

Beaumont & Port Arthur



Welcome

The inspiration for Port Arthur's founding was novel; railroad pioneer Arthur E. Stilwell, who established the town, later wrote that the ideas for his railways and the location of his namesake city came from "brownies" who spoke to him. Stilwell began settling the city in 1895 with financial assistance from Dutch investors. The founder of what is now Kansas City Southern Railroad envisioned Port Arthur as the southern terminus for his new railway, a center for trade and tourism. The city dates its official beginnings to its incorporation in 1898. By that time Stilwell had es-

tablished the Port Arthur Channel and Dock Co., which began cutting a canal along the western edge of the lake to deep water at Sabine Pass. The port was opened for seagoing shipping with the arrival of the British steamer Saint Oswald in August 1899.

Pioneers arrived by the hundreds and began building homes and opening businesses. Stilwell's contributions included the Sabine Hotel on Lakeshore Drive, a natatorium to serve all the residents and an Export Pier into Lake Sabine. He also brought 300 Dutch colonists to begin a new life as farmers in this rich coastal prairie. Though many of the Dutch names have been lost to Port Arthur, their cultural contributions are still