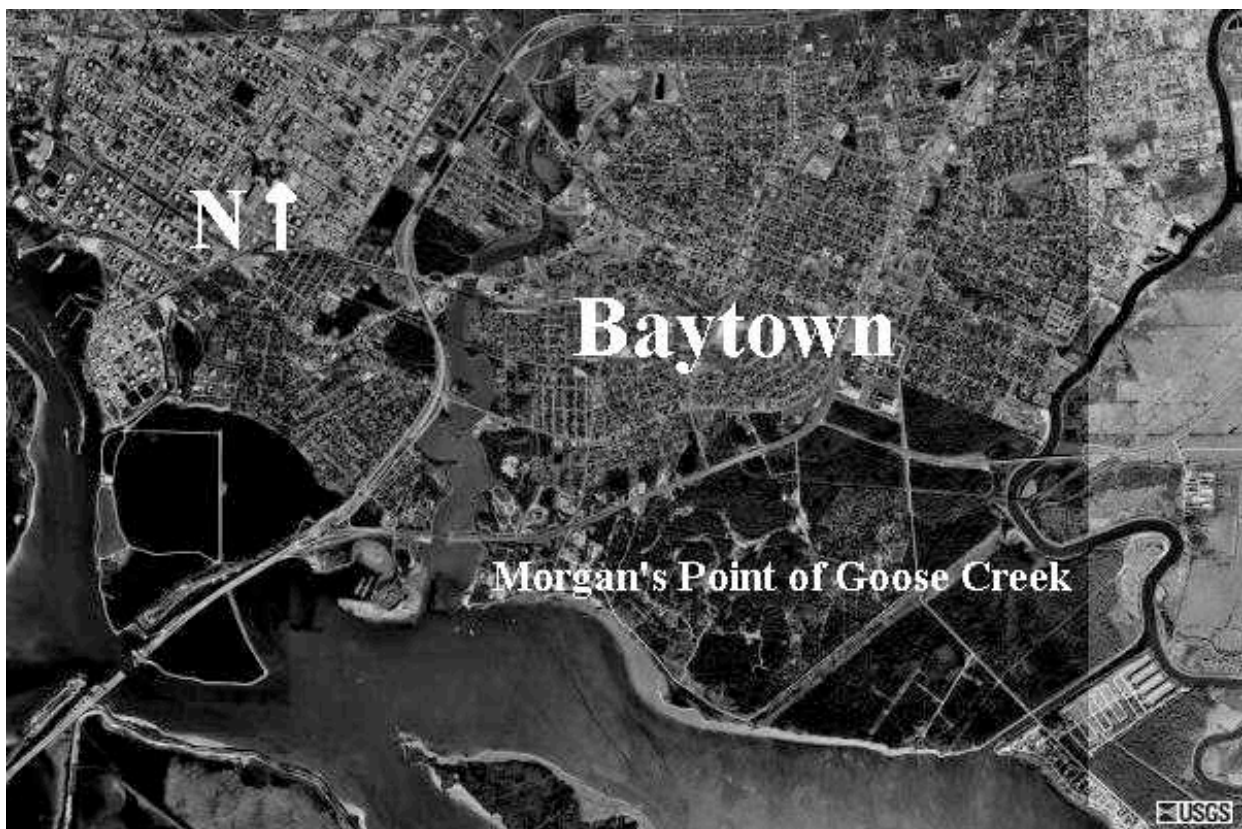


Bayland Orphan Home, 1867–1948

These records consist of nine volumes and several loose documents stored in some of these volumes kept by the Board of Trustees of the Bayland Orphan Home from inception until it closed in 1948. Originally, the Bayland Orphan Home was sited near Morgan's Point on Goose Creek in what is now Baytown (see map below). These records are far from complete, and only three board minute books and four financial ledgers remain from what was transferred from the orphanage on April 26, 1932 to Harry Washburn, Harris County Auditor (see **Accession Information**, which follows). Until the processing of these records was complete, the Harris County Archivist can demonstrate that not all of the records have been available to researchers. Thus, researchers should read all secondary histories with care. The population schedules of the 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930 Federal censuses can be used with these records to help determine some of the names of the orphans nurtured by this institution during its lifetime.



1979 photo of Morgan's Point of Goose Creek area courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey

Agency History

Upon the petition of Rev. C. C. Preston, the Texas legislature approved a bill on September 24, 1866, "...to incorporate the 'Orphan's Home,' at Bayland, in Harris county, State of Texas." In addition to naming the first board members—W. P. Ballinger, J. L. Bryan, M. S. Munson, H. F. Gillette, J. T. Brady, Ashbel Smith, and F. H. Merriman—and providing them with the statutory powers to govern and manage the institution, the legislation also stated that the institution would be nonsectarian and open to all indigent white children free of charge. The board elected Rev. Preston superintendent upon passage of the act and the home immediately opened to receive orphans.

The earliest existent recorded board meeting took place in Houston, Texas, at the home of Dr. John L. Bryan on January 15, 1867. The urgent need for resources compelled the board to hire traveling agents to raise subscriptions to support the home. Appeals were made for donations to buy land and a building to house the children. A new superintendent was hired to manage the running of the home and provisions were made for a matron and teachers.

In February 1869, 205 acres of land and a house were purchased from Dr. Bryan for \$4000 on San Jacinto Bay in eastern Harris County, midway between Houston and Galveston and accessible only by steamboat. The area is currently called Morgan's Point, Baytown, Texas (see photo). The majority of the money to purchase the property came from Houston and Galveston.

Fund raising, both in cash and kind, became increasingly difficult. In 1873, the board contacted former Governor Elisha M. Pease concerning the availability of state land for the orphans. Pease replied on March 19, 1873, that the 6th Legislature had set aside lands for orphans in 1856. However, as nothing had been done with the lands, he was concerned they would revert to other purposes. The Board sent H. R. Gillette to Austin to lobby for the lands. On June 5, 1873, the legislature granted the home 48,635 acres of land. If the home ceased to exist, the land would revert to the state. By 1875, the Board began to sell the lands to raise money to support the home.

An ongoing function of the board concerned the admission and release of children from the home. Although the term "orphan" was used in the name of the home, the children, both boys and girls, were not always orphans in the sense that both parents were dead. Often, children were admitted "on account of the extreme poverty of the applicants." Provisions were made for mothers to accompany their children to the home. They were expected to work and were provided room, board, and clothing. The board also voted to allow private pupils in the schools to help support the home. However, only white children were admitted—no "defective" children or those of bad character were allowed.

From the beginning, the board required any application to receive children to be in writing to prevent abuse and exploitation of the children. As the laws concerning adoption changed throughout the years, the board kept current with those changes and acted accordingly. By 1895, children would only be released if they had been legally adopted.

As early as October 1886, the board began to discuss moving the home closer to Houston due to the "undesirable locality" and "difficulty of access." In the fall of 1887, the board determined to buy the J. C. Baldwin property on the North Side of Buffalo Bayou, 1.75 miles from the courthouse. In an early effort to relinquish responsibility for the home, the board suggested that the city of Houston buy the property for the home and the state relocate the State Orphans Asylum to Houston, but neither the city nor the state was interested. In January 1888, the charter of the orphanage was amended, and the name changed from "Orphans Home" to "Bayland Orphans Home at Houston" with the corporation to exist for an additional 50 years. In June, the board hired Kezia DePelchin as matron for the home. The farming operation became insupportable in the new location. In 1897, the board sold the farm portion of the land. By 1907, only thirteen children remained in the home—a father had just removed his seven children that had been placed there.

In 1908, the board once again began to look for another tract of land for the home. In 1912, Joseph F. Meyer donated 67.9 acres of land southwest of Houston. On New Years Eve 1914, the Baldwin Place home burned to the ground. No one was hurt and some furniture was saved. The board decided to plat the "OLD HOME PLACE" and began plans for the new home in March 1915. A year later, the children were relocated.

Financial problems continued to plague the board along with a low census of children. The board members themselves were aging and it was becoming difficult to bring in new

members to serve. In August 1917, the board passed a resolution to find a “religious, fraternal or other organization with influence” to take over the work and assets of the home. In September it was agreed that Harris County would acquire the Bayland Orphans Home. The transfer took place on October 1, 1918. However, the county was slow to fulfill its obligations. On June 24, 1920, the Board notified the county to return the home to them by August 1, 1920. Negotiations ensued between the county and the board and two years later an agreement was signed by both parties. Harris County would build a home for white girls in Bellaire and Bayland would be used for boys.

The board continued to manage their financial assets and to make significant donations to the homes of furniture, equipment, animals, and cash. In 1925, they donated \$4000 for a schoolhouse to be located between the “Bayland Girls Home and the Harris County Girl’s Home.” In January 1932, J. V. Dealy, the long time Treasurer, was accused of embezzling \$4,338.42 from the funds of the home. Although unable to make restitution, the Board decided not to call in his bond and agreed to a repayment plan by Dealy and the Elgin heirs. The board never recouped this loss.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, the board continued to age and decline. By the mid 1940s, there are only three members left serving. In 1948 A. E. Clarkson proposed to liquidate the assets by giving the 1/16 royalties to the land in Callahan County to Harris County, \$1,000 to Houston Church Women for maintenance of the Chapel at the Bellaire School, \$2,237 for chlorinating units and equipment for the swimming pools at the Bayland Orphans Home for Boys and the Mary Burnett School for Girls, and \$180.27 to the Mary Burnett School to improve the swimming pool area. The board dissolved and the records closed on September 19, 1948.

Scope and Contents of the Records

Minutes, financial and legal records, correspondence and printed materials document the activities and functions of the Board of Trustees of the Bayland Orphan Home from 1867 to 1948. The earliest minute book, *Old Book of Minutes, Bayland Orphan Home, 1867–1890*, records Board deliberations, decisions, resolutions, financial reports, correspondence, and memorials and has been indexed by various users with notes on the inside cover and fly pages. Of particular interest are the organization’s bylaws of February 4, 1871; the difficulties in raising funds; the decision to relocate to Houston; the board’s decisions concerning the welfare of children; and their offer to care for the children orphaned by the hurricane that devastated Sabine Pass in 1886.

The second volume of minutes, *Bayland Orphan [Home], 1891–1932*, documents changes in admission rules; the establishment of the Lady Auxiliary Board in 1895; the sale of the Bayland Farm in 1897; and the decision to relocate to southwest Houston, 1912–1916. Of particular interest is the original plat for the “Bayland Home Addition” of August 9, 1916. The minutes record the desire of the board to have another entity take over the responsibilities for the home in 1918; the negotiations with Harris County in 1920–1922; the management of the Board’s assets; and the embezzlement by J. V. Dealy in 1932. Obituaries of G. W. Kidd, p. 112, S. J. Wertheimer, p. 299, and William Christian, p. 302 detail the lives of some of the prominent men who were involved with the Bayland Orphan Home.

Minute Book, No. 3, Bayland Orphan’s Home, 1932–1948, the final volume of minutes. It continues to document financial decisions; the removal of the Boy’s Home to Clear Lake in 1937; the disposition of the Board of Trustee Records, 1932, 1935; and the final dissolution of the Board in 1948. Of particular interest are the obituaries of Jacob V. Dealy, p. 6, Joseph F. Meyer, p. 22, Ennis Cargill p. 31, and Chester Bryan, pp. 62–3.

The six volumes of financial records, 1883–1947, complement the minutes and document the difficulties in raising money, the financial transactions in running the home, and the

management of the assets of the corporation. Entries record contributors, employees and their salaries, the sales of land, purchasers, and the terms of sale.

Correspondence, financial records, legal documents, and printed materials filed within the volumes of minutes and financial records reveal the functions of the Board from 1870–1939. Correspondence covers topics from donations, 1870, to land sales, 1884 and 1904, to the return of children to their parents, 1915. Financial documents, 1897–1918, record assets, monthly expenditures, and worksheets. A letter, receipt, and list of contributors to a fundraising matinee at the Majestic Theatre, 1917, however, document the effort expended to raise funds for the home. Legal documents contain a report on the examination of titles to land owned by the corporation in 1914, the agreement between Bayland Orphan’s Home and Harris County in 1922, and the 1939 amendment to the Charter of the Bayland Orphan’s Home. Of particular interest are the three subject files. The first deals with an agreement with J. Harrell to lease land on Richmond Road and the drainage ditch that was built. This includes contract, specifications, invoices, receipts, and inspector’s reports. The second subject file documents the embezzlement by J. V. Dealy. The third subject file concerns the removal of the Boy’s Home to Clear Lake.

Unfortunately, these records provide only a glimpse of the records that at one time were created by the Board of Trustees. The remainder, at least one box of records, has been lost.

Related Material

Self-Published

[Board of Trustees, Bayland Orphan’s Home]. *Orphan’s Home at Bayland, Harris County, Texas*. Houston: A. C. Gray & Co., Printers and Book Binders, 1871.

Manuscript Collections

Ashbel Smith Papers, Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin.

Secondary Sources

Haenel, Olga Miller. *A Social History of Baytown, Texas, 1912–1956*. M.A. thesis; Austin: University of Texas, 1958.

Silverthorne, Elizabeth. *Ashbel Smith of Texas* College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1982.

Walls, Albert A. *Study of Administrative Problems at Bayland Orphans' Home for Boys*. M.A. thesis; Austin: University of Texas, 1947.

Online

Bayland Orphan’s Home for Boys, *Handbook of Texas Online* (accessed May 14, 2007)

< <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/BB/ynb1.html> >

DePelchin, Kezia Payne, *Handbook of Texas Online* (accessed May 14, 2007)

< <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/DD/fdekt.html> >

Gillette, Henry Flavel, *Handbook of Texas Online* (accessed May 14, 2007)

< <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/GG/fgi29.html> >

Smith, Ashbel, *Handbook of Texas Online* (accessed May 14, 2007)

< <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/SS/fsm4.html> >

Accession Information

Accession numbers are 2003.009 and 2003.017.

The Board of Trustees transferred on April 26, 1932 the records of the home including the minute and financial books and a box of papers to Harry Washburn, Harris County Auditor. When the board ceased to exist in August 1948, the remaining records were also given to the Auditor’s Office. Only the present nine volumes survive—none of the correspondence or other papers that were referred to in 1932. Seven of those volumes were transferred to the Houston Metropolitan Research Center in the early 1980s as a part of the Regional Historical Records

Depository program and returned to Harris County in the summer of 2003 by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission when Houston Public Library withdrew from the RHRD program. In December 2003, an additional two volumes were found in the Harris County Auditor's Office and was transferred to the Harris County Archives.

The volumes were used as convenient places to "file" papers. Oftentimes there was little or no reason for their placement within the volumes. The loose papers have been arranged for the most part by series and placed after the volumes of minutes and financial records. Those records that were fastened together remain so physically and intellectually in the arrangement. Separation sheets indicate the original and new locations for these documents.

It should be noted that a significant number of records have been lost and that all of the volumes may not have been accessible to the public until the present. Therefore, secondary sources concerning the history of the home published prior to 2007 should be treated accordingly.

Arrangement

Minute Books

Box	Folder	
0528	1.	Old Book of Minutes, Bayland Orphan Home, January 15, 1867–September 29, 1890
OV91		Bayland Orphan [Home], September 24, 1891–February 15, 1932
0528	8–11.	Minute Book, No. 3, Bayland Orphan's Home, April 26, 1932–August 19, 1948, divided into:
0528	8.	A. Front Cover–p. 26, April 26, 1932–October 30, 1936
0528	9.	B. p. 27–p. 46, January 5, 1937–November 11, 1940
0528	10.	C. p. 47–p. 70, November 7, 1940–September 8, 1947
0528	11.	D. p. 71–p. 94, September 26, 1947–September 19, 1948

Cash Journals

0528	2.	Bayland O Home Cash Book, January 1, 1895–February 7, 1904
0528	3.	Cash, Bayland Orphans Home, February 1, 1904–October 29, 1914
0528	4.	Cash Book, January 1, 1915–March 17, 1932
0528	5.	Cash Book, Bayland Orphan's Home, December 4, 1915–March 18, 1918
0528	6.	Cash-Journal and Ledger No. 3, Bayland Orphan's Home, January 27, 1932–November 20, 1947

Accounts Payable Journal

0528	7	Bills Receivable Book / B. O. Home, March 2, 1883–September 15, 1896
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Loose Documents (stored in above volumes)

Correspondence Documents

0528	12.	ALS. B. A. Shepard from H. F. Gillett, July 12, 1870
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Correspondence Documents, Continued

- 0528 12. ALS. [Board of Trustees] from Williams Veale & Son. 2 pp., 1884
12. ALS. Trustees of Bayland Orphan's Home from S. Webb. 1 p., September 20, 1884
12. ALS. Power of Attorney. W. G. Webb to sign and date notes for S. Webb, September 21, 1884
12. ALS. Honorable County Judge of Harris County from W. P. Gribble. 1 p., March 11, 1897
12. TLS. [Bayland Orphan's Home Trustees] from S. B. Hawkins, November 15, 1899
12. ALS. Mr. Dumble from H. Becker, Jr., February 4, 1904
12. ALS. Jas. F. Dumble from W. E. Hawkins. Land dispute. 6 pp., September 4, 1904
12. ALS. Mr. Dealy, Trustee of Bayland Orphan's Home from Mr. and Mrs. Adam Boehm. Return of children. 1 p., February 8, 1915

Correspondence Documents, Minutes

- 0528 13. Memo, removed photos of Emily Perry's home at Peach Point, not dated
13. Memo, donations, not dated
13. Memo, names, addresses, not dated

Correspondence Documents, Reports

- 0528 14. ADS. Report on visit to home by Secretary, 1 p., June 10, 1902

Correspondence Documents, Richmond Road Property

- 0528 15. ALS. Lease agreement between J. Harrell and Trustees. Land on Richmond Road. Includes description of land, 2 pp., January 17, 1914–March 26, 1914
15. Project Report—drainage for Bayland Orphan's Home tract of land. Includes contract, specifications, invoices, receipts, inspector's reports, 13 pp., January 27, 1915–May 10, 1915

Correspondence Documents, Embezzlement of Orphan Home Funds

- 0528 16. First National Bank, three cancelled checks, October 26, 1921–January 1922
16. First National Bank, Bank Statement of May 10, 1922–July 24, 1925, September 4, 1925
16. PPDS. Bond for Jacob V. Dealy in the amount of \$5000, January 15, 1931
16. LT.cc. J. V. Dealy from [A. E. Clarkson], November 4, 1931
16. First National Bank, Bank Statement of September 19, 1925–October 15, 1931, November 4, 1931
16. LT.cc. J. V. Dealy from [A. E. Clarkson], November 19, 1931

Correspondence Documents, Embezzlement of Orphan Home Funds, *Continued*

- 0528 16. Receipt for taxes paid, R. M. Elgin Estate, December 18, 1931
16. First National Bank, Bank Statement of November 30, 1931–January 6, 1932, January 14, 1932
16. LT.cc. J. V. Dealy from [A. E. Clarkson], January 16, 1932
16. TLS. Ennis Cargill from R. W. Elgin, February 6, 1932
16. Worksheet, not dated
16. Financial Worksheets, audit of books, 5 pp., not dated
16. Notes from Elgin estate heirs to be payable to Bayland Orphan’s Home, not dated
16. Draft agreement with J. V. Dealy to repay money owed Bayland Orphan’s Home, not dated

Correspondence Documents, Move to Clear Lake

- 0528 17. Correspondence relating to removal of Bayland Orphan’s Home to Clear Lake, January 14, 1937–April 12, 1937
17. Newspaper Clipping, *Houston Chronicle*, “ ‘Bat’ Used at Boys School, Solons Told,” April 20, 1937
17. Correspondence relating to resolution moving boys home with attachments, April 28, 1937:
- A. Resolution
 - B. TLS, Chester Bryan, March 18, 1937
 - C. Copy of minutes of Trustees of Bayland Orphan’s Home, October 30, 1936

Financial Documents

- 0528 18. Receipt for donations to Bayland Orphan’s Home, March 9, 1897
18. Worksheet, monthly totals of receipts and disbursements, November 1904–December 1905
18. Monthly Financial Report for June 1915, June 1915
18. TLS. J. V. Dealy from H. T. Warner plus enclosures, December 24, 1917:
- A. List of contributors
 - B. Invoice from Majestic Theatre
18. Statement of Bayland Orphan’s Home Assets and estimated values, March 13, 1918
18. List of assets, ca. January 1, 1916
18. Newspaper clipping, contributions to the home, not dated
18. “Menu of Receipts for Building A/C” covering dates February 1900–April 1902, not dated

Legal Documents

- 0528 19. PPD. Copies as executed, Land sales in Shackelford County, February 23, 1909
19. TDS. Report and notes of examination of title to lands of Bayland Orphan’s Home in Shackelford, Callahan, Coryell, Polk, etc., counties by E. P. Phelps. Includes handwritten notes, October 21, 1914

Legal Documents, *Continued*

- 0528 19. Agreement between Bayland Orphan's Home and Harris
County. 2 copies, April 22, 1922
19. Amendment to Charter of Bayland Orphan's Home and
certification of copy, March 1, 1939

Legal Documents Referencing Board Minutes

- 0528 20. Synopsis of Board of Trustee Minutes, October 6, 1888–
March 15, 1889
20. List of references to sale of lands with page numbers, not
dated

Printed Materials

- 0528 21. Note paper, 3 sheets "Bayland Orphan Home", not dated

Processed and prepared by Sarah Canby Jackson, CA, for Harris County Archives, May 2007.