

## White Point Settled by Two Cattlemen Back in the Year 1856

Paper written by Wallace R. Clark, date unknown

Scanned and converted to PDF file by Ken Pinter, 10/2011)

### WHITE POINT SETTLED BY TWO CATTLEMEN BACK IN YEAR 1856

White Point was settled by two cattlemen back in 1856, said Mts H.L. Baylor of Odem in a by-lined story written for San Patricio County News in September 1938. The interesting story reads in part:

"The exact year White Point was named seems vague, but that it was called White Point because of its location at a point on the bay where the cliffs of white shell juts out into the water is generally averred. "About 1856 Eddie and Frank White, cattlemen from East Texas bought many acres of land near White Point and began ranching in a new country of high grass and low brush. Old timers say that this gulf section was in "the Brazado" marsh later but in the early days it was mostly prairie. "In 1857 D.C. Rachal drove cattle from Liberty County to White Point for Eddie White to stock his newly purchased ranch land according to his son Chris Rachal.

"Only a few families moved to the White Point settlement after the war, and although, there is no authentic memorial such surnames as Evans, Moore, Rachal, White, Perdue, Dubose, Barnes and Hatch are accorded to a place in the imaginary register of early comers to the bay section during the last half of the nineteenth century. The Chris Rachal family lives in the original White Point section in what is thought to be several to be the oldest standing in this section". The only other building which might contest its age is part of the George Moore house in Meansville settlement when built. "These adventurous hardy settlers built houses of durable lumber, because when they came they went to make their homes, and cypress is used by most of them. "Frank White's home was made of lumber grafted from orange in lengths cut ready to shape into a house, Cypress is considered the emblem of mourning and though the building could not forest sorrow in store for them, their new cypress houses were to shelter families saddened by death soon after. In 1867 a scourge of yellow fever swept the Point. Will Miller recalls hearing old timers relate seeing a heavy low cloud of yellow fog come inland across the bay at the time of the epidemic. About fourteen people died, several of whom were members of the Whites family The remains of the Whites were first buried at White Point. D.C. Rachal tore boards from the house Mr. White had built for him to make coffins (boxes) to bury Frank and Ed White, and children in the little cemetery plot made necessary by scourge. Today no markers designate the early graves, but a leaning weathered fence southwest of the old ranch house encloses the lots. Before the White's death D.C. Rachal had bought some land from them and after their death bought the rest from the heirs. "There were happy days however, and the colony was not without its social life and romance. On January 18, 1866 a double wedding created interest for the entire section. Mary Barnes worked in the Williams home and when she was to be married to A. C. Moore Mrs Williams suggested that the ceremony be performed in her home. The invitations was accepted and at the same time Mahala Barnes and James Dubose took the marriage vows. These couples perhaps were the first married at White Point. "Buying provisions for the few families was for several weeks supply at one time. Three or four men traveled together and either crossed "the reef" into Corpus Christ via Portland or Gordons Ferry, or took another route to Gordons store at Sharpsburg. In either case the conveyance was "pack saddle" hack or wagon". Crossing the flats in a wagon going to Corpus Christi in the morning was easy, but by evening the return trip had its inconvenience. By then the tide had come in and the wagon tracks made in the morning was gone. Usually another wagon was expected to come meet the marked wagon which was loaded with cord wood and brush to build the temporary bridge above the tide water across the narrow slough and make a road for the returning wagon".

## RACHAL RANCH OLD POSTOFFICE, ROSITA, WAS FOCAL POINT OF PIONEER DAYS

Rosita was the name of the Post Office at the headquarters of the D.C. Rachal ranch, located almost due north of Corggy Christi, across Nueces Bay. The promontory extending south from the ranch house was known as White Point. The Rachal brothers, Darius, Newton and Frank were large land owners and ranch men in the late 70' and 80s. The terrible drouth of 1887-8 and the attendant business panic reduced the Rachal's to very much smaller holdings, Newt Rachal's headquarters were ten miles up Nueces Bay at Keleta, or better known then as Meansville. Albert moved to Beeville and later ~~built~~ built quite a spread in Falls County.

D. C. Rachal, known to everyone as Dyrees, was definitely a character. The pronunciation of Darius in Spanish is Daresus, accent on the second syllable, so it was corrupted to Dyrees. The house was immense. I never really knew how many rooms it had, but I should say somewhere around twelve to fifteen. It faced the east with a colonial porch on both first and second stories with large white columns running all the way to the roof. It was famous all over South Texas and the welcome mat was always out. The family loved company and visitors were constantly there. Some who came as visitors remained and became permanent members of the menage. One of these a Captain Collins, came to the ranch when the lumber for the house was being brought in by schooner from Lake Charles La. The house and most of the out buildings were built of this very fine red pine. The large Schooners docked in Corpus and the lumber lightened across the Nueces Bay. Some of the finishing material was brought by way of wayon all around the bay, crossing the Nueces River above the mouth on the Bitterman Ferry. Mrs Bitterman was a sister of the Rachal men.

This man Collins was a member of one of the crews of these lumber schooners. He made frequent visits to the ranch, staying longer each time. He finally stayed permanently. If he had a family no one ever knew anything about them. He simply became a retainer and to us younger frequent visitors, Collins was simply one of the family. The Rachals accepted him and there was never any thought of imposition. That's just kind of place it was.

Another visitor who became, shall we say "temporarily permanent". was a young man by the name of McDaniel, known to everybody as Chicago. Fact is, I never knew him by any other name until several years later when I was a student in Chicago, long about 1905 or 6, I was at the Chicago and Northwestern depot one afternoon to meet a cousin of mine who was coming in from Nebraska. Just as we were coming out of the main entrance of the station, whom should we meet but my old friend of the Rachal ranch going in. We instantly recognized each other and re-began a very pleasant friendship, which makes another saga, to be told on other pages. "Chicago" lived out in Wilmette, but he was in South Texas, he always said Chicago when asked where called home, as of course no one down there ever heard of Wilmette. He had been sent, several years before to the Southwest by his doctor in the hope of finding relief for a bad chronic case of Asthma. He was for a time saying in San Diego, Texas. It was there that he met some of the men from the Rachal ranch who were down there buying cattle. He and some of the men, especially the boys Ernest and Dick, struck up an acquaintance and they persuaded him to accompany them back to their home. He became another member of the clan, remaining there some three or four years.

The immediate D.C. Rachal family was a large one. Mr and Mrs Rachal who lived to ripe old age; the eldest daughter, Mrs Pete Hunter, sons Chris, Ernest and Dick, other daughter Kate, Julia, May and Florence. It was a happy family and hardly a meal was served but there wer guest

seated with the family. Of course it was a long table. Uncle Dyreese always sat at the head and Aunt Julia, Mrs Rachel, at the foot. The fare was bountiful, but to Ernest there was only one dish- fijoies-red beans if you dudes don't know. He ate them from a deep soup dish with a desert spoon. About every five minutes or so the call from Ernest would be heard: "Chico MAS fijoies "Chico was the cook, from time immemorial.

Some three of the gracious women folk of the family were afflicted with deafness. Aunt Julia, an elderly lady known to me only as "Aunt" and I believe the other was Mrs. Steve Lewis, a cousin. On one occasion when I was dinner guest, only "Aunt" of the women folk was there. As usual Uncle Dyreese was at the head of the table and "Aunt" was at the foot. She seated me just next to her. She was intensely deaf having scarcely any sense of hearing at all. But a most lovely lady, and doing her vast best to entertain the guest of the day- me, It was impossible to converse with her except by nodding or shaking my head. She began asking me questions beginning with "Wallace will you have some butter"? I nodded assent and accepted. "Wallace, do you have butter at home?" I nodded again in the affirmative. Then. "Does you Papa keep a cow"? I shook my head in the negative. In the meantime I noticed, out of the tail of my eye that Uncle Dyreese was getting a little nervous. He knew what was inevitably coming. "Aunt" was going to ask me something finally that would call for something in the way of a reply other than a nod or a shake. Again "Aunt" "Do you have to buy butter?" I nodded. "Buy it from Mr Kleespies?" (A Portland grocer. We lived in Portland). I nodded again. But that was it. Brother. "How much do you have to pay for it?" I was spared the embarrassment of trying to answer. Uncle Dyreese raised up, leaned as far down the table as he could, and shouted "Good God, a dollar a pound". at which "Aunt" only made a wry face.

On another occasion my Mother, father and I spent several days at the Rachel ranch during summer vacation of Bay View College, which was a boarding school in Portland owned and operated by My Father and Mother. At that time all three of the ladies mentioned above afflicted with deafness were there. We had a wonderful time, and no one could possibly have been more royally entertained. We were sent home loaded down with all kinds of delicious fruits and vegetables from the ranch, but for several days after we got home we would find ourselves joyfully shouting at the top of our voices to each other.

There was never another place like it. There never will be, folks just don't have time to visit any more. The art of gracious entertainment is a lost one-more's the pity.

End of Article