Niblett's Bluff Prepared
For Never to Come Battle

Niblett's Bluff, located on the east bank of the Sabine River, echoes more than 200 years of trading post history, but few authentic records are in existence to pinpoint its origin.

Cattle drivers, riverboat men, shiftless gamblers, pionering people, Indians, lumber corporations, and military men all had a hand in molding the faded story of this one-time defense fortress of the Confederate Army's eastern line of defense.

Two Calcasieu Parish families, whose records can be found in piecemeal segments, were founded at Niblett's Bluff. Others probably had their beginnings here but thus far no authentic records can be found.

From here sprang the famous Granger family of Western Louisiana.

The Dunn family began its roots here, also. Both the descendants of the Granger and Dunn founders are vitally interested in the preservation of this historic spot.

In 1961, the population of Niblet's Bluff scarcely exceeded 100 persons. The building point of the sugar growers of New Iberia and direct routes on the New Orleans and points in South Texas, it was the scene of great train of wagons going and coming from market.

Turetre hunters of bounty were held in the bayous and swamps of Southwest Louisiana, also date the life span of this once lively bluff of the Sabine.

One such hunter was Eustis Dunn, now residing in Lake Charles. He said his brother, D. O. Dunn and several friends tried to lift a pirate boat 23 years ago and failed, Dunn said.

Legend and history— they cannot be separated at this date— have it that the famed Buccaneer hero of the Battle of New Orleans, Jean Lafitte, scuttled a schooner in a slough for future regaining in a place called Bottle Neck, a stone's throw from Niblett's Bluff.

Niblett's Bluff was the major link between the Louisiana Territory and the Spanish Province of Texas in the days before the Battle of the Alamo.

After the Grangers and Dunns settled in Niblett's Bluff, things began to take a lasting significance.

Mrs. Dunn wrote in a letter to the Houston, Tex. Post that "at the time I settled in this place, Sept., 12, 1860, all the territory lying along the west Sabine in this parish, was a forest, over whose bosom roamed the bear and deer in countless numbers."

The bluff was the only stopping off place on what was also tabbed as the military road between Alexandria and was one of the points in the Civil War that made a triangle with Natchitoches as the third spot.

William M. Dunn kept busy running messages through the woodsland for the Confederate forces. Eustis Dunn remembers one incident his father told him of those message-running days.

"My father was riding a fast mule to Alexandria with a message for the Confederate headquarters and almost lost his life.

It seems that the mule which the elder Dunn rode was a long-winded, fast runner and never tired or stopped unless he pulled the animal to a halt.

William Dunn told his son, "I never had a horse as fast as that mule."

Dunn was in a spot.

"The Jayhawkers would have killed me if I tried my way out," father related to son. William Dunn told the deserts he had ridden them to join them and as soon as he delivered his message he would join up.

They let him go. He carried the messages through and got back safety to Niblett's Bluff several days later.

Unfortunately, the early chapter in the life of that earlier soldier of 1827, St. John the Baptist Granger, is not recorded in any documents known today.

However his grandson, Lee Granger, 76, who still rides his cow pony to round up his livestock today, recalls many incidents his own father handed down from Grandfather Granger.

There are people today who ask, "what right does Niblett's Bluff have to a place in history?"

Eustis Dunn has the answer. It was a lively trading post in its day. It was the crossing for travelers from way out west and east enroute to the New Orleans cotton mart.

It was the military spot chosen to engage the Yankees in the event they batted safely by Mansfield.

It was the first trading post in Louisiana between LaFayette and New Orleans and attracted pioneers as well as drifters until it finally gave way to become a log-rolling terminal for a giant lumber firm.

LAKE ARTHUR — The first people to inhabit the territory now known as Lake Arthur were the Indians. Evidence of their civilization can still be found in abundance in the mounds to which they buried their dead.

The first known white man to settle at or near "La Petite La Mentu," as it was known in the records of land transfers, was a man named Arthur LaBlanc, according to the book "History of Lake Arthur."

Travelers passing through this country began to refer to the lake as "La Lac d'Arthur," and by process of time it has reached its present form of pronunciation.

In 1831, Atanais Hebert, with his wife and son Placide, came to Lake Arthur to settle. The first store was operated by D. D. Hebert, and was located approximately where the A. D. M. Broadhead home stands.

The factor which drew most of the early people to Lake Arthur was timber. The entire section was a vast forest of the finest timber in the south. The section was rich and all the timber was needed by men who would take them.

Lake Arthur grew slowly, with rice farming joining lumber as a chief industry.

In 1855, when Lake Arthur was hardly able to support a store, a large hotel, the "Live Oak Hotel," was opened.

A fire in 1860 destroyed two saw mills and over five million feet of cypress lumber.

In 1863 a petition was signed by a majority of the landholders and submitted to the government asking that Lake Arthur be incorporated as a village.

At this time Lake Arthur comprised an area of over 250 landowners.

The petition was granted, and Jan. 19, 1904 the newly appointed officers, Dr. V. A. Miller, mayor; Leon Fox, M. M. Young, and J. B. Streeter, aldermen, had their first meeting.

The new officials decided on building the first public building at their first meeting, with Young and Fox being commissioned to build a city jail.

Floyd A. Smith was the first town marshal and John Dickerson was the first policeman.

In the first city elections on May 3, 1904, Dr. V. A. Miller was elected mayor; F. A. Smith, marshal; and J. B. Streeter, alderman.

On June 7, 1904, J. C. Mack and J. R. Moulton were elected aldermen to fill out the incomplete election of a council.

Until 1906 the school system in Lake Arthur was very inadequate, some of the school rooms being in old barns, stores, churches, or any other place that was available at the time.

To rectify the situation a $7,000 structure was completed by 1906 to serve as a school.

In 1908 Lake Arthur was declared a town by order of a declaration by Governor J. Y. Sanders. The village had grown into a town with a population of 1,250, according to the 1908 census.

As a town, five men were elected as aldermen to fill out the incomplete election of a council. 

Bell Telephone Co. installed the first telephone system in Lake Arthur in 1908.

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