

RECENT DELTATION OF THE COLORADO RIVER DELTA, TEXAS

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The modern delta of the Colorado River is unique among Gulf Coastal Plain deltas in the remarkable speed with which it was deposited. Rapid deltation was due to the removal of a log jam, or raft, that choked the river from its mouth to a point 46 miles upstream. The earliest survey of the delta was in 1908 when it comprised about 45 acres. Removal of the raft began in 1925 and by 1929 a pilot channel was completed through it. That year a flood swept much of the raft and the sediments impounded by it into Matagorda Bay. Rapid deltaic growth resulted and in 1930 the delta covered 1780 acres. By 1936 the delta extended across the Bay to Matagorda Peninsula, and by 1941 it covered 7098 acres.

Two earlier river channels of the Colorado River are known. One flowed into Matagorda Bay in the vicinity of Tres Palacios Creek. The other flowed, together with the Brazos River, into a large bay that occupied eastern Matagorda and western Brazoria Counties, Texas. Extensive deposition by these two rivers filled this bay and their delta advanced into the Gulf in the vicinity of Freeport. Any barrier beaches that were in front of the bay were buried by these sediments.

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