



## SHRIMP BOAT PROJECTS

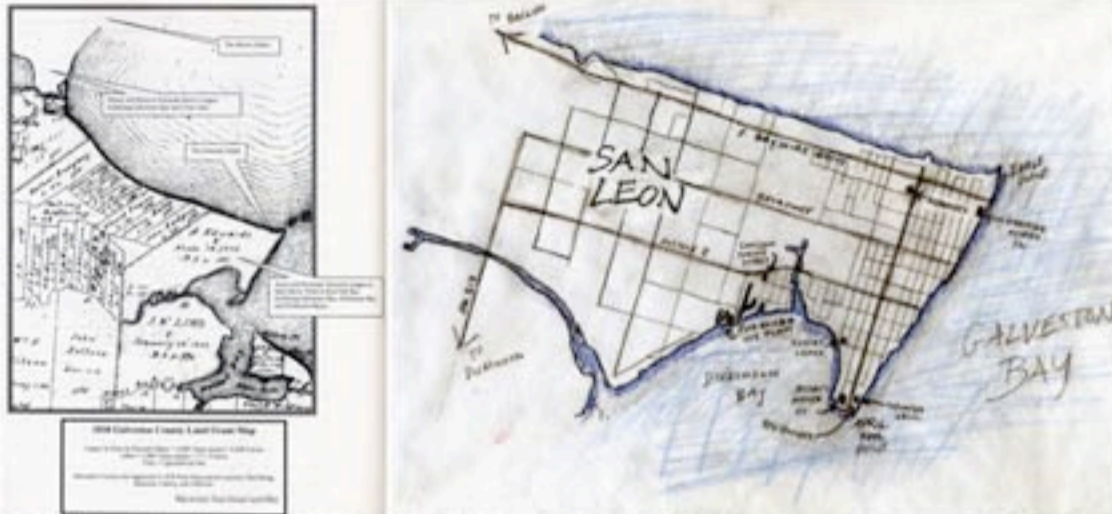
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### Welcome to San Leon

BY ERIC, ON SEPTEMBER 21ST, 2011



Map reprinted from History of San Leon, Vol. 1 by Alecy Galloway (Left); Shrimp Boat Projects map of San Leon (Right)

#### "Why would I want to live anywhere else?"

– Dusty Hill, bassist for the band ZZ Top and former San Leon resident

Not only is San Leon our favorite unincorporated municipality in Texas, it is now also the home of the F/V Discovery!

Long before we started this project, San Leon was our respite from Houston and a point of access to Galveston Bay. We came to eat shrimp and oysters at Gilhooley's and the Topwater Grill, enjoy a cold beer at the Sunset Lounge and relax along the shores of the bay in a place that truly has an off-the-map quality, an end-of-the-road sensibility and a disdain for most of things that make typical small towns "typical". The character of the place may be derived as much from its unique geography as its unusual history. At an event last spring in Galveston, Gator Miller, the local publisher of the *Sea Breeze News*, explained that San Leon, as we currently know it, was actually developed through a real estate promotion concocted by Galveston Daily News, in which subscribers to the newspaper were given lots on the peninsula. When subscriptions were cancelled, so were the lots. The net result is a town that apparently has no clear title to any of its lots, and consequently no chain stores or franchised establishments. While the strip mall may be prolific in the larger Houston region, here in San Leon, its absence seems appropriate. The town is, after all, on a peninsula, framed by the bay on three sides, and with just a couple roads leading in and out. This is not a place where you might end up by mistake. You must willfully choose to visit San Leon, and when you do, you will be rewarded.

And yet, despite all of the romantic reasons for spending more time in San Leon, it was for purely practical reasons that led us to dock our boat here at April Fool Point. Because the town is surrounded by the bay, we now have immediate access to the fishing grounds of the bay. And this geography also insures that we're situated in a place that is strongly identified with what's left of the shrimping and oystering industries on the bay. Our immediate neighbors include longtime bay shrimpers Dub and Johnny, a popular local seafood joint called the Topwater Grill, and Misho's Oyster Company, perhaps the largest processor of local oysters on the bay. And our new landlord, Capt. Wally, the individual perhaps most identified with April Fool Point, harbors a lifelong attachment to the sea, and a virtual library of sea-faring stories from Galveston Bay, to his native Poland and everywhere in between. And he's the owner of the Point's namesake shrimp boat the *April Fool*.

We're not sure how long the F/V Discovery will be in San Leon, a lot of that depends on us actually catching shrimp. But we're pretty sure this town isn't going anywhere. Like most good places on the Texas coast, it's a resilient place that has picked itself up after each hurricane. Many of the places we frequent took a battering in Hurricane Ike, but they're still here. So do yourself a favor, turn off the main road and come visit San Leon.



The F/V Discovery in its new home at San Leon's April Fool Point.

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