

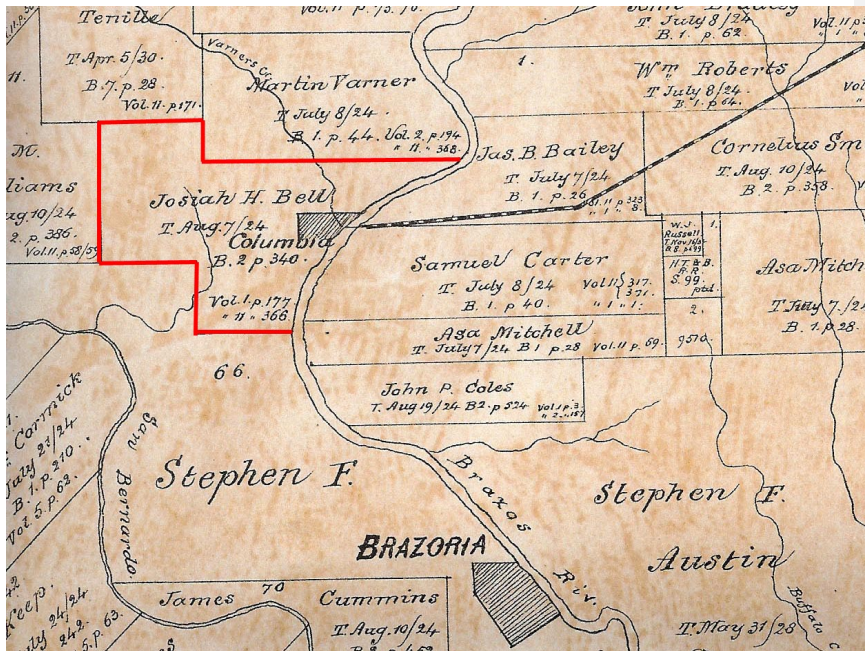
George Washington Duff Home Site
Brazosport Archaeological Society

The George Washington Duff home site is located on the west side of the Brazos River on the east side of Varner Creek adjacent to East Columbia. George W. Duff had arrived in Texas in 1852 at a young age. In 1858 he married Martha A. Culpepper, a cousin of the John Henry Dance family which arrived in Texas in 1853. After serving in the Civil War he purchased 5 acres across Varner Creek from East Columbia. Duff and his wife would raise their family at this home while he continued to pursue the lawyer profession. The tract of land would be added to over the years but remained in control of the Duff family until it was given to the Cradle of Texas Conservancy in 1986. Only an underground cistern marks the home site amid a wooded area along Varner Creek.



Josiah H. Bell received 1½ leagues of land from the Mexican Government located on the west side of the Brazos River along Varner Creek on August 7, 1824.¹ He moved to what was to become Brazoria County in January 1824 and made camp along Bell's Creek approximately two miles from its entrance into the San Bernard River. By the end of 1824 he established Bell's

Landing near the confluence of Varner Creek with the Brazos River. The Brazos River was completely navigable to this point and proved to be a good location for commercial trade. Though most of the old settlers of the area preferred the name “Bell’s Landing”, Squire Bell named the area located along the Brazos “Marion” (later East Columbia).



Josiah H. Bell 1 1/2 League Map 1879 The General Land Office of the State of Texas

Later at the end of a two mile lane from Bell’s Landing to the prairie Josiah H. Bell laid out the town of Columbia, twenty square blocks eight lots to the block. Walter C. White and James Knight, local merchants under the style Walter C. White & Company, established their business in Columbia at an early date. Bell sold many of the town lots to Walter C. White.²

Josiah H. Bell sold 370 acres to Morgan, Claiborn, and Pendleton Rector in December 1836.³ This land was to the east of Varner Creek and bounded by the Brazos River. In 1844 the Rector brothers sold 45 acres on the lower part of Varner Creek to John Adriance.⁴ John Adriance, a long time business man and resident of East Columbia, sold George O. Jarvis half interest in several of his properties, including the 45 acres tract, February 1858.⁵

After arriving in Texas in 1852 at only 13 years of age not much is known of George W. Duff or who he studied law under. On June 24, 1858 George W. Duff and Martha (Mattie) A. E. Culpepper were married by B.D. Dashiell in what may have been a double ceremony as John A. Dance and Columbia Slade were wed by Dashiell the same day. The new Mrs. Duff was a cousin of John A. Dance and had arrived in Texas in 1853 with the John Henry Dance family and her Aunt Nancy Henry Culpepper when they established the Dance’s plantation west of Columbia.⁶



Early Plat Map of East Columbia with no lots laid out east of Varner Creek⁷

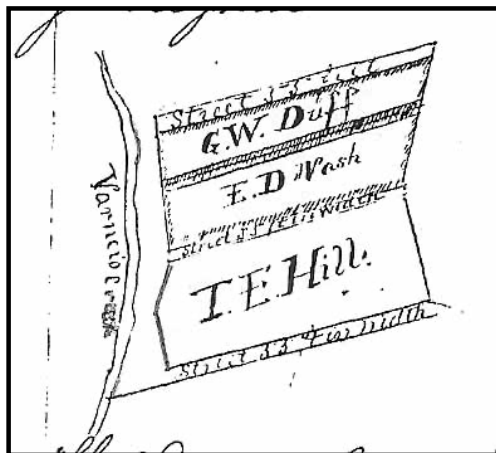
The Dance brothers would open a machine shop on Front Street in East Columbia and build a home across Main Street from their shop. In the 1860 Census the Duff's are listed as part of the household of John H. Dance, Jr, with George W. Duff listed as a lawyer:

J. H. Dance (Millwright)	35M	North Carolina
G. P. Dance	28M	North Carolina
D. E. Dance	26M	North Carolina
I. C. Dance	24M	Alabama
George W. Duff (Lawyer)	21M	Alabama

Martha Duff	18F	Alabama
J. F. Duff	10/12M	Texas
T. F. Mathews (Laborer)	22 M	Mississippi
B. C. Jefferies (Mason)	28M	Virginia

During the Civil War George W. Duff was mustered into service October 5, 1861 in Columbia as a 2nd Lt. in the "Columbia Blues", Company A, Brown's Regiment of Calvary assigned to guard the Texas coast first stationed at Quintana at the mouth of the Brazos River.⁸ Duff served all four years of the war. The Dance brothers put their skills and machine shop into service turning out the highly prized "Dance revolver" for the Confederacy. (Letters of correspondence during the Civil War between Mattie and George Duff are at the Confederate Research Center, Hill Junior College, Hillsboro, Texas).

After the Civil War several tracts on the east side of Varner Creek were purchased from John Adriance and George O. Jarvis by different individuals. George W. Duff purchased a five acre lot in April 1867 for \$611.45.⁹ There was nothing in the deed record indicating any improvements were on the property.



The 1870 the Federal Census lists the George W. Duff household:

George Duff	31M	Lawyer	Alabama
Mattie Duff	29 F	Keeps House	Alabama
Joseph F. Duff	11 M	At School	Texas
Laura Duff	5 F		Texas
Clara Duff	1 F		Texas
Bettie Jones	60F	Dom. Servant	Georgia

Ten years later April 1877 John Adriance sold to George W. Duff a 2 ½ acre lot for \$150 adjacent to the lot "now occupied by said Duff".¹⁰ F. J. Duff purchased an additional 2 ½ acre lot

Commented [SDP1]: James Smith communication: James says Joseph F. Duff in the 1860 Census is Frederick J. Duff in the 1880 Census.

adjacent to their original two lots April 1885 for \$35.00.¹¹ Again there is no indication of any improvements on either 2 ½ acre lot.

George W. and Mattie Duff would have eight children though all would not reach maturity. Several of their children married and raised families in the Columbia area (See Appendix A). The old West Columbia Cemetery holds the remains of many of the Duff family (See Appendix C).

The 1880 Federal Census Lists:

George W. Duff (Lawyer)	41M	Alabama
Mattie C. Duff (Keeps House)	39 F wife	Alabama
F. J. Duff (Clerk)	21M son	Texas
Clara D. Duff	11 F dau	Texas
H. D. Duff	84 F mother	Tennessee
Harry M. Duff	9 M son	Texas
Robert C. Duff	7 M son	Texas
Edward B. Duff	2 M son	Texas
W. R. Nash (Stockraiser)	19 M	Texas
Sallie Adriance	28 F	New York

With the Highway 35 and bridge construction across the Brazos River the original 5 acre lot was reduced in size to an acre more or less. In 1986 all 3 tracts were given to the Cradle of Texas Conservancy (See Appendix B).

An underground cistern is all the structural remains left visible from the George W. Duff home.



Underground Brick Cistern May 2009 Photo J. L. Smith
Christian Kneupper (Brazosport Archaeological Society), Darrell Schwebel (Cradle of Texas Conservancy), and Jeff Durst (State Archeologist South Texas Region)

Appendix A Duff Family Genealogy

- George Washington Duff b. February 2, 1830, Selma, Alabama
 (Abram Duff b. April 4, 1790 d. June 1, 1852 & Hannah Drew McConnico b. November 9, 1796 d. July 22, 1884)
 d. May 06, 1890, Brazoria County, Texas
 m. June 24, 1858 Brazoria County, Texas
- Martha A. Culpepper b. February 24, 1841 Greene County, Alabama
 (John Culpepper, Jr. b. March 1811 d. August 4, 1852 & Lourian A. E. Dance b. 1816 d. 1842)
 d. June 15, 1927
1. Fredrick Joseph Duff b. August 6, 1859 East Columbia, Texas
 d. August 19, 1932
 m.
 Clinton Terry b. May 9, 1862
 d. November 12, 1957
 A. Clinton F. Duff b. December 1885
 B. George W. Duff b. December 1889
 2. John Culpepper Duff b. April 26, 1861 East Columbia, Texas
 d. August 24, 1868
 3. Eddie Duff b. September 1, 1862
 d. September 14, 1862
 4. Clara Duff b. January 10, 1869 East Columbia, Texas
 d. October 5, 1930
 m.
 1st Tom Masterson
 2nd William Alvey b. September 12, 1864
 d. March 18, 1936
 5. Laura Hannah Duff b. November 11, 1865(Listed in 1870 Census) East Columbia, Texas
 d. November 11, 1877
 6. Harrison McConnico Duff b. January 3, 1871 East Columbia, Texas
 d. October 12, 1941
 m. 1st
 m. 2nd
 7. Robert Crews Duff b. February 5, 1873 East Columbia, Texas
 d. December 13, 1942
 m. 1894
 Geraldine Black b. November 17, 1875
 d. February 14, 1947
 A. Martha Duff
 B. Edith Duff
 8. James Edward Duff b. January 7, 1878 East Columbia, Texas
 d. July 24, 1957
 m.
 Kate Williamson b. April 4, 1878
 d. March 11, 1964

Appendix B
Duff Property Deed Record

GRANTORS	GRANTEES	Kind of Instrument	Book	Page	Month	Day	Year	Description
Mexican Government	Josiah H. Bell	Deed	ST	159/62	Aug	7	1824	1 ¼ Leagues west of the Brazos River on Varner Creek
Josiah H. Bell	Morgan, Claiborn, Pendleton Rector	Deed	C	6/7	Dec	1	1836	370 acres on the east side of Varner Creek along the Brazos River
Morgan, Claiborn, Pendleton Rector	John Adriance	Deed	D	71/72	Nov	6	1844	\$1000 bought 45 acres along Varner Creek just above 10 acres Adriance had already purchased
John & Lydia Adriance	George O. Jarvis	Deed	H	384/86	Feb	15	1858	\$3600 ½ interest in several tracts owned by Adriance
George O. Jarvis	George W. Duff	Deed	L	52/53	April	20	1867	\$611.45 5 acre tract on east side of Varner Creek
John Adriance	George W. Duff	Deed	Q	42/43	April	13	1877	\$150 2 ½ acres just below the 5 acre tract that Duff resides on
John Adriance	John McDonald	Deed	N	441/42	Nov	20	1872	\$150 2 ½ acre tract east of Varner Creek just above 10 acre tract of Adriance
John McDonald Estate	Henry E. Vernor	Deed	X	374/76	April	6	1885	\$35 2 ½ acre tract
Henry E. Vernor	Frederick J. Duff	Deed	X	376/77	April	9	1885	\$35 2 ½ acre tract on Varner Creek just below the two tracts already owned by the Duff family
Duff Heirs	Cradle of Texas Conservancy, Inc.	Deed	278	972	Jan	27	1986	1 acre more or less out of 5 acre tract with HW 35 cutting through the property
Duff Heirs	Cradle of Texas Conservancy, Inc.	Deed	279	17	Jan	21	1986	Both 2 ½ acre tracts also impacted by HW 35

Appendix C
George W. Duff, his mother, his wife, and all his children
are buried in the old West Columbia Cemetery



George W. Duff

This was a man without fear and
without reproach, a lawyer who won
honor but not wealth; a citizen who
loved his country, but not officer, a
soldier who served four years in arms
for duty and preferment.

This much of him justice requires
his own wishes would forbid more.

¹ Brazoria County Deed Records: Spanish Translation 159/62 County Clerk's Office, Angleton, Texas

² BCDR: C 67/70

³ BCDR: C 6/7

⁴ BCDR: D 71/72

⁵ BCDR: H 384/86

⁶ Wiggins, Gary, *Dance & Brothers Texas Gunmakers of the Confederacy*, Moss Publications, Orange, Virginia, 1986, p.8

⁷ Plat map from Brazoria County Historical Museum "Columbia File", Angleton, Texas

⁸ *Democrat and Planter*, October 22, 1861, p. 1 col. 3.

⁹ BCDR: L 52/53

¹⁰ BCDR: Q 42/43

¹¹ BCDR: X 376/77