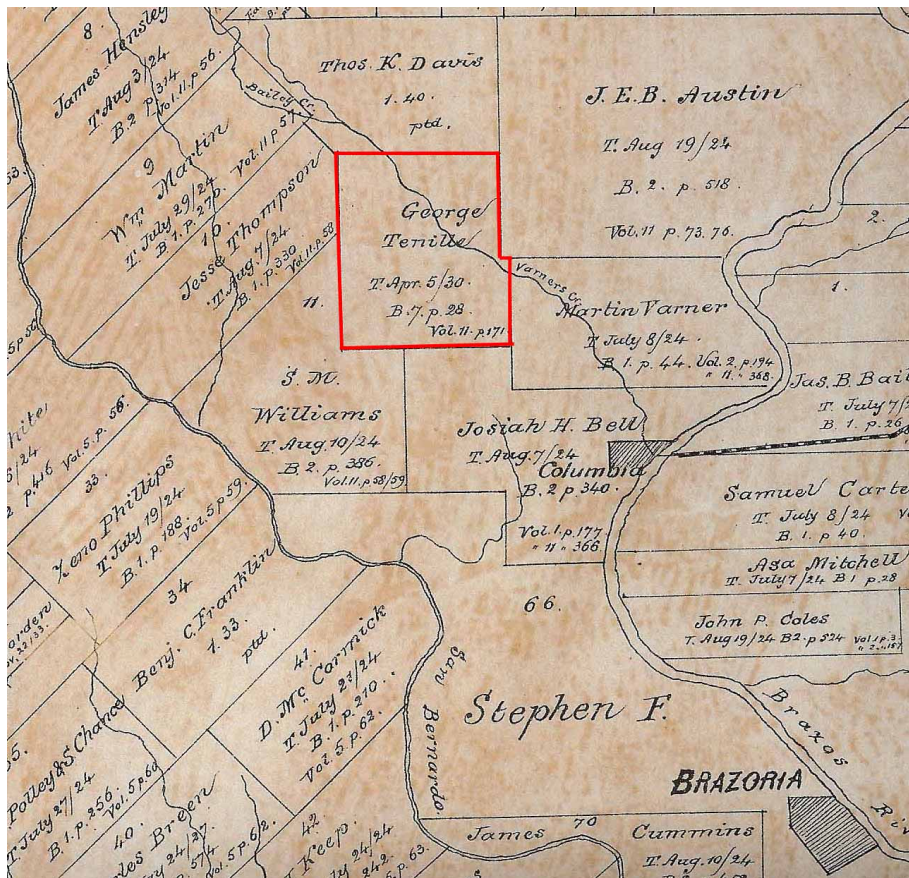


Tinsley Plantation
Brazosport Archaeological Society

Isaac Turner Tinsley entered Texas from Alabama in 1831. In 1832 he traveled to Tennessee to marry Mary A. Turner, who returned with him the same year. They initially settled west of the San Bernard River on property Isaac purchased from Thomas Borden. During the Texas Revolution Isaac T. Tinsley served as a soldier in the ranks. After the revolution Tinsley built up his cotton plantation until he sold out and moved to a tract of land in the George Tennille League west of the Brazos River on Varner Creek above Columbia. Though he built his home on Varner Creek his working plantation was located on a tract of land in the James E. B. Austin 3 League tract west of the Brazos River a few miles from his home site. During the 1850's Isaac T. Tinsley was a consistent producer of cotton and sugar. Tinsley was able to accumulate several other tracts of land through good business practices and he was able to maintain ownership of most of his property through the Civil War and Reconstruction. Most of his property had been given to his and Mary's many children before his death in 1874. Mary A. Tinsley maintained the homestead until she gave it to her son I. Henderson Tinsley in 1876. Mamie McFarland, a granddaughter, owned the property from 1920 until the early 1960's. Mary Lois Whitt, another Tinsley descendant, currently owns the old homestead though the old home on Varner Creek was torn down.



Map 1879 Texas General Land Office

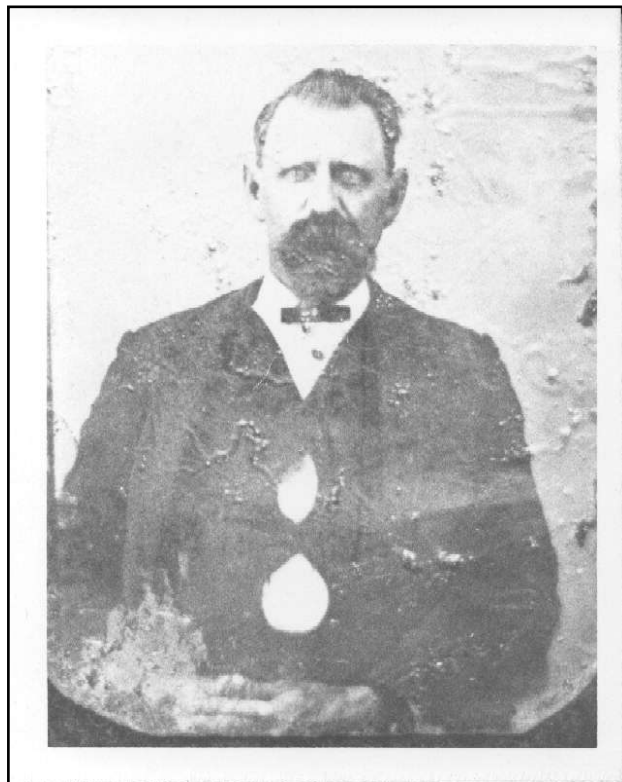


Photo Isaac Turner Tinsley

Courtesy of the Brazoria County Historical Museum, Angleton, Texas, 2000.008p.0064

Isaac Turner Tinsley (1801-1874) was born December 20, 1801 in Sumner County, Tennessee. In 1831 he entered Texas from Alabama. The next year he returned to Tennessee to marry Mary A. Turner (1815-1882). During the Texas Revolution according to family sources Isaac T. Tinsley served as a soldier in the ranks.¹ October 1836 he purchased 600 acres from Thomas Borden west of the San Bernard River in League 32.² Isaac T. and Mary A. Tinsley had already started their family with two of their children born before the Texas Revolution. It is possible that they were already living on the property they purchased from Borden.

Andrew McCormick related his recollections of the Tinsley family:

Mr. Isaac T. Tinsley was one of our neighbors in the Chance's Prairie settlement. He was a prominent actor in public affairs in 1835 and 1836. He was a member of the Committee of Safety and Correspondence appointed by the convention that met in Columbia August 15, 1835. He was for that time and locality quite a wealthy man. He kept a family carriage, and a full supply of the best fresh flour, for his family use, and had hot biscuit on his table always twice a day. These were then and there badges of wealth. He did not have a large force of slaves. He was a good farmer, and had good land and made large crops for the force he worked, but his farming was a side issue. He had made much of his wealth in trade in Tennessee and Alabama. In a few years, when interest-bearing Texas treasury-notes were circulating as money, but had greatly depreciated in

¹ Platter, Allen Andrew, "Educational, Social, and Economic Characteristics of the Plantation Culture of Brazoria County, Texas", Doctor of Education Dissertation, University of Houston, Houston, Texas, August 1961, p.181.

² Brazoria County Deed Record: B 28

value, Mr. Tinsley sold his farm in Chance's Prairie for a great price, payable in these notes. He locked the notes up in his safety deposit vault and let them sleep there, drawing interest; from which sleep they awoke ten years later as good as gold, as large as life and twice as natural. He opened a new farm on the Brazos, five or six miles above Columbia, on which he resided with his family. This took them further from us, but the intimacy of our families continued and increased as the children in each increased in number and grew up towards maturity. His oldest child, a son named Jack, was a few months younger than I. We were always chums in school or away from school, until after Annexation, when his father sent him off to school at Poughkeepsie, New York. He had returned home from school in Washington County, and was soon to start to Centre College in Kentucky. We had seen very little of each other during the last four years, and soon after my arrival home he came to our house and paid me a visit of several days' duration. He wished me to go home with him and continue our reunion there, but I could not, and Jack had to go without me. His road home passed the town of Columbia, where he made a short stop, not exceeding half an hour, to see his tailor, whom he found with a fever on him. The tailor's illness proved to be small-pox. The tailor recovered, but from this exposure Jack, who had not been vaccinated, contracted the disease and died a few days after leaving our house. One of Jack's brothers—the oldest of those now living—was named for my father, Joseph McCormick. He now resides at his native home on the Brazos. One of Mr. Tinsley's daughters, Miss Caledonia, married my friend, the late Hon. John T. Brady, of Houston, Texas.³



Isaac T. Tinsley's First Home Near Chance's Prairie West of Old Ocean

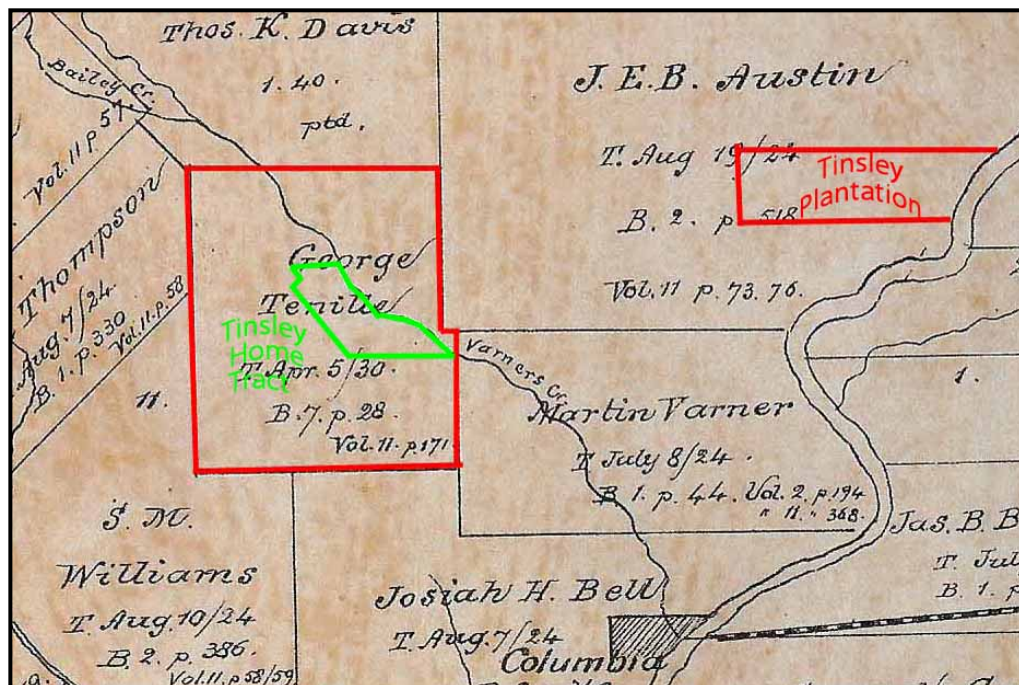
Photo ~1960 Allen Andrew Platter

Courtesy of Brazoria County Historical Museum, Angleton, Texas 2000.008p.0008⁴

³McCormick, Andrew Phelps, Scotch –Irish in Ireland and America, Private Publishing, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1897, pp. 140-141.

⁴ The home was owned by William B. Aldridge and after his death Dr. Anthony T. Morris bought the property from his estate in 1853 (BCDR: L 245/46)

With seven field hands Isaac T. Tinsley harvested 97 bales of cotton in 1838.⁵ In 1839 Isaac T. Tinsley bought 1000 acres west of the Brazos River above Columbia from William G. and Eliza M. Hill in the James E. B. Austin 3 League tract.⁶ This acreage would become his new working plantation. He also purchased Lot 3 Block 2 in Columbia with its improvements. This building had been one of the buildings used by the First Congress of the Republic of Texas. In 1842 he deeded it to the Presbyterian Church.⁷ Isaac and Mary Tinsley sold their old home to William B. Aldridge in 1841. They reserved a 1/4 acre plot as a cemetery which probably contained the grave of their infant daughter Josephine Tinsley (1835-1836).⁸



Map 1879 Texas General Land Office

In 1842 Tinsley purchased 907 acres along the west side of Varner Creek in the George Tennille League. This included the home in which George Tennille had resided.⁹ Here he would make his home and raise his family for many years to come. Isaac T. and Mary A. Tinsley would have twelve children though not all would reach maturity.

According to family tradition Isaac T. Tinsley built his new home of cedar he milled himself from timber taken from the large cedar brakes near Columbia. Facing the prairie the front of the house was only inches above the ground, but the kitchen wing, extending northward from the west end, was supported by piers four feet high. Beneath the building the ground fell

⁵ *Telegraph And Texas Register*, Houston, Texas, July 24, 1839

⁶ BCDR: C 428/29

⁷ BCDR: B 165 & B 166

⁸ BCDR: B 28

⁹ BCDR: F 279/80

away rapidly to toward Varner Creek. At a later date the house was carpeted throughout except for the kitchen and contained furniture of solid hard woods including four poster beds.¹⁰



Photo Home of Isaac T. Tinsley on Varner Creek
 Courtesy of Brazoria County Historical Museum, Angleton, Texas, 1983.006p.0104

Being a prudent businessman and a skilled planter Isaac T. Tinsley built up his plantation and increased his land holdings by buying 925 acres along the Brazos River in the Thomas Alsbury 2 League tract.¹¹ By 1850 he had 210 acres under cultivation according to the 1850 Agricultural Census. The 1850 Slave Census lists 34 slaves while tax records list 29 slaves, 17 horses, and 400 head of cattle. The 1850 Census lists:

Isaac T. Tinsley (Planter)	50 M	Tennessee
Mary A. Tinsley	35 F	Tennessee
Caledonia	12 F	Texas
Joseph	8 M	Texas
Samuel	6 M	Texas
Isaac H.	4 M	Texas
Ann E.	2 F	Texas
V. S. Perpont	16 F	Mississippi

¹⁰ Platter, Allen Andrew, "Educational, Social, and Economic Characteristics of the Plantation Culture of Brazoria County, Texas", Doctor of Education Dissertation, University of Houston, Houston, Texas, August 1961, pp. 181-182.

¹¹ BCDR: E 73/74

During the 1850's Tinsley was a consistent producer of cotton and sugar using steam power:

1852-140 hogheads
 1853-60 hghds
 1854-160 hghds
 1855-79 hghds
 1858- none reported
 1860- none reported¹²

Before September 1855 Isaac T. Tinsley sold the lower half of his property in the George Tennille League to Charles Maner.¹³ In the late 1850's he purchased a plantation on Oyster Creek from the William Fly estate in the William Roberts League.¹⁴ February 1859 Isaac T. and Mary A. Tinsley distributed \$5000 in cash or lands to each of their eight living children.¹⁵

By 1860 Isaac T. Tinsley had real estate valued at \$147,100 and a personal estate of \$72,960 according to the 1860 Census. The 1860 Slave Census lists 31 slaves with 11 slave dwellings. The 1860 Tax Records list 30 slaves, 30 horses, and 400 head of cattle with his property in the J. E. B. Austin 3 League tract valued at \$23,000 and his property on Varner Creek at \$4500. None of the records designate the location of his sugar mill and cotton gin but with the value of the property on the Brazos River being so much more than that of the property on which his home was located on, his mill and improvements must have been in the J. E. B. Austin tract. The 1860 Census (Their eldest daughter Caledonia married in 1858):

Isaac T. Tinsley (Planter)	60 M	Tennessee
Mary A. Tinsley	46 F	Tennessee
Joseph M.	17 M	Texas
Samuel	14 M	Texas
Henderson	12 M	Texas
Anna E.	10 F	Texas
Charles	8 M	Texas
William	6 M	Texas
George	4 M	Texas

During the Civil War the Union blockade of the Texas coast forced Isaac T. Tinsley to ship his cotton overland by oxen to Mexico.¹⁶ Joseph M. Tinsley served in the Confederacy

¹² Champomier, P. A., Statement of the Sugar Crop Made in Louisiana in 1852-53, With An Appendix, New Orleans, 1853 Statement of the Sugar Crop Made in Louisiana in 1853-54, With An Appendix, New Orleans, 1854. Champomier, P. A., Statement of the Sugar Crop Made in Louisiana in 1854-55, With An Appendix, New Orleans, 1855 & Statement of the Sugar Crop Made in Louisiana in 1855-56, With An Appendix, New Orleans, 1856. Champomier, P. A., Statement of the Sugar Crop Made in Louisiana in 1858-59, With An Appendix, New Orleans, 1859. Champomier, P. A., Statement of the Sugar Crop Made in Louisiana in 1860-61, With An Appendix, New Orleans, 1861.

¹³ BCDR: N 743/44

¹⁴ BCDR: J 23/24

¹⁵ BCDR : J 64/65

¹⁶ Platter, Allen Andrew, "Educational, Social, and Economic Characteristics of the Plantation Culture of Brazoria County, Texas", Doctor of Education Dissertation, University of Houston, Houston, Texas, August 1961, p. 182.

being mustered into service October 5, 1861 as a member of Bates' Regiment often call the Columbia Blues which manned the local coastal defenses.¹⁷

The Tinsley family held on to most of their property after the Civil War and in 1870 Isaac T. and Mary A. Tinsley started to divide up their land among their children. The plantation on the Brazos River was divided up into 150 acre tracts and distributed to many of their living children.¹⁸ Several of their children moved to these tracts with their families. In 1874 before the death of Isaac T. Tinsley the tract in the George Tennille League was given to Samuel P. Tinsley except for the 200 acre homestead along Varner Creek.¹⁹ The 1870 Census:

Isaac Tinsley	70 M W Farmer	Tennessee
Mary	55 F W Keep House	Tennessee
Samuel Tinsley	26 M W Stock Driver	Texas
Henderson ²⁰	24 M W Farmer	Texas
William	16 M W Attd. School	Texas
Nellie Brown	12 F W At Home	Texas
Mitchell Smith	16 M B Dom. Servant	Louisiana

Mary A. Tinsley deeded the 200 acre homestead over to her son Isaac Henderson Tinsley in December 1876.²¹ Samuel P. Tinsley, I. Henderson Tinsley, and Joseph M. Tinsley remained in the area with their families for many years and ran the plantation located on the Brazos River through the 1880's.²²

In 1920 Mamie McFarland (Mary Alice Tinsley daughter), L. Henderson Tinsley (son), and Mary L. Mays (Mary L. Tinsley wife of Isaac Henderson Tinsley decsd.) obtained releases from all the heirs for the homestead. Mrs. Mary L. Mays had been living on the property for several years. Mamie McFarland still owned the property in 1960 when Allen Andrew Platter interviewed her for his thesis. In the 1970's the homestead was broken into several tracts but in 1999 Mary Lois Whitt, a Tinsley descendant, combined the 200 acre homestead once again and is now the present owner (See Appendix B).

The home site or plantation areas have been investigated from an archeological point of view.

¹⁷ *Democrat and Planter*, October 22, 1861, Columbia, Texas

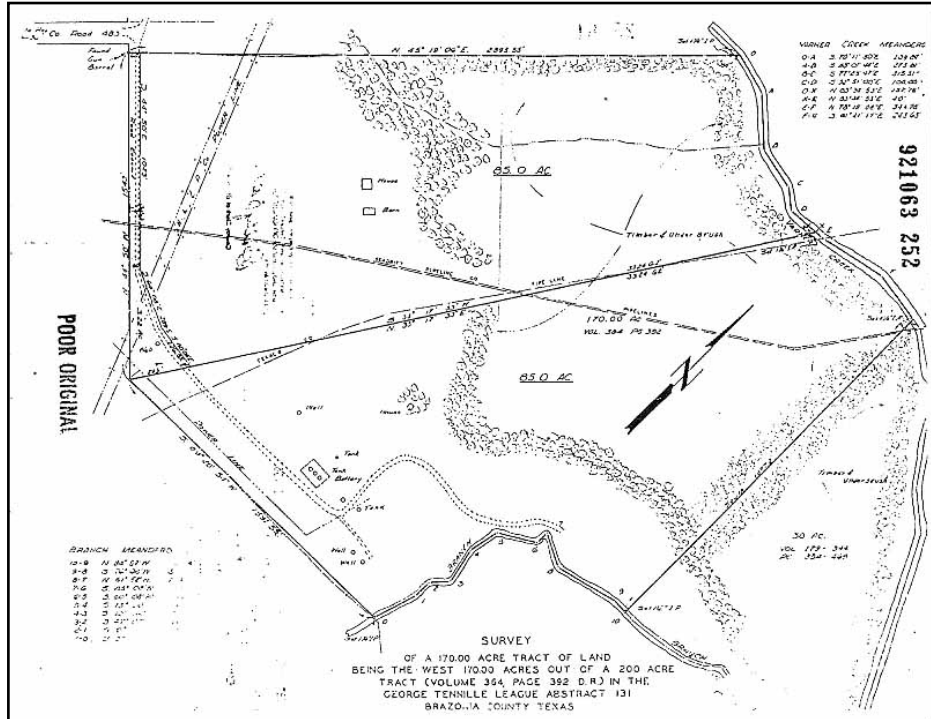
¹⁸ BCDR: M 313, M 356, M 371, M 372, N 301, & O 251

¹⁹ BCDR: Y 7/8

²⁰ "As showing the condition of affairs as late as 1873, I was returning home from Tennessee, where I had been at school at Sewanee,...and a Brazoria citizen by the name of Hen. Tinsley was also coming home, and was acting as escort to a young lady who also was coming home. At a station in Mississippi on the Great Jackson Railroad, the passengers got off for dinner. Tinsley went in with the young lady and drew back a chair for her to be seated, and while doing so, a burly mulatto negro popped himself in the next seat beside her. Tinsley picked up the next chair and broke it over the negro's head and gave him a good beating. He was arrested, and the episode cost his parents one thousand dollars..." , Strobel, Abner J., The Old Plantations and Their Owners of Brazoria County Texas, Revised Edition, The Union National Bank, Houston, Texas, 1930, pp.46-47.

²¹ BCDR: P 699/700

²² BCDR: X 121



200 Acre Tinsley Homestead on Varner Creek

Appendix A
Isaac Turner Tinsley Family

Isaac Turner Tinsley b. December 20, 1801 Sumner County, Tennessee (Moses Tinsley & Elizabeth Betsy Turner)

d. March 17, 1874

m. June 4, 1832 Sumner County, Tennessee

Mary A. Turner b. June 12, 1815 Sumner County, Tennessee (James Turner & Nancy Goodrum)

d. May 12, 1882

1. Jack F. Tinsley b. November 28, 1833

d. May 4, 1850 (smallpox)

2. Josephine Tinsley b. September 5, 1835

d. July 20, 1836

3. Walter Tinsley b. July 4, 1837

d. July 20, 1843

4. Caledonia A. Tinsley b. May 17, 1839

d. January 3, 1879

m. March 31, 1858

Col. John T. Brady b. October 10, 1830 Charles County, Maryland

5. James T. Tinsley b. February 27, 1841

d. August 16, 1849

6. Joseph Malcolm Tinsley b. January 29, 1843

d. October 4, 1899

m. July 15, 1868

Adelia G. Westall b. August 6, 1848

d. April 23, 1912

Turner Randolph **Tinsley** b. 30 Jan 1871, d. 12 Feb 1960

Florence Evlin **Tinsley** b. 23 Jul 1874, d. 12 Jun 1953

Mary Cally **Tinsley**+ b. 17 Dec 1876, d. 14 Dec 1959

Joseph Malcolm **Tinsley** Jr. b. 6 Aug 1883, d. 20 Mar 1941

Robert Porter **Tinsley** b. 28 Jan 1886, d. Oct 1962

7. Samuel Preston Tinsley b. November 8, 1844

d. March 16, 1890

m. 1st September 27, 1871

Sarah Bringhurst

George Isaac **Tinsley**+ b. 9 Jul 1872, d. 12 Sep 1962

Grace Estell **Tinsley** b. 6 Aug 1875

Sarah Jane **Tinsley** b. 26 Jul 1877, d. 29 Dec 1968

Samuel Isaac Tinsley **Tinsley** b. c 1879

- m. 2nd December 7, 1881
 Mahalia Ellen Nicholson b. 1847
 d. 1935
 Effie Rebecca **Tinsley** b. 16 Jun 1887
8. Isaac Henderson Tinsley b. January 27, 1847
 d. March 8, 1882
 m. December 3, 1874
 Mary Louisa Forbes b. October 25, 1857
 d. September 15, 1944
 Mary Alice Tinsley b. March 15, 1876
 Leonidas Henderson Tinsley b. May 30, 1878
9. Ann Elizabeth Tinsley b. March 18, 1849
 d.
 m. November 15, 1868
 Thomas H. Westall b. 1842
 d. December 26, 1876
10. Charles A. Tinsley b. December 18, 1851
 d.
 m. 1876
 Adele Robinson b. May 4, 1851
11. William Evander Tinsley b. December 25, 1853
 d.
 m. October 17, 1878
 Mamie Krenek (?)
12. George Eugene Tinsley b. February 14, 1856
 d. November 8, 1869 (shot)

Appendix B
Deed Record Tinsley Plantation

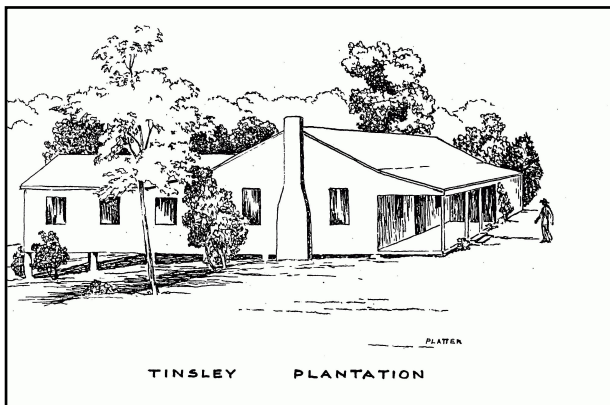
GRANTORS	GRANTEES	Kind of Instrument	Book	Page	Month	Day	Year	Acres	Description
Mexican Government	George Tennille	Deed			April	5	1830	4428	George Tennille 1 League
William G. & Eliza M. Hill	Isaac T. Tinsley	Deed	C	428/29	June	8	1839	1000	Part of JEB Austin 3 League \$2500 on Brazos River
George Tennille	Isaac T. Tinsley	Deed	F	279/80	Nov	3	1842	907	Acres along Varner Creek Tennille League George Tennille had been living on the property
William G. & Eliza M. Hill	Isaac T. Tinsley	Deed	D	199/200	June	7	1845	150	Part of JEB Austin 3 League \$375.00
Isaac T. Tinsley	Ammon Underwood	Deed	F	511	Aug	15	1852		Release any rights to property below where Varner Creek crosses east line of Tennille Lg
Ammon Underwood	Isaac T. Tinsley	Deed	F	512	Aug	15	1852		Release any rights to property above where Varner Creek crosses east line of Tennille Lg
Isaac T. & Mary A. Tinsley	George Eugene Tinsley	Deed	J	64/65	Feb	14	1859	453 1/2	Distribution to children "on which we now live"
Isaac T. & Mary A. Tinsley	Charley Tinsley	Deed	M	372	July	25	1870	150	JEB Austin League gift to son next to S. P.
Isaac T. & Mary A. Tinsley	J. M. Tinsley	Deed	M	313	July	25	1870	150	JEB Austin League gift to son SE corner
Isaac T. & Mary A. Tinsley	S. P. Tinsley	Deed	M	356	July	1	1870	150	JEB Austin League gift to son next Henderson
Isaac T. & Mary A. Tinsley	I. Henderson Tinsley	Deed	M	371	July	25	1870	150	JEB Austin League gift to son NE corner
Isaac T. & Mary A. Tinsley	Samuel P. Tinsley	Deed	N	301	Dec	22	1870	150	JEB Austin League gift to son
Isaac T. Tinsley	John Kaiser	Deed	N	743/44	July	26	1873	453 1/2	Lower 1/2 of his 907 acres in Tennille Lg
Isaac T. & Mary A. Tinsley	Joseph M. Tinsley	Deed	O	251	March	1	1874	150	JEB Austin League gift to son
Isaac T. & Mary A. Tinsley	Samuel P. Tinsley	Deed	Y	7/8	March		1874		435 1/2 acres less 200 acre homestead gift to their son
Mary A. Tinsley	I. Henderson Tinsley	Deed	P	699/700	Dec	11	1876	200	200 acre Homestead gift to her son
S. P. Tinsley	I. H. Tinsley	Agreement	X	121	Nov	24	1884		I. H. Tinsley to run plantation for 1885 for \$600
Mrs. Wiley L Mays	Mrs. M. E. Tinsley & John McNeel	Deed	161	316/17	June	7	1919		Set boundary between their 200 acre tracts Mrs. Wiley M. Mays owns Homestead
Annie Tinsley formerly Westall	Mamie McFarland H. L. Tinsley Mary L. Mays	Deed	161	630/32	Aug	28	1920	200	Release Homestead
Joe Tinsley et al	Mamie McFarland H. L. Tinsley Mary L. Mays	Deed	161	634/635	Aug	23	1920	200	Release Homestead

T. R. Tinsley	Mamie McFarland H. L. Tinsley Mary L. Mays	Deed	161	635/36	Sept	7	1920	200	Release Homestead
Mary Tinsley et al	Mamie McFarland H. L. Tinsley Mary L. Mays	Deed	161	632/33	Aug	23	1920	200	Release Homestead
F. J. & Adele Tinsley Huey	Mamie McFarland H. L. Tinsley Mary L. Mays	Deed	161	636/37	Sept	4	1920	200	Release Homestead
Mrs. M. Tinsley & J. P. McNeel	Mamie McFarland H. L. Tinsley Mary L. Mays	Deed	165	145/46	Oct	4	1920	200	Release Homestead
Casper L. & Effie Tinsley Herrington	Mamie McFarland H. L. Tinsley Mary L. Mays	Deed	165	146/47	Aug	31	1920	200	Release Homestead
	Mrs. M. L. Mays	Deed	179	354					Suit established her ownership
	Henderson L. Tinsley	Deed	344	469	March	9	1926		3/4
	Mrs. M. L. Mays	Deed	347	173/75	April	9	1941		1/3 ownership
Mrs. Mamie McFarland	Howard & Louise Mays	Deed	364	392	Dec	30	1940	85	½ 170 acre left of homestead
Mrs. Mamie McFarland	Henderson L. Tinsley	Deed	364	414	Dec	12	1942	85	½ of ¾ share
	Henderson Tinsley Lizzie Tinsley Mrs. Mamie McFarland	Deed	364	392/97					1/3 Royalties to each
	Mrs. Margaret McFarland Harris	Deed	1073	728	Nov	19	1970	85	House site
	Mrs. Lizzie Tinsley	Deed	1086	644	April	26	1971	85	Other ½ + 30 acre tract
	Mrs. Margaret McFarland Harris	Deed	1086	644	April	26	1971	85	House site
1995010985	Mary Lois Whitt	Deed			June	15	1999		Current owner house site

Appendix C
 Photos and Sketch Courtesy of Brazoria County Historical Museum, Angleton, Texas



Photos of Isaac T. Tinsley Home Chance's Prairie Area Near Old Ocean
 Later the Home of Dr. Anthony T. Morris by Allen Andrew Platter ~1960,
 2000.008p.0009 & 2000.008p.0010



Sketch and Photo of Isaac T. Tinsley Home on Varner Creek North of West Columbia
 by Allen Andrew Platter ~1960,
 1983.024p.001 & 2000.008p.0032

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 Angleton, Texas

Brazoria County Tax Records on microfilm Brazoria County Historical Museum,
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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

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