



Lola Dubose Rockland Photograph Collection

2007:024

Processed by Emily E. Hyatt
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Historical/Biographical Sketch

Rockland, Texas, was once a thriving, yet small community deep in the piney-woods of East Texas in northeast Tyler County near the Neches River. The local rock quarries (limestone) and a sawmill benefited from its terminus position on the Sabine and East Texas Railway. At its peak Rockland consisted of over 200 buildings. Its earliest Post Office opened in 1883, and the ferry across the river (known as the Dunkin Ferry, after its second owner, saloon owner Mac Dunkin) operated from 1885 until a modern highway bridge made it obsolete. A large sawmill operated at Rockland from the late 1880's to 1912, owned at various times by the Rockland Lumber Company, Aldridge Lumber Company, and William Cameron & Company, which benefited from the area's abundant timber and location on a major railroad. After the Texas and New Orleans Railroad acquired the Sabine and East Texas Railway and extended the line to Dallas during the early 1900's, Rockland's fortunes began to fall and it lost its prominence.

Rockland owed some of its short-lived boom to the nearby town of Aldridge, a company town built around the new Aldridge Lumber Company sawmill across the river in 1906. Aldridge had a post office from 1907 to 1916, and its fortunes, like that of Rockland, hinged on the railroads and the mills. The Aldridge mill (in Aldridge, not to be confused with the earlier Aldridge Mill in Rockland) was located seven miles east of Rockland, in northwest Jasper County, and was connected to Rockland by the Burr's Ferry, Browndell and Chester Railroad. The Aldridge Sawmill burned in 1911 and again

in 1915 and consistently disappointed investors, including noted lumberman John Henry Kirby, with its low performance. The main mill was shuttered after the 1915 fire, although some limited milling and forestry activity, including turpentine operations, continued to occur for several years following.

The collection's assembler, Lola Dubose, spent a great deal of time and effort in an attempt to document Rockland's history, researching families and businesses and collecting photographs.

Scope and Content Note

Digital images document Rockland and its inhabitants at the end of the 19th century through the middle of the 20th century. Included are images of Neches River ferries, rock quarries, and Rockland railroad scenes. Two of the photos are featured on page 43 in the December 2007 issue of *The Pine Bough*, which is available as a PDF in the publications section of The History Center's website.

Physical Description

One tintype in fair to bad condition and 32 digital images scanned from donor's originals.

Arrangement Note

Digital images are located in Collection Scans; the tintype is located in the Photo File.

Provenance Note

The various owners of each photograph lent or gave them to Mrs. Dubose as she researched Rockland history. Mrs. Dubose lent the photographs to The History Center in June 2006, when they were scanned and returned to her. Mrs. Dubose donated the tintype to The History Center.