



# Article Side

A History of Marine Port Orange, TX by [Daisy Culai](#)

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A quote from the Marine Port Orange, TX Leader in 1916, long before we had Industrial Park Orange, TX and Shipyard Orange, TX states that “The Port of Orange makes her bow to the world with the advent of the completion of her twenty five foot channel to tide water, adding her to the roster of Deep Water Ports of the Gulf of Mexico.”

While this sums up the initial completion of the port, the Port of Orange is undergoing a major overhaul that will revolutionize its comings and goings.

Marine Port Orange, TX became a true deep water port back in 1916 when it opened to the Gulf of Mexico. This was made possible by a twenty five foot channel passing through Sabine Lake, past Sabine Pass and then out to the Gulf of Mexico upon the completion of the port.

The channel itself took a lot of savvy planning and quite a bit of manpower. A number of sawmill operators were recruited for their knowledge in getting money from the government for helping out with such projects in order to improve the local economy and for other motives. The point being, these guys knew how to talk to politicians and loosen their purse strings.

The harbor itself had always been a popular spot for shippers thanks in part to its location. Just twelve miles above the Sabine River’s outlet at Sabine Lake, this harbor received numerous barges of cotton from ports as far as East Texas, as well as timber from East Texas forests, who floated the wood down the river in order to make marine Port Orange, TX deliveries.

This timber was made into lumber at Orange Port and then shipped all over Sabine Pass. Cargoes then made their way to New Orleans and Galveston, among other ports that sat along the Gulf of Mexico.

A shoal in the channel at Sabine Pass actually prevented ocean vessels from having direct access to the Orange Harbor. The shoal made it so that only six or seven feet of water would be present when the tide was low. Vessels that drew just four and five feet would constantly drag along the bottom making their passes.

The lumber industry tried to solve this problem for the sake of their business. They loaded larger vessels outside of the Sabine Pass bar, but ultimately, heavy demurrage charges run up in rough weather made it nearly impossible to load from barge to vessel.

It was finally in 1885 that the sawmill men Henry J. Lutchter, the Bancrofts, Judge D.R. Wingate, John H. Kirby of Tyler, Texas and Samuel T. Swinford finally came together to develop a harbor at Sabine pass. Their initial failed attempts would eventually draw the attention of US Representative Charles Stewart of Houston. He secured passage of a bill that resulted in jetties built to protect the entrance to Sabine Pass. Brush mattresses were dropped on the shoal and weighted down with stone. The channel was deepened more and more over the years until finally, today, the most recent development, the TMY Project.

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[Daisy Culai](#) - About Author:

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