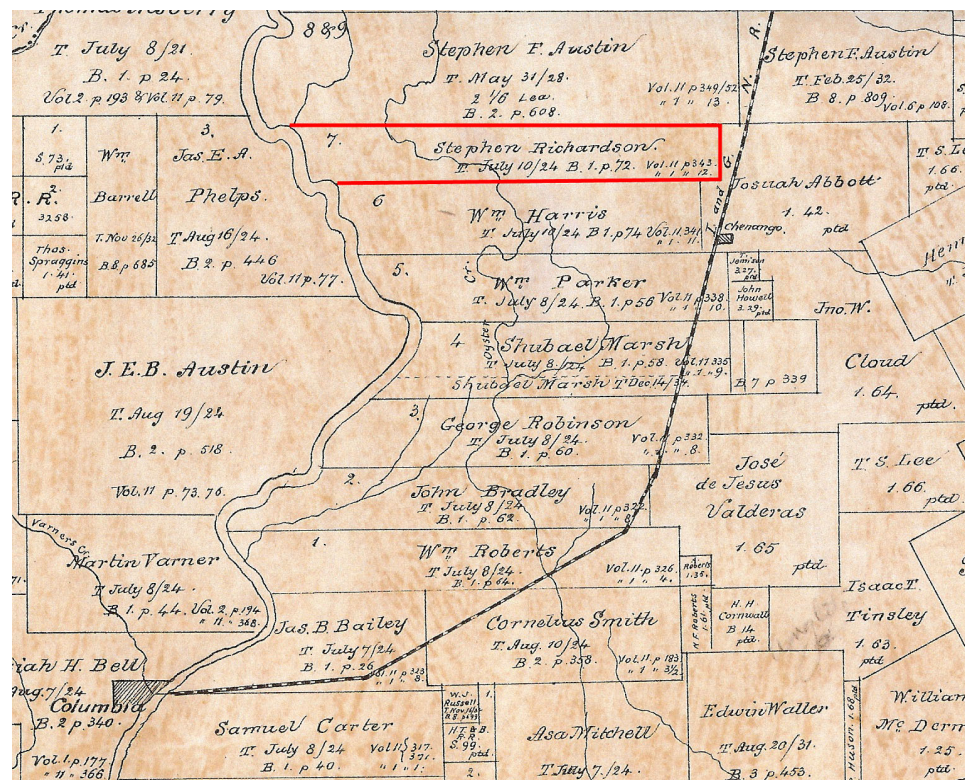


Eldorado Plantation  
Brazosport Archaeological Society

The Eldorado Plantation was located above Columbia on the east side of the Brazos River along Oyster Creek in the upper 1/3 of the Stephen Richardson League. John F. Webber, a single farmer and stockraiser, bought the 1/3 league in March 1828 from Stephen Richardson. Mathew T. C. Patton obtained ownership after his family had purchased the property in 1836. While he lived in the eastern part of the 1/3 league he sold a western tract along the Brazos and Oyster Creek to Louis M. Strobel. Louis M. Strobel, stepson of Abner Jackson, established Eldorado, a modest cotton plantation, in the late 1850's. Louis M. Strobel and Mathew T. C. Patton both sold portions of their tracts to Edmund T. Arrington. All three men and their families then cultivated cotton on their respective tracts of land. Thomas H. M. Drayton of South Carolina acquired the Eldorado Plantation less than a year before the Civil War. After the Civil War and the death of Thomas H. M. Drayton his estate sold Eldorado to Ball, Hutchings & Company of Galveston. Passing through several owners before the turn of the century portions of the plantation were sold to the Texas Prison Commission in 1908. The Ramsey Prison Farm now contains lands from all three cotton farms.

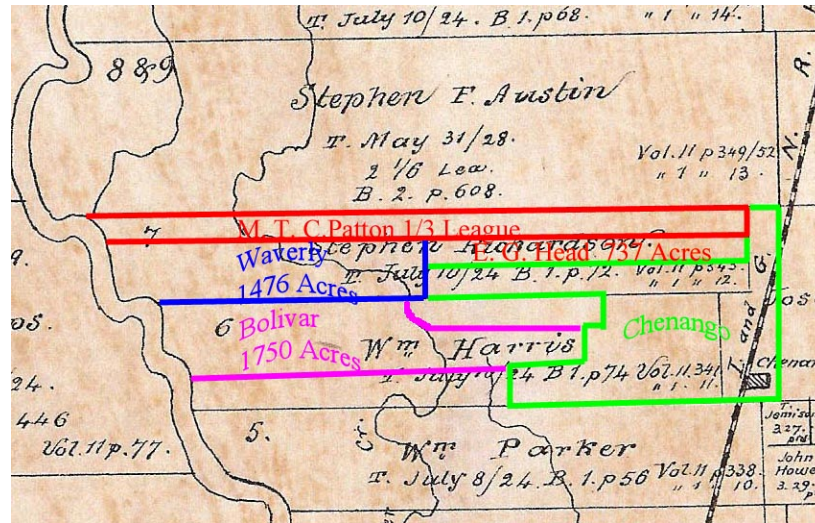


Stephen Richardson League Map 1879 The General Land Office of the State of Texas

Stephen Richardson (1794-1860) received title to one league of land east of the Brazos on both sides of Oyster Creek above Columbia in what is now Brazoria County on July 10, 1824.

He married Lucinda Hodge and moved to near Wallis in Austin County in 1828. By 1832 he moved with his family to Chocolate Bayou and built a saw mill near the site of present day Alvin. His saw mill was destroyed by flood in the summer of 1832 and he built another saw mill near Liverpool. In January 1838 he moved to Harrisburg, where he operated a steam sawmill for about ten years.<sup>1</sup> His league of land was not developed by him or his family.

March 1828 Stephen Richardson sold the upper 1/3 of his league to John F. Webber, a single farmer and stockraiser.<sup>2</sup> It is unclear if Webber resided in Brazoria County but when he sold the property to St. Clair Patton in September 1836 “farms and building improvements” are stipulated in the deed record [Brazoria County Deed Record<sup>3</sup>: G 141/42].



Upper 1/3 League with Waverly, Bolivar, and Chenango Plantations & E. G. Head Tract  
Stephen Richardson League Map 1879 The General Land Office of the State of Texas

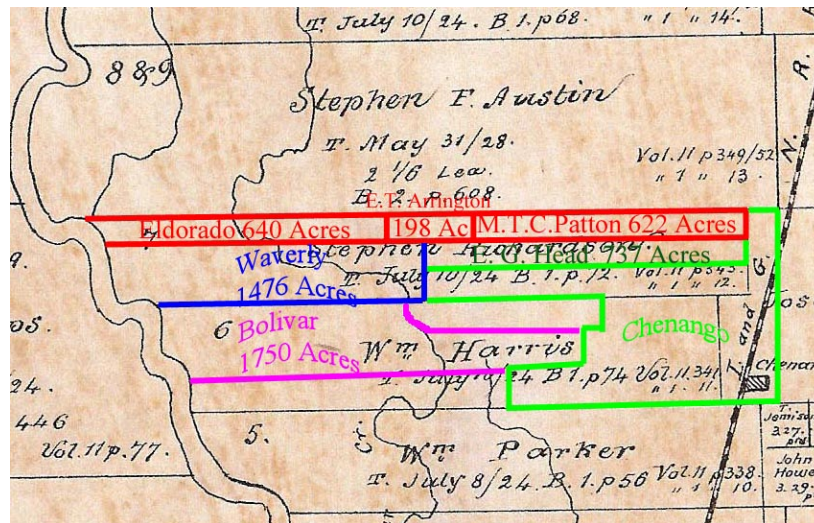
Mathew T. C. Patton and his wife Medora F. Patton lived on a cotton farm in the eastern half of the 1/3 league. August 1857 Mathew signed a bond agreement with Louis M. Strobel<sup>4</sup> to sell the western 750 acres of the 1/3 league by January 1859 for \$9600 [BCDR: H 260/61]. Strobel also purchased eight slaves from Patton for \$6920 [BCDR: H 261]. By December 1859 Edmund and Lucy Arrington purchased 106 acres from Strobel and 92 acres from Patton to build a home and cotton farm in the same 1/3 league [BCDR: J 79/80 & 101/02].

<sup>1</sup> *The Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association

<sup>2</sup> The deed record was not located in the Brazoria County Clerk's Office though reference is made in subsequent deeds.

<sup>3</sup> Brazoria County Deed Records will be notated as BCDR from this point forward.

<sup>4</sup> Louis M. Strobel was the stepson of Abner Jackson, owner of the Lake Jackson Plantation. He married Elizabeth Washington, the niece of William H. and John A. Wharton of the Eagle Island Plantation. Abner Strobel author of *The Old Plantations and Their Owners of Brazoria County Texas* was born on the Eldorado Plantation in 1858.



Division of Upper 1/3 Stephen Richardson League  
Map 1879 The General Land Office of the State of Texas

Mathew T. C. Patton bought the Eldorado Plantation back from Louis Strobel April 1859 [BCDR: J 113/15]. He and his wife sold their homestead to Samuel M. Frost for \$2800 and moved to Eldorado [BCDR: H 577/78]. By June 1859 he sold the 349 acres with “dwelling house, cotton gin, grist mill and 200 acres under cultivation” for \$6980 to Thaddeus Mather, Charles R. Hughes, and William Saunders of Galveston [BCDR: J 164]. He also agreed to pay \$850 rent for the year 1860 and to sell them the adjacent 225 acres at \$20 per acre [BCDR: J 165/67]. Later he and his family moved to Columbia where he became a grocer. By the time the 1860 Census was taken the family lived in Columbia:

M. T. C. Patton (Grocer)	26	M	Kentucky
Medora Patton	24	F	Alabama
C. F. Patton	9/12	M	Texas

Mather, Hughes, and Saunders in July 1860 sold the plantation to Thomas H. M. Drayton from South Carolina for \$15,000 [BDCR: J 626/27]. The 1860 slave census lists 54 slaves on the property. The 1860 tax records list 56 slaves and 16 horses owned by Drayton. The census also records:

T. H. M. Drayton	30	M	South Carolina
M. L. Wood	29	M	South Carolina
Wm. Waties	25	M	South Carolina

Also living just east was the Edmund T. Arrington family:

E. T. Arrington	36	M	North Carolina
Lucy Arrington	35	F	Alabama
Kate Arrington	11	F	Texas
Robert Arrington	7	M	Texas
Clara Arrington	6	F	Texas

Bettie S. Arrington	1/12	F	Texas
Jane Wallis	28	F	Georgia
Bryant Cherry (Overseer)	40	M	North Carolina

Thomas H. M. Drayton and his brother James came to Texas to seek their fortunes while their brother Dr. John Drayton stayed in South Carolina to look after the family estate. Their older brother Charles Henry Drayton III had died in 1852 and Dr. John Drayton became administrator and acted as ward for his nephew Charles Henry Drayton IV at Drayton Hall near Charleston, South Carolina. At the out break of the Civil War James Drayton went back to South Carolina to join the Confederacy. Thomas H. M. Drayton stayed in Texas. Thomas wrote to his brother John in South Carolina:

“You say that you are expected to be under orders to march in a week. Well, it’s what we all expect to do. I don’t know at what time I may be called on to do my part in the struggle for our liberties. If you go, go with a bold heart and do what you can. Fight like the devil and if you are to be shot, let it be in front and not in the back. It’s no disgrace to die on the battlefield and if it so pleases God that you are to be in the number of those whose blood is to be asked for their country, you shed it in a Glorious Cause, but kill every Devil of a Yankee you can. If things get to the worst in Carolina I will leave property here in safe hands and come on myself. I would prefer to die on her soil and in her cause than any other. We may never meet in this world again, but if it’s God’s will, I trust we will meet in better.”<sup>5</sup>

After the Civil War Thomas H. M. Drayton died ~1867. Upon his death his brother Dr. John Drayton<sup>6</sup> became the administrator of his estate February 15, 1868:

1 Set of Cottage Furniture	\$10.00
500 Bushels of Corn @ 50c	250.00
30 Hogs	50.00
11 Ploughs	11.00
12 Mules @ \$10.00	120.00
2 Wagons @ \$20.00	40.00
1 Set of Black Smith’s Tools	12.00
14 pr. Trace Chains @ 50c	7.00
640 acres land @ \$5.00	3200.00 [Record of Wills: D 344]

Court records indicate that Thomas resided on the plantation at the time of his death. Probate records also reveal that for year 1867 the estate paid \$288.40 to freedmen for labor on the plantation. Due to claims against his estate the property had to be auctioned off and Ball, Hutchings & Company placed the winning bid of \$1500 for the property April 1, 1869 [Record of Wills: D 426/27]. A. C. Barnes rented the property for \$55.00 for the year 1869 [Record of Wills: D 446].

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<sup>5</sup> Drayton Hall web page.

<sup>6</sup> Dr. John Drayton, along with Dr. Collins, Colonel Mordello S. Munson, Farrell Vincent, Andrew Alexander, and Captain Mosley formed the Tuxpan Land Company and bought acreage along the Tuxpan River in Mexico. Robert Willy and Dr. Drayton left Texas and traveled to Tuxpan in 1873. Drayton married Katie Lebwitz at unknown date. Captain Wells and Dr. Drayton were partners in a sugar mill in Tuxpan. Dr. Drayton was also a partner of Henry Young in a sugar mill near Frijollio. Letters in Family File 111 indicate Dr. Drayton was still in Tuxpan in 1888.

Ball, Hutchings & Company sold Eldorado to Branch T. Masterson January 1878. Masterson sold the property to A. C. Barnes July 1878 for \$3750. Barnes may have been living on the property since 1869. Barnes also acquired the Quarles Plantation just north of Eldorado.

These two plantations would be combined with other tracts by several other owners until Bassett Blakely purchased them in December 1905. Bassett Blakely who was President of the Chenango Plantation Company transferred title to the company.

February 1908 the Texas Prison Commission bought 7772 acres from the Chenango Plantation Company for \$107,005.25. This became the nucleus for the Ramsey Prison Farm. Additional acreage has been added over the years and the Ramsey Prison Farm is still in operation today.

### Appendix A Deed Records Top 1/3 Stephen Richardson League

GRANTORS	GRANTEES	Kind of Instrument	Book	Page	Month	Day	Year	Acres	Description
Mexican Government	Stephen Richardson	Deed	SR		July	10	1824		Stephen Richardson League
Stephen Richardson & David	John F. Webber	Deed			March	13	1828		
John F. Webber	St. Clair Patton	Deed	G	141/42	Sept	14	1836	750	Upper 1/3 League with improvements \$700
Mathew T. C. Patton	Louis M. Strobel	Agree	H	260/61	Aug	26	1857	750	Bond to sell to Strobel for \$15,360 west 750 acres \$9600 by 1Jan1859
Mathew T. C. Patton	Louis M. Strobel	Deed	H	261	Aug	26	1857		8 slaves \$6920
Louis M. Strobel	Mathew T.C. Patton	Mortgage	H	262	Aug	26	1857		\$5000 11 slaves
Louis M. Strobel	Mathew T. C. Patton	Mortgage	H	265	Aug	26	1857		\$1920 7 slaves
Louis M. Strobel	E. T. & Lucy Arrington	Deed	J	79/80	Dec	10	1857	103	\$1166 106 acres off the east end of his 750 acre tract
Mathew T. C. Patton	E. T. & Lucy Arrington	Deed	J	101/02			1857	92	\$738 92 acres west end of his tract
Mathew T. C. Patton	Samuel M. Frost	Deed	H	577/78	Feb	10	1858	626	\$2800 East end of 1/3 league his residence
John Stewart Jr. Lycurgus Edgeton New York City	E. T. Arrington	Release	H	633/34	Oct	20	1858		Release mortgage on 2 slaves
Louis M. Strobel	Mathew T. C. Patton	Release	J	113/115	April	5	1859		~640 acres Eldorado Plantation release \$9000 debt & \$3000 by Patton 500 barrels corn to Patton and Strobel to keep the Cotton crop for 1859
Mathew T. C. Patton	Louis M. Strobel	Mortgage	J	106	April	5	1859		\$3000 4 slaves
Mathew T. C. & Medora F. Patton	Thaddeus Mather, Charles R. Hughes, William Saunders of Galveston	Deed	J	164	June	4	1859	349	\$6980 Dwelling house, cotton gin, grist mill, 200 acre under cultivation

Mathew T. C. & Medora F. Patton	Thaddeus Mather, Charles R. Hughes, William Saunders	Indenture	J	165/67	June	4	1859	349	\$850 rent to live on property for year 1860 & agree to sell adjacent 225 Thaddeus Mather, Charles R. Hughes, William Saunders acres at \$20/acre
Louis M. Strobel	Mathew T.C. Patton	Release	J	233	Sept	8	1859		Paid note J 106
Louis M. Strobel	Mathew T.C. Patton	Mortgage	J	235/36	Sept	8	1859		\$3000 note 4 slaves as security
Samuel M. Frost	Benjamin Terry & William Kyle	Dee	J	469/72	April	30	1860		Patton Tract & Head Tract \$15,000
Thaddeus Mather, Charles R. Hughes, William Saunders	Thomas H. M. Drayton	Deed	J	626/27	July	9	1860	640	\$15,000
Estate Thomas H. M. Drayton	Ball, Hutchings & Co.	Deed	L	484/86	June	11	1869	640	~700 acres less 106 acres \$1500
Ball, Hutchings & Co.	Branch T. Masterson	Deed			Jan	21	1878	640	Eldorado Plantation
Branch T. Masterson	A. C. Barnes	Deed	R	204/05	July	18	1878	640	Eldorado Plantation 640 acres \$3750
E. T. & Lucy Arrington	William Kennedy	Deed	Q	146/47	April		1860	198	Both his tracts \$8000
A. C. Barnes	John Walker & Walter Kennedy	Deed	8	19/23	Dec	7	1889		Eldorado & Quarles Plantations \$13,000
Marshal Sale	Benjamin Graham	Deed	18	301/04	Oct	27	1892		Foreclosure Sale \$25,000 5557 acres including Eldorado & Quarles Plantations
Benjamin Graham	Francis Smith	Deed	43	521/23	Dec	24	1897		\$36017.21 3850 acres
Francis Smith & H.P. Drought	Bassett Blakely	Deed	68	391/95	Dec	28	1905		\$37,500 2600 acres
Bassett Blakely	Chenango Plantation Company	Deed	69	191	Feb	17	1906	3600	4 Tracts \$37,700
Chenango Plantation Company	Texas Prison Commission	Deed	85	501/05	Feb	10	1908	7772	\$107,005.25

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