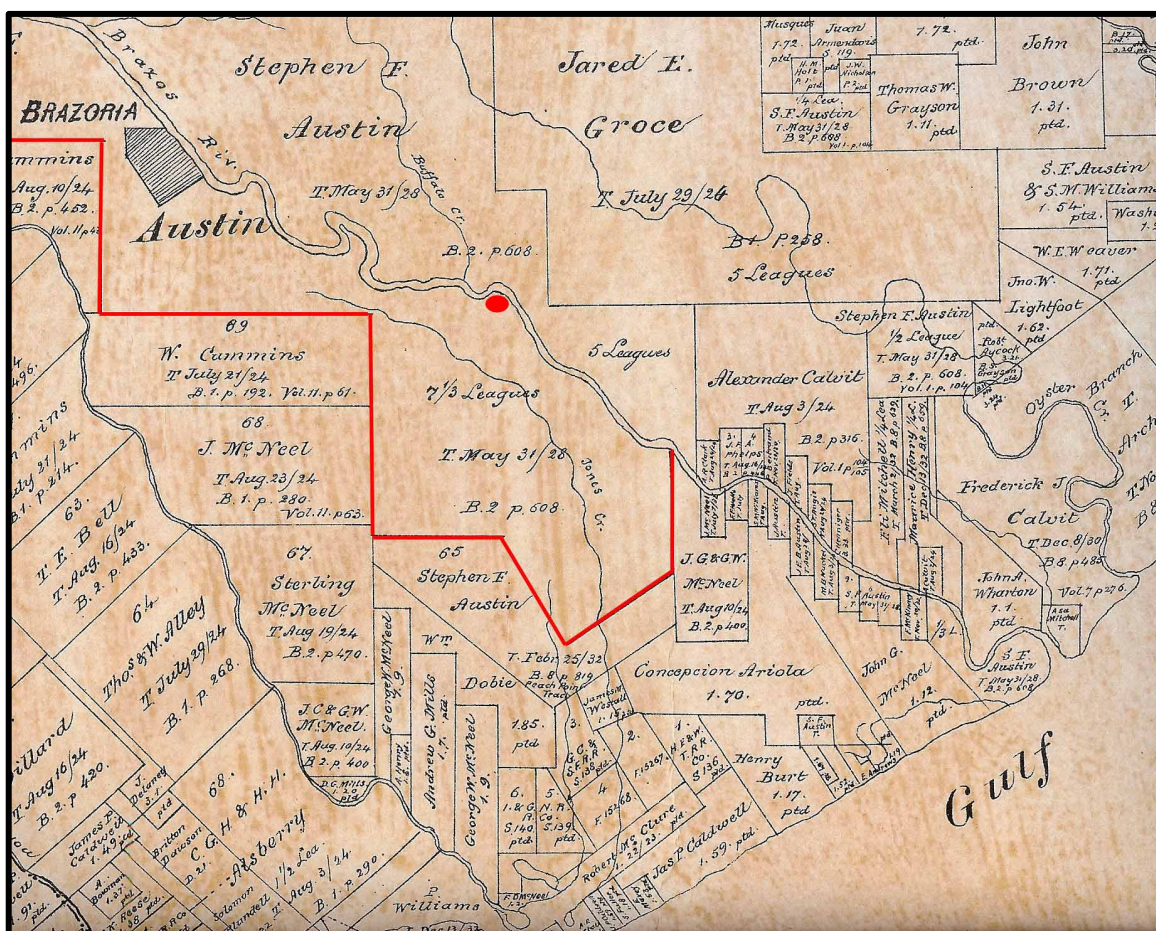


Thomas Phillip Crosby-Thomas Murray Crosby Plantation-Crosby's Landing  
Reference Aycock's Landing-Perry's Landing  
Brazosport Archeological Society



Stephen F. Austin 7 1/3 League Map 1879 The General Land Office of the State of Texas

Nine miles below Brazoria was an important plantation landing on the Brazos River. Thomas Phillips Crosby aged 26 years and his wife aged 20 years, the former Clementina Murray, lived in Philadelphia before moving to Texas in ~1830 along with their two children and an orphaned young man, Sidney Whitehead aged 18 years.<sup>1</sup> Their two oldest sons Thomas Murray and George Edward Crosby had been born in Pennsylvania. Crosby received a Mexican land grant of 1,400 acres in Karnes County but shortly removed to Brazoria County.

Stephen F. Austin had agreed to reserve land in his colony for Joseph H. and George Anne Hawkins of New Orleans.<sup>2</sup> Both Joseph Hawkins and his wife died of yellow fever in New Orleans before they were able to come to Texas.<sup>3</sup> Stephen F. Austin did deed their share to

<sup>1</sup> Williams, Villamae, ed., *Stephen F. Austin's Register of Families*, Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, Maryland, 2000, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Cantrell, Gregg, *Stephen F. Austin Empresario of Texas*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1999, pp.80-84.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph H. Hawkins died 1823 and George Anne Hawkins died 1829.

their heirs. The Crosby family settled in Brazoria County on land west of the Brazos River that was owned by the heirs of Joseph H. and George Anne Hawkins and early on were probably renting.

In 1832 Thomas P. Crosby received a de-habilitating wound in the Battle of Velasco and ever after was somewhat disabled by it.<sup>4</sup>

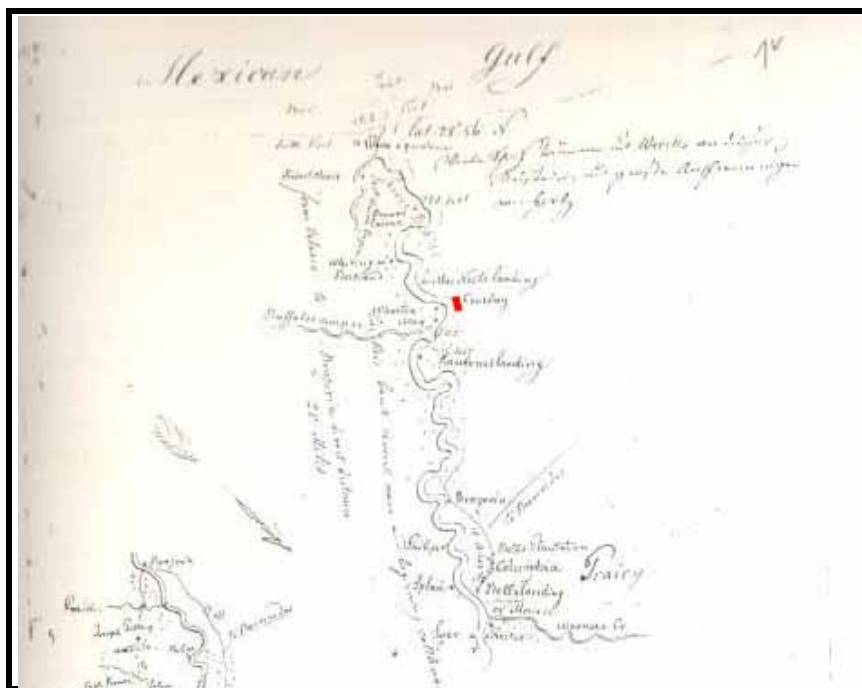
In 1834 Crosby received 436 pounds of salt for Peach Point plantation. That year was probably the first year of the Crosby's Landing business.

In the summer of 1835 Mary Austin Holley had occasion to stop at Crosby's landing while being rowed down the Brazos River in a perogue from John Austin's Bolivar plantation to the mouth of the Brazos to board the schooner *San Felipe* on her travels to New Orleans:

### June 8<sup>th</sup>

Landed at noon at a new place just opened by Mr. Crosby near the bank—The trees are so thinned you can see through the timber to the prairie in beautiful vistas. Longed to have time to explore a little. Mrs. Perry lives but two miles off...<sup>5</sup>

During the Texas Revolution Thomas P. Crosby did a thriving business at the landing supplying the Texas Army and its officers.<sup>6</sup> In February 1836 Colonel Eduard Hardkort surveyed the Brazos River from the mouth of the river to the north to San Felipe de Austin.



Lower Brazos

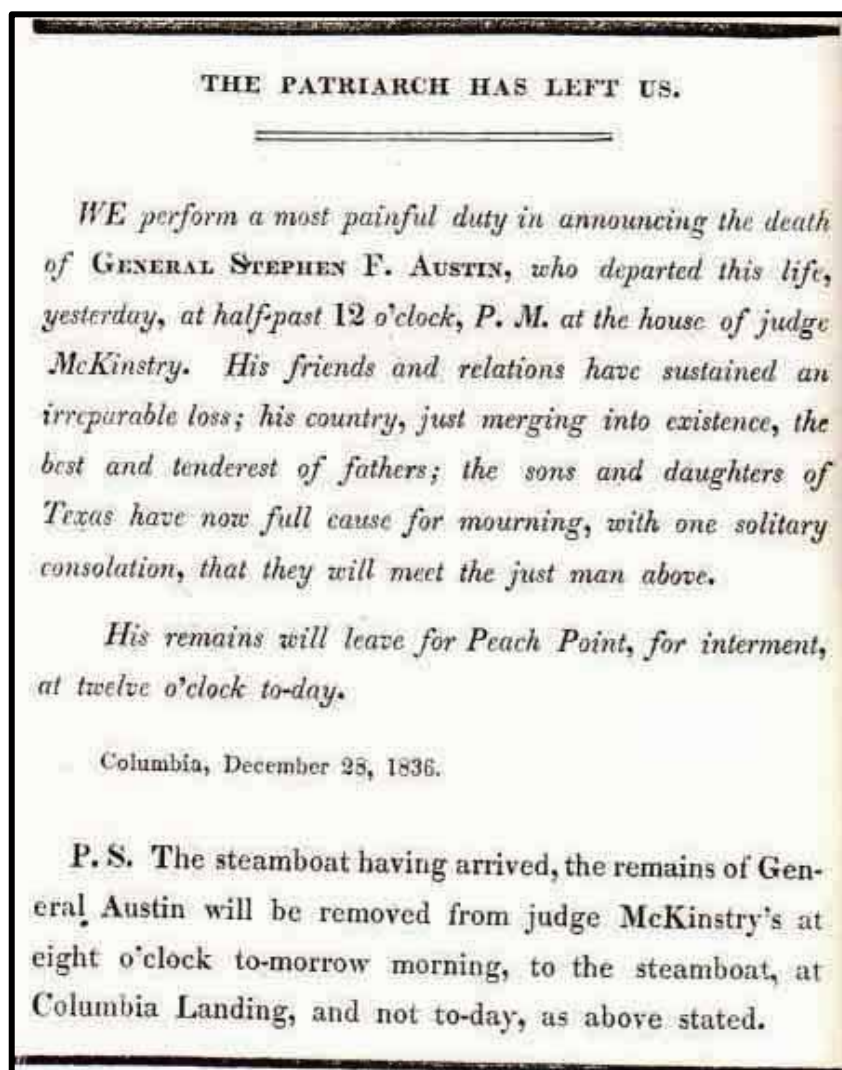
<sup>4</sup> Boddie, Mary Delaney, *Thunder on the Brazos*, Taylor Publishing Company, 1978, p.40.

<sup>5</sup> Holley, Mary Austin, *The Texas Diary, 1835-1838*, University of Texas Press, Austin, Texas, 1965, p.27.

<sup>6</sup> Claims Republic of Texas, Texas State Archives

<sup>7</sup> Brister, Louis, ed., *The Journal of Col. Eduard Harkort, Captain of Engineers, Texas Army, February 8-July 17, 1836*, *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. CII, January, 1999, p. 351.

In December 1836:



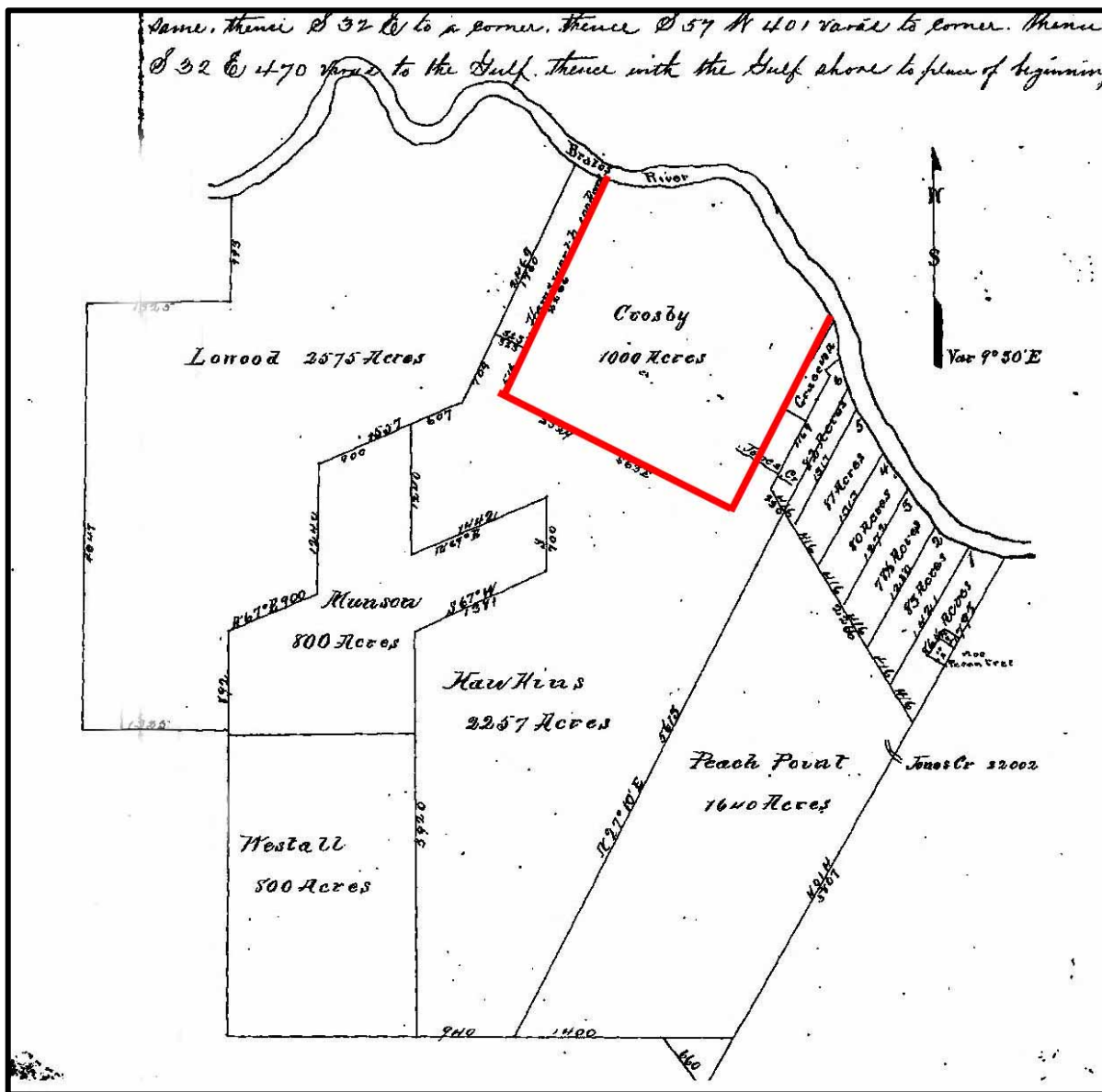
### Stephen F. Austin's Funeral Notice

On the morning of December 29, 1836 Austin's remains were carried on board the steamboat *Yellowstone*. The *Yellowstone* proceeded down the Brazos River to Crosby's Landing. Sam Houston, members of the cabinet and a military escort accompanied the body to James F. Perry's Peach Point plantation for the burial.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Cantrell, Gregg, *Stephen F. Austin Empresario of Texas*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1999, pp. 365-67.

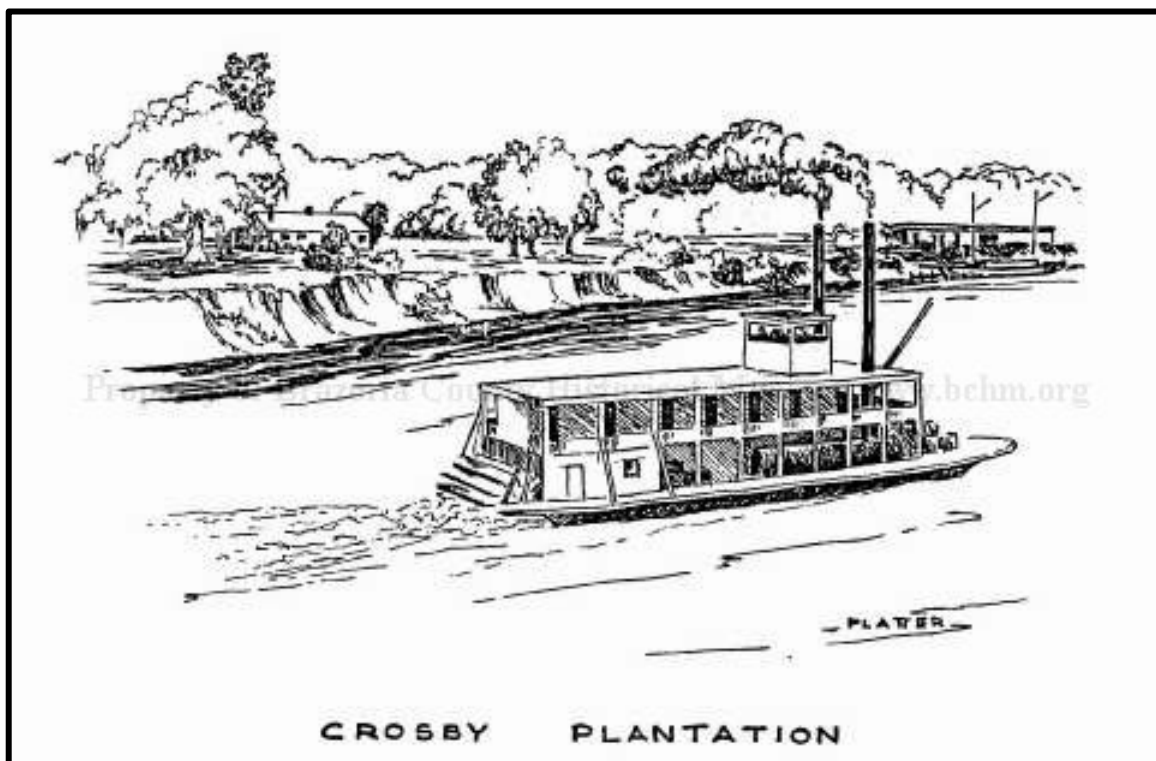


Earlier that same December Thomas P. Crosby had signed a contract with Edmund St. John Hawkins to purchase 1000 acres on the west side of the Brazos River to include 1 ½ miles fronting on the river and to include all of Crosby's improvements. The \$3000 price tag was covered by notes drawn on his brother John Crosby of New Orleans, Louisiana.<sup>9</sup>



<sup>9</sup> Brazoria County Deed Record: 3 28/29

Thomas P. Crosby's property lay on the west side of the Brazos; at the site of his landing the river ran from west to east. His home was about a hundred feet south of the river and the rear of the house overlooked the river. In a land of large trees, two of unusual size determined the location of the residence. One was a live oak on the riverbank to which boats tied at an early date. The other was a pecan, four feet in diameter just east of the dwelling. The house was of wood, one storey, with a chimney in the center. Because of its well-drained location, on high ground above the river, it was built close to the ground. Also on high ground, four hundred yards west of the house, was the large warehouse just above the water.<sup>10</sup>



A note written in 1838 indicated Crosby raised 500 bushels of corn that year in a field three-quarters of a mile from the Brazos River.<sup>11</sup> During this time period tax records indicate that Crosby only owned two slaves. The family really never had a work force large enough to actually farm the land to any great extent. By 1840 he owned 7 slaves but by 1842 for financial reasons he had had to sell all his slaves.

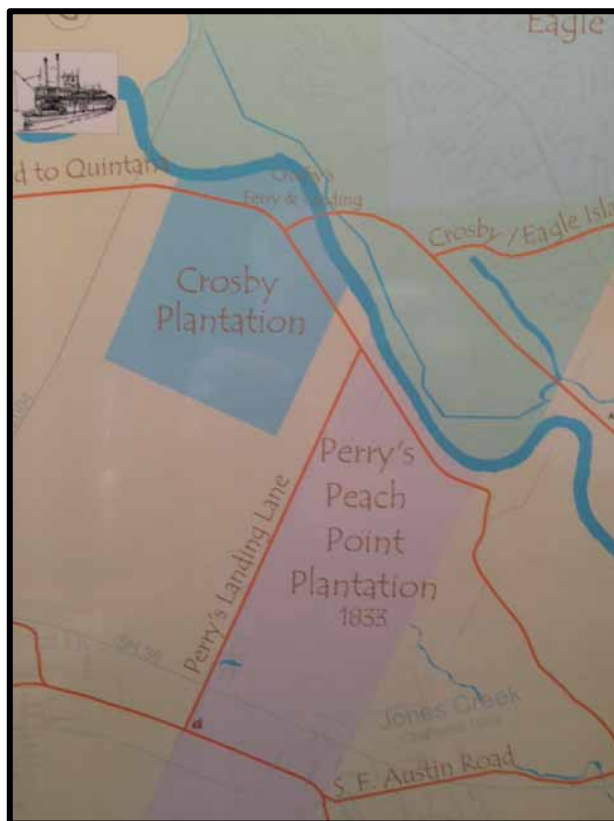
<sup>10</sup> Platter, Andrew Allen, *Educational, Social, and Economic Characteristics of the Plantation Culture of Brazoria County*, Doctoral Dissertation Education, University of Houston, Texas, 1961, pp. 119-24.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas P. Crosby to James F. Perry, 25 July 1839, James F. Perry Papers

Marry Austin Holley visited Mrs. Laura Jack on the east side of the Brazos River across from Crosby's Landing in 1838. She crossed the river and again stopped at the Crosby's home:

**Jan. 29<sup>th</sup>**

After breakfast left the beautiful place of Mr. Jack for home. Cloudy morning—prairie wet & full of mosquitoes. Pass Mr. Calvert's[Calvit's] & Mr. Wharton's. Nothing but mud all the way to the river. Crossed & stopped at Crosby's—genteel people. Mrs. Crosby is from Philadelphia—daughter of Mr. Merry [Murray], of the firm of Farmer Draper & Co [Murray Draper Fairman & Co.]. Live in a cabin...<sup>12</sup>



Portion of Road Map by George Kramig-Clute Library

In December 1840 Mary Jane Davis and Joseph T. Hawkins for their deceased brother made out a deed to Thomas P. Crosby for the 1000 acre tract.<sup>13</sup> Thomas P. Crosby contracted the northern 500 acres of his land to his brother John Crosby for the \$3000 he owed him.<sup>14</sup> In 1842 John Crosby turned his contract over to Edward W. Sanders of San Antonio, Texas.<sup>15</sup>

Though Thomas P. Crosby was shipping, receiving and storing goods in his large warehouse the family always seemed to be in a financial pinch. According to the family records

<sup>12</sup> Holley, Mary Austin, *The Texas Diary, 1835-1838*, University of Texas Press, Austin, Texas, 1965, p.54.

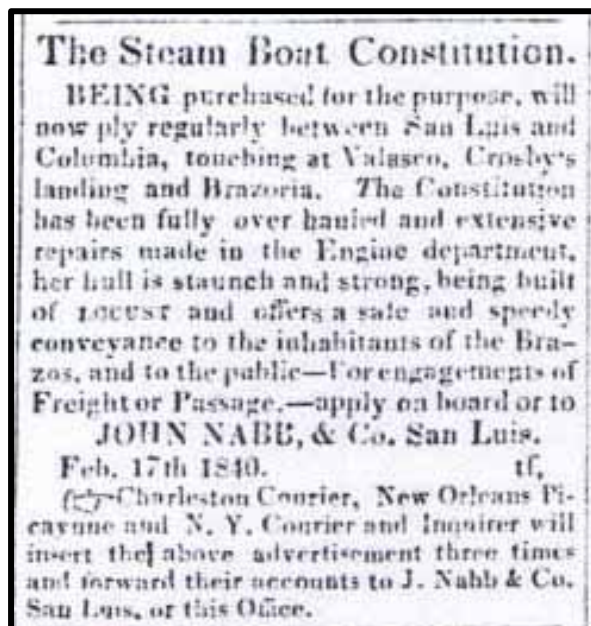
<sup>13</sup> BCDR: 3 29/30

<sup>14</sup> BCDR: B 23

<sup>15</sup> BCDR: B 137

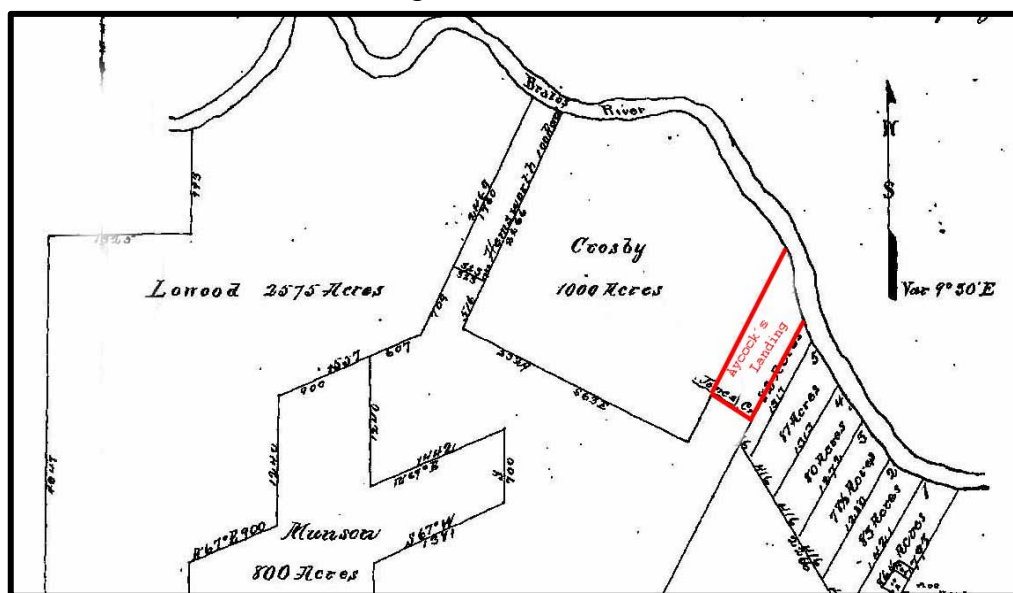
he soon established a ferry and ran a post office at the landing. Ester aged 35, a female house servant who was a good cook had to be sold in 1842 for \$161.40 to cover Crosby's debt.<sup>16</sup>

Shipping on the Brazos River increased constantly. Sailing ships dominated the river in early years, but steamboats appeared in increasing numbers.



17

Early in the 1840's competition appeared just downstream of Crosby's Landing. Nathaniel M. Aycock purchased 105 acres on the Brazos River adjacent to Crosby's land in December 1841 and built his own landing.<sup>18</sup>



<sup>16</sup> BCDR: 179

<sup>17</sup> *Brazos Courier*, June 9, 1840, Brazoria, Texas

<sup>18</sup> BCDR: E 418//19

This was slightly closer to Peach Point plantation and by the later 1840's Stephen S. Perry was using Aycock's Landing regularly as were other planters in the area.

17- The steamer *S. M. Williams* was still aground, by the last accounts. We are informed that there is a good deal of produce on the river, awaiting transportation to this port. A gentleman from Columbia informs us that he left six hundred bales of cotton there; and that there is at least two full cargoes of sugar and molasses at Aycock's landing.

18- The crops of corn, cotton, and sugar are uncommonly promising in Brazoria county. The amount of sugar is much greater than that of last year.

The amount of cotton received at this port, since

19

In Stephen S. Perry's log for Peach Point plantation in February 1848 he notes several instances of now using Aycock's landing:

Month & Day	Occupation
2	Making fence and splitting railes Shiped to Aycock's landing fifteen sacks of corn, containing 40 bushels to be sent to Judge Low Galveston
3	Making and splitting railes, continue building fence
4	Making cotten bails, made fifteen bails carrying cotton in to the Gin,
5	Continued to bail Made seven bales, weighed, and shiped eleven to Mr Aycocks Landing Making fence, gin stoped today
6	Sunday
7	Finished building the back string of fence in the Bottom field Shiped eleven bails of cotton to Mr Aycocks Landing

20

<sup>19</sup> *Texas Planter*, June 9, 1848, Brazoria, Texas

<sup>20</sup> Curlee, Abigail, "The History of a Slave Plantation 1831-1863". *SWHQ*, Vol. 26, July 22-April 1823, p. 118.



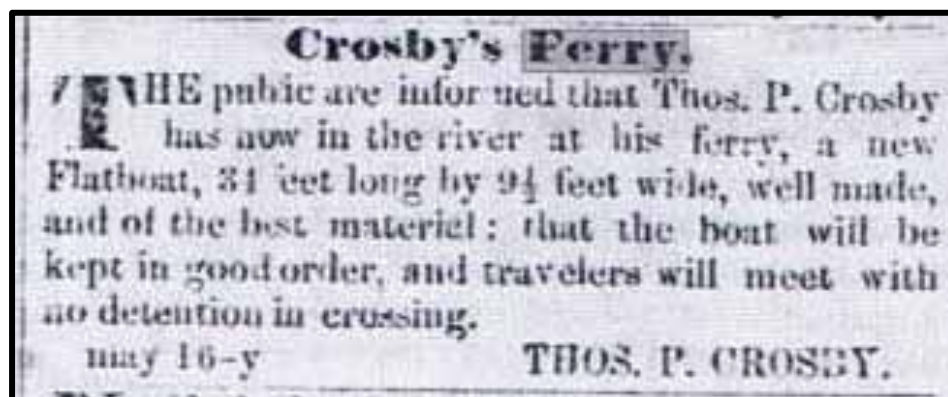
Thomas M. Crosby was sent to school by his Uncle John Crosby who was a sales merchant. Then he was sent to New York City to be an apprentice in novelty works for seven years.<sup>21</sup> Apparently he was serving his apprenticeship during 1850 at the time of the census. Thomas P. Crosby is not listed in the 1850 Agricultural Census for Brazoria but tax records indicate he owned 1 horse and 75 head of cattle but no slaves. His family listed in the 1850 Federal Census:

Thomas P. Crosby	(None)	42M	Pennsylvania
Clementina Crosby		42F	Pennsylvania
George M. Crosby		19M	Pennsylvania
Zelia A. Crosby		15F	Texas
Samuel M. Crosby		7M	Texas
Charles H. Crosby		5M	Texas
Peter Preston	Ferryman	42M	Scotland
Ezra Corey	Seaman	60M	New York

In 1853 Thomas M. Crosby wed Victoria McGown Marshall. They would raise their family on the Crosby plantation.

Nathaniel M. Aycock sold out his landing in March 1852 to James P. Caldwell of Oakland plantation. Ownership was later sold to James McFaddin who owned a plantation on the east side of the Brazos River.<sup>22</sup> In April 1854 Caldwell and McFaddin turned all ownership over to Stephen S. Perry of Peach Point.<sup>23</sup> In 1856 Perry received \$75 from the Commissioner's court to build a bridge over Jones Creek develop the road from Peach Point to Crosby's landing but it also went by his property now on the Brazos River which became Perry's Landing.

In 1854 Thomas P. Crosby improved his ferry:



24

<sup>21</sup> Crosby Family File, Brazoria County Historical Museum, Angleton, Texas

<sup>22</sup> BCDR: F 384/85, F 484/85 & F 744/45

<sup>23</sup> BCDR: F 746/47

<sup>24</sup> *Texas Planter*, June 27, 1855 Brazoria, Texas-Add started in May 1855 and ran continuously into 1856 in the *Democrat and Planter*, Columbia, Texas

During the 1850's Thomas P. Crosby was the plaintiff in several civil suits over past debts. He reached an agreement with Samuel Quarles in 1854 but never held his end of the deal and was sued again in 1858 resulting in foreclosure on his property and sale at public auction on everything but the 50 acres on which his improvements sat. This land was purchased for only \$250 by Peter MacGreal and Clinton Terry, two local lawyers.<sup>25</sup>

The plantation was still under producing at the end of the decade. The 1860 Agricultural Census lists Thomas P. Crosby as only having 20 acres improved while owning 4000 acres unimproved and having only \$100 worth of farm equipment. Tax records indicate a smaller number of acres owned. Livestock included 2 horses, 1 mule, 20 milch cows, 6 head of cattle, and 100 hogs. The farm produced 75 bushels of corn, 75 of Irish potatoes, 50 of sweet potatoes, and 50 lbs of butter. No slaves were listed in the records. The Crosby household listed in the 1860 Federal Census:

Thomas P. Crosby	Planter	53M	New York
Clementine Crosby		48F	Pennsylvania
Thomas M. Crosby	Machinist	28M	Pennsylvania
Victoria Crosby		23F	Tennessee
Walther Crosby		6M	Texas
William Crosby		3M	Texas
Aila Crosby [Adelaide]		2F	Texas
Zelia Crosby		20F	Texas
Samuel M. Crosby		12M	Texas
Henry W. Crosby		10M	Texas

Thomas M. Crosby continued operation of the plantation after the death of his father in August 1860. Earlier in the year Thomas P. Crosby had been elected county sheriff but never held office because of his death. According to his family he had left home to look over his land interests for about three weeks and upon his return took ill and died.<sup>26</sup> The list of his real estate assets in his probate file indicates he still laid claim to the 1000 acre tract west of the Brazos River but it was under suit. Its value at this time was \$5000.<sup>27</sup>

Confederate camps sprang up near the Crosby ferry crossing but Thomas M. Crosby appears to not have volunteered for the southern cause. After the war in 1869 Victoria Crosby died.

Civil suits were settled in 1868 and Zelia A. E. Buckner received the rights to the northern half of the 1000 acre tract and her brother Thomas M. Crosby received the southern 500 acres.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> BCDR: G 292/94 & H 612/13

<sup>26</sup> Crosby Family File, Brazoria County Historical Museum, Angleton, Texas

<sup>27</sup> Thomas P. Crosby Probate File, Brazoria County Clerk, Angleton, Texas

<sup>28</sup> BCDR: 176 144/45

In 1870 the Thomas M. Crosby household was listed in the Federal Census:

Thomas Crosby	Farmer	41M	Pennsylvania
George Crosby		14M	Texas
Adlade Crosby		12F	Texas
Pinke Crosby [Clementina]		9F	Texas
Walter Crosby [Walthall]		3M	Texas
Dory Crosby	Domestic	35FB	Louisiana

According to the family Thomas M. Crosby had a sugar mill and a grist mill near the river and a saw mill in Houston. He also ran a post office. He was an excellent mechanic and did work on sugar mills of neighboring planters. From a wrecked vessel at the mouth of the Brazos River, Crosby salvaged a boiler which he placed in his sugar house. The boiler, forty feet long and four feet high, was used for years in the manufacture of sugar. When the mill ceased operation, the boiler became a cistern for drinking water, and was covered with massed of honeysuckle. About 1940, Walter Crosby, son of George Edward Crosby, cut the boiler in two and the halves have since been used as water troughs on the Crosby ranch.

In 1873 George Crosby and his sister Zelia Buckner bought out the  $\frac{1}{4}$  interest of the lower half of the 950 acres tract from Eugene J. Wilson who had obtained ownership from the MacGreal family.<sup>29</sup>

J. P. Bryan bought most of the lower 500 acre tract at tax auction in May 1878 for ~\$35.00.<sup>30</sup>

The 1880 Federal Census lists the Thomas M. Crosby household:

Thomas Crosby	Engineer	55M	Pennsylvania
William Crosby		23M	Texas
Adelaide Crosby		21F	Texas
Clementina Crosby		18F	Texas
Walthall Crosby		12F	Texas

After the death of Thomas M. Crosby in 1889 his 500 acre tract which contained all the original Crosby improvements was divided up among his children including the 200 acre homestead with each child receiving 50 acres of the homestead.<sup>31</sup>

By 1900 George E. Crosby was the only child of Thomas M. Crosby that was still in Brazoria County. Thomas W. Crosby with his family and his Aunt Zelia Buckner had moved to Caldwell County. In 1909 Zelia sold out the northern 500 acre tract to F. A. Brock.<sup>32</sup> George E.

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<sup>29</sup> BCDR: N 470/71 & N 770

<sup>30</sup> BCDR: R 516/17

<sup>31</sup> BCDR: 15 352/54, 16 22/24, 16 24/25 & 16 26/27

<sup>32</sup> BCDR: 85 162/64

Crosby also left the county in 1900 before returning 1903-1904 to spend the rest of his life. The George E. Crosby family in the 1900 Federal Census:

George E. Crosby	44M
Maud Crosby	36F
Thomas M. Crosby	13M
Jessy Crosby	12M
Claud Crosby	10M
Grace Crosby	8F
Walter Crosby	6M
Mabel Crosby	4F
George Crosby	3M

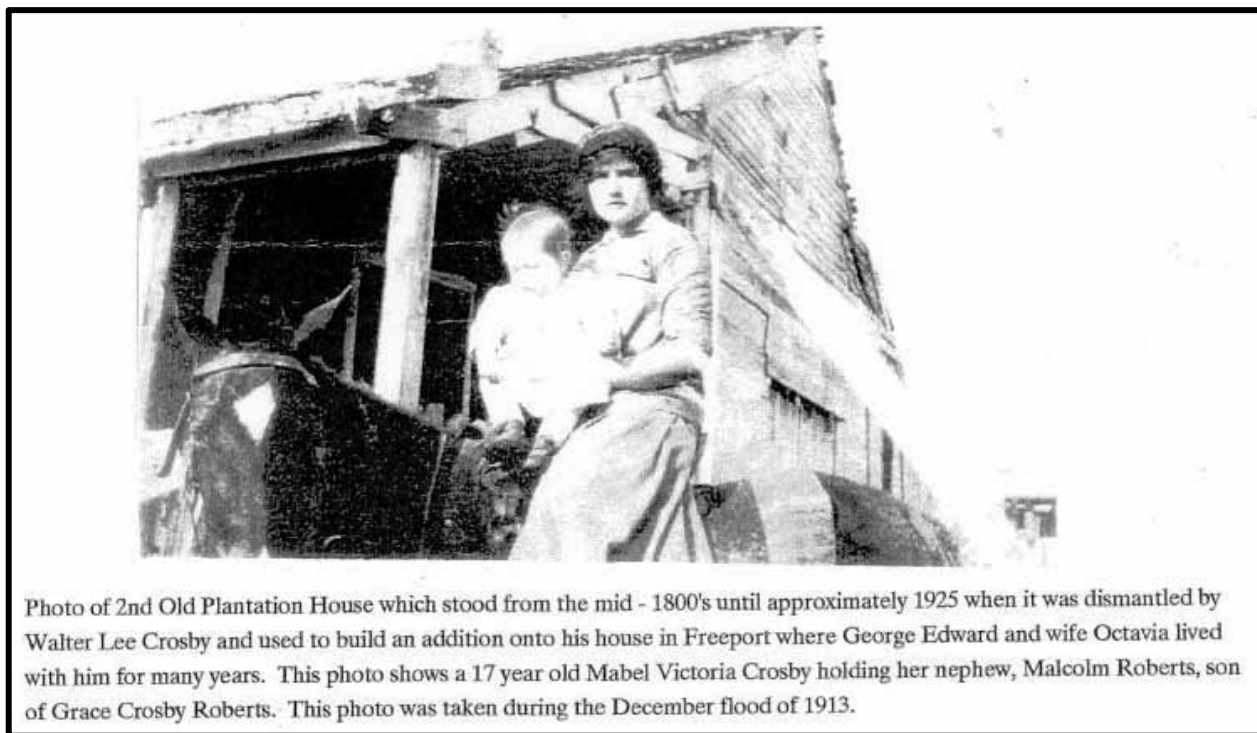
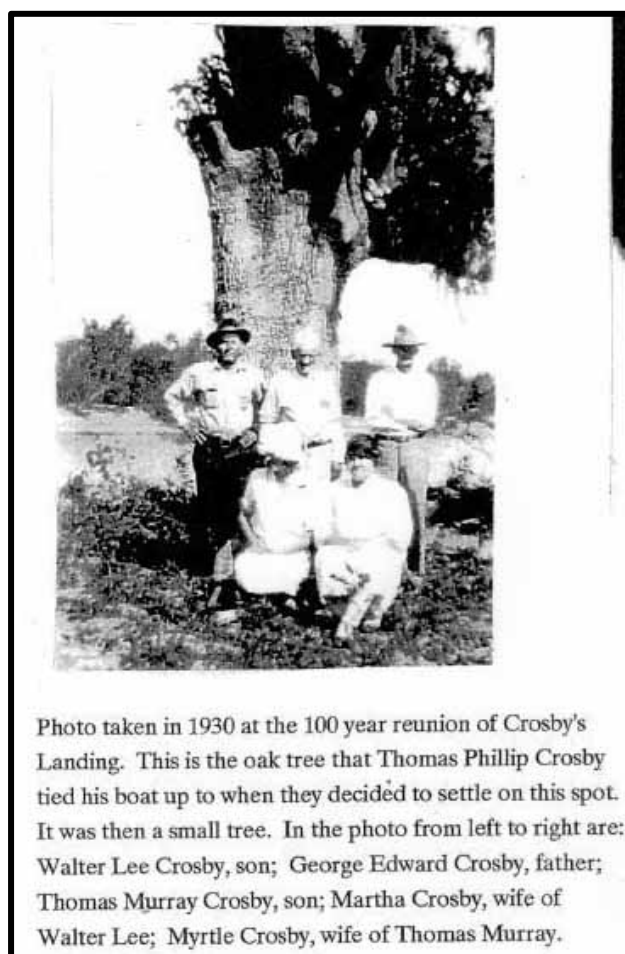
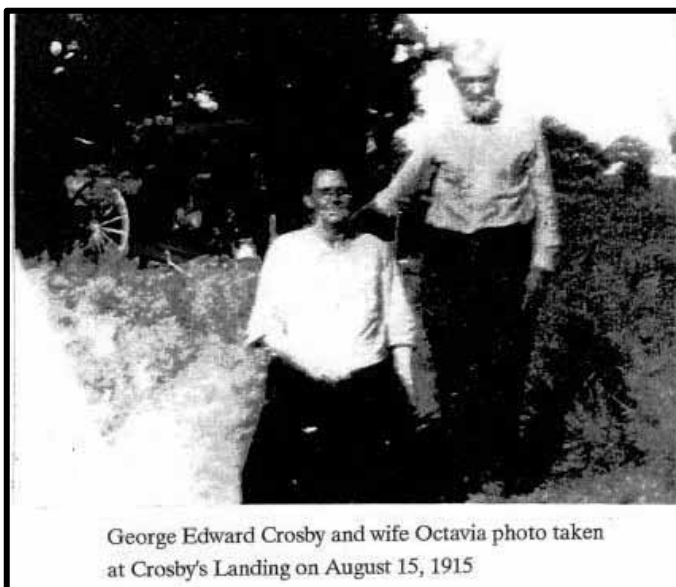


Photo of 2nd Old Plantation House which stood from the mid - 1800's until approximately 1925 when it was dismantled by Walter Lee Crosby and used to build an addition onto his house in Freeport where George Edward and wife Octavia lived with him for many years. This photo shows a 17 year old Mabel Victoria Crosby holding her nephew, Malcolm Roberts, son of Grace Crosby Roberts. This photo was taken during the December flood of 1913.





<sup>33</sup> Pictures from Crosby Family File, Brazoria County Historical Museum, Angleton, Texas

Much of the old Crosby plantation is still owned by heirs of George E. Crosby. The old home is gone and part of the homesite has caved into the Brazos River. None of the site has been surveyed archeologically.



## Appendix A

### Thomas Phillip Crosby Family Genealogy

Thomas Phillip Crosby b. 1808 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

d. August 1860 Crosby's Landing

m. ~1827

Clementina F. Murray b. 1808 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (George Jennings Murray 1766-1822 & Jane Duval Jenkins 1770-1866)

d. 1867 Crosby's Landing

A. Thomas Murray Crosby b. March 25, 1829 Pennsylvania

d. 1889 Brazoria County, Texas

m. January 22, 1853

Victoria McGown Marshall [Wilmuth?] b. 1827 Tennessee- Virginia

d. 1869

1. Walter Crosby b. ~1854

2. George Edward Crosby b. February 16, 1856 d. December 9, 1939  
m. December 31, 1885

Octavia Maude Everton b. June 15, 1865 Indiana d. April 13, 1928

a. Thomas Murray Crosby b. April 13, 1887 d. 1962

b. Jessie Crosby b. 1888

c. Claude Marshall Crosby b. 1890 Killed in horse accident

d. Gracie Evelyn Crosby b. 1892 d. 1976

e. Walter Lee Crosby b. 1894 d. 1965

f. Mabel Victoria Crosby b. April 30, 1896

g. George Samuel Crosby b. 1897 Killed by Lightning

h. Nora Mae Crosby b. 1902-1903 died of whooping cough 6 months

3. William Crosby b. 1857

4. Adelaide R. Crosby b. 1859 d. ~1915 Lockhart, Texas

5. Clementina Victoria Crosby b. September 26, 1864 d. February 25, 1936

6. Thomas Walthall Crosby b. October 10, 1866 d. March 16, 1945

7. Pennie Crosby b. d. died at age 5 or 6

B. George Phillip Crosby b. 1830 d. before 1868

C. Zelia A. E. Crosby b. May 1832

d. ~1916 Luling, Texas

m. December 14, 1865 Brazoria County, Texas

William A. Buckner b. 1835 Virginia d. Oklahoma ?

1. Elizabeth Buckner b. 1867 d. died young

2. William Buckner b. 1869 d. died young

3. ???

D. Samuel McGar Crosby b. 1843 d. ~ 1868 drown Brazos River

E. Charles Henry Crosby b. 1845 d. August 1864

## Appendix B

### Crosby Plantation Deed Records

Mexican Government	Stephen F. Austin	Deed			July	8	1824		7 1/3 Leagues west of the Brazos River
Stephen F. Austin	Hawkins Heirs	Deed							
Edward St. John Hawkins	Thomas P. Crosby	Contract	3	28/29	Dec	5	1836	1000	\$3000 west side of the Brazos river to include the improvements at this time
Mary Jane Davis Joseph T. Hawkins	Thomas P. Crosby	Deed	3	29/30	Dec	24	1840	1000	Bought in 1836 from Edward St. John Hawkins made title
Thomas P. Crosby	John Crosby New Orleans	Bond	B	23	Dec	24	1840	500	\$3000 north 1/2 tract
John Crosby	Edward W. Sanders	Deed	B	137	May	10	1842	500	\$3000 north 1/2 tract sold bond
Thomas P. Crosby	Ammon Underwood	Deed	B	179	Jan	9	1842		\$161.40 Ester aged 35 Female slave-good cook and house servant
Samuel Quarles	Thomas M. Crosby	Agreement	G	292/94	June	4	1854		Foreclosure
Sheriff Auction	Reuben R. Brown	Deed	H	11/12	Dec	2	1856	800	\$30 Suit brought by Brown
Sheriff Auction	Peter MacGreal Clinton Terry	Deed	H	612/13	Oct	5	1858	950	Foreclosure \$250 Suits by Quarles & Purcell deceased
		Decree	176	444/46	Nov	6	1868		Z. E. Buckner upper 500 acres Thomas M. Crosby lower 500 acres
		Decree	176	444/46	Jan	16	1872		950 to C. Terry estate & Clarence MacGreal
	Heirs Thomas P. Crosby	Survey	N	345/46	Nov	19	1872	50	50 acre Homestead-Survey
Clarence W. MacGreal	Eugene J. Wilson	Deed	N	470/71	Feb	21	1873		\$150-1/4 part of the lower 1/2 of 950 acre tract-Crosby Landing Tract
Eugene J. Wilson	George Crosby Z. E. A. Buckner	Deed	N	770	Aug	20	1873		\$150-1/4 part of the lower 1/2 of 950 acre tract-Crosby Landing Tract
Sheriff Auction	J. P. Bryan	Deed	R	516/18	Nay	7	1878		Sale for back taxes Thomas M. Crosby-\$35.16
Sheriff Auction	J. W. Parks	Deed	R	319/20	Sept	3	1878		Lost suit over \$37.20 debt Sold 500 acres less 200 homestead-\$51.91
Thomas W. Crosby	H. Blum	DT	B	89/91	April	18	1888		1/10 of 1000 acre tract \$750
Thomas M. Crosby estate	Thomas W. Crosby	Deed	15	352/54	Feb	6	1892	150	Back end of lower 500 acre tract \$326 owed estate
Thomas W. Crosby	E. N. Krause	DT	4	183/85	Feb	6	1892	150	Back end of lower 500 acre tract \$326 owed estate
Thomas M. Crosby heirs	George E. Crosby	Deed	16	22/24	April	23	1892	150	Between Thomas W. Crosby and 200 homestead on river
	Thomas M. Crosby heirs	Affidavit	16	24/25	April	23	1892	200	
	Thomas M. Crosby heirs	Deed	16	26/27	April	23	1892		Split 200 acre homestead among 4 surviving children
Thomas W. Crosby	J. P. Bryan	Deed	54	145/46	March	8	1899	150	Back end of lower 500 acre tract
Z. E. A. Buckner estate	F. A. Brock	Deed	85	162/64	Feb	12	1909	500	Northern 1/2 of 1000acre tract



Thomas W. Crosby	H. C. Roberts	Deed	126	360/61	Jan	13	1912	50	\$600 his part of 200 acre homestead
George E. Crosby	T. M. Crosby	Deed	321	15/16	Aug	29	1927	12 1/2	
Clementina Burnam	T. M. Crosby		221	1/2	Feb	17	1930	50	Her tract
George E. Crosby	Grace Roberts	Deed	238	434/35	Dec	15	1931	12 1/2	Grace Roberts
George E. Crosby	Mabel Hanson	Deed	238	627/28	Dec	15	1931	12 1/2	Mabel Hanson
George E. Crosby	W. L. Crosby	Deed	254	470	Dec	15	1931	12 1/2	W. L. Crosby
George E. Crosby		Affidavit	266	457/58					
George E. Crosby		Affidavit	266	458/59					

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    "Schedule 2—Slave Inhabitants in the County of Brazoria, Texas"

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1860   The State of Texas, Brazoria County

    "Schedule 2—Slave Inhabitants in the County of Brazoria, Texas"

Federal Population Schedule, Ninth Census of the United States.

1870

Federal Population Schedule, Tenth Census of the United States.

1880

Federal Population Schedule, Twelfth Census of the United States.

1900

Federal Population Schedule, Thirteenth Census of the United States.

1910

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1920

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