

Shadrack Burney

Shadrack Burney was born about 1789 in North Carolina and is usually referred to as one of the earliest settlers of this area. A Shadrack Burney appears in 1792 as the grandson of a Simon Burney, whose will was probated in Greene County, Georgia. Most sources give his date of arrival as 1823. When the family of E. H. R. and Sarah (Barrow) Wallis settled at Wallis Hill in the winter of 1824-1825, they found only two bachelors living in that section. Family tradition holds that one of the two was Burney. The other was a Mr. Arnold, although no records have ever provided any more information about him. The 1826 census of the Atascosito District lists him as a farmer and stockraiser and also indicates he had previously resided in Louisiana before coming to Texas. His survey, located on the north side of Turtle Bay (Lake Anahuac) was bordered on the west by the E.H.R. Wallis Survey and on the north and east by the M. A. Carroll Survey. His title was dated April 24, 1831. His name does not appear in any local records after that date. One record refers to Burney as a former associate of the pirate/privateer Jean Laffite. The only landmark that links this early settler to the land is Burney Gully.

Green B. Jameson

Although some records incorrectly give the survey bearing his name carries the above spelling for his surname, other records suggest that it was actually spelled Green B. Jameson. He was born in Kentucky about 1807 and found himself in Texas early. By October 1830, Green was in San Felipe de Austin where he was practicing law. Historians say he may have moved briefly to Brazoria County some time before 1836. The young man eventually fell in with James Bowie and served the latter as an aide. He also is referred to as the chief engineer for the doomed Texian garrison at the Alamo. While at that famous bastion, Jameson supervised the remounting of the guns and the general strengthening of the garrison's defenses. He was killed along with the other defenders of the Alamo on March 6, 1836. The survey bearing his name in Chambers County was actually patented to his heirs, but this came several decades after his death. The State of Texas granted a donation certificate for 640 acres in 1851 to Jameson and his heirs for his having fallen in the Alamo. The tract was located in what is now Chambers County and was finally patented to the heirs on Dec. 17, 1873. Although he never lived here, Green B. Jameson's name will live forever in Texas history and makes a fascinating story. This survey was located along the north-eastern shore of Turtle Bay and was bordered on the northwest by Turtle Bayou.

Edward Dorr

Edward Dorr was born October 20, 1786 in the town of Mendon, Massachusetts. He was the youngest of eight children born to the Hon. Joseph Dorr and his wife Catherine Bucknam. He appeared before the Liberty County Board of Land Commissioners and indicated that he came to Texas in 1825 as a single man. He received a one-third league of land (1,476 acres), a tract that became known here for many years as Dorr's Island. Early tax rolls of Liberty County from the late 1830s and early 1840s suggest Dorr operated a small ranching and farming operation there. His herd of cattle generally consisted of around three hundred head, with horses numbering anywhere from ten to seventeen. A few other obscure records provide some additional information on this man's life. An interesting letter sent to Stephen F. Austin in 1829 included the signature of Dorr and a few other locals. The document testified to the impartiality of George Orr, who was then serving as the alcalde or judge for the Atascosito District. Entries in Dr. Nicholas D. Labadie's Day Book for September 6, 1837 show Dorr was one of twelve men selected to serve on a coroner's jury after the body of an unidentified man was found on the bay shore near the home of Jacob Freeland Winfree. Edward Dorr died in April 1847, apparently

without issue. His property was later purchased by Joshua Jackson Mayes and years later was known as Mayes Island.

Moses Alfred Carroll

The M. A. Carroll Survey, situated on the north shore of Turtle Bay, dates back to October 1835 when Moses Alfred Carroll received title to the tract of land. This property runs north and east of the Shadrack Burney Survey, takes in a section of land on the east side of Turtle Bayou, and then follows the meanders of that same stream all the way down to the mouth of Turtle Bayou. This survey is connected to one of the earliest and most shocking murders in the county.

Alfred Carroll was the legal ward and later the son-in-law of John M. Smith, who settled in the Atascosito District with his family in 1827. Smith is widely regarded as the most notorious Tory in the district. The family initially settled at Liberty. After his property was selected as the site of the present town of Liberty in an 1831 election, Smith was dispossessed of his land and relocated to the mouth of Turtle Bayou, obviously the land that was later granted to Carroll. It was here that Smith began his celebrated friendship with Colonel Juan Davis Bradburn, the commander of the Mexican garrison at Fort Anahuac.

Local historian Jean Epperson-Osborne has written extensively about the Smith family. Her research showed that a grand dinner for General Manuel Mier y Teran was held there at Smith's "country home" on Monday, October 13, 1831. After the battle of Anahuac in 1832 and Bradburn's removal from command, the Smith family found themselves no longer welcome in the vicinity of Anahuac.

They moved a third time, in late 1832 or early 1833, on this occasion resettling on an unoccupied peninsula known as Porter's Point in what is now the extreme southern part of Chambers County. After Smith's occupation of the property, the area became known as Smith's Point or Smith Point. John M. Smith built a home on the south side of the peninsula, according to Jean Epperson, on a wooded bluff that overlooked East Bay. It was also at this same time that Moses Alfred Carroll was married to Smith's daughter, Mary Eleanor, who was then about eighteen years of age. At that same time, John M. Smith, acting on behalf of the young man, submitted an application in Carroll's name for a league of land at the mouth of Turtle Bayou, which would take in the old family homeplace there. Carroll also constructed a home for himself and his wife on the north side of the Smith Point peninsula. Their home faced Trinity Bay and was located just north of his father-in-law's house. The pleasant days at Smith Point came to an end on October 7, 1835 when Carroll and his brother-in-law, William M. Smith, got into a quarrel, which ended in William fatally shooting Alfred Carroll. The dispute stemmed out of Carroll's alleged mistreatment of slaves. It also involved the Carroll Survey at Turtle Bayou, which had been granted to the young man only four days earlier. After a murder trial was held, William and John M. Smith (who was not involved in the fatal affray) were both sentenced to be hung by the neck on March 24, 1836. William, who wisely joined the Texian Army, fought at the battle of San Jacinto and was afterward granted a full pardon by President Sam Houston on January 29, 1837.

The rest of the family, including John M. Smith and the widowed Mrs. Eleanor Carroll, appear to have fled to Louisiana. Eleanor later sold the northern portion of the Carroll Survey on December 23, 1837 to Liberty County Sheriff William M. Logan. Another 225 acres was sold in 1839 to Taylor White, who had an adjoining survey. The balance of the property was sold to White's son-in-law Robert E. Booth at some later time. Jean Epperson's research shows that Carroll's widow was remarried to Richmond Read of Jefferson County, Texas. Alfred Carroll was buried by some of his slaves in a grove "black jack oaks" at Smith Point. Except for his years spent with the Smith family at Turtle Bayou, Carroll never lived long enough to occupy his survey there.