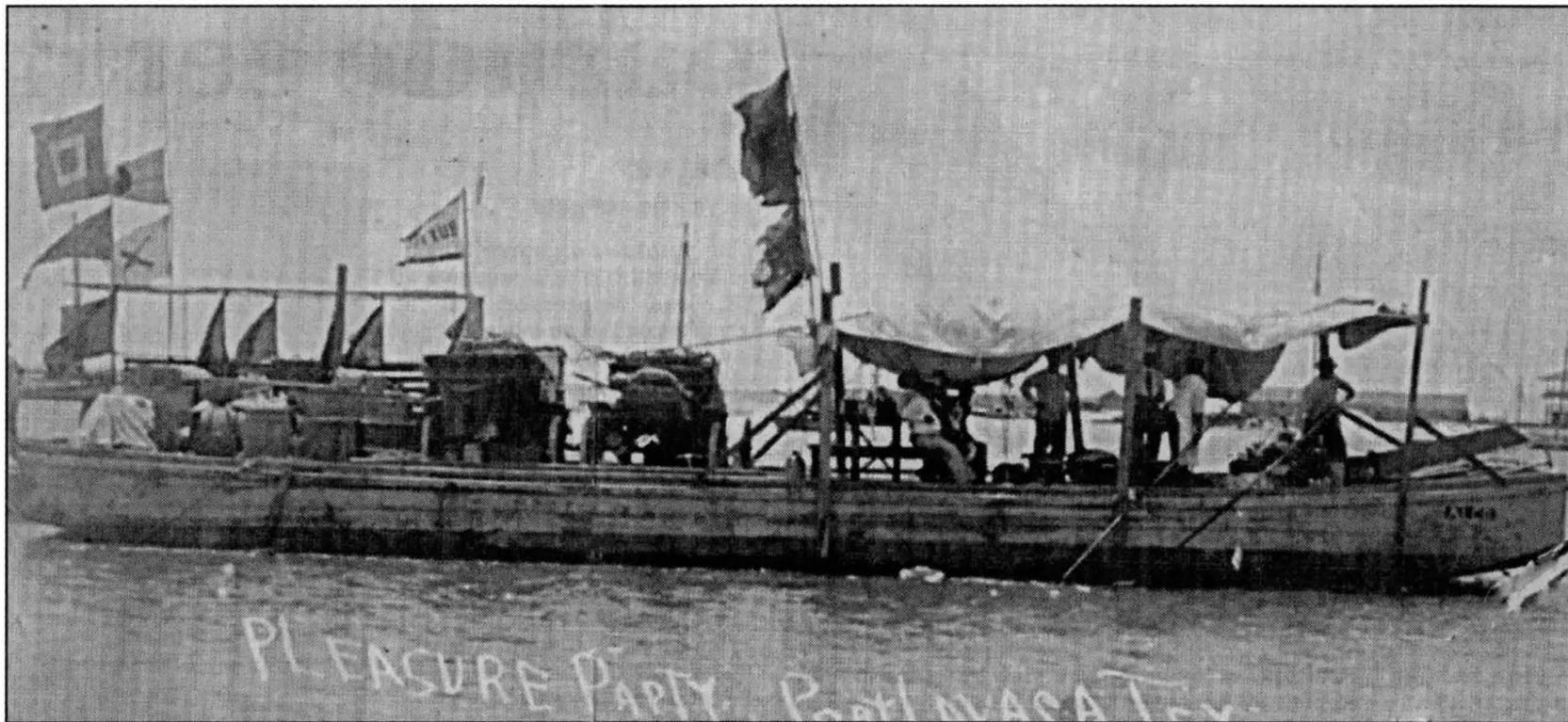


# Group traveled to steamship wreck



Contributed Photo

A group of local and area adventurers are shown in this photograph from June of 1914 as they left Port Lavaca to visit the wreck of the

steamship "Nicaragua" on Padre Island. The Nicaragua had been wrecked two years before by a mid-October hurricane.

***"The party embraced cattlemen, farmers, merchants, well-giggers and bug-chasers, all were true sports."***

J.D. Mitchell

Victoria naturalist on journey to shipwreck

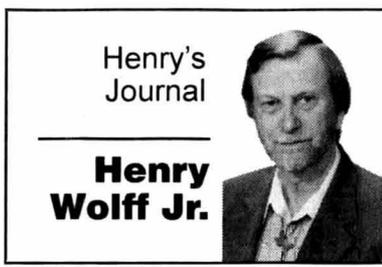
A great adventure was in progress during this very time of year in 1914, it being a voyage that took several local and area men to see the wreck of the steamship Nicaragua.

An account of their journey from Port Lavaca to Padre Island was written by the noted Victoria naturalist J.D. Mitchell, who also served as photographer for the expedition.

The Nicaragua had been wrecked two years before by a mid-October hurricane.

"During the month of May, 1914," Mitchell would write in an account of the journey, "among the genial and kindred spirits, who often meet in the rest room of the Lone Star Saloon, in Victoria, Texas, a plan was formed and a trip planned to visit the wreck of the steamship Nicaragua, on the beach of the Padre Island, ninety miles South of Corpus Christi Pass."

The plan was discussed "pro and



con" and Mitchell, L.A. Fritz, H.C. Edwards, Martin O'Connor and Tom O'Connor, all of Victoria, Eugene Low of Refugio, C.A. Keeran of San Antonio, and J.W. Young and E.L. Fairis of Edna all signed on "To See The Nicaragua or Bust."

"The party embraced cattlemen, farmers, merchants, well-giggers and bug-chasers," Mitchell noted, "all were true sports."

In addition to being appointed photographer, it was also decided that Mitchell (the bug-chaser) should serve as recorder of the trip with the "understanding that he

was to write down nothing but the truth."

Fritz was elected a committee on solid comforts, and Keeran on liquid refreshments.

They chartered the tugs "Buffalo" and "Edward Edison" and the barge "Alco" with W.H. Smith Jr. as the captain; Stanley Smith, mate; Alfred Butler, cook; and Will Booth, roustabout.

On the 22nd of June, after "much preliminary leave taking," they sailed from Port Lavaca and entered San Antonio Bay that night where "all hands complained of sleeping poorly (probably the effects of saying good bye)."

The next morning John Young fell overboard, taking part of the cabin of the Edison with him, but was rescued by Stanley Smith and Tom O'Connor.

"He was sober," Mitchell related.

By 6 p.m., they had reached Pat Dunn's ranch on the north end of Padre Island.

"Mr. Dunn came on board and the evening was spent in smoking and story telling," Mitchell wrote. "At 10 p.m. the writer accepted Mr. Dunn's invitation to pass the night with him at the ranch and we bid the boys good night."

After breakfast on the morning of June 24, Dunn furnished Mitchell a horse and buggy to collect insects. He and Dunn

later went to the Gulf end of Corpus pass where "the boys, after much work and worry, had effected a landing for the two Ford autos and motorcycle, which were brought along for the final dash."

There was flounder for dinner, caught the night before.

Mitchell then went looking for bugs in the sand hills while the rest went fishing in the Gulf where "Martin O'Connor and Tom O'Connor, each, caught a fine red fish."

On the 25th, after some fishing, picture taking and a dinner of shrimp and crabs caught by Will Booth, they took off down the island with Young, Fairis, Fritz, the O'Connors, Low and Mitchell in the two Model-Ts and Stanley Smith leading on the motorcycle.

Smith was soon out of sight.

About 40 miles down the beach the cars began to bog down in the wet sand and a large log between the dry land and the water along the beach blocked their way until the tide went down and they could continue — "some with jaws set, others with weak knees."

They reached the steamer at 7:25 p.m., dug a well, cooked supper, and went to sleep, some on the deck of the wrecked ship and others on the drifted sea wood along the beach.

To be continued . . .