, cautioning them that the first was a mistake and that Powell was actually a wealthy and influential person and should not be bothered. The authorities were suspicious enough to arrest Powell, anyway. Confronted with the two letters, Powell recognized his partner's handwriting, and "squealed" loud and long concerning Edwards' part in the swindle.

Though they knew who they were looking for, authorities had little or no idea of where to look. Monroe had left New York immediately after mailing the second letter, returning to Philadelphia to provisions for Kitty and himself to leave for New Orleans.

With an infant to care for, Kitty could not travel as fast as would be necessary for Monroe, so he planned to leave cash for her needs and have her join him later. Through a friend, he attempted to deposit \$500 for her in a local bank, but the banker wanted no such small account with an ignorant black girl. Edwards decided to wait one more day and try to make arrangements with another bank.

The delay cost him his freedom. The next morning officers appeared to arrest him. They also arrested Kitty Clover because of the attempted deposit, but later released her when they learned of her involvement with Edwards and the fact that she was a slave. A search of Edwards' trunks revealed \$43,600.

Edwards was sent to the Tombs, a jail in New York, to await trial. Still attempting to outwit authorities, he hired a visitor to slip his name on the registers of the Waverly and Northern Hotels in New York City and in a hotel in Albany. He hoped this would provide an alibi, and had his brother, Ashmore Edwards, check the registers to be certain his name appeared on the proper dates.

Far from Texas, Monroe Edwards had lost his fortune, friends, and freedom. While he languished in jail even the faithful Kitty Clover deserted him. Converted by a religious denomination of so-called saints, she was convinced that she would suffer damnation if she sent a single word of sympathy to her master. Edwards never heard from her after that time.

Unwilling to admit defeat, Edwards bribed the boy who brought his meals to furnish him with a crow-bar, a watch-spring, a small package of sleeping potion, some fine glazed gun powder and a ball of cord. Somehow the plan was discovered and authorities confiscated the materials.

Although he retained some the finest lawyers on the east coast in something of an almost circus atmosphere in October 1842 Judge Kent sentenced Edwards accompanying the usual sentence with a firmly worded opinion of Monroe's reputation and activities. Almost smirking, Edwards broke into the remarks saying, "Very complimentary indeed sir." "Your remarks, sir," said the judge coldly, "make no difference in the allotted sentence. You are consigned to 10 years imprisonment in the state prison at Sing Sing; being five years on each conviction. In this the court goes to the extreme of the law. Had the law admitted of a longer term, the court would have imposed it on you-for, under the circumstances of the case, there can be no mitigation!"

About the time he was being shipped of to prison his personal effects were being sold at a sheriff's auction. The trunks were unpacked and bidders were offered a multitude of items. Sold at the auction were such things as six-barreled pistol, a pair of bullet moulds, a powder flask with

powder and bullets, a seal with coat of arms, a gold watch and chain, a stomach pump, a money belt, a box of cologne, a bottle of hair dye, a box of stamps and die, and a stamp lettered "Paid". The wardrobe went, too including 6 coats, 8 vests, 14 pairs of pantaloons, 16 shirts, and one blue sash.

In prison he continued to scheme and plan, his thoughts now centering upon escape. Convincing a prison agent that he still owned vast lands in Texas the agent procured a box like those used to move manufactured goods from the penitentiary to the outside world. Inside were provisions including biscuits, brandy and water. There was also a latch inside to prevent accidental discovery, and Monroe was ready to be shipped outside with merchandise.

"When this note is found, Monroe Edwards will be no more," he wrote. A fellow prisoner planted the note, along with Edwards' coat and cap, on the prison wharf at the river. Obtaining permission to go from the shoe shop where he worked out into the prison yard, the friend was signaled. Then Edwards slipped into the box and latched it behind him as the friend raised a cry about a man having fallen into the river.

The river was dragged, but no body was found. Warden Angus McDuffie was no man's fool and had much experience with attempts at escape. He began a search of the prison. Dozens of times footsteps thudded past the box where Monroe huddled, and finally a guard ordered the box opened.

As described by the *New York Herald*, "He was placed on the whipping post, his back bared, and a strong athletic keeper selected who applied some 50 lashes with a cat-o-nine tails to his quivering flesh".

Remembrance of such a punishment might have deterred a less stubborn man, but Monroe was determined to escape. Again in 1847 he made careful plans, and again he was caught and whipped. Shortly afterward he died-supposedly as a result of that beating-and was buried in the prison burial ground far from his adopted Texas.

Monroe Edwards had skipped out of Texas owing many but leaving Christopher Dart without title to the Chenango Plantation.

Appendix G
Chain of Title

GRANTORS	GRANTEES	Kind of Instrument	Book	Page	Month	Day	Year	Acres	Description
Mexican Government	William Harris	Deed	SR		July	10	1824		William Harris League
William Harris	W. Henry Austin	Deed	SR	10	Feb	15	1832		\$1200 for Harris League
William Harris or Clark	Benjamin Fort Smith	?							
Jared E. Groce	Benjamin Fort Smith	Deed	C	207/08	Jan	2	1835	781	\$976.50 East of Oyster above the Parker League
Monroe Edwards	Christopher Dart	PA	A	183	May	16	1836		Power of Attorney signed in Natchez, Mississippi
Benjamin F. Smith	Monroe Edwards	Deed	A	23/24	Sept	10	1836	1300	\$35, Green, Harding & Co. New Orleans 000 2 Tracts + 17 Slaves + cotton & corn crop
Monroe Edwards	Warren D. C. Hall	Deed	A	96	Sept	12	1836	1300	\$35,500 2 Tracts + states all slaves African
Warren D.C. Hall	Vincent A. Drouillard	Deed	A	1/2	Oct	26	1836	1300	\$40,000 2 Tracts + 15 Slaves+ crop of cotton & corn & livestock
Joshua Abbott	Vincent A. Drouillard	Deed	A	66/67	Oct	26	1836	600	Tract from league on which Abbott resides
Vincent A. Drouillard	William J. Russell	Deed	A	68/70	Dec	9	1836		\$66,940 1300 acre tract + 600 acre from Abbott League + Christy tract + addition slaves & livestock
William Christy Of New Orleans	William J. Russell	Deed	A	67	Dec	9	1836		Tract bought by Christy from A.E.C. Johnson
Warren D. C. Hall	Peter Bertrand	Deed	A	97	April	8	1837	1300	\$15885 2 Tracts + 16 African slaves
Peter Bertrand	Warren D. C. Hall	Deed	A	98	April	10	1837	1300	\$20,000 2 Tracts + 16 African slaves
Monroe Edwards	Christopher Dart	Agree	A	177/78	April	18	1837		½ interest in all land and slaves owned by Monroe Edwards in Texas
Christopher Dart	George Knight & Co. of Cuba	Mortgage	A	184/85	Nov	1	1838		\$35410 mortgage on slaves bought by Monroe Edwards in Cuba
William J. Russell	James Love	Deed	C	300/05	April	19	1839	~3000	\$72,000 All tracts & slaves + ½ of Half league of Stephen Richards
Benjamin F. Smith	James Love	Deed	C	483/84	Jan	22	1840		Agreement to pay Smith his lien against plantation from crop.

Monroe Edwards	Christopher Dart	Decree	H	335/37	April	2	1840		Christopher Dart won his suit against Monroe Edwards. All property to be liquidated to pay debts ~\$89,000 + interest just to Dart.
James Love	William J. Russell	Decree	C	532/34	May	8	1840		Love to pay \$5000 to Russell after Smith is paid/secured to Mills Bros.
James Love	Albert T. Burnley of New Orleans	Deed	B	534	Jul	29	1841	3300	½ interest \$25,000 Parker's Point Plantation
Harriet Head Frost	James Love	Deed	B	238	Mar	22	1843	720	\$10,000 Head Tract in Richardson League
James Love	Robert & D. G. Mills	Mortgage	B	433/35	June	24	1843	~3000	\$22,328.02 part of down payment to Russell paid by Mills brothers.
James Love	R H. Chinn	Mortgage	B	545	May	14	1845	~3000	Part of debt of B. F. Smith \$4000 on plantation
James Love	Nathaniel Ware of Mississippi	Mortgage	D	139/41	April	9	1846		\$15,531 All his tracts & slaves
R. & D. Mills	James Love	Release	D	142/43	April	10	1846		Debt paid by funds from N. Ware
A.C. Horton Governor	James Love		J	115/16	Sept	12	1846		Joshua Abbott League just east of Chenango
R. H. Chinn	James Love	Release	D	218	Sept	20	1846		Debt paid
Albert T. Burnley New Orleans	James Love & William Pitt Ballinger	Mortgage Trust	D	601/04	May	25	1848	3300	\$36910 mortgage to Frederick Hath & Company of London ½ interest in 3400 acres Parker's Point Plantation
James Love	H. L. Kinney	Mortgage	E	480/81	Aug	28	1848		\$1200 note secured by slaves
James Love	William M. Rice & Charles W. Adams of Galveston	Mortgage	E	115/19	Feb	17	1849	~3400	½ interest Land & slaves for funds to build horse powered sugar mill of wood & machinery & operational funds + interest on note to Ware
Charles Adams	James Love	Contract	E	119/21	Feb	17	1849		Contract Rice Adams & Co. to fund sugar mill etc. and Love to sell his crops thru their company.
James Love	Nathaniel Ware	Deed	E	121/22	Feb	25	1849		\$1708.41 850 head of cattle to secure note for 1 year
Albert T. Burnley	William Sharpe	Deed	F	26/27	Dec	7	1850	3400	\$25,000 ½ interest of Burnley
William Sharpe	Albert T. Burnley	Mortgage	F	28	Jan	9	1851	3400	\$18,750 ½ interest of Sharpe
James Love	Nathaniel Ware of Galveston	Deed	F	290/96	April	20	1852	3400	\$18,500 ½ interest of Love +1/2 int 70 slaves foreclosure at public auction.

William Sharpe	Nathaniel Ware	Trust	F	297/99	April	21	1852	3400	\$29,000 ½ interest
Nathaniel Ware	William Sharpe	Deed	F	311/13	April	21	1852	3400	\$29,000 ½ interest Land & slaves
William Sharpe	Green, Harding & Co. New Orleans	Mortgage	G	149/50	Jan	25	1854	3400	\$27,000 ½ Interest land
William Sharpe	Green, Harding & Co. New Orleans	Deed	G	313/15	June	8	1855		\$23,000 ½ Interest in 73 slaves & livestock

Green, Harding & Co. New Orleans	Albert G. Green	Mortgage	H	293/96	Sept	19	1857	3400	\$24,000 1/2 Interest in land & slaves
William J. & Susan V. Stevens	Samuel S. Green & Edward K. Harding	Deed	H	344/46	Dec	20	1857	3400	\$15,000 1/3 of 1/2 Interest in land & slaves
E. B. Nichols & John Fox	Green, Harding & Co. New Orleans	Release	J	135	Apr	12	1859	3400	Release of Mortgage to Albert G. Green
Samuel Green & Edward K. Harding	Thomas W. Peirce of Boston	Deed	J	136/38	Apr	11	1859	3400	\$65,000 1/2 Interest in land & slaves
Thomas W. Peirce	William J. Kyle & Benjamin F. Terry	Deed	J	138/40	Apr	13	1859	3400	\$63,900 in notes ? paid down
William Sharpe	Estate of W. J. Kyle & David Terry	Agreement	K	443/45	Mar	29	1864	3400	Division of property requested by probate court
William Sharpe	Estate of Wm. J. Kyle	Deed	K	449/51	Aug	15	1864	3400	\$54,125 land \$26,150 slaves
Estate of Wm. J. Kyle	William Sharpe	Deed	K	446/48	Aug	15	1864	3400	\$83,435 land \$25,200 slaves Kyle 1/2 interest
William Sharpe	Henry H. Williams & John L. Darragh	Deed	1	159/62	Dec	14	1869	3400	\$10,000 2/3 Henry H. Williams & 1/3 John L. Darragh foreclosure
John L. Darragh	Mrs. E.G.C. Darragh	Deed	R	617/18	Jan	18	1879	3850	Quit Claim 1/6 interest
Mrs. E.G.C. Darragh	Rebecca A. Williams Baltimore, Maryland	Deed	R	618/20	Feb	5	1879	3850	\$1,000 1/6 interest + crop of 1878 cane sugar molasses cotton & corn
John L. Darragh	Rebecca A. Williams	Deed	T	519/21	May	3	1881	3850	\$1,500 1/6 interest
A.C. Barnes	Rebecca A. Williams	Mortgage			Jan	21	1884	3850	\$500 down +10 notes \$1000/10 yrs.
Rebecca A. Williams	A. C. Barnes	Release	1	706/07	Oct	5	1888	3850	\$10,500 paid

