



SUGAR LAND 95

EXHIBIT GUIDE

HONORING THE SUGAR LAND 95

The discovery of the Sugar Land 95 has provided Fort Bend ISD with the opportunity to educate our students and community about the state-sanctioned convict leasing system. It is in our efforts to educate that we hope to bring light to the atrocities faced by those who were subjected to the inhumanity of the convict leasing system which operated for more than four decades in the state of Texas.

Despite the conditions surrounding the incarceration of individuals during this period, convict laborers during the turn of the 20th century contributed to the rebuilding of communities across the nation, including Sugar Land, Texas.

It is heartbreaking that the burial site of the Sugar Land 95 was abandoned and hidden for more than a century.

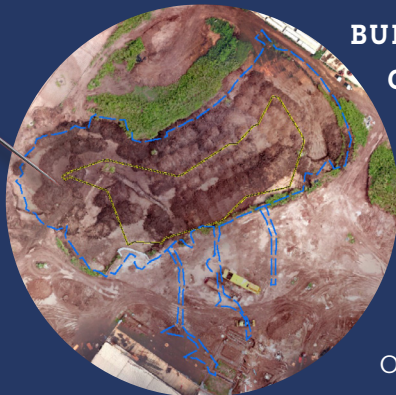
Our District — and our Board of Trustees — is committed to honoring this monumental discovery, which is why we are taking steps to ensure they are never again forgotten. We hope this exhibit serves as one small action taken to uphold our commitment to restoring dignity and paying tribute to the many men and women who were impacted during the period of convict leasing.



CIVIL WAR

ON THE TEXAS HOME FRONT

In the 1820's, Stephen F. Austin recruited settlers to establish the first Anglo colony in then Mexican-ruled Texas. The nearly 300 grantees, or "Old Three Hundred," settled along the Brazos River to cultivate the land, creating Fort Settlement or Fort Bend. Nearly a quarter of the population was enslaved peoples.



BULLHEAD CAMP CEMETERY

The cemetery falls entirely within the Alexander H. Hodge's League, deeded to him on April 12, 1828 as part of Stephen F. Austin's Old 300

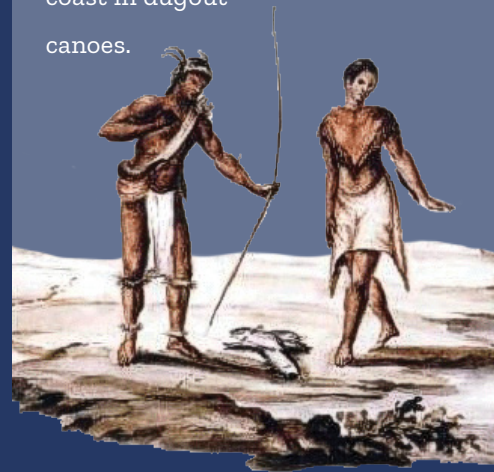


THE HODGE LEAGUE

Positioned on the north side of the Brazos River and crossed by Oyster Creek, the plantation was a well-known stopping place for travelers.

FACT

Modern day Fort Bend County was once the native lands of the Karankawa people. This was a nomadic tribe that traveled throughout the mainland and along the Texas coast in dugout canoes.



Why do you think the Brazos River was an important location for early settlement?

EMANCIPATION

Contrary to what many believe, the Emancipation Proclamation in 1862 didn't free all the enslaved. Lincoln's proclamation was directed to Southern States, also known as the Confederacy. The proclamation only applied to the states in direct rebellion against the Union, over which Lincoln had no legal jurisdiction. Slavery was allowed to continue in border states that remained loyal to the Union.

The Emancipation Proclamation did, however, boost African American participation in the Northern effort by accepting black men to serve in the Union army and navy. By the end of the war there were over 200,000 black soldiers and sailors fighting for freedom.



Freedom has always been an idea Americans have fought for. What does freedom mean to you?



TO COLORED MEN!

FREEDOM, Protection, Pay, and a Call to Military Duty!

On the 1st day of January, 1863, the President of the United States proclaimed FREEDOM to over THREE MILLIONS OF SLAVES. This decree is to be enforced by all the power of the Nation. On the 21st of July last he issued the following order:

PROTECTION OF COLORED TROOPS.

WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,
WASHINGTON, July 21.



For the information and government of all concerned:—

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, July 30.

Let it be known to all citizens, of whatever class, color, or condition, and especially to those who are engaged in the treatment of prisoners of war as public enemies. To sell or enslave any person, or to place any person in any manner in the hands of any enemy, or to give any person any other protection than that which the laws of the United States shall provide, or to aid in any such violation of the laws of war, a rebel soldier shall be executed; and for every such violation the law shall be placed at hard labor on the public works, and continued at such hard labor until the person is restored to the hands of the United States.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Adjutant General.

Officers and men of the United States Army and Navy are directed to see that the above order is strictly obeyed, and to report to the Adjutant General any violation thereof.

WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON CITY, August 3, 1862.
The Department has received consideration. This Department has directed that the above order be published in the newspapers and in the public places.

FACT

While the Civil War ended in April 1865, most enslaved people in Texas were unaware of their freedom until Union troops — including the U.S. Colored Troops — arrived in Galveston, Texas months later. On June 19, 1865, Major General Gordon Granger read 'General Order No. 3' decreeing "all slaves are free." The following year, freed African Americans in Galveston celebrated "Emancipation Day," which later spread throughout the state and beyond as **JUNETEENTH**.

13TH AMENDMENT



Had Lincoln lived, some method would have been devised for continuing the work so grandly begun by him.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS



To what "work" is Douglass referring? How might Lincoln's survival have impacted the lives of newly-freed men and women?

RECONSTRUCTION: BLACK CODES

By 1866, Texas passed into legislation a set of laws to define the legal rights and liberties of freed Blacks in society. These laws ruled everyday actions of the formerly enslaved. All individuals with 1/8 or more African blood would be defined as a person of color and subject to Black Codes like the following:

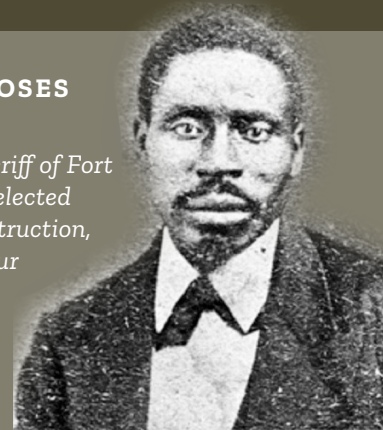
- × May not vote
- × Apprenticeship allowed unpaid labor for minors under 21
- × May not serve on juries
- × May only testify in cases involving other Black citizens
- × May not hold office
- × May not marry whites
- × Required segregation on trains and other public facilities
- × Restricted school funding
- × Public land may not be provided to Blacks
- × Employer power to garnish wages for disobedience, swearing, wasting time, injury to tools or livestock
- × Subject to vagrancy laws

FACT

During the latter period of Radical Reconstruction, many actions were taken to prevent the enforcement of the Black Codes. Freedman's schools and towns were developed to assist black citizens in obtaining education, individual liberties, and rights.

WALTER MOSES BURTON

First Black sheriff of Fort Bend County, elected during Reconstruction, later served four terms as state senator



The following contracts for convict labor were approved by

the Board and signed in open session: T. P. Barry, agent, 60 1st-class

negroes; John D. Rogers, 50 1st-class negroes; Tom Peoples, 50 1st-class

whites; ... 50 1st-

50 1st-class negroes; Dyer; Bertrand, 50 1

Hous... 50 1st-class negroes; Watt, 50

Cunningham & Co., 200 1st-class negroes; C.

groes; W... 50 1st-class negroes;

whites and ... Lindsey Land & C

whites and ... Terrell and G. W

negroes; Mrs. D. Eastham, 125 2nd-class whi

Watts, 50 1st-class negroes; A. P. Borden,

groes; ...

CONVICT LABOR

In Texas, the demand for farm labor funneled most convicts into agriculture, including the grueling work of harvesting sugarcane.

Because the companies who leased convicts were responsible for housing, feeding, and managing them, and because imprisoned workers were easily replaceable, they were often worked to death in deplorable conditions.



THE PROGRESSIVE ERA

Following Reconstruction, the Progressive Era (1890s–1920s) ushered a wave of social activism to correct problems caused by industrialization and political corruption. Journalists like George Waverly Briggs, writer for San Antonio's *The Daily Express*, exposed widespread abuses in the prison system, inspiring public backlash against convict leasing. However, forced labor would continue in Texas for another few years, until 1912, and would not be abolished via federal law until after World War II.

SPREADING THRU THE SOUTH

GA Worked on railroads, roads, brick-making

FL Mined phosphate & turpentine, layed roads in brutal heat

TN Mined coal, squeezing out non-incarcerated miners & spurring a revolt

AL Last state to abolish convict leasing; picked cotton, worked in lumber mills and deadly coal mines

FACT

Women were not excluded from convict leasing. In many cases, women prisoners were forced to work in labor camps and as leased domestic servants.



In what ways might the system of convict leasing have been worse than slavery?

COMMUNITY ACTIVIST AND HISTORIAN REGINALD MOORE

Sept. 14, 1959 – July 03, 2020



Mr. Reginald Moore was a local activist and historian who warned state and local officials about the possibility of unmarked graves buried in this area. Mr. Moore began his mission to shed light on the history of convict leasing. As his interest in the history of the prison system grew, so did his desire to teach others about the inhumanity of the convict leasing system.

Mr. Moore left behind a legacy of research, activism, and passion for educating others and restoring dignity to the lives lost to convict leasing.

How might everyday citizens make an impact on their community?



How does understanding local history benefit a community?



FACT

The historical work of Mr. Reginald Moore can be found in the Sugar Land Convict Leasing research collection at Rice University Fondren Library, Woodson Research Center?



What are other examples of historical places, people or events in your community?



DIGGING DEEP INTO THE DISCOVERY

In total, the entire discovery process took over two years, including exhumation, excavation, and extensive archival research. The exhumation phases alone required a total of 87 crew members.

On February 19, 2018, the first remains were uncovered at the site of the James Reese Career and Technical Center. Initially, the bone material exhumed was determined to be 99% *not human*. Fort Bend ISD wanted complete certainty, so a second analysis was conducted, which identified the bone as 100% human.

After the first grave site was totally exposed, researchers quickly recognized the burial was historic in age due to the square-cut nails, and the way the body was laid to rest in an east-west orientation.

Early on, it was presumed that the first burial found may have represented an isolated grave. But there remained the possibility of a family burial plot or even larger cemetery.

The study of the Bullhead Camp Cemetery population represents the very first study of a group of men subjected to forced labor on convict labor camps anywhere in the United State.

The bones of these men can tell something about what their lives were like before incarceration and a great deal more about what they endured in the last months and years of their lives as convict laborers.

SPOTLIGHT ON WORDS

INTER/INTERMENT:

the burial of a corpse in a grave or tomb, typically with funeral rites

EXHUMATION:

the action of digging up something buried, especially a corpse

EXCAVATION:

to dig out and remove, especially an archaeological site

ARCHAEOLOGIST:

a person who studies human history and prehistory through the excavation of sites and the analysis of artifacts and other physical remains

FORENSICS:

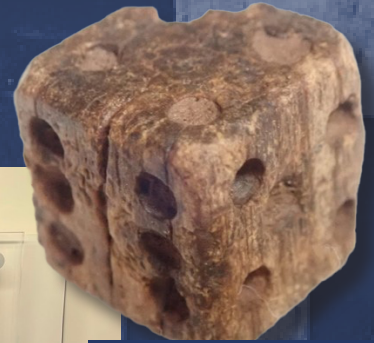
scientific tests or techniques used in connection with the detection of crime

ARCHIVE/ARCHIVAL:

a collection of historical documents or records providing information about a place, institution, or group of people

"We initially thought we had a single grave or a small family cemetery."
Reign Clark, Archaeologist

ARTIFACTS



Wooden Die



Wedding Band

Medicinal bottle | Iron hoe heads known as "Aggies" | Alcohol bottle

Iron spike with heavy chain

Iron mill file

Fire brick reading "St. Louis/V&E.B. Co./Furnace" | Glazed ceramic mug | Brick reading "Texas"

Iron chain with hook | Iron chain with mid-swivel

Horseshoe | Sugar cane tram road track segment, tie plate, and spike

Why are artifacts an important source of information when studying the past?

What information do they provide?

What do they tell us?



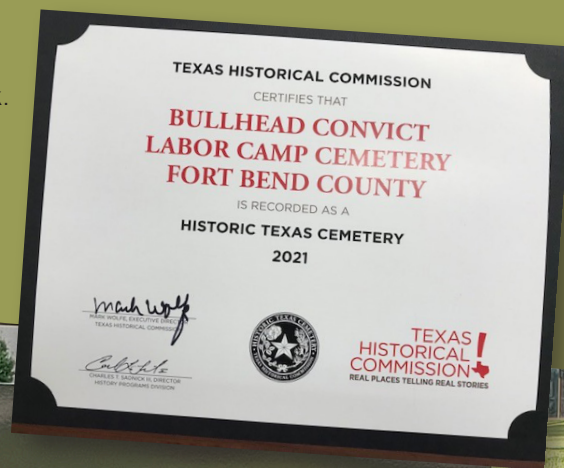
A HISTORIC CEMETERY IS RECOGNIZED

The burial ground of the Sugar Land 95 is the first convict labor camp cemetery to be located and excavated in the United States. This monumental discovery helps to shed light on a forgotten or lesser-known part of history.

The remains provide us with the evidence needed to draw conclusions about the atrocities associated with convict labor and how it impacted those subjected to the work.

“Cemeteries are important keys in the history of Texas. Designation as a Historic Texas Cemetery helps increase public awareness of these critical cultural resources.”

Mark Wolfe, Executive Director of Texas Historical Commission



How do new discoveries impact our understanding of history?

ONGOING RESEARCH AND DNA STUDIES

PRINCIPAL RESEARCH GROUP

was formed by a group of dedicated scientists and historians to tell the stories of the underrepresented. Using several different areas of study, they were able to begin answering important questions about who the Sugar Land 95 were, like: *Do they have any living family members? How were their living conditions? What did they eat? Where were they from? What was their occupation? How did life change following the abolishment of slavery?*

The team examining the remains combined several types of research to reconstruct the life histories of the Sugar Land 95, including:

SKELETAL ANALYSIS: signs of trauma, age at death, occupation

STABLE ISOTOPE ANALYSIS: diet, migration

DENTAL CALCULUS: diet, bacteria, viruses, health problems

ANCIENT DNA ANALYSIS: determining identity, descendants

HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS: prison ledgers, government forms



How does the discovery of the Sugar Land 95 connect the subjects of science and social studies?





ROSTER OF THE DECEASED

This roster includes the names of 71 individuals related to the cemetery whom archival records indicate died while working in the prison camp. DNA studies to confirm identities of these individuals is ongoing.

NATHAN POPE | 18 years old
Killed during escape attempt after 2 days

JONATHAN NORTON | 27 years old
Pneumonia; died after 7 mo. in work camp

ESAU POWELL | 32 years old
Chronic diarrhea; 6.5-year sentence for theft

WILLIAM WHITE | 26 years old
Died during escape attempt after 7 months

GARRISON STROUD | 27 years old
Caught in machinery at camp

HARRY BOONE | 20 years old
Dysentery; died after 5 months

WILLIAM BONNER | 32 years old
Pneumonia; escaped, recaptured twice

MICHAEL CRUSE | 18 years old
Tree fall; died after 4 months

SEBE FROCH | 60 years old
Complications for limb amputation

MANUEL CARTINAS | 25 years old
Brain, stomach congestion; died after 1 mo.

GEORGE BREWER | 40 years old
Illness complications; died after 1 month

HARDY FULLER | 28 years old
Meningitis; died 7 months before release

LEWIS DAVIS | 24 years old
Congestion of bowels; died after 3 months

JAMES GARCIA | 19 years old
Unknown; died after 5 months

STEVE NEWMAN | Age unknown
Pauper burial at work camp

BILL ODAM | 27 years old
Pneumonia; repeated lashings for behavior

JOHN CHAMBERS | 32 years old
Pneumonia; Died 5 years into 7-year term

AARON DARBY | 18 years old
Heart clot; 7-year sentence for theft

PETER BROWN | 23 years old
Pulmonary congestion; died after 47 days

NEWTON ROLLINS | 32 years old
Pneumonia; died after 17 months

WILL HAGELL | 22 years old
Pneumonia; died after 4 months

JOHN VARNES | 34 years old
Pneumonia; sent to two work camps

IKE RHODES | Age unknown
Heart clot; died after 3 days

BEN DIXON | 18 years old
Pernicious fever; died after 32 days

GUS PARKER | Age unknown
Congestive fever; died after 22 days

RILEY WILLIAMS | 25 years old
Congestion; died after 1 month

HENRY COREY | 29 years old
Killed during escape attempt after 10 days

BEN FRANKLIN | 39 years old
Congestive fever; died after 2 months

SPOTLIGHT ON WORDS

BRAIN CONGESTION:

a broad term used describe a stroke, brain trauma, untreated hypertension, or meningitis

CONGESTIVE FEVER:

also known as malaria

DROPSY:

currently known as edema, indicates an abnormal build up of fluid; a sign of underlying heart, liver, or kidney disease or malnutrition; fatal if untreated

PERNICIOUS MALARIA:

a grave form of chronic malaria

PLEURISY:

inflammation of the chest and lung tissue making breathing painful; caused by infections like the flu

PULMONARY CONGESTION:

fluid in the lungs



JOSEPH COLLINS | 24 years old
Killed during escape attempt after 1 month

ALEX GRANVILLE | 26 years old
Typho malarial fever; died after 2 months

SAM ALLEN | 20 years old
Epileptic convulsion; died after 1 month

JIM SHELTON | Age unknown
Dropsy; labored at 3 different work camps

GEORGE JESSIE | 25 years old
Heart disease; died after 2 months

PHIL DAVIS | 26 years old
Paralysis of heart; died after 2 months

JOHN DAVIS | 26 years old
Brain congestion; died after 9 months

MORRIS GRAY | 40 years old
Sun stroke; died after 11 months

JERRY NEVILS | 29 years old
Sun stroke; repeated lashings for behavior

JOSH MITCHELL | 23 years old
Sun stroke; died after 4 mo.; repeated lashings

DEMPSY WHITFIELD | 20 years old
Sun stroke; died after 8 mo.; repeated lashings

HENRY TERRY | 25 years old
Sun stroke; died after 27 days at work camp

JOHN WILLIAMS | 25 years old
Internal hemorrhage; died after 1 month

GEORGE BAKER | 26 years old
Shot during escape attempt after 8 days

JEFF THOMAS | 25 years old
Abscess of liver; repeated lashings

COLEMAN COLE | 28 years old
Congestive convulsions; died after 8 days

WEST SCOTT | 18 years old
Shot during escape attempt after 3 months

WILLIAM STEPHENS | 23 years old
Dropsy; died after 6 months

WILLIAM NICHOLS | 25 years old
Congestive chill; gun, knife wounds

DAVY SMITH | 23 years old
Run over by tram car; died after 19 months

TOM ANDERSON | 23 years old
Dropsy; died after 7 months

AUZ. BOON | 27 years old
Sun stroke; died after 8 months

LLOYD ADAMS | Age unknown
Sun stroke; died after 10 days

WILL WILLIAMS | 22 years old
Pleurisy; died after 6 months; several scars

SAM LEE | 22 years old
Killed during escape attempt after 4 mo.

WILLIAM CRAWFORD | 21 years old
Shot during escape attempt after 1 month

WAFER O'DAIR | 23 years old
Sun stroke; died after <1 month

WILLIAM NASH | 16 years old
Brain congestion; died after 8 months

HENCE SIMONS | 27 years old
Consumption; 15 year sentence for horse theft

MACK BALDWIN | 24 years old
Killed during escape attempt after 4 years

JIM GLASS | 22 years old
Pernicious malaria; repeated lashings

ED JACKSON | 20 years old
Malaria; died after 8 months

ALLIE TOLLISON | 26 years old
Pneumonia; died after 13 months

JOHN BLACKSOM | 25 years old
Drowned; repeated lashings

ABE ADAMS | 26 years old
Drowned; 12 lashes for indolence

JOE MILLER | 22 years old
Malaria; died 5 months before release

JOE BERMAN | 40 years old
Malaria; 12 year sentence for burglary, theft

JACK MITCHELL | 33 years old
Pernicious malarial fever; died after 11 days

DUMP MILLER | 20 years old
Pernicious malarial fever; died after <3 mo.

ARTHUR ROBINSON | 20 years old
Killed during escape attempt after <2 mo.

HENRY WALKER | 25 years old
Struck by lightning after 14 months

ANDY JACKSON | 54 years old
Pernicious malaria; died halfway thru term

TRAVIS OWENS | 25 years old
Pneumonia; died 5 days into 5-year sodomy sentence

ROBERT BROWN | 23 years old
Sun stroke; died after 17 months; repeat lashings

ISRAEL NEWSOM | 38 years old
Heart failure; died 10 days after end of Convict Labor Era

ALFRED DAVIS | 37 years old
Pnumonia; died 67 days after end of Convict Labor Era



This digital exhibit guide and the Sugar Land 95 Traveling Exhibit were produced with Fort Bend Education Foundation Founder's Grant Funds. A special thanks to the Foundation for their continuous support in the important project.

