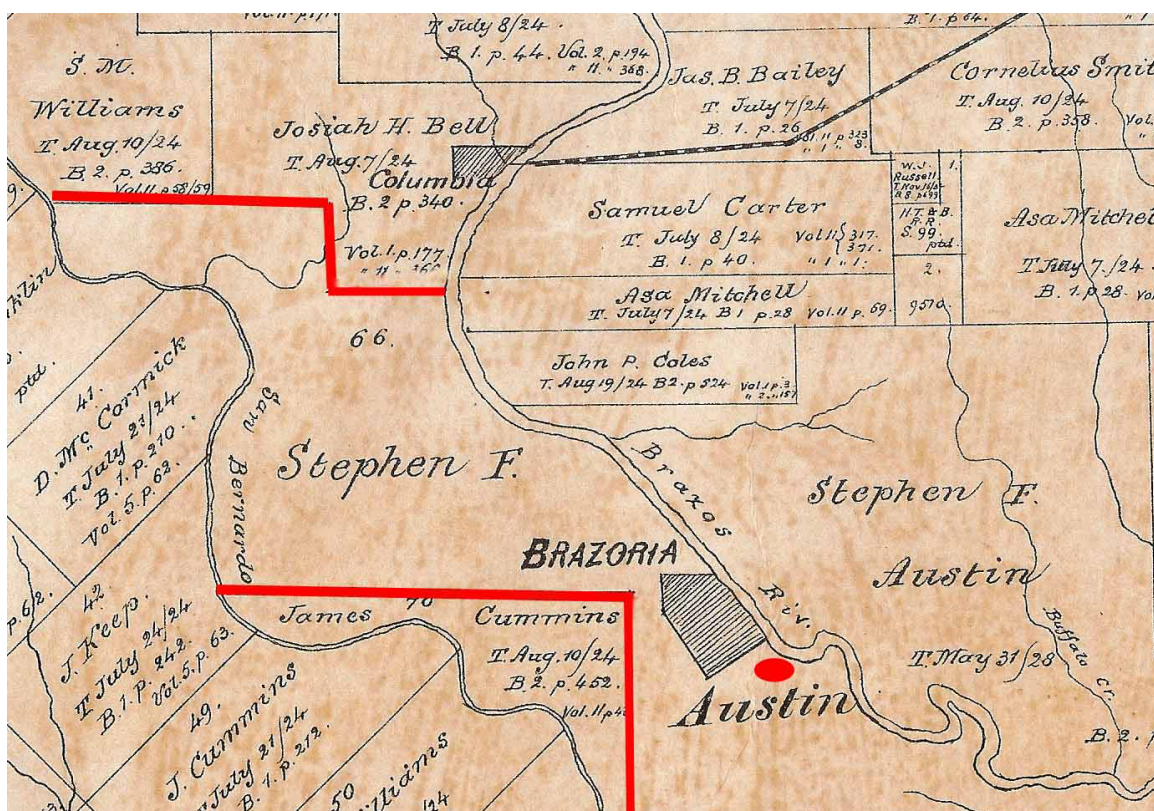


Thomas Gilbert Masterson-Thomas Washington Masterson Eureka Plantation
Brazosport Archeological Society



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

Thomas G. Masterson was born in Knoxville, Tennessee December 16, 1812. His father Thomas Masterson had died shortly before his birth. His father's death left his wife Sarah Gray Washington, who was pregnant at the time, and their son William Washington Masterson. Thomas G. Masterson graduated from law school in Nashville, Tennessee. In 1832 he moved to Texas become a merchant for a short time before returning to Tennessee. On July 3, 1834 Thomas G. Masterson married Christiana Irby Roane in Nashville, Tennessee.

Thomas G. Masterson moved his family to the port of Velasco on the east side of the mouth of the Brazos River. There he went into the mercantile business with Edwin Waller under the style of Waller & Company by 1837-1838. By 1839 Waller had a home in the new state capital, Austin. Masterson borrowed money from his mother-in-law Ann C. Roane to purchase a small plantation on Oyster Creek owned by Edwin Waller. Unable to make his payments the property was foreclosed on and bought by Roane in late 1840. Waller had been residing on the

property.¹ Masterson had purchased another 200 acres on Oyster Creek from Elisha Maxey in early 1840.²

Sarah Groce Wharton of Eagle Island plantation lost her husband William H. Wharton in a tragic accident in 1839. Thomas G. Masterson signed a lease to operate the Eagle Island plantation for 1840 and 1841 for \$3500 per year, Included in contract Masterson was also to pay the taxes for 1840 and 1841. He would be permitted to sell the crops for these two years.³ The family may have moved to the Eagle Island property for these years.

The Masterson family later moved to the building that was once the American Hotel in Velasco courtesy of Ann C. Roane. The first transaction for this property took place August 18, 1838, but the tavern was built earlier based on receipts from the tavern. Velasco Association president Thomas J. Green sold Lots 3, 4, 5, and 6 to Jeremiah Brown and I. C. Hoskins for the token price of \$180.⁴ Brown, Captain of the *Invincible* during the Texas Revolution, died shortly afterward, and his widow, Rebecca Brown, gave her power of attorney to Hoskins when she went to the United States in December 1842. Three years later in July 1845, Hoskins sold the property with house to Ann C. Roane, the mother of Thomas G. Masterson's wife Christiana for \$1000.⁵ The property was adjacent to the half lot on which Masterson and Waller had a storehouse. Masterson owned many lots in the town site of Velasco at that time.

Thomas G. Masterson held five separate mail contracts from March 1844 to April 1845, totaling 608 miles.⁶ The family was still living in Velasco in 1850. The 1850 Federal Census lists the Masterson and Roane families in two separate dwellings in Velasco:

Thomas G. Masterson	Mail Contractor	37M	Tennessee
Christiana I. Masterson		31F	Tennessee
William Masterson		15M	Tennessee
James R. Masterson		12M	Tennessee
Thomas W. Masterson		9M	Texas
Ann T. Masterson		7F	Texas
Archibald Masterson		5M	Texas
Branch T. Masterson		3M	Texas
Laura R. Masterson		7/12F	Texas
Ann C. [Contesse]Roane		60F	Virginia
Laura V.[Virginia] Roane		21F	Tennessee ⁷
Samuel Harris		40M	Virginia

¹ Brazoria County Deed Records: A 421/22

² BCDR: B 15/16

³ Brazoria County Deed Records: A 319/20

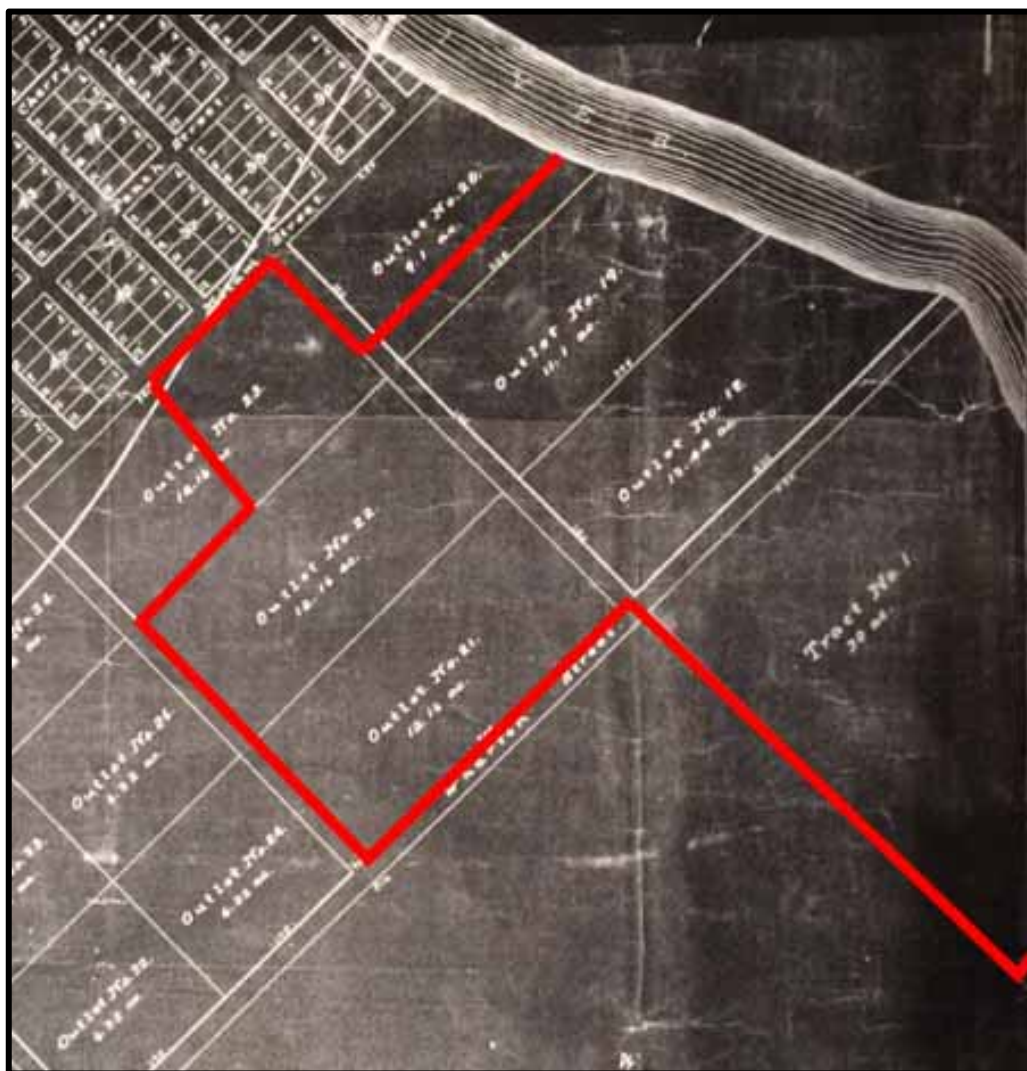
⁴ BCDR: C 222

⁵ BCDR: D237/38

⁶ *Handbook of Texas Online*, Diana J. Kleiner, "Masterson, Thomas G.," accessed March 29, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fma72>

⁷ Sister of Christiana Masterson born July 27, 1827 died March 31, 1886 unmarried.

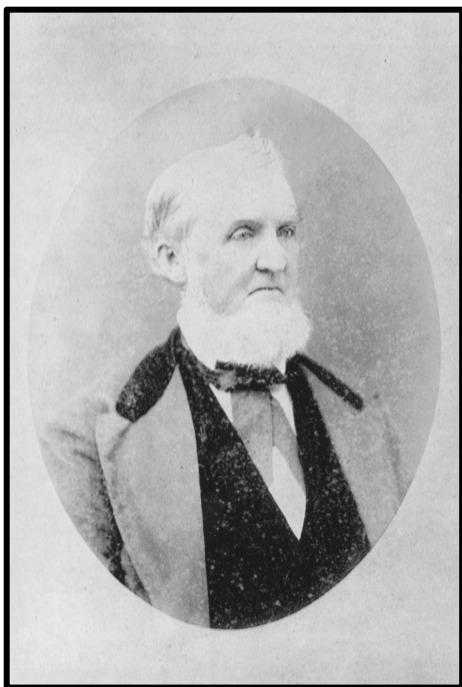
In December 1853, the property and “dwelling in possession of T. G. Masterson” was sold by Ms. Roane to Richard T. Archer of Mississippi, apparently another relative, for \$800.⁸ Thomas G. Masterson had become the Deputy Brazoria County Clerk the same year. The family would move to property just below the town of Brazoria on the west bank of the Brazos River. Tax records for 1854 indicate that Masterson owned 87 acres out of the Stephen F. Austin 7 1/3 league tract. The original deed record was not located but it may have been sold to him by the Hawkins heirs, E. M. Pease, or the Terry family. A large two story home was built on the bank of the west Brazos River.



Plat Map Down River from the Town of Brazoria

⁸ BCDR: F 626

Thomas G. Masterson would again take up the law profession. He also served as county clerk and chief justice as their family continued to grow.



Thomas G. and Christiana I. Masterson in Later Life

The Thomas G. Masterson family from the 1860 Federal Census:

Thomas G. Masterson	Lawyer	46M	Tennessee
Christiana Masterson		40F	Tennessee
Terese Masterson		17F	Texas
Archibald Masterson		15M	Texas
Branch T. Masterson		13M	Texas
Jennett Masterson		7F	Texas
S. H. Masterson		4M	Texas
Child		6/12F	Texas
Nancy Roane		60F	Virginia
Laura Roane		30F	Tennessee



Thomas G. Masterson Homestead Unknown Date
 Courtesy Brazoria Historical Museum, Brazoria Texas

Thomas G. Masterson became an enrolling officer with the Confederate Army during the Civil War. Four of his sons also joined the Confederate cause. William Masterson, the oldest son, joined the Twenty-second Texas Infantry and was appointed Adjutant by Col. Hubbard. Later he was made Lieutenant, and on the battlefield at Mansfield, Louisiana was promoted to the rank of Captain. He lost his left arm in the battle and was wounded in the side by a ball which caused him considerable pain until it was removed by surgery twenty years later.



James R. Masterson enlisted as a private in Company B 20th Texas Infantry and later became Judge Advocate in the Confederate service. Returning from the service he moved to Harris County where later became a judge.



James R. Masterson

"Wash" Masterson enrolled at Camp Clark, Texas July 11, 1861 as "5th Sgt" in Co. B, 4th Regiment Texas Infantry, later becoming part of John B. Hood's Texas Brigade. Present at the Battle of Gaines Mill on June 27, 1862 Masterson was promoted to 2nd Lt. Wounded in early 1864 he was back in Texas most of that year. He resigned October 26, 1864. Recovering his health January 27, 1865 he was detailed to light duty and March 31, 1861 he was Capt. & A. A. G. to General John A. Wharton. Archibald R. Masterson was seventeen when he joined Hood's Brigade. He was wounded at Gettysburg and two other battles and according to the family was present at the surrender of Robert E. Lee.



Archibald Roane Masterson

Branch T. Masterson was on his way to the army when the war closed.⁹



Branch Tanner Masterson

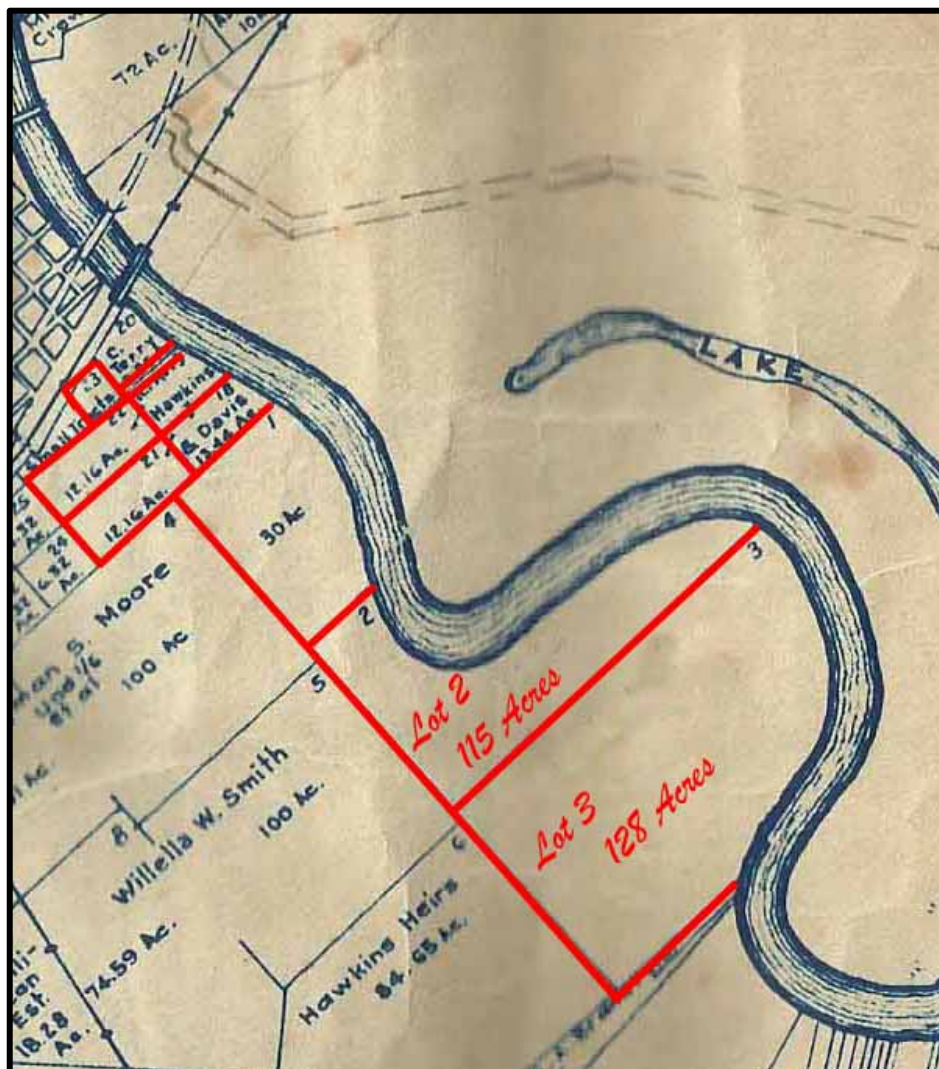
Their sisters Ann Terese Masterson died in 1862 and Eloise Masterson in 1863 with both being buried in the family cemetery near the home.

During the war Thomas G. Masterson bought Lots 2 & 3 amounting to 243 acres just down river from his homestead.¹⁰ In 1869 Thomas and Christiana sold these two lots to Thomas W. Masterson for \$2500.¹¹

⁹ Masterson Family File 20, Brazoria County Historical Museum, Angleton, Texas

¹⁰ BCDR: K 290/91

¹¹ BCDR: L 568/69



1941 Plat Map Modified with Lots 2 & 3

“Wash” Masterson who had married Annie Chalmers in 1865 was interested more in agricultural pursuits than his brothers. He built a sugar mill on this property and raised sugar cane as part of his cash crop naming it the Eureka plantation.

Thomas G. Masterson had built a building near his home which was his office but also used as a law school. Four of his sons would later become lawyers and judges. Some sources say that Christiana Masterson was the actual one that schooled the boys in law.

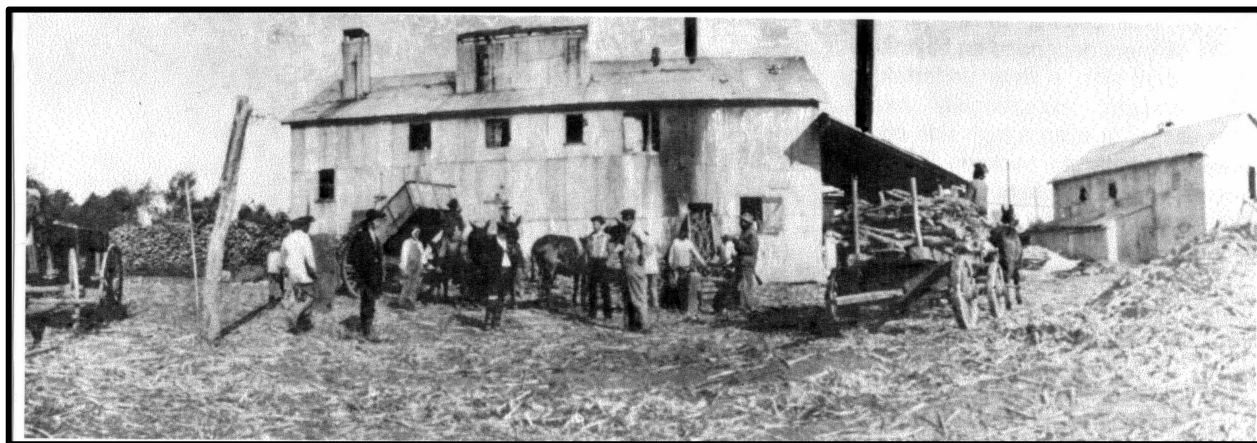


Thomas G. Masterson Office Unknown Date
 Courtesy Brazoria Historical Museum, Brazoria Texas

Thomas W. Masterson went to work cultivating corn and sugar cane on his acreage while living at the homestead. The 1870 Federal Census lists the Masterson families:

Thomas G. Masterson	Lawyer	56M	Tennessee
Christiana Masterson		51F	Tennessee
Nellie Masterson		17F	Texas
Harry Masterson		13M	Texas
Thomas W. Masterson	Farmer	30M	Texas
Annie Masterson		25F	Texas
Mary Masterson		3F	Texas
Thomas Masterson		9/12M	Texas
Ann Roane		76F	Virginia
Laura Roane		40F	Tennessee
Phebe Parker	Domestic Servant	50F	Kentucky
Nelson Parker	Domestic Servant	11M	Texas
Jennette Parker		9F	Texas
Willie Jack	Domestic Servant	10M	Texas
Claiborne Jack	Domestic Servant	14M	Texas

Being in the position to know which lands were being foreclosed on or part of probate sales Thomas G. Masterson and several of his sons started to purchase various tracts and lots of land. On Oyster Creek west of Rosharon they bought a tract of land which became a working sugar and cotton plantation. They did not live on this property but William Masterson supervised its operation. A station on the Columbia Tap named Masterson grew up in this area.¹²



Masterson Mill Courtesy Brazoria County Historical Museum

In 1877 “Wash” Masterson died. Annie Masterson and her children remained on the plantation with her father-in-law. Annie leased the farm land to R. G. Earnest for eight years starting January 1, 1878. This contract was canceled January 1879 by mutual consent.¹³ For the year 1880 “John Lang, Eureka plantation made 150 hogsheads of sugar, 300 barrels of sirup and 150 bales of cotton.”¹⁴

The 1880 Federal Census lists the Masterson families in two separate households:

Thomas G. Masterson	Lawyer	67M	Tennessee
Christiana Masterson		62F	Tennessee
Harris Masterson	Lawyer	24M	Texas
Annie T. Masterson		34F	Texas
Mary G. Masterson		15F	Texas
Thomas G. Masterson		10M	Texas
William Masterson		8M	Texas
Leigh C. Masterson		7F	Texas

¹² Creighton, James A., *A Narrative History of Brazoria County*, Texian Press, Waco, Texas, 1975, p. 486.

¹³ BCDR: Q 398/400 & R 479/80

¹⁴ *The Galveston Daily News*, February 12, 1881, Galveston, Texas

The 1882 crop was described in a local newspaper: “Eureka plantation, just below Brazoria, is owned by Mrs. Annie and B. T. Masterson, and managed by Mr. Bynum Turner. We found a magnificent crop of ninety acres of plant cane and no stubble.”¹⁵



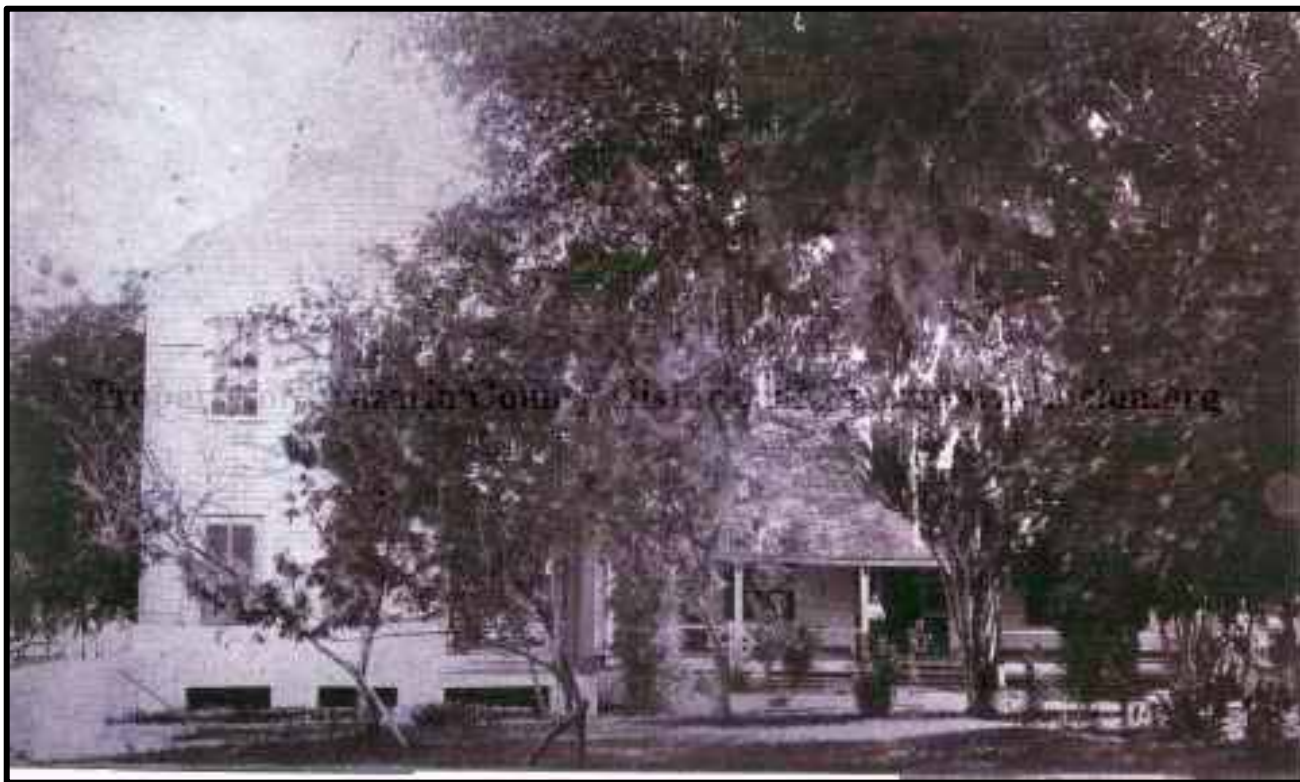
Unknown Date (Possible children of “Wash” and Annie Masterson)
Courtesy of Brazoria Historical Museum

Thomas G. Masterson died in 1882 and Christiana in 1899. In 1900 Annie T. Masterson was still at the home:

Annie T. Masterson	Farmer	55M	Texas
Mary G. Masterson		33F	Texas
R. C. Gaines	Boarder	38M	Mississippi
Ellen Brooks	Servant	90F	Louisiana
Jane Wells	Servant	57F	Louisiana

The home later burned down and by 1910 Annie Masterson was living in Houston, Texas as were most of the Masterson brothers except for Branch T. Masterson in Galveston.

¹⁵ *The Galveston Daily News*, October 3, 1882, Galveston, Texas



Masterson Home Unknown Date Courtesy of the Brazoria County Historical Museum

The heirs turned over the property to the Magnolia Petroleum Company [Texaco] well after the turn of the century. Those family members buried in the homestead graveyard on the homestead were removed to the Glenwood Cemetery in Houston, Texas. The company sold the acreage which included the homestead and the Eureka plantation to George G. Badge in 1941.¹⁶

In 1946 C. A. and Dixie S. Vollbaum purchased the property.¹⁷ Although portions of the property have been sold off over the years Glenn Vollbaum currently still owns that part of the homestead on which the old Masterson house sat. The remains of an old iron fence half buried in silt from the Brazos River still marks the location of the family cemetery. The remains of the infant Laura R. Masterson could possibly still be there. Scattered bricks can be seen just under the surface but the location has not been surveyed archeologically.

¹⁶ BCDR: 364 197/98

¹⁷ BCDR: 411 271/72

Appendix A
Thomas Gilbert Masterson Family

Thomas Gilbert Masterson b. December 16, 1812 Knoxville, Tennessee (Thomas Masterson & Sarah Gray Washington)

d. May 18, 1882 Brazoria, Texas

m. July 3, 1834 Nashville, Tennessee

Christiana Irby Roane b. January 10, 1818 Knox County, Tennessee (James Roane & Anne Contesse Irby)

d. November 24, 1899 Brazoria County, Texas

A. William Masterson b. May 22, 1835 Tennessee

d. May 4, 1906

B. James Roane Masterson, Sr. b. April 15, 1837 Lebanon, Tennessee

d. July 12, 1913 Houston, Texas

(Run Over By Car in Houston)

m. January 19, 1865 Galveston, Texas

Sarah Wood b. February 3, 1845

d. December 21, 1890

C. Thomas Washington "Wash" Masterson b. June 1839 Tennessee

d. August 3, 1877

m. December 19, 1865 Houston, Texas

Annie Thomas Chalmers b. July 14, 1844 LaGrange, Texas

d. December 7, 1914 Harris County, Texas

1. Mary Green Masterson b. November 5, 1866 d. January 2, 1946

2. Thomas G. Masterson b. September 23, 1869 d. June 6, 1901

3. William Masterson b. 1871

4. Leigh Chalmers Masterson b. May 4, 1873 d. May 7, 1940

D. Ann Terese Masterson b. October 6, 1841 Brazoria County, Texas

d. October 15, 1862

E. Archibald Roane Masterson b. January 10, 1845 Velasco, Texas

d. December 9, 1913 Houston, Texas

m. March 1, 1871 Houston, Texas

Katherine Ewing b. June 1847 Harris County, Texas

d. January 6, 1941 Harris County, Texas

F. Branch Tanner Masterson, Sr. b. March 20, 1848 Brazoria County, Texas

d. August 16, 1920 Denver, Colorado

m. Texas

Annie Wilmer Dallam b. 1847 d. September 8, 1900 Galveston Storm

G. Laura R. Masterson b. 1850 Brazoria County, Texas

H. Jeanette Love “Nettie” Masterson b. May 1, 1853 Brazoria County, Texas
d. June 27, 1918 Texas

m. November 13, 1875

Travis Logan Smith d. September 27, 1927 San Antonio, Texas

I.S. Harris Masterson b. June 30, 1856 Brazoria County, Texas

d. July 29, 1920 Houston, Texas

m. 1st June 6, 1880 Brazoria County, Texas

Sallie Stewart Turner b. June 29, 1860

d. January 14, 1894

m. 2nd

Mrs. Louise Jane Birdsall Sharp b. September 21, 1871

d. May 6, 1956

J. Eloise Masterson b. January 10, 1860 Brazoria County, Texas

d. June 1, 1863

Appendix B
Thomas G. Masterson Plantation Deed Records

GRANTORS	GRANTEES	Kind of Instrument	Book	Page	Month	Day	Year	Acres	Description
Mexican Government	Stephen F. Austin	Deed	B	608	May	31	1828		Stephen F. Austin 7 1/3 League Tract
Hawkins Estate	William Lusk Robert E. Handy	Deed	A	32	June	24	1836		\$150 Lot 20
Joseph E. Wilson	Robert J. Townes	Deed	B	140	June	6	1842		Lot 2, 5, 8 Brazoria
Mary H. Cowan	James B. Cowan	Deed	D	4/45	Jan	5	1846		\$250 Her interest in her husband John B. Cowan's estate
Guy M. Bryan	E. W. Gregory	Deed	E	85/86	Nov	27	1848		\$3000 debt Lot 2, 5, 8
Elliot W. Gregory New Orleans	James B. Cowan	Deed	F	77/78	March	6	1851	115	\$790 Lot 2
E. M. Pease	T. G. Masterson							87	Part of Lot 20
Robert J. Townes	T. G. Masterson Ben C. Jones	Release	G	44	July	1	1854		\$1500 Office of R. J. Townes
Robert J. Townes	T. G. Masterson Ben C. Jones	Mortgage	G	45	July	1	1854		Townes Lot
Clinton Terry	James H. Bell	Mortgage	G	535/36	March	10	1856		Lot 20 \$466.59 note
Thomas G. Masterson	Churchill B. Jones	Deed	G	762/63	Nov	12	1856		\$1000 Townes Lot in Brazoria
John Wales	James B. Cowan	Deed	G	764/65	Nov	8	1856	128	\$1000
John B. Cowan Estate	John Smelser	Deed	K	102/03	Feb	2	1861	243	Lot 2 & 3
John Smelser	Thomas G. Masterson	Deed	K	290/91	Oct	6	1862	243	Lot 2 & 3 Branch T. Masterson 1/3 owner
Thomas G. Christiana R. Masterson	Thomas W. Masterson	Deed	L	568/69	Aug		1869	243	\$2500 Tracts 2 & 3 the old Cowan place
Thomas W. Masterson	Branch T. Masterson	Deed						243	1/3 interest
Annie T. Masterson Branch T. Masterson	R. G. Earnest	Contract	Q	398/400	Oct	18	1877	250	8Yr lease starting Jan 1, 1878 1/4 of all crops to the owners
R. G. Earnest	Branch T. Masterson	Mortgage	R	119/20					
Annie Masterson Branch Masterson	R. G. Earnest	Release	R	479/80	Jan	6	1879		Cancel lease mutual consent
Terry Heirs	Thomas G. Masterson	Deed	T	223/24	June	15	1881		2/3 of Lot 20 next to Masterson residence
Magnolia Petroleum Co.	George G. Badge	Deed	364	197/98	Aug	22	1941	306.6	Eureka Plantation + Homestead
George G. Marjorie Badge	C. A. Dixie S. Vollbaum	Deed	411	271/72	Aug	28	1946	306.6	\$5000
George G. Marjorie Badge	C. A. Dixie S. Vollbaum	DT	V	432/35	Aug	28	1946	306.6	
	Glenn Vollbaum								

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

UNPUBLISHED PAPERS

Brazoria County Historical Museum Library, Angleton, Texas

Masterson Family File

Brazoria Historical Museum, Brazoria, Texas

Photograph Collection

NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

The Galveston Daily News, Galveston, Texas

The Houston Post, Houston, Texas

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

Deed and Probate Records Brazoria County, County Clerk's Office, Angleton, Texas

Brazoria County Tax Records on microfilm Brazoria County Historical Museum, Angleton, Texas

Federal Population Schedule, Seventh Census of the United States.

1850 The State of Texas, Brazoria County

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

Federal Population Schedule, Eighth Census of the United States.

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

Federal Population Schedule, Fourteenth Census of the United States.

1920

Secondary Sources

BOOKS, ESSAYS, THESES, AND DISSERTATIONS

Creighton, James A., *A Narrative History of Brazoria County*, Texian Press, Waco, Texas, 1975

The Handbook of Texas Online