

Pride of Accomplishment Has Been Trademark of EL Folks

Citizens of Eagle Lake take pride in their community and a quick look at some of the accomplishments over the years will accent this point. The community boasts of some of the finest facilities available for research, study, work, and recreation of all kinds.

This historic little city has a modern appearance as the result of a constant downtown improvement program. Sparkling new store fronts, renovated building interiors and new lighting give a bright new appearance to the downtown scene.

Eagle Lake is a good example of how contagious



Eagle Lake's beautiful new public library, the Eula and David Wintermann Library.

largest in cattle production. Sand and gravel are mined and processed at a half dozen operations near Eagle Lake, and the city is a major railroad shipping point.

Although the area's economy is a varied one, rice is by far the area's most important crop. Last year more than a million barrels of rice were harvested in the county-most of it around Eagle Lake-for an income of almost \$20,000,000.

Tall rice dryers rise proudly above the coastal prairie at Eagle Lake, symbolic of the area's dependence on this rice crop.

You find rice everywhere, in restaurants, homes and at service clubs, rice is featured on the menu at almost every meal.

The growth of Eagle Lake and the development of the rice industry are closely intertwined. Eagle Lake was incorporated in 1888 as a ranching center, and the first rice crop was planted ten years later.

The crop was a success from the start, but the lack of water and adequate irrigation systems restricted crop development. In those early days, it wasn't uncommon for the big lake where the city got its name to be pumped dry during the summer months.

Today, big pumping plants on the Colorado River and the lake are tied in with wells and an intricate irrigation system to provide the water needed by rice growers.

Eagle Lake is also the headquarters for the Western Division of the Texas A&M Rice Research Center which is supported by finances from the state of Texas and through individual contributions from farmers of the area.

Cotton, corn and milo are grown extensively in the Eagle Lake area, but have lost out to rice as the principal money crop. Soybeans

are a crop gaining steadily in the area and provide income on lands between rice crops, since normally rice is planted on the land every third year.

Livestock has played an important part in the development of the Eagle Lake area since the days of the Texas Republic. Today, it combines with rice to give Eagle Lake a strong agriculture-centered economy.

As a vital material in the construction industry, the production of sand and gravel has long been important to Eagle Lake and Colorado County. Rich deposits of sand and gravel are found along the Colorado River. These deposits are mined and processed at several big plants operated by six companies. Thousands of truckloads of sand and gravel are shipped from the plants in the Eagle Lake area, annually.

Two railroads serve the city. Because of the large sand and gravel shipments, Eagle Lake is a major rail center. Eagle Lake is the second largest station on the Southern Pacific system on the basis of tonnage shipped.

Oil and gas are also produced in the Eagle Lake region. Crude oil production in Colorado County averages about 800,000 barrels annually, and more than 40 billion cubic feet of gas are produced each year. There are two gasoline plants and one cycling plant in the area. Several major pipelines cross the county.

About 5,600 acres are currently managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Land acquisition is still underway, and the proposed area of the refuge is 8,000 acres.

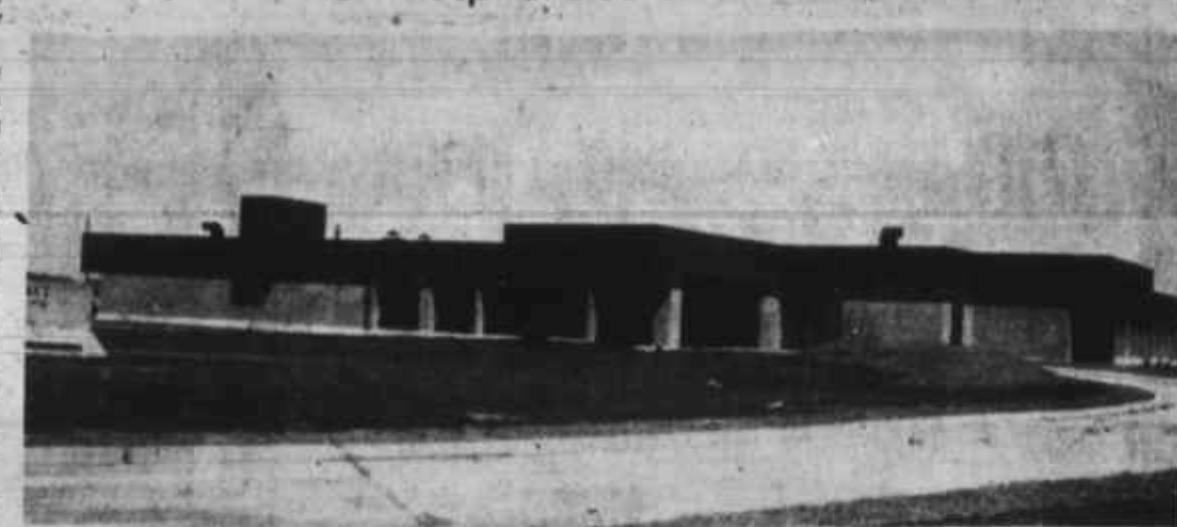
The refuge is situated in the heart of the upper Texas coastal tall grass prairie in Colorado County, about 75 miles inland from the Gulf of Mexico.

Refuge headquarters may be reached by traveling northeast from Eagle Lake, Texas, on FM 303 for six miles to the refuge entrance sign. An alternate route may be taken south from Seely, Texas, on 36 to FM 303, then traveling southwest for 10 miles to the refuge entrance sign. For additional information, contact: Wildlife Manager, Attwater Prairie National Wildlife Refuge, P.O. Box 845, Eagle Lake, Texas 77434. Telephone: (713) 234-3021.

Colorado County was one of the original Texas counties, and Eagle Lake has a long and colorful history. First records show the city with a population of just under 800 in 1890. The population passed the 1,000 mark in 1900, and growth has been steady since except for a dip following the depression years of the 1930s.

Although the city has had no residential building boom, many new homes are found in

New Hospital Dedicated Debt-Free



35-bed \$1.5 million Eagle Lake Community Hospital dedicated debt-free

also available at nearby Altair.

Eagle Lake folks like the idea of their city as a hunting center, and their friendly attitude to visitors helps keep them coming back year after year.

Eagle Lake is also the site of an Attwater Prairie Chicken Sanctuary, located north of the city. The Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge was established on July 1, 1972, to preserve and restore habitat critically needed for the endangered prairie chicken. The refuge became a preserve in the mid 1970s when The Nature Conservancy of Texas and the World Wildlife Fund, non-profit conservation organizations, purchased about 3,500 acres of land.

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attractive subdivisions at the edges of the city. Eagle Lake has many stately old homes and beautiful churches.

The city has an aggressive Chamber of Commerce. And as far as the future of the area is concerned, businessmen are optimistic, as evidenced by the fact that the city's one bank, The First National Bank, regularly lists new records in deposits and assets.

As evidenced by the continual modernization program, local folks are convinced that the first step toward progress must be taken by the citizens themselves.

The community, in 1975, dedicated the new 35-bed ultra-modern Eagle Lake Community Hospital, a \$1.5 million project, debt-free. This was made possible largely through individual, civic groups and corporation contributions. Also in 1975, the community dedicated the new Eula and David Wintermann Library, a public facility and a gift from the Wintermanns. The library is a project sponsored by the Eagle Lake Study Club and again many citizens and businesses have given to the establishment and operation of this valuable community asset.

The City of Eagle Lake boasts of the fact that every street in the community is paved; and virtually all homes have complete utility and sanitary facilities. A new fire station, with well equipped trucks and skilled equipment, was completed in 1974, and is manned by an active staff of volunteers. Also the community has a volunteer-manned Emergency Ambulance Service and over 20 of the volunteers are qualified as Emergency Medical Technicians.

Plans are underway to stimulate new business for the area. The Chamber of Commerce industrial committee is working to attract new industry to provide further diversification. The C.C.C. group regularly contacts industrial prospects and has a list of available industrial sites.

With the rapid growth of Houston-just 65 miles away-and the development of the coastal area farther south, prospects for the future look bright for this pleasant community.

Typical of the duck and goose concentrations in the Eagle Lake area during the fall and winter

God Bless America!

History Of Post Offices Compiled By Cong. Pickle

[The following information on the county and post offices in the county is reprinted from Cong. J. J. Pickle's Bicentennial "Postmasters & Post Offices of the Tenth Congressional District of Texas", dedicated to the late Cong. Wright Patman]

Colorado County

Only sixty miles from the Gulf of Mexico in South Central Texas, the boundaries of Colorado County enclose almost one thousand square miles of Colorado River watershed and some of the oldest historical sites in Texas. La Salle camped there in 1687 and traveled European explorers followed through the area. The first colonists who attempted to settle there in 1819 were from Moses Austin's colony, and a few years later Stephen F. Austin and the Baron de Bastrop surveyed a site for the capital of the municipality of Colorado although they ultimately chose San Felipe. The county was organized in 1836, one of the more substantially settled by then in Texas. Following the Civil War the river became less important for transportation when railroad construction was resumed in earnest, and by 1900 four different rail routes through the country had been completed that brought in a new group of immigrants, mostly Germans and Czechs, whose descendants give Colorado County its interesting ethnic flavor.

Columbus Post Office

Columbus, originally an Indian village called Montezuma by the Spanish and Beason's Ferry by the Americans, and later named for Columbus, Ohio, was located on a one hundred seventy acre site selected by Stephen F. Austin and the Baron de Bastrop as the capital of the municipality of Colorado but was soon abandoned by Austin because of difficulties with Indians. W.B. DeWees built a home there, however, and established the town. Streets were laid out and named in 1835, but, during the revolution that shortly followed, General Houston burned the town while retreating to San Jacinto before Santa Anna's Army. The town recovered, though, probably because of its advantageous location which one traveler in 1837 described as "more desirable than any I had yet seen for a town,

community, then called Prairie Point, had a store on the stage line between Columbus and Gonzales. The town was laid out by A.C. Herford in 1837. When Herford could not secure a Post Office because of the town's nearness to other ones, Amasa Turner agreed to move his Post Office in Lavaca County to Herford's location on the condition that it retain the name "Oakland" which Turner had chosen in honor of David G. Burnett's home.

R.L. Smith, one of two negro Legislators of the Twenty-fourth Legislature of Texas in 1894 was from Oakland.

Sheridan Post Office

Sheridan, in western Colorado County on the Texas and New Orleans Railroad, was laid out in 1869 and named for Hugh Sheridan, a pioneer settler. There must have been a small settlement in the area before the first Post Office was established in 1908, and before the town was surveyed and platted, Sheridan, for the first thirty

years after its inception, was a small rural community with a school house, store, hotel, depot and about a dozen scattered houses. The land is a poor sandy post-oak type which is not very productive and was used mostly for grazing cattle.

The first Post Office at Sheridan was transferred from the small village of Cheatham, one mile to the east, and first established in 1908. There was quite a rivalry between these two small villages and on June 17, 1913, the Post Office was transferred back to Cheatham. The People of Sheridan were persistent and on September 10, 1912, the Post Office was opened in Sheridan, leaving the one in Cheatham. In 1920, the Cheatham Post Office was discontinued and the Sheridan Post Office has since served the whole area.

In 1940 quite a change took place in the Sheridan area. The Shell Oil Company struck oil, the first of sixty or more wells, in a field of approximately eighty-eight hundred acres. It was determined, after initial development in the field, that oil production would be limited and that the field contained extensive gas and water reserves. After Shell's Plover Healy No. 3 was completed in April 1941, all subsequent wells were drilled to obtain gas.

Shell Oil Company also built a cycling plant that went into operation in 1945, employing a total of sixty-five people. As a result of the oil and gas production the population of Sheridan increased to the present two hundred twenty-five, with good schools and several progressive businesses.

Eagle Lake Post Office

Named for the nearby lake which was also the site of a Kanakawa Indian village and the scene of colorful Indian legends, Eagle Lake is also close to the Colorado River, one of the best farming regions in Texas. James McNaught, one of Stephen F.

After the Buffalo Bayou, Brazos and Colorado Railroad became part of the Southern Pacific System and the Santa Fe and Aransas Pass Railroad and then the Santa Fe reached Eagle Lake, the town became an important shipping point. For instance, about two hundred cars of local sand and gravel are presently shipped daily from Eagle Lake.

Eagle Lake is also famous as a center for hunting and has been since 1875 when W.A. Hight began commercially hunting there. Today, enormous flocks of migratory birds, especially canadian and snow geese, are attracted to the rice fields and the mild climate and spend their winters around Eagle Lake, waiting for spring and the long flights north.

Rock Island Post Office

The first Post Office in the Rock Island area was called Crasco. David Black was the first Postmaster appointed in April 1869, and he was succeeded by Elisha Scott in January 1897.

Crasco was named for Crasco Creek which is nearby. In 1824 shortly after Stephen F. Austin's "Old Three Hundred" settled in the area, a man named Crasco and some companions were driving horses and mules to Louisiana. When they were crossing this creek they were attacked by robbers and all were killed except one Mexican who was wounded, and the horses and mules were stolen. The Mexican made his way to Beason's now Columbus, and six or eight of the settlers were wounded, and the horses and mules were stolen. The Mexican made his way to Beason's now Columbus, and six or eight of the settlers were wounded, and the horses and mules were stolen. The Mexican made his way to Beason's now Columbus, and six or eight of the settlers were wounded, and the horses and mules were stolen.

This area was open range for cattle from the time Crasco was settled until about 1890 when C.S. Penfield and Charles Peterson bought a tract of land, had the town surveyed and platted in February 1896, and advertised city lots for sale. Located in southwest Colorado County on the San Antonio and Aransas Pass Roads, it was advertised as a "lush tropical paradise," which it was not. The name was changed to Rock Island by the settlers many of who were from Illinois.

Charles Peterson was appointed the first Postmaster of Rock Island in August 1897 and the Crasco Post Office was closed. He served until October 1901 when Marion Rigg was appointed who served until 1912.

Now, the town is a small rural community of about two hundred people whose income is derived from rice, cattle and oil.

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