

# The Bandera PROPHEET

April 25, 2025

Today in Texas History

On this day in 1861, 500 Federal troops stranded at the port of Saluria in Calhoun County were forced to surrender to Confederate colonel Earl Van Dorn.

Saluria, at the eastern end of Matagorda Island, was founded in the 1840s and was a thriving port and ranching center in the 1850s. With the outbreak of the Civil War, Federal troops flocked to the coast, hoping to find transport to the North. Van Dorn intercepted 500 of them at Saluria. After being paroled, they were allowed to sail for New York. During the federal blockade of 1862, when invasion seemed imminent, Saluria inhabitants fled to the mainland.

Confederate troops stationed at nearby Fort Esperanza later burned the town, dismantled the lighthouse, and drove most of the cattle off the island. Confederate artillerymen defended the fort until Nov. 29, 1863, when they retreated to the mainland.

In June 1864, Federal troops left Fort Esperanza. Afterward, citizens began moving back to the island.

What finally destroyed Saluria was hurricanes, in 1875 and 1886. By 1904, a rural school with one teacher and seven students was the only vestige of the community.

The more famous nearby port of Indianola was similarly destroyed.