



ALVIN

**"IN TOUCH WITH THE PAST,
OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE"**



Alvin is twelve miles southeast of Houston in northeast Brazoria County, on land originally granted to the Houston Tap and Brazoria Railroad. In the 1860's the Santa Fe Railroad established a flag station near the head of Mustang Slough on its Galveston to Richmond branch line. Santa Fe hired Alvin Morgan in 1872 to supervise the loading and shipping of cattle at the stock pens. Morgan built the first house in the area in 1879 and persuaded many travelers to settle here. In 1881, the settlement acquired a post office, Methodists organized the first church, held the first public school classes and the residents named the community Morgan, but renamed it Alvin upon learning of another Morgan, Texas. Alvin Morgan is remembered for his companions: dog Shep and goose John.



By the mid 1890's Alvin had experienced a population explosion. Alvin was incorporated in 1891 and again in 1893. Businesses in the community included an ice factory, pickle works, cotton gin, bank, opera house, six hotels, four churches, and two weekly newspapers. Alvin's economy was based primarily on farming and fruit growing. A community college opened at the high school in 1949 and moved to a separate campus in 1963.

During World War II businessmen persuaded the United States government to place an internment camp in Alvin. About 500 Germans from the camp worked in the local canning factory and rice fields for two years. Between 1960 and 1970 Alvin grew 89 percent, from 5,643 persons to 10,671 persons. Annually, from July through November, the city braces for floods and hurricanes. The Galveston hurricane of 1900 destroyed or damaged most Alvin businesses and homes. In 1979, Alvin acquired the record for the most rain fall within a twenty four hour period.



After the uncertainties of the War and the subsequent period of reconstruction, railroad construction in Texas became serious business. All of the railroad lines gave the residents of Alvin access to markets for their products, vehicles to receive goods, and passenger service to locations throughout the United States. Alvinites could travel to Galveston or Houston to conduct business ventures, to purchase products, and to visit medical facilities.

At least two Alvinites have achieved widespread recognition. Dr. F. R. Winn, an Alvin resident, was nationally praised for his 1898 Cuban Report to Theodore Roosevelt and his eyewitness newspaper report of the battle of Santiago. His distinguished record as medical corpsman in World War I brought international recognition and requests for assistance from foreign governments. Alvin's baseball superstar, Nolan Ryan, pitched for the New York Mets and California Angels before signing with the Houston Astros. He finished his career with the Texas Rangers in 1993, having set many major league records, and was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1999.¹

Alvin has kept pace with the population growth of the county as a result of its close proximity and relatively short drive time to many of the metropolitan area's most significant employers and transportation arteries. Assuming Alvin continues to account for roughly nine percent of the county population, this means that the City's population would increase to between 32,433 and 40,690 persons by the Year 2025.



Looking ahead to the Year 2025, OUR VISION is to manage growth and development in a way that results in improved economic competitiveness and an enhanced community character; achieve a compatible pattern of land use that sustains property values and supports a blend of housing types for all lifecycle stages and income levels; revitalize downtown as a true city center and community gathering place while preserving our rich history and its unique character; improve transportation choices including increased opportunities for walking and bicycling; enhance convenient access to parks and recreation facilities for citizens of all ages, allowing healthy lifestyles; protect valued open spaces and conserve natural resources, providing benefit to our environment, drainage systems, and community appearance; efficient use of community facilities and public infrastructure and their adequate provision concurrent with new development; and, an attractive and well maintained community for which we are proud to call home.²

¹ Ida M. Blanchette, *Babe on the Bayou* (Waco: Texian Press, 1979). ² City of Alvin Comprehensive Master Plan (Sept. 2005).