

From a newspaper article in the Beaumont Enterprise written by Ralph Ramos on 6 Feb 1973:

PATROON BAY - Time was when Time was quite a place but Time's time ran out. There was a Time, but there is no more.

Time in its time was a busy Sabine County community hugging the Sabine River with Patroon Bayou between it and clear, high ground to the west.

Time, soon after the turn of the century, had its own post office. It grew to demand two grocery stores, and had a steam-powered cotton gin and grist mill and a school house which for years served double duty as a church on Sunday. Then in the late years of Time's existence a union church building went up, a community project.

There are a handful of living descendants of Time like Will Shue who lived there from 1911 until 1944. He moved off to Port Arthur and would have finally settled back down on the land which was once Time but Toledo Bend Lake rose up to cut off the Hamilton to Milam road. The only other way to get there required about 15 miles of out-of-the-way travel on a bad road.

Only a piece of that Hamilton-Milam mail route is passable. Shue remembers when the mailman made the trip between Hamilton and Milam and through the communities of Time and Isla on horseback, twice daily.

Mrs. J.D. Chambers was an early postmistress at Time. The post office made several moves before it finally shut down. After Mrs. Chambers, the mail service was headquartered at Tom Bell's store. Chambers' ferry was one of the landmarks on the Sabine, it was just a quarter of a mile away from Time. Shue's father-in-law set up the ferry service, and in his younger days Shue helped operate it. The ferry ran until the Pendleton Ferry Bridge went in, and then like Time, the ferry's time ran out.

Shue remembers making the river crossings. To go one way he'd tie one end of the ferry tight to the cable slung across the Sabine and loosen the lines on the other end. The current would hit the slanted ferry and scoot it and its load across. To return the procedure would be reversed.

It cost four bits for a horse-drawn wagon to cross. The fee for a wagon pulled by a team of mules was six bits and a horse and rider paid two bits...two bits, of course, being a quarter.

And, when large herds of cattle came to the crossing their drovers were charged a nickel a head for the boat service.

The ferry boat was 12 feet wide and 52 feet long. Shue remembers because he helped hew out the solid heart timbers from which the ferry barges were made.

When the river would rise and flood the bottoms it wasn't unusual for the ferry to be hand hauled from tree to tree almost two miles from Texas high ground to high ground in Louisiana.

Shue remembers a body being washed up against the ferry one morning, long ago. No one could identify the dead man, and he was buried on top of the highest knoll. "Would you believe it," Shue goes on, "that grave is at least 12 feet under water now."

What happened to Time? It never was a big community. A few of the older folks died off. No one would maintain the road to Time and to Chambers Ferry, so several families moved out. Then the logging tram railroads pulled up track and left. A few more moved out with that.

Finally that Sabine River community which heard the steamboats whistle and whose residents held the lines when they steamed up to the banks, the town whose folks went to and from Louisiana across the nearby ferry, was deserted. Houses and buildings either were torn down and hauled away or fell and decayed.

"Now," says Shue, who still owns his place where Time was, "it's nothing but pasture land. Not a sign there ever was a Time."