

Houston HISTORY

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DESIGN AND PRESERVATION



UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

CENTER FOR PUBLIC HISTORY

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Preserving the Past (*If Possible*)



The groundbreaking for the new archival wing of the Julia Ideson Building was something to behold. On a picture perfect Houston spring day in January, several hundred people gathered to hear the speeches and watch the groundbreaking for the new wing. Mayor White spoke with enthusiasm about the impact of the preservation and expansion of the Ideson Building on future generations of Houstonians.

I left the ceremony convinced that he was not exaggerating. This was an important, perhaps even historic, moment for our city. This ambitious project has mobilized almost \$25 million in public and private funds to restore an important downtown building and to complete the original plans from the 1920s by adding space for an archive. It might well prove to be a turning point for historic preservation in Houston.

The mayor took the critical role of targeting this project as something that needed to be done. Then concerned citizens led by Phoebe Tudor organized the Julia Ideson Preservation Partnership to push the project forward. They enjoyed the support of key figures such as Rhea Brown Lawson, the Director of Libraries for the City of Houston, and of many others in the public and private sectors who closed ranks to get the job done.

In doing so, this group of citizens continued the long tradition of Houstonians who in the past have organized to help complete the Houston Ship Channel, to bring NASA to the Houston area, to build major universities in the city, to create the Texas Medical

Center, and to pursue other civic endeavors. This time, their efforts were in the interest of historic preservation, a quality of life issue whose time has come.

The articles on Julia Ideson and the preservation of the library building bearing her name celebrate this triumph. What a place the restored, refurbished, and expanded Ideson building will be. This issue also includes an article on a successful case of adaptive reuse, the transformation of the M&M Building into the main campus building for UH Downtown. It also has an article on one of the most notable failures in historic preservation in our city's history—the demolition of the Shamrock Hilton. As is often true, in this case failure triggered success; the unsuccessful efforts to save the Shamrock fostered the growth of a stronger preservationist movement in Houston.

(Old editor's cranky aside: I acknowledge that the Shamrock was historically significant. But I also spent the night there once, and I remember the room as one of the worst hotel rooms I have ever occupied, second only to a room in a bizarre run-down motel near the north entrance of Yellowstone where we lay awake half the night waiting for Anthony Perkins or his mom to burst through the door. Perhaps we should have preserved the Shamrock's amazing swimming pool and its lobby while demolishing the rooms.)

The excellent interview with Larry Gregory reminds us of the horrible damage from Hurricane Ike to much of Galveston, prodding us perhaps to dig a bit deeper with our time and our money to help repair the historic buildings of that city. My own piece on the near total destruction of Bolivar Peninsula is simply my way of grieving the destruction of a place that has been a significant part of my life. I'll admit that the article is self indulgent, but pamper me on this one, for it comes from the heart. The memories from Hilda Lopez of her beach house on Bolivar are, for me, touching beyond words.

Where Do We Go from Here?

The *Houston History* magazine is committed to publishing three issues each year, although the addition of the third issue has stretched thin our funding and our small staff. The editor, Joe Pratt, remains, but a detour in life has taken him temporarily to the job of "interim dean" of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS), the largest college on the UH campus. Expect more misspelled words and incomplete sentences and thoughts in his future letters from the editor. The new staff consists of Jamie Quiroga and Debbie Harwell, with assistance from Ernesto Valdes, the director of the Oral History of Houston. We have an enlarged and perhaps more active board headed by Bill Kellar, with new members Fred Korge, Jim Saye, Betty Chapman, and Penny Jones (for a complete list, see opposite page). While planning future issues, we also are building a

state-of-the-art web site with the cooperation of the Houston History Association.

We are also committed to the current format of the magazine. Designer Marsha Van Horn, who designed the original issues of the magazine, has returned. Future magazines will retain the length and look of the current issue. We will continue to have several feature articles (such as those on the Ideson building in this issue), followed by recurring departments with articles on historic preservation, culture (high and low), neighborhoods, museums, and interviews with interesting Houstonians. The next issue in July will feature articles on sports in Houston. The following issue in November will be on the history of what I still call the Houston Fat Stock Show. If you have ideas for these or future issues, let us know.

Houston History

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FEATURE ARTICLES

- Page 2 Julia Bedford Ideson: A Woman For All Seasons
by Betty Chapman



- Page 7 The Preservation and Expansion of the Julia Ideson Building
by Barry Moore



HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- Page 10 The Long Journey of the Merchants and Manufacturers Building
by Garna L. Christian



- Page 16 The Demolition of the Shamrock Hilton Hotel: Motivation for a Preservation Culture
by Diana Sanders



MUSEUMS

- Page 22 CONVERSATION WITH...Larry Gregory, president of the Lone Star Flight Museum and William H. Kellar



NEIGHBORHOOD

- Page 32 BOLIVAR MEMORIES *by Joe Pratt*



READER'S FORUM

- Page 38 MEMORIES OF BOLIVAR AND THE LINN HOUSE
by Hilda Lobez

- Page 40 **NEWS BRIEFS** *by Barbara Eaves*

Julia Bedford Ideson: A WOMAN FOR ALL SEASONS

by Betty Trapp Chapman

The Rice Hotel was the setting for a festive gathering on the evening of April 30, 1929. The distinguished crowd included prominent Houstonians involved in the professions, the business world and the city's social life. Occupying the place of honor was a brown-eyed, gray-haired woman dressed in white georgette with a rose silk cape thrown gracefully over her shoulders. Her name was Julia Ideson and she was there to receive the Torchbearer of the Year Award given by the Women's Advertising Club to the city's outstanding professional woman.¹ The occasion marked the intelligent, energetic Ideson's twenty-five-year tenure directing the Houston Public Library while also recognizing her civic contributions.

Julia Bedford Ideson's life began, not in Texas, but in Hastings, Nebraska on July 15, 1880. Young Julia attended Visitation Academy, a convent school where she received an education rich in classical studies but also steeped in practical subjects such as bookkeeping, typewriting and stenography. Julia's father owned a book store in Hastings and, as a voracious reader, had a large personal library.

Thus Julia and her sister, Margaret, grew up in an atmosphere of books. The family's frequent reading sessions usually ended in lengthy discussions of the book being read.²

When Julia was twelve years old, her parents relocated to Houston. Apparently John and Rose Ideson felt that this up-and-coming city, with a population of approximately forty thousand, offered new opportunities for their family. John first worked at Baldwin Book store and later entered the field of real estate.³ Julia attended the city's public schools, graduating in 1899 from Houston High School. As part of her graduation exercises, Julia played the role of Cordelia in "The King's Awakening," one segment of *A Morning with Shakespeare*.⁴ Literature would remain important to Julia for the rest of her life.

In the fall of 1899, Julia entered the University of Texas. Enrolling in the Department of Literature, Science and Arts, she intended to become a teacher. During her second year in Austin, however, Julia discovered that the university had initiated a course in library science. Her long-time interest in books led her to change her course of study to this newly developed discipline, which was under the direction of Benjamin Wyche, the only trained librarian in the state at the time. As she pursued the required course in Library Economy, Reference Work and Bibliography, she also worked in the university library as second assistant cataloguer.⁵

In a letter dated June 20, 1902, the school's assistant librarian wrote that Julia Ideson had completed the "required quota of studies" leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree and that she had also taken the "course of library science offered by the univer-

sity."⁶ The letter continued by giving a strong recommendation for Ideson, particularly emphasizing her "admirable and obliging disposition" as well as her "quick and intelligent mind."⁷ Just one day later, Ideson applied for the position of librarian for Houston's public library, then under construction. A postscript to her letter of application pointed to her practical education as well as her literary one with this sentence: "I may add that I use the typewriter, as you probably know, a requisite of the modern librarian."⁸

Over the next several months, many letters of recommendation were sent to the Library Board from faculty members in Austin describing Ideson as being "unusually energetic, wide awake, and ambitious,"⁹ and having "an uncommonly keen intellect and a pleasing personality."¹⁰ Not until October 1903, however, was Julia Ideson officially hired as librarian by the Houston Lyceum and Carnegie Library Association.¹¹ In accepting this position, Ideson was planting herself firmly in a new field that seemed ideal for the professional woman. In

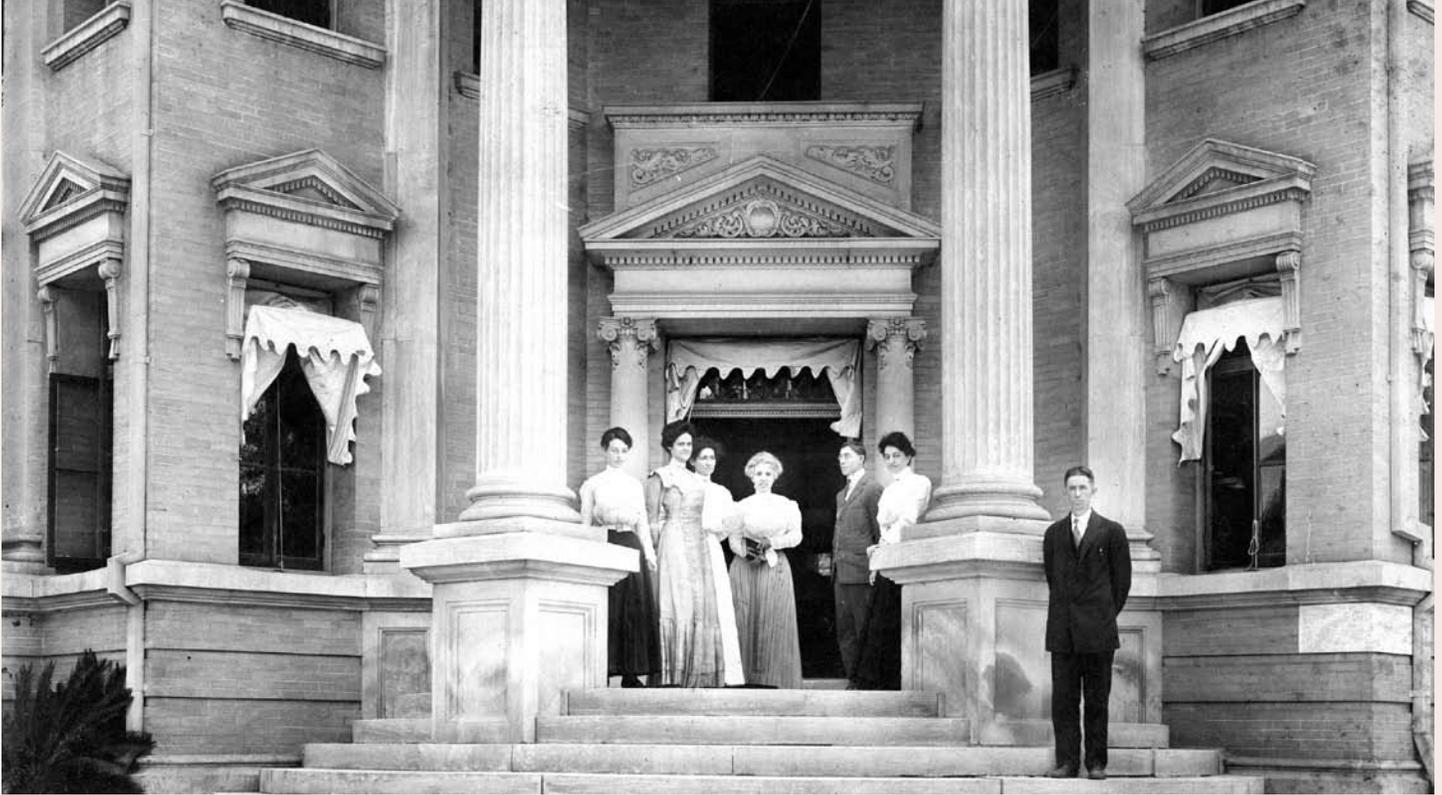
She would be very much a hands-on librarian attending to every detail, and she would establish a strong connection to her profession beyond the local arena.

the nineteenth century, women were shut out of most professions. Only teaching and nursing were deemed appropriate for the female population. Society did not favor higher education for women even though institutions, including the University of Texas, were admitting growing numbers of women by 1900. At the same time, the public library, funded by taxes and donations, proliferated in the late nineteenth century. It sought

well-educated, low-paid workers. The role of librarian was considered suitable for women because it served as a guardian of culture in a homelike setting, where most of the users were women and children. As a result, the profession attracted more women than men. Because women were hired in larger numbers, the profession became known as a "feminized" one. These women often remained single, giving their entire lives to their library career.¹²

Ideson assumed control of a library in progress. Houston's library had been chartered by the city in August 1900, but it had taken two years to raise the money for a site and to begin construction of a building, funded by a gift from steel magnate Andrew Carnegie.¹³ There was obviously much to do in preparing for the opening of the new facility. In her first report to the Board, just one month after assuming her duties, Ideson reported on the accessioning, classifying and cataloguing of books.¹⁴ She later recalled, "These days were hectic. There was only one person to assist me, and an errand boy and janitor completed the staff. I had to do all the cataloguing, plating, mending of books, ordering—on everything! It seemed endless routine work, but I loved it."¹⁵ In this same report, Ideson noted that she would





Library staff (Ideson, second from left) in front of the city's first library building, circa 1913.

be presenting a paper at the “Texas state library association,” of which she was a charter member.¹⁶ This early report predicted two roles that would clearly mark Ideson’s career: she would be very much a hands-on librarian attending to every detail, and she would establish a strong connection to her profession beyond the local arena.

Moreover, Ideson found herself at the helm of an institution serving a growing population. The formation of a free public library had been many years in the making. Houston had a circulating library during its early years, but it served only a limited segment of the population. When the Houston Lyceum formed in 1854, it organized a subscription library as one of the activities for its male members.¹⁷ After years of agitation by women in the community, the Lyceum opened their shelves to them. The reality, however, was a decidedly inferior institution. Female Houstonians banded together to raise money for land and successfully appealed to Carnegie for a building.¹⁸ Houston was soon poised to acquire a long-desired amenity in the form of a public library.

On March 2, 1904, the Houston Lyceum and Carnegie Library opened with a gala reception. A large crowd gathered to admire the Italian Renaissance building at the corner of Travis Street and McKinney Avenue. In his address for the dedication, Henry H. Dickson, president of the library association’s Board of Trustees, welcomed the audience to “the inauguration of a means for the greater intellectual and literary advancement of the people of Houston.”¹⁹ President Dickson announced that the library had 10,000 volumes on the shelves, the majority having been prepared for circulation by Ideson with the help of her one assistant.²⁰

Ideson’s vision for the library, however, went beyond its one central facility. Between 1900 and 1920 Houston’s population tripled,²¹ resulting in a growing number of students in the city schools. Most schools did not have a library available to their students. Furthermore, in view of the harsh Jim Crow laws in the community there was no place where the city’s black residents could check out books. Ideson, seeing these needs,

began planning for an expanded library system. Book deposit stations, which made books available on a rotating basis, were established in a number of schools. One of these was placed in Colored High School. A book station, however, was not a full-service library. Thus prominent black Houstonians incorporated as the Colored Carnegie Library Association and organized their own facility. After raising funds for a lot in the Fourth Ward and receiving a grant from Andrew Carnegie, the trustees opened Colored Carnegie Library in 1913. Although it operated independently of the city’s library system, Ideson supported this library by assisting in cataloguing books and by training the first librarian, Emma Myers. In 1921, the library became a branch of the Houston Public Library. At the same time, the book stations on the campuses of Heights High School and North Side Junior High School evolved into the Heights Branch and the Carnegie Branch. Ideson continued to send books to the public schools until 1938 when individual school libraries had finally been organized.²² That same year the library bought its first bookmobile, which held two thousand volumes. The bookmobile’s neighborhood routes were so popular that eventually two more vehicles were added and the routes were expanded.²³ Ideson remained insistent that the library’s books continue to be made available to all sections of the city.

In the meantime, Houston’s phenomenal growth had made the central library inadequate. Realizing that the city needed a larger facility and that the library’s standard funding was also inadequate, Ideson implemented a drive to petition the city to levy a maintenance tax of \$0.025 on a \$100 valuation for library services. Enough petitions were handed in to call for a referendum vote, and the measure for the library passed on February 9, 1921.²⁴ With the income from the new tax, the library almost doubled the amount previously received in the city budget. Ideson’s acumen in financial matters enabled the library to acquire sufficient funds for the first time since its founding.

That same year the system changed its name to the Houston Public Library and began seeking a new site and making plans

for a larger building.²⁵ The block bounded by McKinney and Lamar avenues and Smith and Brazos streets was selected as the location. Library trustees chose the Boston architectural firm of Cram & Ferguson to design the facility. Ideson made a tour of libraries from St. Louis to Detroit and from Chicago to Boston to gather ideas for the structure.²⁶ The library director's highest priorities were natural light, cross ventilation, and flexible space. Ideson also declared, "It is not enough to be functional; a library must offer delight to the eye."²⁷ The project was completed in seventeen months at a cost of \$500,000. The original architectural plan, however, had to be reduced with some of the components being eliminated due to construction costs.²⁸

The handsome Spanish Renaissance-styled building opened October 17, 1926. It was both elegant and functional, as Ideson had requested.²⁹ With enlarged quarters, Ideson began to expand library holdings. Soon after the building opened, Ideson explained: "Reading is no longer done only for pleasure, but business and professional men and women must keep up with the latest development of their particular work."³⁰ Accordingly, books on business technology were added. A historical reference room was another addition. The library began collecting documents pertaining to Houston and Texas history. Genealogical materials were gradually added to the Historical Room.³¹ (These collections eventually became the foundation for Clayton Genealogical Library and Houston Metropolitan Research Center.) Ideson's vision for library services never diminished.

Another of Ideson's concerns was providing library service in prisons. At the Texas Library Association (TLA) meeting in Austin in 1922, she initiated a discussion of libraries in prisons. Three years later the TLA formed a special committee on Penal Libraries. In 1935 Ideson was given the opportunity to put some of her ideas into action when she was asked to serve as library consultant to the prison in Huntsville, Texas. After several visits to Huntsville, she prepared a classified list of books for the penitentiary library. Ideson included listings of vocational books designed to be used by prisoners in their future life. During the three years Ideson continued as a consultant, she helped in organizing a library committee which, along with a recreational and vocational committee, developed policy for the operation of the prison facility.³² In keeping with her credo that books "awaken our sense of duty, encourage our feelings of responsibility, and stimulate and refresh the idealism in our souls,"³³ Ideson wanted everyone to have access to books that both inspired and instructed them in life's journey, wherever it might lead.

For this reason, along with her strong convictions regarding First Amendment rights of free speech, Ideson refused to remove a controversial book from library shelves during World War II. *Mein Kampf* (often translated as "My Struggle," or "My Campaign") was written by Adolf Hitler in 1925 as both an autobiography and a political treatise.³⁴ When the United States entered World War II, there was strong public agitation to ban the book as contraband reading. Although Ideson did not endorse the book's contents, she allowed it to remain on the shelves. In a speech to the League of Women Voters, she defended her decision by saying, "Intellectual freedom is never permanently assured. It is especially endangered by war. But even in war time the library recognizes the right of all readers to find on its shelves both sides of controversial questions."³⁵

Soon after beginning her work in Houston, Ideson had become connected to the larger circle of librarians. Her



Ideson, a true "hands-on" librarian, at her desk in the new library.

early involvement in the Texas Library Association led to her selection as president of the state organization in 1910-11. The energetic librarian edited the *Handbook of Texas Libraries* on two occasions: the second volume in 1908 and the fourth volume in 1935. She was president of the Southwestern Library Association from 1932 to 1934, serving also as First Vice President of the American Library Association during this time. Ideson was a predictable voice in preserving library services. In 1933 when the state legislature moved to abolish the Texas State Library, Ideson, chair of the legislative committee of the Texas Library Association, acted decisively and quickly to block the action.³⁶ Julia Ideson was, undoubtedly, a person of strong convictions and was unafraid to act on those convictions.

When many women in Houston were not bold enough to join the local suffrage association, it was very much in character for Ideson to step forward and assume an active role. Suffrage schools were held to train citizens in various elements of the campaign, such as press and publicity, public speaking, funding, parliamentary law and organization. Each new session was highlighted by a presentation on the history of the woman suffrage movement. Ideson was a frequent speaker on this subject.³⁷ As treasurer of the Woman's Political Union, she spoke at the first open-air woman suffrage rally in Texas in 1915. Ideson stressed that "women will never obtain necessary reforms unless they have the right to vote." On the following day the local newspaper reported that "the speakers worked on the hearers with determined logic and quiet faith."³⁸ Texas suffragists favored a host of progressive reforms including a juvenile justice system, protection of women and children in the workplace, compulsory education and public health improvements. They strongly supported the prohibition of alcoholic beverages, which they believed contributed to family instability. Professional and working women emerged as vocal proponents of female enfranchisement. Ideson was joined by such women as attorney Hortense Ward, teacher Julia Runge, seamstress and union member Eva Goldsmith, and businesswoman Florence Sterling. These women provided the speaking skills, the professional experience, the political knowhow, the fiery enthusiasm and impatience to create a sense of urgency in the community about voting rights for women.³⁹ Ideson, in particular, was singled out



Librarians sent to Europe by American Library Association during World War I (Ideson, second from right)

in an article in *The Houstonian* which noted, “Her judgment, opinion and advice are valued so highly that if there is a question that becomes a subject of doubts someone usually suggests that Miss Ideson be consulted.” Her “mental capabilities” and her “charming personality” were stressed as reasons she had become such a valuable part of the community.⁴⁰

Historical accounts have recorded that the suffrage movement was, undoubtedly, a racist operation. Minority women were not welcomed into most of the organized groups, especially in the South. Yet many of the white suffragists likely would not have considered themselves racist since this segregated way of life was accepted as normal. Whether this bothered Julia Ideson is not known since there are no records of her thoughts or actions at that time. A decade later, however, Ideson did let her views become known when she participated in an interracial organization.⁴¹

As World War I became a reality in America, Ideson, like many suffragists, turned her attention to the approaching war efforts. She served with the Harris County Women’s Committee for the Liberty Loan campaign. With other women, she traveled over southeast Texas speaking for the campaign in selling war bonds.⁴² Then Ideson accepted another challenge. When the American Library Association decided to place libraries in Europe for the armed forces, she applied for overseas library service.⁴³ She requested a leave of absence from her position with the Houston Library to go to Brest, France and oversee a library for American troops stationed there during World War I. She was sent to Camp Pontanezen where more than one million soldiers stopped en-route to a port of embarkation. The overseas staff of the ALA numbered fifty persons working in reference libraries maintained in Paris and at fourteen other places where the greatest concentrations of troops were found. Books provided one of the few sources of recreation for these men.⁴⁴ Ideson wrote back to her staff in Houston that the seating capacity in the camp library was for about two hundred men, but often in the evenings there was standing room only.⁴⁵ After eight months in France, Ideson resumed her duties in Houston. Her service abroad was not her only wartime contribution. Ideson also organized a library at Camp Logan, a National Guard mobilization camp built just west of downtown Houston.⁴⁶

In 1926 Ideson had the opportunity to become a community advocate for freedom of speech and thought—principles that she treasured in her own life and wanted others to experience. Curtis Howe Walker, a Rice Institute professor of history and government, was instrumental in establishing the Open Forum, a group committed to preserving First Amendment rights by bringing distinguished and often controversial speakers to the city. Patterning its efforts after those in Dallas, Houston was the third of six Texas communities to sponsor an Open Forum. Houston Public Library trustees, likely at the suggestion of Ideson (an Open Forum Board member), offered the new central library auditorium as the Open Forum’s meeting place. Although the audiences grew so large that meetings were moved to the City Auditorium, Ideson continued to prepare lists of books to be read in conjunction with the speakers.⁴⁷ The Open Forum brought lecturers from all over the world, including Clarence Darrow, Margaret Sanger, Norman Thomas, Bertrand Russell and Lincoln Steffens.⁴⁸ The organization intentionally brought guest speakers who provoked discussion and dissent. Sanger’s invitation was particularly controversial. Chief opposition to Sanger came from Catholic women’s groups and Catholic clergy who objected to a lecture on contraception. After carefully weighing the situation, the Forum “nervously and doubtfully” agreed to go ahead with the event. On November 7, 1931, Margaret Sanger spoke before a crowd of 2500, using as her subject, “The Need for Birth Control in America.” The lecture drew widespread publicity, some of it unfavorable, but it managed to stimulate thought and discussion on a subject much in the forefront at the time.⁴⁹

In 1938 the Open Forum folded. During its twelve years of existence, it had served as a tool for informing the public on complex issues and providing a framework for progressive-minded Houstonians to exchange ideas and to possibly work for change. After its demise, Ideson reflected, “It served a good purpose and its influence is still with us today.”⁵⁰ The presence of the Open Forum had another, perhaps unintentional, effect. Women, who were frequently excluded from leadership positions in more traditional organizations, were given important roles in the Open Forum. Ideson eagerly accepted these opportunities and in doing so served as a role model for other women.

Julia Ideson died on her birthday, July 15, 1945, while visiting a friend in New Hope, Pennsylvania.⁵¹ She lacked three months of serving forty-two years as director of the Houston Public Library. During that time she developed a library system that offered the community endless roadways to learning and pleasure through the printed word. Yet Ideson gave vastly more to her community than buildings filled with books. As a long-time member of the library staff commented after her death, “Her ceaseless energy, her sense of honor and fairness, her sincerity of purpose, her quick and flexible judgments, her sense of humor, her personal charm and her respect for the opinions of others, gave to her leadership a quality of greatness.”⁵² Julia Bedford Ideson was truly a woman for all seasons.

• **Betty Trapp Chapman** is a historian who researches, writes, and lectures on Houston’s history. Although she delves into all aspects of local history, her special areas of interest are women’s history and historic preservation. She currently chairs the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission.

The Preservation and Expansion of the Julia Ideson Building

by Barry Moore



The Ideson Library, as it appeared upon completion of construction in 1926.

The Julia Ideson building, located in downtown Houston at 500 McKinney and opened in 1926, is one of the most important historic buildings in Houston. By the criteria established by the Secretary of Interior, the building meets the most important standards: it is a superb example of Spanish Renaissance style; it was designed by one of the most prominent architects of the early twentieth century; as the Houston Central Library, it was one of the most important public buildings in Houston; and its long time director, Julia Ideson, was one of the most prominent citizens of her generation. For these reasons, the building is on the National Register of Historic Places, is a Texas Historical Landmark, a Texas State Archeological Landmark, and a City of Houston Protected Landmark.

In 1924, with the assistance of Julia Ideson, the Houston Library Board selected Architect Ralph Adams Cram of the Boston firm Cram and Ferguson to design a new central library. Houstonians were already familiar with his work, which included the Rice Institute campus and Trinity Episcopal Church. William Ward Watkin, head of the architecture department at Rice, was chosen as Associate Architect. Cram selected a Spanish Renaissance style for the building, and, in the words of architectural historian Steven Fox, “he stretched a modest program into a scenic expression of civic pride, with cross ventilation.” The Houston Metropolitan Research Center (HMRC), housed in the building since the 1970s, owns an incomplete set of preliminary drawings, including a site plan, floor plans, two

elevations and two building sections. These historical records show that the building was realized substantially as originally designed. Due to shortage of funds, however, several notable features in the original plans were not included in the library as built. Missing were a south wing and loggia, as well as a fenced reading garden on the corner of Smith and Lamar Streets.

The Ideson served as Houston’s main library until 1976, when the much larger Jesse H. Jones building opened across the plaza. At that time, the newly created Houston Metropolitan Research Center was housed in the Ideson building, which was altered to accommodate archival and historical materials. For more than thirty years, the Ideson has served as an important repository for records and photographs documenting Houston’s history; highlights include the Texas Room—where historians conduct research aimed at recapturing the region’s past, a center for oral history, and the home of the *Houston Review of History and Culture* (the predecessor of the *Houston History* magazine).

Throughout these years, the building has been well-maintained by the city, but the stacks had become badly crowded, the air-conditioning systems detrimental to an archival collection, and the security of the collection badly compromised. Acting on the initiative of Mayor Bill White, in 2006 Phoebe Tudor, Margaret Skidmore, and Minette Boesel formed the Julia Ideson Library Preservation Partners, a 501C3 organization charged with raising funds

for restoration and addition to the Ideson. With the City of Houston contributing \$10 million to the project, the Partners are raising the additional \$28 million required by the project budget in private funds.

The Ideson project is part of a thirty-eight million dollar campaign; the Partners have raised more than half in a little more than a year. An early decision was made to relocate the bulk of the archival collection to a new south wing, using the original Cram drawings as a starting point. A public reference room, replacing functions now offered in the Texas Room, will be located on the first floor, with high density archival shelving on the three floors above and a new rare book vault located on the second stack floor. An appropriate climate control system will be installed, as well as separate elevators for staff and the public.

The original building will have a renewed life as a multi-purpose public library. On the first floor the Auditorium, the Meldrum Room, and the Reynolds Room will be upgraded for continued use as meeting rooms. A selection of the original children's furniture will be installed in the north alcove of the Meldrum, and old, but not rare, children's books from the collection will again inhabit the shelves. In the space where the stacks begin, a new photo lab will be provided, with enhanced capability for scanning and digitizing the image collection.

The floor between the first and second floor on the west end of the building will be renovated to house the conservation lab, with appropriate equipment and mechanical systems. The second floor, the piano nobile in Cram's original

scheme, will enjoy enhanced public amenities: the existing Texas Room will again be a public reading room, with the alcove on the north side dedicated to objects and memorabilia from Houston's original 1904 Carnegie Library.

Across the central atrium, in the vacated stack space, a large exhibition hall will be made available. The Partners and the City anticipate that the reading room, the atrium, and the exhibit hall will be popular sites for all types of public and private events. The offices of the Director of Libraries and the Library Foundation will occupy the west end of the floor. The floor between second and third, on the west end of the building, will be dedicated to a volunteer's lounge and HMRC staff.

The third floor will house the architectural archives in the space currently occupied by special collections, with the same environmental systems that will be provided in the stacks. A restored conference room, additional staff workspace and break room occupy the remainder of the floor. The original decorative features, almost totally intact, will be restored. Original light fixtures will be rewired and reconditioned. For the first time, WPA artwork from the 1930s will be lighted. The existing Texas Room will be furnished with refinished



Left: The Central Reading Room (currently the Texas Room) as it appeared when completed in 1926.



The new Exhibition Hall, located where six levels of stacks now stand, in an architectural rendering.



The Restored Central Reading Room, in an architectural rendering.



The new south wing, loggia and reading garden, in an architectural rendering.



Groundbreaking on January 12, 2009; Mayor Bill White, Partner Chair Phoebe Tudor, Gensler Project Manager Barry Moore, HMRC Director Kemo Curry.

original furniture. Art original to the building up to the 1940s will be relocated from the library vault, restored and rehung, in most cases, in original locations.

The exterior of the new south wing will match the existing building as well as Cram's design, with brown brick, cast stone trim, red tile roofs and cast decorative elements. A new south loggia will be added, providing direct access to the outdoors from the existing Reynolds, Meldrum and Texas Room. The new reading garden, a quiet landscaped square, will be realized, inspired by the Cram design. It will be surrounded by a black metal fence supported by stone gate posts. The resulting public space in the center of downtown will be open to the public during the day but closed at night and for special events.

Although the completed building will recapture the spirit and look of the original plans from more than eighty years ago, it will also incorporate one important aspect of modern construction, an energy and environmentally friendly design.

It will be among the first Texas Historic Landmark projects to qualify for LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification. It also will seek to qualify for a "Silver" designation from the U.S. Green Building Council. An efficient air conditioning system and the use of indigenous plant materials along with recycled and low-emitting materials during construction are among the key components needed to achieve LEED certification. When completed, the new Ideson will combine the best of the old and the new.

For the library department, the non-profit board, the mayor, and the architects, a great sense of satisfaction arises from the opportunity to complete an eighty-three year old architectural concept, but to enhance the interior with a state of the art archival and research facility that can be enjoyed by Houstonians for generations to come.

A sense of promise floated in the air at the formal ground-breaking for the construction of the new south wing on January 12, 2009. On this cool, crisp day, hundreds of Houstonians came to watch Mayor White, Houston's Director of Libraries Dr. Rhea Brown Lawson, and prominent members of the Julia Ideson Preservation Partners celebrate the beginning of construction. There was good cause for celebration. Sustained by a private-public partnership of a sort so common in Houston's past, this project marks a turning point in historic preservation in Houston. It will produce a beautifully restored and expanded facility to serve as a repository for historical records that will help students, citizens, and scholars alike explore our region's history. The restored Julia Ideson building will become a symbol of the debt we owe to those who came before us; it will also be a message to those who come after us of the value of history and the logic of preserving and adapting historic buildings for current and future uses.

☛ **Barry Moore**, Houston architect and historian, is a member the Gensler architectural firm, a Houston-based, internationally active firm with a strong commitment to historic preservation. He took the lead in the design for the preservation and expansion of the Julia Ideson building. He has been an Adjunct Associate Professor in the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture at UH for twenty-one years.

The Long Journey of the Merchants

by Garna L. Christian



In a city in which a twenty-year-old building is often considered obsolete and a forty-year-old structure routinely ends as a parking lot, the Merchants and Manufacturers Building continues its seventy-eight year watch over Buffalo Bayou, a few hundred feet from the birthplace of Houston. Indeed, the varied aspirations of builders and owners have matched in their ambition those of city founders John, Augustus, and Charlotte Allen for their crude settlement in 1836. Yet, the recipient of historical designations from the National Register of Historic Places and the Texas Historical Commission hovered on the brink of extinction for half its existence due to an uncanny combination of hard luck and miscalculations.¹

The location at the confluence of Buffalo and White Oak bayous, occupied by the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) since 1974, held a conspicuous position on the outskirts of the city for almost a century before the construction of the building. The streams that fed into the San Jacinto River, through the present day ship channel, provided the basis for the Allens' dream of a navigable waterway connecting the potential port of Houston to Galveston Bay and beyond. Indian tribes camped in its forests en route to visiting their friend President Sam Houston on the site of the present day Scanlan Building, in the new Republic of Texas. A Texas Historical Commission marker, recently removed

from the path of the light train that traverses the Main Street Viaduct to the grounds of the UHD campus, notes the use on this site of an earlier structure housing 350 Union prisoners during the Civil War. At the nearby intersection of Commerce and Travis streets, a Confederate supply ship sank into Buffalo Bayou after escaping a Yankee blockade at Galveston before falling victim to navigational obstacles. After the restoration of peace, Louis Pless and Samuel L. Allen operated a warehouse on the later site of the M&M Building, with Allen extending commercial operations as far as Oklahoma and New Mexico. Despite the success of the enterprise, the once vibrant area had deteriorated into an "unsightly jumble of ramshackle warehouses and shacks" by 1927, according to a local business magazine.²

Houston stood near the forefront of American cities expanding their business districts in the prosperous 1920s. In the decade in which the United States officially became an urban nation and the gross national product exceeded one hundred billion dollars for the first time in history, municipalities enthusiastically augmented their skylines. Within the decade William Hogg and associates planned and opened the exclusive community of River Oaks on the city's west side; Jesse Jones promised and delivered Sam Houston Hall, on the site of the later Coliseum, for the 1928 Democratic National Convention; and Houston businessmen applied for \$36 million of building permits, seventh highest nationally.

and Manufacturers Building



Amid this building boom, two Houstonians, Rex Dunbar Frazier and James R. Cheek, in 1924, conceived the idea of a novel commercial center that would access street, water, and rail routes.³ Akin in its novelty to contemporary developments such as the Chicago Mart and Santa Fe Terminal Building at Dallas, the building would integrate wholesale and retail merchandising with the transportation of goods within a single location.

Both men had contributed signally to their city's economic development. A Chicago native, Frazier was vice president and general manager of the proposed structure. He directed the Manchester Terminal Corporation on the Houston Ship Channel to the position of the world's largest cotton compress and warehouse. Once described as a "combination of scientist, writer, businessman, dreamer, and philosopher," he had written numerous articles on meteorology and biology and worked for several newspapers, including the *Houston Daily Post*. Frazier was president of the South American Hardwood Importers, the Buffalo Warehouse Company, and Texas Rope Company. The former mining, oil, and railroad operator stocked his Webb County ranch, Rancho Balcones, with extensive quantities of cattle, sheep, and goats. Cheek, who died in 1928 before seeing his project completed, headed the Magnolia Park Land Company and Citizens Loan and Land Company and served as vice president of Fidelity Realty Corporation.⁴

The ambitious project attracted prestigious names in

construction. Bertram E. Giesecke and Augustus H. Harris, who headed a prominent architectural firm in Austin, Texas, conducted an eighteen-month study to determine the design best suited to the location and its particular requirements. Hendrick and Gottlieb, of Houston, and Wyatt C. Hedrick, of Fort Worth, collaborated on the engineering features. Don Hall, the contractor, had contributed to the erection of one hundred and thirty three buildings within the decade, including the New Cotton Exchange, Warwick Hotel, Medical Arts, Houston National Bank, wharf facilities, and headquarters for the *Houston Post-Dispatch* and *Houston Press*. Georgia born Edward Andrew Peden, president of the building, had directed a leading iron and steel business in his adopted city since 1890 and had served on the Houston Port Commission, Chamber of Commerce, First National Bank, Houston Lighting and Power Company, and the Texas Hardware Jobbers Association. He administered a European relief program for Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover during the First World War and became a trustee for Rice Institute, now Rice University.⁵ Donald Marion (Curly) Harwood, general superintendent, had accumulated both engineering experience and tributes to his successes while working as an associate of Stone and Webster Engineering Corporation. Examples of his art were presented in textbooks as models. He established a speed record for ship construction during the late war. Harwood added to his laurels by completing the Merchants and Manufactur-

ers Building in less than a year without the loss of a single worker's life.⁶

Other participants in the project included John K. Stirton, secretary-treasurer and officer in the Magnolia Park Land Company and East End Home Builders, and a distinguished board of directors. Prominent among the latter were Don Hall; J.W. Neal of the Second National Bank; Walter H. Walne of the law firm of Baker, Botts, Parker, and Garwood; W.L. Pearson, chief officer of W.L. Pearson and Company; Clyde L. Paul of Paul and Company; and A.J. Hennings, Fred Thulin, and T.C. Ernest, representing the banking house of Peabody, Houghteling, and Company of Chicago. The latter financial institution, in existence since 1865, long had financed industries in the coastal region. Walne had attained particular distinction. He joined the Baker Botts law firm in 1912 and became managing partner, known for his recruiting of talented lawyers from various parts of the state. In 1946 the firm bore his name as Baker, Botts, Andrews, and Walne.⁷

The Merchants and Manufacturers Building opened to accolades from the press on April 17, 1930. An enthusiastic reporter pronounced it a "modern combination office and warehouse...unique in the Southwest." Another praised the edifice as "a modern miracle of architectural genius," which "no single term can fully describe." The architects confirmed that "no similar type of structure" existed in the nation. The city assuredly welcomed an opportunity to wake Houston from the financial doldrums. The object of attention stood eleven stories tall, alone against the skyline, where no competing structure could "obstruct its view or light." The bifurcated, twin-surfaced building came in at around six million "prosperity decade" dollars, the equivalent to more than seventy-three million in today's currency.

The art nouveau and art deco style reflected the transitional period in architecture of the late 1920s that emulated the New York and Chicago schools. The most pronounced ornamentation graced the terminus of each bay at the ninth floor and on the parapet wall, assuring the building recognition as a landmark of Houston. Its six hundred thousand feet capacity made the Merchants and Manufacturers Building the largest in Houston at the time and the third in height. Indeed, it boasted the largest floor area of any building south of St. Louis. An admirer calculated that the edifice could accommodate ninety thousand people, a third of the city's population, or the floor space of any other local building within its interior with additional room for another structure. One observer, with perhaps an overactive imagination, estimated that a person requiring fifteen seconds to open a window would need six hours to perform the task on the forty thousand window panes.⁸

The M&M Building, as Houstonians soon dubbed it, offered various innovative features. The single structure housed convenience stores, private and general offices, wholesale and retail displays, distribution and warehouse

areas, and garage space for four hundred autos under one roof. Tenants and clients could relax at clubs, lounges, and restaurants without leaving the premises. Parcel post chutes to provide a billing system and the city's first automatic telephone recording device functioned in advance of general use. Brass mail boxes at the northern and southern sides of the building remained nearly eight decades later as silent testimony to the grandiose aspirations of the designers. Six rapid passenger elevators and eight freight elevators moved people and cargo efficiently. Each floor provided a special purpose in the overall design. The first floor served warehousing and distribution functions; the second floor, also below street level, housed a spacious parking garage; the third floor, opening on Main Street, encompassed more than forty arcade stores; the fourth through ninth floors featured single offices and suites, each enjoying an outside exposure; the tenth floor consisted of local and foreign

industrial displays; the eleventh floor contained administrative offices. An advertisement extolling "Finely Finished Offices" listed "General Offices, Accounting rooms, Display and Sample rooms, large or small areas for laboratories, assembling and light manufacturing. Stores and arcade display rooms. Steam heated, circulating ice water, running hot and cold water..."⁹

The physical surroundings complemented the nature of the enterprise. Its location, which guaranteed an unobstructed view, assured truck, rail, and water

transportation access to the three and one half acre site. Maximum advantage of the options, however, required some modification. The city widened the Main Street viaduct, fronting the building, to facilitate entry. The Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad, whose tracks paralleled the building, dropped plans to construct a similar building on adjacent property and undertook a new bridge across White Oak Bayou and additional trackage. The M&M Building designers added a barge dock to accommodate increased water travel and excavated a tunnel to connect the dock to the warehouse facilities.¹⁰

Amid slumping building permits, restricted municipal funds, falling tax collections, and threats of borrowing freezes at the outset of the Great Depression, the Bayou City needed a financial boost. The ensuing economic malaise, however, mocked the vitality of the effort and the applause of the civic leaders. Although Houston, now the largest city in the state, with the nation's sixth ranking port, maintained an image of job opportunities superior to many other municipalities, it was caught in the universal tide. Cotton, oil, and hamburgers fell to a nickel and Texans on relief reached thirteen percent of the population. In 1932, the year that brought Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the New Deal to the national stage, building permits in the Bayou City fell to below three million dollars. Shanty towns sprang up along the train yards and waterways within view of the Merchants

"modern combination office and warehouse...unique in the Southwest."

"a modern miracle of architectural genius," which "no single term can fully describe."

and Manufacturers Building as Houstonians peacefully demonstrated for employment. Construction and operational costs of the structure demanded full occupancy, a goal that appeared easily attainable at the time of its planning. Now tenants, finding it difficult to meet their rent, began canceling their leases. Flood damage, sustained in 1929, permitted numerous lessees an opportunity to exit. The businesses that remained represented a range of economic activities, including oil well supplies, produce, printing, warehousing, rubber products, barbering, and publishing, but their numbers failed to cover the expenses and interest payments. Floor rentals slumped from a minimum of nine cents per square foot to five cents, and the building succumbed to debt. Like new constructions across the country, including the famous Empire State Building in Manhattan, the M&M building faced a stark future. The owners filed for bankruptcy in 1934.¹¹

After Houston and the nation sought to climb out of the Great Depression through the remainder of the 1930s, the onset of World War II boosted employment and demand for strategic goods. The chemical, steel, and shipbuilding industries, in particular, enjoyed new life. Still, prosperity frustratingly eluded the M&M Building. Merchandisers and printers, the staple of the tenancy, suffered shortages of vital materials. The advertising of the 1930s, which had hailed the structure as one of the leading merchandising marts in the nation, waned to one-line listings in the City Directory. Inflation, more than demand, elevated the rental of square footage to eight and eventually ten cents before the end of the war.

A postwar boom held out new hope for the M & M Building. Houston diversified its economic base. The port and medical center expanded, along with the city's boundaries and population, and the near-town airport, now Hobby, acquired east and west flights to complement the north-south air axis. Veterans flocked to the University of Houston in record numbers, filling trailers and temporary housing assigned to supplement dormitories. A second opportunity for the Merchants and Manufacturers Building to attain its optimistic promise presented itself in the person of businessman H.H. Coffield, who retrieved the building from bankruptcy in 1948 with a successful bid of two million dollars.¹²

A native of Rockdale, Texas, and a transplanted Dallas oilman, Coffield had earned a local reputation as a "hard,

shrewd businessman" with extensive warehouse holdings in Houston. He appeared to be the man for the difficult task of rejuvenating the eighteen year old building. A rags-to-riches success in his Central Texas hometown, Coffield had earned a fortune in the scrap iron business during World War I. Concurrent with acquiring the M&M Building, he purchased three buildings of the Hughes Tool Company and the wartime plant of Reed Roller Bit, commenting, "You can't miss a bet in Houston." Variousy described as "a perfectionist" and "impatient with details," the extremely private individual also possessed a strong commitment to civic improvement. He served as a national officer of the Boy Scouts of America and the Salvation Army, to which, along with the Episcopal Church, he subsequently bequeathed the bulk of his estate. He sat on the Good Neighbor Commission and the Texas Department of Corrections, where his credentials as a reformer induced the state to name a prison unit for him in Anderson County. The Texas Heritage Foundation named Coffield and celebrated philanthropist Ima Hogg as Texans of the Year.¹³

His son, C.H. (Pete) Coffield, shared many of the father's interests and joined in the rejuvenation project. The younger man managed the M&M Building while acting as secretary of the State Democratic Executive Committee and serving on the Battleship Texas Commission and Texas Conservation Foundation. For recreation he navigated a quarter-million dollar air conditioned paddle steamer, a replica of a Mississippi River craft. A Houston mayor appointed him to the Crime Commission.¹⁴

While promising "no radical changes" in the operation of the building, the elder Coffield designated three quarters of a million dollars for improvements, including a three-to-five-story garage and an air conditioning unit. The new owner immediately razed one and a half acres on the west side of the building for the proposed improvements. He placed advertisements in business journals under the title, "Growing Because We Serve the Houston Metropolitan Area." Accompanying photographs extolled the spacious office, storage, and parking facilities.¹⁵

Once again, however, the times proved unpropitious for the huge structure. The remarkable postwar expansion of Houston mitigated the attraction of the central location. Consistent with the new national trend, freeways, outlying shopping centers, and suburban housing developments sapped the commercial life and revenue from the downtown area, leaving a deteriorating core in their wake. Major department stores followed the lead or relocated farther from the old lower downtown business area. City officials cut the ribbon on the newly completed Gulf Freeway, helping create new neighborhoods and businesses between Houston and Galveston. Wildcatter Glenn McCarthy located the innovative Shamrock Hotel beyond Rice Institute, on the southern edge of the city. Humble Oil's industrial site at the West Ranch led to the NASA Manned Space Center in the following decade. Houston doubled its area in 1949 to prevent encirclement and ten years later embarked on a freeway expansion program.¹⁶

Downtown interests fought vainly to save the original heart of the city. As early as 1946 Houston businessmen met to formulate a plan. Out of this concern sprang the





Students relax in the lobby mall which once housed numerous downtown Houston businesses and government offices.



The campus cafe, a center of activity in the early years of UHD, has been replaced by a modern food court in the Academic Building.

Central Houston Improvement Association, which sought improved police protection, expanded transportation systems, and increased investment capital. In the mid-1950s a related group, the Rehabilitation Committee of Downtown Houston, led by John L. Andrew of the First National Bank, focused on the section between Buffalo Bayou and Texas Avenue. These efforts, in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce, resulted in the establishment of Allen's Landing Park, a monument to the city's founding.¹⁷

Nevertheless, restoration of Houston's core still lay decades in the future. From 1948 through 1958, the share of total retail sales for downtown outlets shrunk from 51 percent to 28 percent. The Merchants and Manufacturers Building stood guard over an abandoned area and its occupancy dwindled to 50 percent. With one bullet left in the chamber, the younger Coffield in 1966 made a final bold attempt to rescue the investment. Acting on a plan of businessman Nathan H. Goldberg to establish a home furnishings mart, Coffield devoted 12,000 square feet of the eighth floor to the venture. Thirty exhibitors of a proposed two hundred displayed merchandise to visiting merchants, departing from the custom of merely supplying pictures of the goods. Within four months the gamble showed cautious success, as the Home Furnishings Mart attracted ten more clients. Coffield released additional space for a gift mart, enticing an average of eight dealers daily to view the \$45,000 inventory. The modest gains, however, peaked at that point; a similar enterprise at Dallas further depressed the market. The flight to suburbia, like the depression and the war before it, dashed the dream of the M&M Building for commercial success. The Coffields placed the building on the block.¹⁸

Salvation, although not immediate, arrived in a quite different form. A mile to the south, South Texas Junior College

had outgrown its facilities at 1600 Louisiana. Founded in 1948 as an educational arm of the Young Men's Christian Association and companion to South Texas College of Law, the school grew into the largest private two-year college in the state. Sorely pressed for larger facilities, in 1963 the governing board empowered attorney Elliott Johnson to head a search committee for a new campus. The committee combed the greater Houston area, driven by criteria demanding choice location, accessibility to public and private transportation, and adequate space. When the Coffields presented the M&M Building for consideration, some members, recalling its hard luck history, paused. One later recalled, "Winos inhabited the area," and another described it as a "homely old building" that had been "a flop for everybody." An inspector observed that a single light bulb constituted the entire illumination of a lower floor.¹⁹

The building's attributes, however, won over the opposition. Houston Endowment, a financial supporter of the college, desired a central north side location, and the building fulfilled all the criteria of the search committee for the new campus. The structural strength, considered the soundest in the city, easily met all perceived challenges, and the voluminous yet compact design afforded ample vertical movement for a large student body. Noting that the receptive owners had cleaned the building, the committee recommended the move. Accordingly, in November 1966 the YMCA leased 30,000 feet of space from the Coffields and prepared to occupy the premises by the following February. The timetable placed stress on both the owners and the new occupants. Neither could find a contractor willing to guarantee completion of the necessary remodeling in time for the opening of the spring semester. Nevertheless, zealous efforts by the Coffields, the building manager, architect Carroll Broadnax, interior designer Newell Stickney, and

others, accomplished the ambitious task.²⁰

Attendance soared and South Texas Junior College, as previously agreed, attained independence from the parent organization in early 1968. The college purchased the building for a sum of four million dollars, for which the sellers promised a gift to the institution of \$325,000. In 1972 Houston Endowment transferred to the school controlling interest in Houston Terminal Warehouse and Cold Store Company, an adjacent six story structure of more than 134,000 square feet. The gift, valued at \$700,000, comprised more than seventy percent of the outstanding common stock in the warehouse firm, one of the oldest in the city. The college established One Main Plaza Corporation as a non-profit subsidiary to operate the building.²¹

External forces again conspired against the Merchants and Manufacturers Building. Student enrollment declined as the new Houston Community College system offered lower tuition, the selective service modified college deferments as the Vietnam War wound down, and the burden of debt pressed more heavily. Attendance decreased from 5,245 students in 1968 to 3,179 in 1972. In common with other private colleges across the nation, South Texas Junior College faced a bleak future. Attempts at merger with Houston Community College sputtered and stalled. Administrators and faculty braced themselves for likely closure and the M&M Building faced the possibility of demolition.²²



The U.S. Department of Interior awarded the M&M Building official recognition as a historic building in the minimum amount of time, fifty years.

Opportunely, fate finally moved in a different direction. The University of Houston, losing a longstanding downtown site, sought another central location. A series of conferences between UH president Philip G. Hoffman and president W.I. Dykes and the board of directors of South Texas Junior College produced an agreement by which the two-year school turned over its assets to the larger institution in 1974. With no interruption in the schedule, faculty, staff, and students returned to the familiar premises in the fall semester. Renovation outlays soon exceeded the original cost of the building, but the exterior, in accordance with the guidelines of the US Department of Interior and Texas Historical Commission, which awarded the building a historical marker in 1980, remains virtually the same as at the celebrated opening.



This view of the university from downtown shows the 1997 addition of the Academic Building (left).

Today, almost eighty years after its opening and after decades of uncertainty over its future, the Merchant and Manufacturers Building has taken an important place in the city of Houston. Originally envisioned as a commercial center with access to street, water, and rail routes, it has added access through a new mode of transportation, light rail, serving as one terminus for a line that connects downtown Houston, the museum district, Rice University, the Texas Medical Center, and Reliant Stadium. Now devoted to education, not commerce, it is the primary building for the campus of the University of Houston-Downtown. It is now a place where Houstonians from all walks of life come in search of educational opportunities to improve their choices in life. The M & M Building still stands in its singular location, where, consistent with the vision of its founders, no other edifice obstructs its view or light.²³

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The Demolition of the Shamrock Hilton Hotel: Motivation for a Preservation Culture

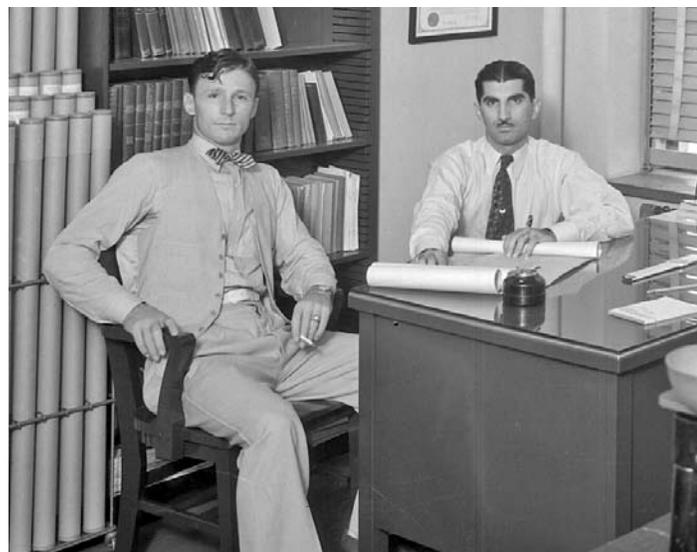
Diana Sanders

It is possible the Shamrock Hilton Hotel meant more to Houston than Houstonians realized. From its completion in 1949 until its destruction in 1987, this imposing structure at the intersection of South Main and Holcombe dominated the southern end of the city. Big and bold, it symbolized the coming of age of Houston in the post-World War II era of growth and prosperity, an era when oil dominated the economic landscape and independent oilmen shaped the city's development. Ironically, its loss forced some Houstonians to begin to question the values and the political process that laid waste to landmark buildings in the name of progress, with little regard for their social or historical significance. The lack of any effective means to challenge the process of development that brought down the Shamrock Hilton outraged many observers, encouraging them to come together and try to find ways to protect historic structures. In this sense, the destruction of the hotel became a symbol of the need for a stronger preservation ethic backed by law in Houston.

GLENN MCCARTHY: THE MAN BEHIND THE SHAMROCK

Glenn H. McCarthy was an independent oilman who focused his money and attention on civic pride. Wanting to develop his city into a world class venue for visitors, commerce, and culture, he envisioned a retail and amusement cultural center anchored by an upscale hotel, a larger airport, and a multi-purpose sports arena outside of the central business district.¹ The Shamrock was the only part of this vision that he realized.

McCarthy was born in Beaumont, Texas, on Christmas day, 1907. His childhood memories included the wells at the nearby Spindletop oil field, but his family eventually moved to Houston. McCarthy went to San Jacinto High School in Houston. He attended Texas A&M, Allen Academy, and Rice Institute² before dropping out of college to marry Faustine Lee, daughter of millionaire oilman W. E. Lee.



Glenn H. McCarthy with Michael T. Halbouty, 1928-29. Photo courtesy of The Sloane Collection.

Glenn and Faustine had four daughters and one son. After running a gas station and dry cleaning businesses, McCarthy ventured into oil in the 1930s, acquiring the materials necessary to drill for oil by hook and by crook.³ He made his first million at the age of 26, and struck oil “thirty-eight times between 1932 and 1942.”⁴ McCarthy was a hard-working, hard-living, hard-dealing, hard-talking man of his time.

After World War II, he recognized the direction the oil business was headed as the major, international conglomerates and government regulation slowly marginalized the independent oil companies.⁵ In response McCarthy began to diversify his business interests. He invested in newspapers, a radio station, publishing, and a movie production company, two banks, several properties, and oil-related companies.⁶ His most famous investment was the Shamrock Hotel. The Shamrock was the first phase of his proposed McCarthy Center, a retail, entertainment and recreational center similar to today's Galleria. McCarthy also built a \$700,000 home in Braeswood in 1950, however, by 1952 he was virtually bankrupt.⁷

Although McCarthy maintained that the Shamrock always showed a profit, he cited failures in his other ventures as the cause of his financial difficulties in the 1950s.⁸ McCarthy claimed that his newspapers constituted a big financial drain, the radio station lost ground as it competed with the new television stations in town, his chemical plant experienced difficulties, and his oil income was cut in half due to the prorationing of oil production.⁹ McCarthy lost or sold off most of his properties, yet managed to live a comfortable, but substantially quieter life until his death in 1988.



Glenn McCarthy gets King Capon award for 1958. Photo: The Houston Chronicle

THE SPECTACULAR RISE AND SUBSEQUENT DECLINE OF THE SHAMROCK

The Shamrock Hotel was a comet on the Houston landscape; it shined brightly in its heyday, but trailed off into the mist all too soon. A factor in the fate of the hotel was undoubtedly its location. McCarthy said he chose the location for his McCarthy Center because of “foresight.”¹⁰ He saw that the city was developing to the south and southwest, and he recognized that new freeways would encourage decentralization and suburbanization in Houston.

In 1949 the city of Houston had begun to plan its freeway system through the city. U.S. Highway 59 was scheduled to



Shamrock Hotel, photo courtesy Metropolitan Research Center.

follow Main Street through the city and south where it turns into State Highway 90 as illustrated in the Houston Freeway Planning Map for 1949.¹¹

Had the freeway taken this route, McCarthy's proposed commercial development along South Main and Bellaire might have prospered. He might have been able to attract a major anchor retailer such as Saks Fifth Avenue.¹²

Ultimately, decentralization did take place, despite the resistance of many businessmen devoted to the continued development of downtown, and McCarthy led the way. McCarthy had bought a 4,000-acre tract of land, Westmoreland Farms, in the 1940s. In 1953 he proposed to develop it in partnership with the city as Houston's intercontinental airport.¹³ According to McCarthy, Oscar Holcombe, the mayor at the time, rejected the southwestern location for the airport, as did Jesse Jones, the most prominent of the downtown Houston business leaders.¹⁴

In 1954, as McCarthy tried to recover from his financial difficulties, he sold the land to Frank Sharp. Sharp, in turn, donated right-of-way through the land to the city to build the Southwest Freeway. Consequently, U.S. 59 turned due west as it emerged from downtown and turned southwest just past the proposed Loop 610, completely bypassing McCarthy's Shamrock Hotel and diverting the subsequent development along the highway to the southwest. Frank Sharp developed the Sharpstown residential area and the retail mall along the Southwest Freeway corridor.¹⁵

Although McCarthy lacked the political clout within the city of Houston that was needed to push through his grand plans for the McCarthy Center, one part of the proposed center, the Shamrock Hotel, moved forward. Construction on the hotel began in 1946, and \$21.5 million later, the Shamrock opened on March 17, 1949.¹⁶ This was a world-class hotel, plush, extravagant, and lavish.¹⁷ The eighteen-story building boasted a 5,000-square-foot lobby adorned with Bolivian mahogany paneling and Art Deco trim. The color scheme throughout the hotel consisted of sixty-three shades of green, a tribute to McCarthy's Irish lineage. The hotel's 1,100 rooms had air conditioning, and each had a television, push-button radios and abstract art works. One third of the rooms had kitchenettes. These were extraordinary amenities for 1949. Surrounding the Shamrock was an elaborately landscaped garden and terrace. The hotel's pool measured 165 by 142 feet, with a three-story diving platform accessible by an open spiral staircase. The pool was large enough to accommodate ski exhibitions. Adjacent to the Shamrock was a five-story facility that housed the 1,000-car garage and 25,000-square-foot convention hall. The hotel's opulence attracted Hollywood royalty and heads of state and patrons from all walks of life from around the world.¹⁸

The star-studded, one-million dollar grand opening of the Shamrock Hotel was covered by every media outlet at the time. McCarthy brought in 150 to 175 stars. The



Shamrock Hotel, photo courtesy of The Sloane Collection.

master of ceremonies for the evening was actor Pat O'Brien, and Dorothy Lamour's radio show broadcast was part of the entertainment for the party. The aspect of the grand opening that endeared the hotel to Houston was McCarthy's inclusiveness. Three thousand guests (including the Hollywood crowd) were invited to the party in the hotel and some 50,000 Houstonians showed up to watch the festivities. The evening evidently became so rowdy that an expletive was heard on the Lamour broadcast and the network cancelled the rest of the show.¹⁹ The local newspapers dripped with stories about the stars, McCarthy, the hotel and anything related to it. Congratulatory ads took up entire pages, and regular ads identified their product with the hotel, capitalizing upon the event.²⁰ The Shamrock's grand opening was one of its finest hours.

Despite being famous for catering to the rich and famous and having been dubbed the "Houston Riviera," the Shamrock nonetheless became an integral part of the local community. This author recalls parking near the Lanai Wing, a section of bungalow-style motel suites, and walking into the pool area as if a registered guest to enjoy a summer afternoon swim. Local celebrations, such as Easter egg hunts and St. Patrick Day parties, were annual events. Weddings, anniversaries, bar and bat mitzvahs and high school reunions were held at the Shamrock Hilton. The hotel organized sports clubs that allowed area residents to utilize the Olympic-size pool and tennis courts for a nominal fee. The Shamrock Hilton in essence became a kind of civic center for the neighborhood.²¹ The memories generated over the thirty-plus years of its existence made the Shamrock Hilton an important asset to Houston. But the bottom line determined its fate.

Although McCarthy maintained that the hotel was always profitable, his personal fortunes turned, and he lost the hotel in 1954 when he defaulted on a \$34 million loan to McCarthy Oil and Gas from Equitable. Hilton Hotels assumed control of the hotel in November,²² allowing McCarthy to remain the head of the hotel at a salary of

\$100,000 a year. But he quickly became unhappy with his lack of control, and he sold his interests in the hotel to the Hilton Corporation in 1955 and walked away.²³ The hotel remained a Hilton property until the company donated the building and land to the Texas Medical Center in 1985.²⁴

DEMOLITION SPARKS A PRESERVATIONIST RESPONSE

Under Hilton management for thirty years, the Shamrock Hilton became a mainstay in the community, but the location, although promising during the 1950s, became its ultimate nemesis. Houston was growing and annexing land and population throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Suburbs and commercial centers developed along the growing highway system. The Texas Medical Center continued to expand near the Shamrock Hilton, but other businesses shied away from the area. Other hotels sprung up along the new highway corridors, especially near the Domed Stadium, which was built in the 1960s on the South Loop, and in the Galleria area near the West Loop in the 1970s. Although the Shamrock Hilton remained a favorite host for conventions, its room occupancy dropped "from 74 percent in 1956 to 52 percent in 1962."²⁵ Ultimately, the Shamrock Hilton declined due to its isolation from the central business district, the lack of development down the South Main corridor, and competition from the outlying hotels.

The oil bust of the 1980s dealt another blow to the Shamrock. In 1985 the hotel's occupancy rate was down to 48 percent. That downturn precipitated the Hilton's decision to donate the Shamrock Hilton to the Texas Medical Center (TMC) in 1985.²⁶ According to the *The Houston Chronicle*, the TMC conducted studies that concluded that renovation of the Shamrock Hilton was not a financially sound option. Converting the hotel into a housing complex would cost \$43 to \$65 million, and conversion into a medical facility such as a hospital would reach \$102 million.²⁷ By March of 1986, the fate of the hotel was unsure, but demolition seemed likely.

In response to this situation, Houstonians formed a grassroots movement to save the hotel. Dr. Don Speck founded

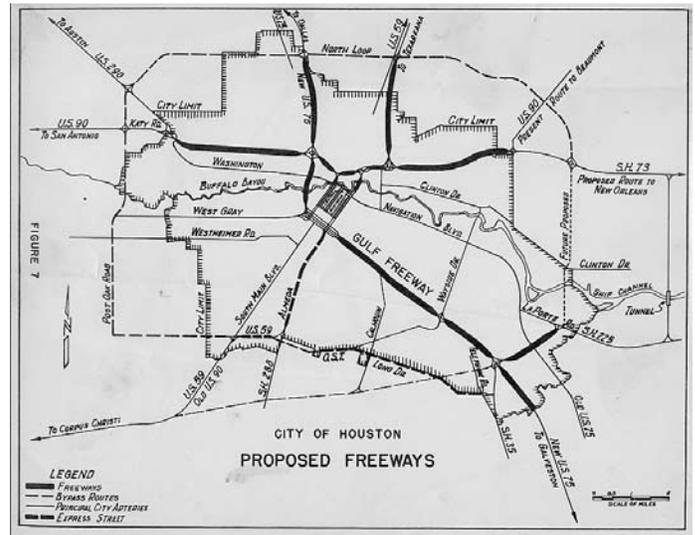
the *Save the Shamrock* committee and organized a human ring parade around the hotel on the thirty-eighth anniversary of the grand opening. Seventy-nine-year-old Glenn McCarthy joined the protest saying, “I want to see it used. It’s a silly thing to tear it down.” Many of the 3,000 participants had personal ties to the hotel, ranging from having spent their honeymoon there to attending their senior prom in the hotel’s ballroom. Beyond such sentimentality, the Shamrock undoubtedly had historic value. The hotel had hosted six United States presidents and numerous foreign dignitaries.²⁸

Houston had a record, however, of tearing down the old and the not-so-old and replacing them with the even-newer. There was little sense of history in the relatively young city. Consequently, “there was no political will or support for saving it [the Shamrock Hilton],” observed Minnette Boesel, who was president of the Greater Houston Preservation Alliance (GHPA) in 1986. “And, of course, no preservation laws at the time.”²⁹ Public policy governing historic preservation was nonexistent in Houston in 1986; consequently there was no legal recourse in place to protect the Shamrock Hilton.³⁰ The GHPA lobbied the Texas Medical Center in an effort to change its mind. The TMC’s answer echoed earlier reports on the infeasibility of renovation and the impracticability of maintaining the building. “The rationale was that it was full of asbestos,” said Boesel, “and too expensive to renovate.”³¹ GHPA Executive Director Ramona Davis felt that the failure at the time was the lack of vision on the part of the administration of the TMC.³² What Houston needed was a change of vision.

The Shamrock Hilton officially closed on June 30, 1986.³³ TMC announced in December of 1986 that the hotel would be demolished.³⁴ The contents and appointments of the hotel were auctioned off the next spring to Houstonians, who relished the thought of owning a piece of the hotel, a piece of Houston’s history. On May 31, 1987, the first doomed sections of the Shamrock fell under the wrecking ball. After the demolition uncovered the cornerstone, the stone and the contents of the copper box behind it were given to Glenn McCarthy.³⁵ The next year, eighteen months after the wrecking ball began to swing, McCarthy died at a Houston nursing home. He passed away on December 26, 1988, one day after his 81st birthday.³⁶ Granted, McCarthy was 81 years old, but many in the media at the time felt that the razing of his beloved hotel broke the oilman’s heart, even though he had lost it over thirty years earlier.

The loss of the Shamrock Hilton was the catalyst for change in the cultural mindset of the city. Boesel felt that the efforts that surrounded the Shamrock and the *Save the Shamrock* committee were the beginnings of preservation activity in Houston. Ramona Davis noted that membership in the GHPA has increased dramatically in the last decade, citing that modern technology made communication easier and more effective.

In the years since the demolition of the Shamrock, change has occurred. The City of Houston adopted a Historic Preservation Ordinance in 1995, which “recognizes and protects the city’s historic sites, many of which are in a five-mile radius of downtown.”³⁷ The city also created the Houston Architectural and Historical Commission so that there would be an official entity charged with reviewing any



Houston Freeway Planning Map, 1949, Historic Houston Freeway Planning Maps (Texas Freeway.com)

demolition or alteration proposals for historic structures. After a 90-day waiting period, however, even if the Houston Architectural and Historical Commission disapproved, a property owner was and is free to do as he wishes with his property.³⁸ In 2006, City Council approved tax incentives for protected landmarks in an effort to support the need for prudent preservation.³⁹ In April 2007, the 1995 ordinance was given a little punch as the City Council approved measures to designate neighborhoods as historic districts, strengthening preservation efforts.⁴⁰

Articles in the *The Houston Chronicle* that discussed the preservation measures taken in 2007 credited the loss of the Shamrock as the pivotal moment that galvanized Houston’s preservation movement: “Ironically, the 1987 demolition of the legendary Shamrock Hotel, symbol of Houston’s unbridled energy and flash, might have occasioned Houstonians’ first significant preservationist stirrings. Since then, many buildings worth saving have disappeared, often in the dead of night, with no legal avenues available to save them.”⁴¹ According to Ramona Davis, ultimately it is up to the citizens of Houston to save their historical heritage. While there are now protections in place, historical sites are by no means safe. Houston’s preservation ordinance allows a property owner to request landmark designation from the Houston Archeological and Historical Commission, but the fate, positive or negative, of any given property is still in the hands of the owner.⁴²

In 1987 there were no such incentives, options, or legal recourses in place to save the Shamrock Hilton. The TMC chose to demolish the hotel without regard for civic sentimentality or its historical significance; it was strictly a fiscal decision. The land where the hotel, its gardens and pool once were became a surface parking lot for the TMC. The acreage has experienced some development since the 1980s. In 1990 The TMC announced plans for a park to be located in the triangular area on the southwest corner of South Main and Holcombe Boulevard. The 1.2-acre Gus S. and Lyndall F. Wortham Park, dedicated in September, 1991, was designed by John Burgee Architects of New York City, the same firm that designed the Water Wall fountain next to the Williams Tower near the Galleria. The centerpiece for the



Photographer Ed Bourdon takes a picture of the Shamrock Hotel's demolition with the same camera he used to photograph the opening of the hotel in 1949. Photo courtesy Metropolitan Research Center.

park consists of a 650-foot water pool and twenty-three water columns, each progressively taller than the next. Funding for the park came from a \$2.5 million grant from the Wortham foundation, as well as donations from three other groups.⁴³ Although the exact costs of the park and fountains and the demolition of the Shamrock have not been disclosed, the combination of the two would have been far less than the proposed cost of renovating the hotel, which at the low end was \$45 million.⁴⁴ Therefore, according to Bob Stott, Executive Vice President for Planning and Development for the TMC, "It was the only decision possible."⁴⁵

In 1991 Texas A&M built the Institute of Biosciences and Technology on the Shamrock acreage. The eleven-story building faces Holcombe and is next to the Wortham Park. The building is a teaching and research facility for the growing biosciences and biotechnology interests in the Texas Medical Center. A&M also has a priority option on the "M" parking lot that will be built on the property opposite the IBT building across from Wortham Park.⁴⁶

Two elements of the Shamrock complex left after the hotel's demolition, the five-story garage and the convention facility, were preserved and remain intact today. According to Stott, both the garage and the Edwin Hornberger Conference Center are in excellent condition. The conference center is available for not-for-profit use only, and is used consistently by Medical Center institutions.⁴⁷

The basement of the garage houses the Texas Medical Center Facilities Operations and Maintenance offices for the entire TMC campus. The structural integrity of the garage was sound enough for the first floor to be the staging area for Federal Emergency Management Agency and for TMC ride-

out teams as part of the Emergency Preparedness activities during Tropical Storm Allison and Hurricane Rita. Currently the University of Houston system occupies the first and second floors.⁴⁸

A few changes are in store for the Shamrock acreage and the current buildings. While the surface parking that currently exists will remain in the foreseeable future, the conference center will be demolished when the Texas Medical Center adds three floors to the parking garage. The building will be renamed the Paul G. Bell Building.⁴⁹ Eventually other medical center institutions may develop facilities on the property, but there are no plans other than the Bell Building at this point.⁵⁰ The TMC is expected to grow considerably over the next six years, reaching 40 million gross square feet of utilized space. Currently the TMC occupies 28.3 million gross square feet.⁵¹

Other than the parking garage, few traces remain of the Shamrock Hilton Hotel. There are no plaques, markers, statues, or monuments to mark its existence at its original location. The only accoutrements from the hotel still in the possession of the Texas Medical Center are the fixtures from the grand ballroom. A piece of the wall of the Shamrock swimming pool is imbedded in the crosswalk path on the northwest corner of Market Square Park in downtown Houston. Minnette Boesel said that it is part of a collection that includes "other architectural shards meant to remind Houstonians that we are losing our heritage."⁵²

In reflecting on her experience at the Greater Houston Preservation Alliance, Ramona Davis concludes that the saving of buildings, not their loss, has more influence on public awareness: "Generally, buildings, houses and neighborhoods that are saved have a much stronger influence on the public's perception of the value of historic preservation than anything that is lost. Losses are easily forgotten. We focus on the success stories because they continue to remind the public of the value of historic buildings."⁵³ But it is not only the saves that the public remembers, nor only the preserved landmarks that instill a sense of historical pride in a community. Houston is finally gaining a sense of self, and Houstonians, natives and transplants, are developing a sense of heritage. The loss of so much of Houston's historical fabric helped inspire this change in the city's culture. Such losses stir the blood, making the public angry enough to be moved into action. The loss of the Shamrock Hotel was one early inspiration for the public's and the city government's interest in preserving the physical embodiments of our past. It helped Houston to begin to consider creating the political and legal framework necessary to protect its history. The Shamrock's loss shocked Houstonians into looking harder at the value of historic buildings, encouraging the emergence of a stronger preservation movement in the city.

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Conversations with...

LARRY GREGORY, PRESIDENT OF THE LONE STAR FLIGHT MUSEUM

The Lone Star Flight Museum (LSFM) first opened in 1990 in a newly constructed, 50,000 sq. ft. hanger at Scholes International Airport at Galveston (Scholes Field). The original collection of historic aircraft grew rapidly and, in 1991, the Museum opened an additional hanger to house its new acquisitions. In November 1999, the Museum became the home of the Texas Aviation Hall of Fame, which was established by the Texas Legislature and then Governor George W. Bush, to honor the contributions of Texans in aviation. Within a few years, the Lone Star Flight Museum achieved an international reputation as one of the foremost flying museums in the country. The Museum's collection had grown to over 1,500 artifacts and some forty historic aircraft, many of which were maintained in flying condition and took part in air shows across the country. One of these aircraft, a P-47 Thunderbolt, flies regularly as part of the U.S. Air Force "Heritage Flight" program, which brings historic aircraft and modern jet fighters to aviation events across the country. The following "Conversation" is based on William H. Kellar's interview with Larry Gregory, President of the Lone Star Flight Museum, on November 11, 2008. This interview originally was scheduled for late September, but was postponed because of the extensive damage to the Museum and to Galveston from Hurricane Ike in September 2008. Gregory, a native Texan, graduated from Texas A&M University in 1989 with a degree in meteorol-

ogy. He became interested in historic aircraft when his father began flying an old Stearman (biplane) during the mid-1970s. In 1994, he began volunteering at the Lone Star Flight Museum and accepted a job there in 2002. He has been president of the Museum since 2006.



LARRY GREGORY (LG): My interest in historic aircraft came at a young age. My dad and another gentleman in LaMarque purchased a Stearman back in 1974 or 1975. I was seven or eight years old when they got it. They owned that plane for ten or twelve years, and both of them began flying in the Commemorative Air Force's "Tora! Tora! Tora!" routine in the late 1970s. I was at a lot of air shows with them and always enjoyed the "round motors," the older aircraft, and also enjoyed meeting some of the figures from World War II.



All photos are courtesy of the Lone Star Flight Museum unless otherwise noted.

One of the most memorable days in doing that at an air show was one in Harlingen in the late 1970s; sitting at a table, I first met General Doolittle, Tex Hill, Ensign George Gay and Pappy Boyington, all right there. My dad said... "Come on boy, you have got to meet these guys." As a nine-year-old, it was pretty neat to meet those heroes. I did not realize what they did until later on, but being able to say that I actually shook these guys' hands means a lot today. And coming full circle on the Doolittle front, the Museum repainted our B-25 in the colors of the Doolittle Raiders in 2007. I had become acquainted with Dick Cole who was Doolittle's copilot on the historic mission and talked to him about painting our B-25 as a flying tribute to the Raiders. The concept was well received and I eventually worked with the Doolittle Raiders Association for permission to use their emblem as part of the nose art. We wanted the airplane to serve as a tribute to all 80 men who flew the mission, and their emblem is a symbol that links them all together. We are honored to have the only civilian aircraft adorned with their

emblem and is recognized as the official B-25 of the Doolittle Raiders Association.

So, it is something that we are very proud of and, on a personal note for me, it is one of the most rewarding things that I have been associated with at the Museum. Having met General Doolittle, and now a lot of the surviving Raiders and their families, has certainly been a thrill. We debuted the aircraft at the 65th Doolittle Raider Reunion on April 18, 2007 in San Antonio. We departed for San Antonio about 8:00 A.M., sixty-five years to the day [of the Doolittle raid on Tokyo, April 18, 1942], almost to the hour and met seven of the surviving Raiders and many family members. The Raiders now refer to it as "their airplane," which makes me very proud for our museum.

WILLIAM KELLAR (WHK): How did the Museum get started?

LG: The Museum was founded by Houston business man Robert Waltrip in the mid-1980s. In fact, the first airplane he purchased





B-25 painted in Doolittle Raiders colors.

was our B-25 in 1984. He was rapidly acquiring aircraft through the 1980s and the early to mid-1990s, building the airplane collection, and looking for a home for the Museum. Galveston turned out to be the place they selected after doing some study and negotiations elsewhere. Galveston was the location that wanted us, it was a good tourist destination with the opportunity to attract a lot of visitors. So, we built here, opened the building in November of 1990 and have been here ever since. The collection has changed through the years, but the main core of the Museum collection has been pretty stable for the last eight to ten years.

I would say that the queen of the fleet is the B-17. Mr. Waltrip purchased that back in 1987 in England. We had a crew fly it across the Atlantic shortly thereafter to Hobby Airport where it underwent a three-to-four-year restoration. It is one of the finest flying B-17s around and is very complete on the inside. We are very, very fortunate to have it. Only thirteen B-17s are flyable at this time. Almost 13,000 were built, so, it is not a real good percentage. And, of course, the B-25 now has significantly more meaning with its current paint scheme.

Our P-47 is very active in the Air Force Heritage Flight Program and is seen at many air shows across the country during the year. And, of course, the Corsair and the Hellcat and the SBD [Douglas SBD Dauntless—World War II Naval Dive Bomber] are some of the rare Navy airplanes that we have. Only three Hellcats and SBDs are currently flying to my knowledge. Both are historically significant as well with the SBD making its mark at Midway and the Hellcats impressive combat record. Hellcats destroyed more enemy aircraft than any other American fighter.

And, of course, we have some other airplanes that we fly quite a bit — a Stearman and a T-6 Texan and those kinds of things. You have got to have some trainers in the mix.

Our T-6 is just out of the paint shop. It is in the colors of the 111th Fighter Squadron of the Texas Air National Guard based at Ellington back in the 1950s. We wanted to do that as a tribute to the 111th for their ninety-plus years of service here on the Gulf Coast. They recently have lost their fighter mission, and are now in the reconnaissance role flying Predators, remote-controlled, unmanned airplanes. So, we felt that that was a worthy tribute.

WHK: How do you go about finding aircraft and then preserving them?

LG: Well, finding a derelict airplane just sitting out at an airport—that is hard to do. Now, people are recovering them from crash sites and restoring them. Our Hurricane is an example of an aircraft restored from a wartime crash. The airplane crashed next to a little fresh water bog in Newfoundland back in 1944 and sat there until 1972. Once recovered, it passed through a few hands until we purchased the airplane and started a restoration. It took more than fifteen years to restore it! Another aircraft, Glacier Girl, a P-38 that was found under the ice in Greenland is probably the most famous example of a recovered aircraft flying today. They had to tunnel under the ice more than 200 feet and bring the airplane up. It took a monumental effort and millions of dollars to accomplish, but that is how it is done. Technology has enabled more aircraft to be restored that were previously thought to be impossible. It is very tough and highly expensive to restore a fighter or a bomber that has been sitting for many years.

Just keeping them flying is very difficult. Parts are in short supply and some items are nonexistent. You cannot buy a new tail wheel tire for the B-17. It is impossible. All of the molds were destroyed fifteen to twenty years ago. In order to keep the airplane flying, we had to work with an engineer to design



B-17 in flight over Galveston Island

a new wheel that will accept a tire that is readily available. In fact, had we not had the hurricane [Hurricane Ike], we would have already had one cut. Otherwise, we will ground the airplane because of a tire. So, those are a few of the obstacles that we are looking at.

And then, of course, there are insurance and regulatory issues from the FAA and TSA. We are up against a lot of that now, especially with some proposed rulings that may come into effect which will greatly restrict our ability to fly these airplanes. So, it is a constant struggle. I think that we have the ability to keep flying the airplanes for another two, three, maybe even four decades. But, I think we will be done well before that due to outside issues.

WHK: How hard is it to find people qualified to fly these old planes?

LG: Well, that would seem to be a huge concern because obviously people think the only people who qualify to fly these airplanes are the ones who flew them in the war. You have 22-year-old, 23-year-old pilots flying copilot at a regional airline or a charter outfit or whatever — it is all training. You have to build up a set of skills flying a certain set of airplanes to be able to transition into some of these airplanes that we have here in the hangar. A person with 2,000 hours in a [Cessna] 172 does absolutely nothing for me because it has few characteristics that most of our airplanes possess. Whereas a person with a couple hundred hours of Stearman and T-6 time along with some Twin Beech time for a radial engine, multiengine type airplane would be a good candidate to progress into some of our airplanes. Obviously, flying tailwheel type aircraft is key.

Fortunately, we have about twenty-five folks who fly our airplanes, and I would say the average age is probably around fifty-three. And other organizations have some pretty young guys flying a lot of their stuff, which is great.

WHK: Are you a pilot?

LG: Yes. My dad had that Stearman when I was a kid and I always had an interest. I kind of delayed it a little bit and really got busy in the mid 1990s and earned my ratings to start building

some time. I wanted to do the airline gig, but 9/11 disrupted the interview that I had scheduled eight or ten days later. And so, I just started building more experience in other airplanes and was fortunate to fly a few of the planes here.

Right now, I am a copilot on the B-17 and the B-25 and fly our Twin Beech, the Stearman, the T-6 and the DC-3 when it was flying a little bit. I am not the senior guy by any means as far as experience. I am still very much in the learning mode, but it is very rewarding and an honor to be able to fly some of these airplanes. It is the dream that I had playing with little airplanes as a kid growing up. I cannot believe that I am actually allowed to do this. It is beyond words....

But, like I mentioned before with the Raiders, meeting the families and being accepted by them means a lot, obviously. And with our ride program now, a lot of folks will buy a ride for their dad who flew as a B-17 gunner in the war or B-25 pilot, or whatever. It is different circumstances but the story is the same. They go on a flight and experience the airplane with their loved ones. Like this one gentleman we flew a few months ago — more than thirty relatives were on hand to watch him go for a ride in a B-17. And when he got back, they were all rushing to him with hugs and congratulations. It was very emotional for everybody as four generations saw him fly in the airplane he flew in combat. Just being able to have a process to allow them to make that memory with the man's great-grandkids is pretty special. There will be a day when we will not have that ability and unfortunately, it is probably coming too soon. But, to be able to let them see that someone appreciates what they did is pretty rewarding. I hope that we display the airplanes in a manner fitting for what they all did for us.

We have flown some folks who never met their father because he was killed in a B-17 before they were born. They can experience all the sounds, sights and smells of the airplane at or next to his crew station. It means a lot in a way I'll never know. That makes all the hard work, sweat and expense worth it whenever people can have an meaningful and enjoyable experience.



Flooded aircraft and storm debris after Hurricane Ike.



WHK: Well, you have a real living history museum here. Let me ask you a couple of hurricane questions. Before Hurricane Ike, what was your plan if you got word that there was a hurricane in the Gulf that was coming this way?

LG: Well, that is one thing that we talked about throughout hurricane season. One of the things that we have done on the airplanes is to change some of our maintenance schedules so we do not have an airplane on jacks for an extended period of time during hurricane season. It is one thing to check the weather and say, O.K., there is nothing out there and I have three or four

days to change some tires that just so happen to need changing at this time. That is one thing. Having an airplane on jacks for an involved two- or three-week process, that is done in the winter time. We have also moved some of our airplane inspection intervals out of hurricane season. That is just kind of ground work ahead of time. It does not always work that way but that is the big picture. Obviously, we have protocols for how we are going to prepare some of the artifacts, the airplane maintenance manuals, and a lot of the other stuff.

With Ike, we were watching the storm obviously before it hit Cuba. About one week before the storm, we had some

involved maintenance on the B-17, B-25 and P-47. We made the call to start putting one of those airplanes back together over the weekend. The Saturday weekend warriors addressed that on the B-17 and made some headway on the B-25 as well. Monday and Tuesday, we finished the other two airplanes, which gave us some of Tuesday and all of Wednesday to prepare some of the other airplanes to get ready to go.

WHK: And the weather bureau was still thinking that Ike was headed towards Corpus Christi...

LG: Right. But, most of the time when there is an error on the storm tracks in the Gulf, it is to the right, which would mean towards Galveston. I was not very confident with the storm com-

ing off of Cuba that it was going to go south of us. So, we were a little more proactive, I think, and that allowed us to evacuate a few airplanes that had not flown in a while. Over the weekend... I had already sent e-mails out to all of our pilots. We were going to need help and I was laying the ground work to get the most pilots here as possible. On Wednesday, it was finalized—we are leaving Thursday and we are flying to Midland—far enough inland and no big concerns with the storm there. Plus, Midland had their air show the next weekend or two weeks later. That would be a good deal.

We got here Thursday [September 11] morning—I had pilots on the way down and, of course, the logistics of just getting people here are immense. I could not rely on a lot of my Houston area pilots because they were protecting their own property [in advance of the hurricane]. I have a lot of folks in Dallas, so a lot of those guys were coming down. One guy was coming from New Mexico. One of my guys started the day in Oslo, Norway, on a corporate trip and flew back to Houston, landed, came down, and flew two airplanes out. I mean, the whole thing was very challenging.

The main thing this time that really hurt us was that a lot of our pilots were at the Reno Air Races. I was down several folks and we had challenges all around. Well, Thursday morning, we checked the weather at Midland. The one day that Midland is IFR— meaning low clouds, rain, bad weather — was Thursday. So, at 9 o'clock Thursday morning, I began looking for places to send ten airplanes. We had a



Above: Texas Aviation Hall of Fame before Hurricane Ike, and, below, devastation after the storm.





Seabees and Crew from USS Nassau helping with cleanup.

lot of folks come together. We arranged to take a couple of airplanes down to a private ranch in South Texas. We also took a few of the airplanes to a hangar at Hobby owned by the same family. We sent an airplane to Ellington and three airplanes went to Sherman. So, we really had airplanes spread out all over the state but we got them out.

The heroic aspect of this event occurred on Friday morning. We were unable to evacuate the DC-3 Thursday evening due to traffic issues at Hobby Airport. We had arranged for hangar space, but we could not get there. A couple of our pilots asked if they could attempt to evacuate it Friday morning. We agreed to give it a shot and they flew a small Cessna to Galveston around 9:00 A.M. One runway was under water and the other runway had water at the edge. One of our pilots in Galveston pulled the DC-3 out of the hangar before they arrived to make for a quick escape. Water was quickly covering the ramp and the DC-3 taxied out in the water. When they took the runway, only the middle part of the runway near the centerline was dry. Another thirty

minutes would have been too late. It was just like a movie when the hero escapes to safety; minus all the explosions. And in the six hours after they left, the water rose six feet.

I saw the DC-3 fly over my house while I was covering the last window. I was jumping up and down, as you can imagine. I was very elated and sent a quick e-mail to our volunteer e-group. After I finished securing my house, I evacuated to my brother's house in Magnolia and rode it out there.

We helicoptered down on Monday after the storm. It was pretty devastating to walk into the Museum. My family had been a part of this place for fifteen years and invested a lot of time and energy, not to mention all the other volunteers who had devoted so much time to further the museum. To see the shape that it was in was just heartbreaking. I remember looking at my brother after being inside about five minutes and saying, "This is all meaningless." The destruction had no meaning because it was just so complete. It was very disheartening, very daunting. Where do you even begin? We were standing in the middle of all this debris and did not even

know where to start. That was pretty tough.

And then, we walked into the Hall of Fame and just about cried... You know, I can handle an airplane getting wet. It is what it is. In the Hall of Fame are a lot of artifacts from people of what they accomplished, and some were one-of-a-kind objects. There is a lot of loss in there that affects people on a personal level. It was such a wonderful facility with all the exhibits and artwork, and to see it devastated was very difficult. That, to me, has been the worst result of the storm. The exhibits represented so much, not just to our state, but to our country, and obviously to the families. It was such a source of pride for the families of our inductees that had their loved ones enshrined in the Hall of Fame. So, that has been very difficult.

WHK: How did you go about starting your recovery process?

LG: Well, the difficult thing about it is that we could not start right away. Galveston was closed, but I was able drive down on Friday and arrange some logistics to get our staff and volunteers on the island. Top priority was to get airplanes out of the hangar and flushed with fresh water. Well, Galveston did not have any water so we worked with some folks at the BP plant in Texas City. They arranged for Evergreen Industrial to deliver a tanker of fresh water on Saturday, one week after the storm. I was at the museum all day that Saturday to meet equipment in order to begin removing debris on Sunday.

While I was here on Saturday, I met some folks from the U.S. Navy that were in Galveston to assist with the recovery efforts. The Seabees from Amphibious Construction Battalion 2 volunteered to help remove debris. That was the best news yet. They indicated that they could enlist some support from the sailors of the USS Nassau as well. Even better news. So, Sunday, about fifteen of our staff and volunteers joined twenty Seabees and forty sailors from the USS Nassau to start the process. Over a two day period, we removed over 500 cubic yards of debris from the museum. The best advice I can give about working with the Seabees is to get out of the

way because they can handle any and every situation. It was amazing to be a part of working with these young men and women. Our military has some of the finest young people you could ever meet.

The CO of the ship told me that everyone wanted to participate. A young sailor from the Nassau gave me a Nassau T-shirt and a handshake and said, “Sir, thank you for letting me be a part of this.” I about lost it. This young “kid” is busting his tail and covered in sweat, sea water and other stuff washed into the museum by the Gulf of Mexico, and is thanking me for allowing him to do this. Thank you has never seemed so inadequate. I do not think I will ever forget it. These sailors saved the museum. I hope they realize what they did for not only the museum, but everywhere they worked in Galveston.

In the days following, we took steps to save the airplanes and recover some of the artifacts from the Hall of Fame and other areas of the Museum, and tried to do our best to preserve what we had left... We would pull out a pile of debris with a front-end loader and have about four guys go through it with a pitch fork looking for stuff— looking for prop tools, looking for anything rare that we needed to work on an airplane that came from the shop. It was very disheartening. You are reduced to digging through a bunch of wet, nasty, gooey junk looking for a nugget here or there. That is the way it is.

The amount of work that has been done in two months is astounding, in my opinion. I did not think we would be anywhere near this. We are on a pace where we might even be able to open by Christmas—part of the facility, not the whole thing. I did not think that that day would come for a long time. All the siding around the perimeter of the building has been cut away from twelve feet down and replaced. We have had a lot of electrical work done obviously. The place is basically all sheet rocked now. The gift shop area is taped and floated and primed; getting ready to do paint in there today or tomorrow.



Exterior of building sporting new metal siding.

We are making tremendous strides to bring the airplanes home. In fact, our B-17 is in the hangar. We will have a couple of other airplanes home by the end of the week, maybe even all of them home by Sunday. So, that is a welcome sight, to look out and see the B-17 sitting in the hangar, knowing that in less than one week, there will be six, seven, or eight more. One day at a time. And the thing that I have been saying is that this is not a week or two length project. This is a couple of years. We cannot tackle it all right now. And that is kind of how we went about it. We have done a pretty good job, I think. We made some mistakes here and there, I'm sure, but you just do what you can.

Obviously, we are going to evaluate a lot of things that we do with the Hall of Fame and I am not sure of a time table on that, to be honest with you. We have so many pressing needs that we have to do right now just to survive. I have to get the airplanes flying again so we can try to generate some revenue through our ride program. Without that, then the Hall of Fame, whatever my plan is with that, is meaningless. We have got to start generating some revenue. So, that is our focus. All the artifacts in the Hall of Fame are being cataloged and steps taken to mitigate the damage done and to rehabilitate them to the best extent possible. So, that will continue. It will be a long process. As far as making new exhibits and turning that place back into the Hall, I am a year out before I can even have a good handle on what and how we are going to go about it. It took ten years to build, and just to rebuild the exhibits, the media and everything in there is going to cost several hundred thousand dollars. So, that is going to have to wait.



PHOTO: WILLIAM H. KELLAR.

P-47 returned "home" to LSFM, Scholes Field, November 11, 2008. L to R: Volunteers: Bill Reid, Mechanic; Dan Blanchard, Pilot, and LSFM President, Larry Gregory. Photo: William H. Kellar.

WHK: What do you need most here? What kind of things could people do that can help you the most?

LG: Actually, I need some folks who are interested in this stuff, or who have some time and want to start doing something new, to come down and volunteer and help us. We definitely need manpower. Of course, I need financial commitments. We need various tooling, various equipment needs that will be ongoing for quite a while. There are a lot of ways folks can help. Come by and ride in one of the airplanes. You help us and you get a great experience in return... You do not have to be a craftsman to come down here and help. We have a lot of things in the curatorial side of the house from record keeping to cataloging some



Aircraft back home at the Lone Star Flight Museum Hangar.

of the items in the Hall of Fame and storage areas—sweeping a broom—it can be very non-technical type stuff. But it is all equally important. Sweeping up an area is just as important as working on an airplane because without having that place clean, we cannot put anything there. So, yes, it all leads to the combined effort to get it up and running again... And the other thing we need is for people to come down and see us... Galveston is open. The new part of the Causeway is open and you can get here. When we re-open, we need people to come visit. That is the only way that we are going to survive.

I think that the Museum has come through the storm very well so far. We saved a significant portion of the airplanes and the airplanes that were damaged are in the process of being rehabili-tated... We are working very hard to get this place back up and running. It is important for us to come back and it is important for our airplanes to be flying over the island again. It has been difficult on my staff and my volunteers. It wears on you. Yesterday, when we pushed this B-17 in, that was huge! Two months ago, the airplane was out of here. It left almost two months ago, and today it is on Galveston soil, under our roof. That is amazing! The day the lights came on in the hangar — that was a big deal. So, it all adds up. We will have a few

setbacks between now and when we are fully recovered, but we are going to have some victories, too. As I have told our folks, it's a big elephant to eat and we're going to be chewing for quite some time.

• **William H. Kellar**, Ph.D. is a Houston historian and frequent contributor to *Houston History*. He retired from UH in 2008 and presently is working as a freelance writer and president of HistoryConsultants.Net.

The Texas Aviation Hall of Fame-Lone Star Flight Museum complex is located next to Moody Gardens and the Schlitterbahn Waterpark at the Galveston International Airport at Scholes Field in Galveston, Texas, 2002 Terminal Dr., Galveston, TX 77554.

For more information about the Museum, including opportunities for volunteer work and contributions, call 409-740-7722 or 1-888-FLY-LSFM (359-5736) or visit the LSFM Website at: <http://www.lsfm.org/>

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Bolivar Memories

As I think about the destruction from Hurricane Ike, an old Paul Simon song, "Bookends Theme," plays in my head:

Time it was, and what a time it was.

It was...a time of innocence, a time of confidences.

Long ago, it must be, I have a photograph.

Preserve your memories; they're all that's left you.

My memories of the beach are mostly of Bolivar Peninsula. It was my first beach, and I have returned to it all of my life, watching its transformation from a relatively undeveloped

area to a series of growing beach house subdivisions. Although I have seen the impact of storms on the peninsula for a half century, it is difficult to absorb the reality of Ike's devastation.

For the first twenty years of my life, the beaches at Bolivar and Galveston were the only ones I visited. My family would drive through the refineries in Port Arthur, pull off the beach road (old Highway 87) at the first sign of the ocean, drive out onto the sand, and lay a blanket on a spot away from other people. For me, this was "the beach," complete with gobs of oil



that had to be removed from our feet with kerosene or baby oil, cars driving too fast up and down the sand, and pieces of broken bottles and flip-top tabs. Nonetheless, to me Bolivar was a beautiful place where brown waves met brown sand.

As I grew older, beach blankets gave way to beach cabins. Growing up was different back in the early 1960s. With drivers' education, we got our licenses at fourteen, and our parents thought nothing about letting us make the forty or fifty mile drive to the beach. My first glimpse of anything approaching

adult freedom was a trip with two friends to a beach cabin on the Port Arthur side of Crystal Beach sometime early in high school. We stayed at a cabin that family and friends had built on the beach to provide a roof over their heads while enjoying the ocean. Such self-built cabins, which owners often called "camps," were the most common dwellings on Bolivar in this era. Nothing fancy, they were places for working people to spend their weekends relaxing, fishing, and splashing in the waves.



Image of Hurricane Ike at sea on September 10, 2008, taken by the crew of the International Space Station.

Permission: World Wide Photos

In these years, whatever you needed for your stay, you brought along with you, since there were few stores on the peninsula. After unloading the groceries, we took glorious drives up and down the beach by ourselves in an old pickup. One night we flirted with the limits of freedom by borrowing a watermelon from a neighbor's watermelon patch. Later we rode down 87 toward the ferry landing in the back of the pickup. We passed quickly through the scattered collection of filling stations and beach cabins that constituted the unincorporated "town" of Crystal Beach. Most of the remainder of the trip featured undeveloped beach on our left and fenced pastures on our right. This was Bolivar Peninsula in the early 1960s, before the wave of construction brought by the oil boom of the 1970s. With as many cows as people and more open land than subdivisions, it was a world apart from Beaumont, much less Houston.

The memory of a much different trip to a beach cabin on Bolivar several years later is even stronger. I graduated from college at age twenty-one in June of 1970, and then spent the summer waiting to go to basic training in the army in October. That summer my wife Suzy and I lived at my parents' home. I worked as a laborer in a petrochemical plant; she helped care for my dad, who was dying a miserable death from cancer. Between his burial in August and the start of basic training, my young wife and my young self decided to spend a week at Bolivar trying to wash off some of our sorrow and to forget about our impending separation.

My backdoor neighbors owned an old-fashioned beach cabin, and they rented it to us at a cut rate. As I scribbled directions, they joked that we couldn't miss their cabin, since it was painted pink. Once on Bolivar, we drove on past the major landmark, Swede's store, turned left into a cluster of beach cabins, and followed the directions down narrow roads to a funky pink cabin. The key they gave us fit into the lock but did not open the door, so I pried open a screen, pushed up a window, and climbed in. (This was, after all, a cabin, not a fancy home with an expensive security system.) We then enjoyed a couple of memorable days at the beach. The waves were higher than we had ever seen. We had a big raft and a rowdy ocean all to ourselves, since almost no one was there in September. An old couple were our only neighbors, and they enjoyed sitting in their lawn chairs and watching the giddy kids frolic in the big waves. We were enveloped by the ocean, oblivious to anything beyond the waves—so much so, in fact, that the old couple had to tell us that Tropical Storm Felice was out in the Gulf moving toward Galveston.

Reluctantly heeding calls to evacuate Bolivar, we returned home to wait out the storm. I walked over to tell our neighbors how much we were enjoying their cabin, particularly the great outdoor shower for rinsing off. They looked puzzled; it turned out that their cabin did not have an outdoor shower. We had missed the last turn in their directions and stumbled upon the only other pink beach cabin for miles. Although breaking and entering seemed somewhat more serious than borrowing a watermelon, we nonetheless returned to the scene of the crime after the storm had cleared. The old couple smiled and waved at us as we drove past them. Surely they had second thoughts when they saw us moving into our second pink cabin of the week, but the police never came.

Basic training did, however, all too soon. Then came graduate school on the east coast and a job in California. The 1970s are to me a blur of motion marked by frequent drives across the country in our Rambler American, the birth of our daughter, and our swimming fool of a golden retriever, who loved all beaches equally. Along the way we discovered beaches far different than Bolivar. Stays at a Cape Cod-style beach home on Nantucket, a rental cabin on Cape Hatteras, a condo on St. Croix, a motel near Destin, Florida, and a cottage in Carmel revealed that some beaches had white sand and blue water. By the time we returned to Texas to live in 1981, we knew what pretty beaches looked like, but we still found ourselves drawn to Bolivar.

Ten years had brought dramatic changes in the appearance of the peninsula. The most obvious was the absence of a reliable road from Port Arthur to Bolivar. High waters from a series of hurricanes had severely damaged Highway 87 from Sabine Pass to High Island, and that thirty-two mile strip of the beach road had been temporarily closed...forever. By the early 1980s, full-scale houses on piers had begun to replace beach cabins on parts of Bolivar. Although some still called these fancy houses "beach cabins," most were nicer



than any house I will ever own. Indeed, the future of Bolivar was already evident across the ferry and past the seawall on the west end of Galveston, where structures I came to call beach mansions had begun to appear. On Bolivar Peninsula, upscale subdivisions were gradually taking over what had been stretches of empty beach. In the newly incorporated town of Crystal Beach, the proliferation of new businesses to serve the growing number of part-time beach cabin inhabitants had begun to give this section of Bolivar the feel of a tourist resort. There goes the neighborhood.

For the next twenty years, we rented cabins at Bolivar for functions ranging from our daughter's birthdays to our niece's wedding, when twenty or so family members congregated on Bolivar for much of a week. We regularly rented a big old-fashioned beach cabin at Caplen beach from my sister's friend and neighbor in Beaumont. I knew I would like the cabin before seeing it when I heard the directions: "once you cross Rollover Pass, look for the cabin with 'LINN' on the roof." A previous owner had used dark shingles on a white roof to spell out the family name in big block letters. This decreased the likelihood of pink-cabin mistakes, and it also helped me spot the cabin several times on Southwest Airlines

flights from Hobby to points east. The LINN cabin had been built in the early twentieth century to serve as an elementary school, but a storm ended these plans by depositing it in the East Bay. In the 1920s, a new owner salvaged the cabin and relocated it on Caplen beach. It was a glorious, giant cabin, with a big screened porch on three sides with hammock beds hanging from the roof. It had a raggedy old red piano, and few could resist pounding out an off-key "song." Alas, it also had a beach that seemed to have moved closer to the backdoor every time we visited, as storms ate away the shoreline.

In the years traveling to and from the LINN cabin, we could not help but see the changes brought by "gentrification," Bolivar style. A great old-fashioned burger joint, the O.K. Corral, offered milk shakes near a water slide that was never mistaken for the Schlitterbahn. A golf course of sorts graced the far west end of the peninsula. New restaurants and bars dotted the landscape; the symbol of the arrival of Crystal Beach as a full-scale entertainment center was the opening of a karaoke bar.

With the continued spread of beach house developments on Bolivar, a new stage of its growth moved forward in the early twenty-first century, marked by an honest-to-goodness supermarket, a spiffy new post office, and a fine new elementary school. Several summers ago, even a strip mall came to the neighborhood.

Initially, I preferred the old Bolivar to the new, the rugged old cabins to the new-fangled upscale homes on stilts. This began to change, however, when a friend began to offer the use of a beach mansion on the west end of Galveston. Then my sister Carolyn and her husband Bob Murphy bought a great house on the first row at Lafitte's Landing, a beach-style subdivision between Rollover Pass and the town of Crystal Beach. I discovered the joys of a great deck looking out at the ocean, a good kitchen, central air and heat, and all sorts of other amenities. The deck of my sister's cabin became one of my favorite hangouts. What a show: the sights and sounds of the waves meeting the sand; the porpoises and shrimp boats; the spectacle of a sky full of stars, a thunderstorm out in the Gulf, or even the lights of offshore platforms. Best of all, squadron after squadron of brown pelicans flew right over the deck. As a bonus, when I wanted something to eat or drink, I could make a quick trip to the supermarket. Life was good at the beach.

I began to take regular advantage of the Murphys' generous offers to use their beach house as a place to write. Part of my writer's ritual was a long walk on the beach at sunrise before I sat down in front of the computer. On these walks, I had to look away from the ocean to avoid the glare from the rising sun, and I could not help but look closely at the new Bolivar—the rows of beach houses stretching farther and farther into beach-front areas once devoid of development. Two questions came to mind: (1) how long could this growth continue without fundamentally changing the experience of going to the beach at Bolivar; and (2) how large would a storm have to be to do serious damage to these recently constructed houses?

At Bolivar the threat of hurricanes hung in the air in the summer and fall. You could track the histories of storms by looking at the receding coastline. But I found even more sobering storm warnings in a great little book I first



Major, Billy, Owen, and Michele Murphy and the view from the deck of the Murphy house.



Big waves at Bolivar, spring break 2008.

discovered in the bookshelves at the LINN cabin, A. Pat Daniels's *Bolivar! Gulf Coast Peninsula*. Writing with the passion of a part-time resident of Bolivar, Daniels traces the history of the peninsula through a combination of documents and interviews. I read this short, entertaining book from front to back the first time I picked it up, and I have read it several more times since. I always return to the short section called "Storms over Bolivar." Here Daniels presents a list of the many hurricanes and tropical storms that have passed over the peninsula since 1766, complete with gripping stories of the struggles for survival in the big storms of 1900 and 1915. Both storms brought death and widespread damage to Bolivar, destroying most of the structures on the peninsula. During both, those who did not evacuate faced death, with hundreds finding refuge from high waters in the Bolivar lighthouse near the ferry landing. I had, of course, heard the stories of the "Great Galveston storm" of 1900, and I even knew about the massive storm in 1915. But the sheer number of big storms over Bolivar grabbed my attention. For as long as people had lived there, they could be certain that still another bad hurricane lurked out there in the Gulf with Bolivar's name on it.

I thought of Daniels's book each time a hurricane threatened our part of the coast. In 2005 Hurricane Rita scored a near miss, heading straight for the Murphy house before moving up the coast a bit just before making landfall. This year as I watched for news of Hurricane Ike after evacuating to a friend's home in Austin, I kept worrying about predictions that a massive storm surge up Galveston Bay could flood homes all along Clear Lake and Clear Creek, including my home in Friendswood. Knowing that Ike was not supposed to make landfall until late Friday night, I was stunned by the televised images of waves splashing up above the Galveston seawall at ten on Friday morning. I breathed a sigh of relief when I saw reports that the center of the storm was moving slightly up the coast, putting the big storm surge to the east of us. And then it struck me that our good fortune might spell disaster for Bolivar. Television accounts of water rising on the peninsula well before dark gave me the idea to call someone with a reminder of the safe haven the Bolivar

lighthouse had offered in the distant past, but I did not know who to call with my strange historian's knowledge.

I stayed up most of the night of Ike watching news accounts of its landfall. Groggy from too little sleep and too much beer, I recalled my last long visit to Bolivar during spring break six months earlier, when I stayed at the Murphy house for a week. A big storm on the first day pushed high waves all the way to the sand dunes, reminding my wife and me of our journey to the pink beach cabin almost forty years earlier. The turbulence and power of the usually tame Gulf fascinated me, and I watched the rough surf for hours. What an amazing spectacle it would be, I mused, to watch a big storm surge coming up out of the ocean. Having seen this beach all of my life, what a sight it would be to have a protected space from which to see it transformed by the extreme conditions brought by a hundred-year storm. As I watched and waited for news by myself in a dark room in Austin, two hundred miles away on Bolivar, there were no protected places west of High Island as Ike churned around and over those who had not evacuated.

The next day Suzy and I sat with Carolyn and Bob at the Austin home of her son and his family. The mood was not that of one of our family get-togethers at the beach house. We were not sitting on the deck of the beach house at Bolivar watching pelicans or out on the beach playing with our great nephews. Instead, we were searching for news about our homes and the beach house. One "news" broadcast brought a frenzied outburst from a reporter, who screamed into the camera: "Crystal Beach is gone." We laughed at how the fools on TV always exaggerated, but we later learned that this particular fool was more or less correct. Most of the structures on Bolivar had either disappeared or suffered serious damage. Photos on the internet seemed to show empty spaces where the first rows of cabins had been at Lafitte's Landing. After power was finally restored at my own house, which suffered significant damage in Ike, I surfed the web obsessively looking at web sites with images of the mind-numbing damage on the





Sailboat beached at Bolivar after Ike.



The view from under the late deck of the Murphy house after Ike.

Bolivar peninsula.

Several weeks after the storm, when homeowners could finally return to Bolivar, my sister and her husband confronted the harsh reality of the peninsula after Ike. They saw that the LINN cabin had vanished, and that much of the lot on which

it had stood for more than eighty years was in the ocean. At the site on their own beach house, they found nothing except some silverware, a plate, their golf cart buried in sand in a ditch across the road, and chunks of concrete where the driveway had been. Not even the piers remained. Ike's tidal surge washed away most of the houses on the first and second rows facing the beach all along Bolivar. Farther back from the ocean, many of the structures that remained suffered serious damage from the wind and water, as well as from collisions with beach houses ripped from their piers which careened across the peninsula like giant bumper cars.

Months passed after Hurricane Ike before I mustered the courage to go and see the devastation that resulted when the ocean chewed up Bolivar Peninsula and spit out the pieces from Chambers County to Padre Island. Although I knew I would find a landscape several people had compared to "a giant battlefield," I was not prepared for the miles of desolation I encountered on the road from High Island to Crystal Beach a full three months after the hurricane.

Along with my wife, daughter, and son-in-law, I followed Carolyn and Bob to the site of their cabin. The loss of familiar landmarks made it difficult to keep our bearings. We walked the beach looking back at what had been the first row of cabins. So little remained of the beach house that had given us such pleasure in the past that we could not be certain exactly where it had stood. Up the road toward Galveston the supermarket was in shambles; its sturdy fortress-like front wall stood tall between a mound of debris out by Highway 87 and the gutted interior of the store. Most of the exterior walls of the fine new strip mall had been washed away. We made no

effort to find the old pink cabin, figuring that if we could not find it in 1970 with good directions, we had little chance of identifying it amid the chaos of Bolivar after Ike. Along the beach at Gilcrest was the much photographed "only house standing" that the national media had adopted as a symbol of hope amid the devastation of Ike; the house looked to be on mighty shaky ground. On down the road toward High Island stood a beautiful sailboat grounded on the beach, standing as a stark reminder of how much was left to be done to return the peninsula to its previous state.

My memories of the beach on Bolivar before Ike now stand in sharp contrast to the ravaged landscape there. A century ago in 1900 and 1915, residents on this barrier island in the Gulf twice faced similar destruction and the same sense of loss and confusion about the future. Like these earlier citizens of Bolivar, many of those who lost everything they owned on Bolivar during Ike plan to do what Americans have always done: build something bigger and better. Once the beach is cleared, they and their families and friends will rebuild and once again enjoy their beach houses and the vacation communities on the peninsula. Then a year or a hundred years later, others will stand at the same spot looking once again at the destruction from what nature has always done: destroy man-made structures on barrier islands with massive tidal surges driven by hurricane winds.

After sixty years on earth, I now accept as a normal, almost comprehensible, part of life the sad reality that people die. The death of a place, however, is for me a strange new reality. Sure, the brown waves still meet the brown sand at Bolivar, and in places, you can make your way through the debris and walk along the beach. But the landscape no longer matches my memories. The physical symbols of this unique place have been washed and blown away. In this sense, Ike destroyed history itself, leaving no record of the changes I have witnessed over my lifetime. Memories of Bolivar are all that are left me--memories of times of innocence, when big waves meant big fun, and we remained confident that hurricanes would pass us by and destroy someone else's beach.

• **Joe Pratt** is editor of *Houston History* magazine.

Memories of Bolivar and the LINN House

Hilda Lopez of Beaumont wrote these reflections after Hurricane Ike washed away her family's cabin on Caplen Beach.



The site of the LINN house after Ike.

The History

Eighty-four years ago the new school at Caplen was lifted by a storm and set in East Bay. Galveston County abandoned the school. The Oxford family brought the school back and made it their beach cottage. In 1929 Guy Linn bought the house and it remained in the Linn family for the next 48 years. For the last 33 years it has had our name on the deed but it will always be the Linn house. The true history of the grand old lady was not the physical house but rather was what the house represented. Hospitality. Fun. Love. Family. Friends. And maybe a little cold beer.

Caplen

The oldest houses on the beach were at Caplen. They were large. Land went from highway to beach. Families had owned the same houses for generations. In the beginning, families had spent the entire summer at the beach. In the spring, people were sent down to plant gardens. At the beginning of the summer, cows and chickens were sent down by train. No road led to Caplen. At High Island, one got on the beach and drove to the houses. By the 1950s, each house had been updated to include indoor bathrooms, running water (now they even had hot water), and some had been so bold as to replace the screens with windows.

When we bought the Linn house, we were the new kids on the block. Strangers. We began updating the house. Twenty-six gallons of white paint brightened the inside; new fabric covered the furniture. Our kitchen now included new cabinets, a stove with all the burners working, and even a dishwasher. A sun deck was added. Our neighbors were not impressed. They came. They looked. They nodded. They smiled. Each and every one had the same comment. "I'm glad you kept the hanging beds." But one could tell they thought these new kids were going to ruin the neighborhood.

The Peninsula

The people made the peninsula like no other place that I know of. One of my first experiences in dealing with "the locals" was the building of the deck. I hired a local for a set fee plus cost of materials. When it came time to pay, I found out he had charged the materials to me. Before I paid him I went to check and see what he had charged. I got to the lumber yard and they could not find an account in my name or [my husband] Johnny's name. We even tried Linn since that was the name on the roof of the house. No luck. I ask them to try once more, giving the full name, Dr. John Joseph Lopez. No luck. Then they ask what kind of doctor he was. When I replied dentist, they knew where they had put the charges. An account had been opened to "the dentist on the beach."

We decided that we needed a telephone. I called

Southwestern Bell. After answering a long series of questions, I was told they didn't know if they serviced my area but they would research it and call back. Knowing that Claud's had a phone, I called Claud and asked how he got service. He told me to call the Cameron telephone company. The only question I was asked was where I wanted the bill sent. They gave me a number in High Island and told me the next time I headed for the beach to just call this number and I could get my phone installed. Sure, I thought, this is really going to work. Headed for the beach the next Saturday. Called. By the time I got to the house the phone was being installed. Billy, the phone man, came in, had a beer, and told us the best place to go crabbing.

Interviewed a handyman about some work that I needed done. When I got through he told me, "Well, lady, if I wanted to work that hard I would move to Beaumont. All I need is enough money to keep me in shrimp and beer." The electrician showed up a day late. His excuse? "I'd been barbecuing since early morning and by the time you called at noon, I was so drunk that my breath alone would set the house on fire."

The list goes on and on. The ferry captain that let my first grade grandson drive the ferry from Galveston to Bolivar. The lady at the cut [at Rollover Pass] who spent days and days teaching my son and his friend all about fishing at the cut. The septic tank guy who drove a truck with a large lettered sign that read "I really know my shit."

The House

The insurance adjuster wants me to make a diagram of the house with approximate room dimensions. A floor plan is not what we lost. How can one explain that we measure rooms not in feet but how many we can sleep. It seems they do not care that the walls were 12-inch heart of pine, the floors were oak and cypress, the ceilings were high. It was built to catch the wind from every directions.

The adjuster also wants us to list the contents of the house with age and cost of each item. Age and cost have nothing to do with the loss. How does one replace an old, round, leaning oak table that had a heart and a history. Do they not care that we kept repairing it year after year with no thoughts of ever giving it up? We have sat around the table and played hundreds, maybe even thousands, of games of cards. Our family and our friends come into the house and sit at the table. Chairs are filled. More chairs are brought in. Floor



The LINN house in its prime.

space is taken. People sit on kitchen cabinet tops. Drinks, food, good times are shared. For years I have sat around that table with friends and the friendship has turned into a sisterhood. We even trade stories about the table itself. Yes, it's true that many years ago someone was shot and killed at this very table. Well no, it was not the only shooting at the table, but it was the only death.

I can put a cost on ten single beds and one queen, but what about the hanging beds? Two double beds with sagging mattresses, set on iron frames, hanging from chains. They were placed on the southeast and the southwest corners of the house so that there was always a breeze on one or the other. First ones in the house called dubs on those beds. Each could sleep two, but at times at least four kids would pile in. A great place for a afternoon nap, rocking a baby, sharing secrets with a friend, or seeing how high one could swing the bed without breaking a window.

The adjuster might question why one would have over 60 windows and 13 ceiling fans. He wouldn't know that air-conditioning is a new thing to Caplen. Before air-conditioning, windows were always up, with sticks propping most of them. Ceiling fans were on with a few floor fans for extra wind. The windows were old and leaky. When the wind blew strong and seeped through the windows, the house sang its own song. At night one would be lulled to sleep with the sound of the surf and morning would be announced with the raising of the sun and the cry of the gull. At night, when the rains came, everyone would jump out of bed and run to shut the windows, mop up the wet floors and raid the kitchen for pots to put under the leaks.

Then it all changed. A grandson was born. Carter. The perfect child. Johnny saw a bead of sweat on Carter's brow. No longer did I have my perfect house. Roofs were ripped off and replaced with a new non-leaking roof. No more wind song. Windows were replaced with new insulated glass. No more wonderful old unfinished porch ceiling. Insulation was added and a new ceiling. Air-conditioning was installed. I learned to love the comfort of the cool air, but I always missed the sounds and smells it took from me.

The End

Once Johnny realized that our kids had never seen a beach with blue water and white sand. He took the family to the Caribbean. On about the second day of our trip, my son asked if the people here knew about Bolivar Peninsula. When we told him no, he informed us that he was not surprised because if they knew about Bolivar they surely would not be here. After all, he couldn't find one light bulb on the beach.

Yes, our water was brown, tar was on the beach, sticker burrs in the grass, days and even nights were hot, jelly fish in the water, but we loved it. We only needed enough to keep us in beer and shrimp.

All is gone now. Ike took our house, the swinging beds, the picnic table, and the oak kitchen table. The gumbo pot is gone. Walls of pictures are no more. Ike was able to rob us of what we cherished but Ike was not able to wash away our memories. When one recalls a memory one still has the beach house. We did not lose a house, we lost a way of life.

HOUSTON ARTS AND MEDIA (HAM)

KTBU-TV, Channel 55, will begin sending Postcards from Texas over the airways. This new, weekly half-hour show will cover everything from Native American Indian sites, to the Mexican Army's retreat from San Jacinto, to tales of the Great Depression, to Wheatley High School's basketball powerhouses of the 1960s, to the dedication of Texas historical markers on the Gulf Building. There will be four or five stories in each episode. The schedule was not nailed down at deadline time, but check www.houstons55.com for air times and topics.

"Our goal is to make history fun and accessible," said Mike Vance, host and executive producer. "This means we need your ideas, we need history experts who can tell stories on camera, and we need plenty of good images."

The new show is backed by a strong web presence with comprehensive history site links, history features, extra footage, an events calendar and more.

HOUSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY: FRIENDS OF THE TEXAS ROOM

Cinema Houston: From Nickelodeon to Megaplex, by David Welling, has won the first annual Julia Ideson Award. The prize was presented in October by the Friends of the Texas Room for published work that contributes to local and Texas history and culture. It is named for Houston's first city librarian.

Books, articles, films, video productions, web sites, exhibits, or other published work may be nominated. Entries must have been completed within the past five years and must have made significant use of the resources of the Texas Room/Houston Metropolitan Research Center.

The 2008 entries were judged by Don E. Carleton, The University of Texas at Austin; Lee Pecht, Rice University; and Dick Dickerson, University of Houston. "We had fourteen stellar entries," said Dickerson. "In my opinion, most should be submitted again."

For additional information, contact Sims McCutchan at smccutch@flash.net or www.friendsofthetexasroom.org.

HOUSTON HISTORY ASSOCIATION (HHA)

The Houston History Association is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to promoting Houston area history. In its first year, the non-profit HHA has sponsored a public lecture by Houston historian, David McComb Ph.D., and an oral history workshop. In February, 2008 HHA co-hosted with the University of Houston Center for Public History a successful conference for historical, archival, educational, and preservation organizations in Houston. The HHA is now working on one of its recommendations—developing an interactive web site that will include an events calendar and links to other historical organizations. HHA has also co-sponsored a workshop on the preservation of historic cemeteries in conjunction with the Harris County and Texas historical commissions.

"One of our primary objectives is to help older neighborhoods develop and record their histories," said Pam Young, HHA president. "We're working in Eastwood now,

building a walking tour, installing signage, and writing a manual for other neighborhoods to follow."

Finally, the young group's first membership renewal notices are in the mail. Those renewing at the Buffalo Bayou (\$60) level (or above) receive subscriptions to *Houston History* magazine. For more information, log on to www.HoustonHistoryAssociation.org.

SAN JACINTO SYMPOSIUM

The ninth annual San Jacinto Symposium, which casts *New Light on Old Stories*, will be held Saturday, April 18, 2009, at the Hilton Hotel and Conference Center, University of Houston. The \$50 admission includes lunch and parking.

W. H. Brands, Dickson Allen Anderson Professor of History at the University of Texas in Austin, will speak on the importance of interpreting battlefields, setting the stage for a panel discussion about archeological discoveries made since 2003. Some of these artifacts extend the area of the conflict beyond current park boundaries. Panelists include Roger Moore, Gregg Dimmick, Douglas Mangum, Douglas D. Scott and Manual Hinojosa.

In the afternoon, Sam W. Haynes, a professor of history at UT-Arlington, will compare Texas to other post-colonial societies in their efforts to define themselves after winning independence. James P. Beville, past-president of the Texas Numismatic Association, will discuss his new book, *The Paper Republic: The Struggle for Money, Credit and Independence in the Republic of Texas*. Finally, the popular James E. Crisp, a history professor at North Carolina State University, returns as Symposium moderator.

The San Jacinto Symposium is approved for six hours of Certified Professional Educator credit.

For more information or to register, call (281) 496 1488 or visit www.friendsofsanjacinto.org.

HERITAGE SOCIETY-NASA-HOUSTON HISTORY MAGAZINE

Houston, the Eagle has landed, an exhibit on NASA and its first fifty years, continues on display at the Heritage Society, 1100 Bagby, through April 26. This is a joint project of NASA, the Heritage Society and *Houston History* magazine. Call (713) 655 1912 or visit www.heritagesociety.org for additional information.

SAN JACINTO MUSEUM OF HISTORY

Spring is a busy time at San Jacinto. Please note the dates, and contact the museum for additional information: 281-479-2421 or www.sanjacinto-museum.org.

- Wednesday, April 15 – The spring fund raising dinner for the San Jacinto Museum of History at the Houston Country Club.
- Tuesday, April 21 – San Jacinto Day Commemorative Ceremony at the battleground.
- Saturday, April 25 – San Jacinto Festival and Battle Re-enactment at the battleground.

The exhibit, *Developing Houston: Photographic Treasures from the Cecil Thomson Collection*, continues at the museum through Memorial Day. A display on the U.S.-Mexican War will follow in early summer.

Houston's Treasure Houses — Bayou Bend and Rienzi Sisters, not Twins!



BAYOU BEND Architect, John Staub 1928
Former home of Ima Hogg

BAYOU BEND



RIENZI Architect, John Staub 1953
Former home of Carroll Sterling and Harris Masterson III

BAYOU BEND

RIENZI



American Collections



European Collections



German Porcelain



Chinese Export Porcelain



American Porcelain



English Porcelain



Sterling Silver



Sterling Silver

Joseph Badger, *Portrait of John Gerry*, 1745, oil on canvas, Gift of Miss Ima Hogg, B.53.13

William Ellis Tucker, *Vase*, 1827–38, porcelain, Gift of Miss Ima Hogg, B.72.118.1

Attributed to John Weesop, *Portrait of Esmé Stuart, 5th Duke of Lennox and 2nd Duke of Richmond*, c. 1651, oil on canvas, The Rienzi Society and Mr. and Mrs. Harris Masterson III, by exchange, 2003.49

Worcester Porcelain Manufactory, *Plate from the Stowe Service*, c. 1813, soft-paste porcelain, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harris Masterson III, 96.1146

Meissen Porcelain Factory, *Plate from the "Mollendorff" Service*, c. 1761, hard-paste porcelain, Bequest of Caroline Wiess Law, 2004.1370.20

Paul Storr, *Wine Cooler*, 1812, sterling silver, Bequest of Caroline Wiess Law, 2004.1359.1

Hot Water Dish, c. 1810–20, porcelain, gift in honor of Ann Lacy Crain by her daughter Lacy Crain, B.2007.1

Manufactory of Andrew Ellicott Warner, *Soup Tureen*, sterling silver, 1817, Gift of the Theta Charity Antiques Show in honor of Betty Black Hatchett, B.80.6

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IDESON ENDNOTES

- 1 “Friends Praise Miss Julia Ideson at Dinner in Honor of Houston’s Torchbearer,” undated clipping, Torchbearer Scrapbook, Julia Ideson Collection (hereafter cited as Ideson Collection), Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library. The points on which the Torchbearer award was given were: a woman of unimpeachable character; one who was outstanding in her business or profession; one who had made a valuable contribution to the economic, social or cultural development of the community; one who had served her community; and one who had added to Houston’s prominence in the state and nation. The two previous winners of the Torchbearer award were Edna Saunders and Mellie Esperson. Ideson would receive another honor in 1932 when she was the first Houston woman named to Who’s Who in America, a compendium of leaders of American thought and accomplishment.
- 2 Mary Brown McSwain, “Julia Bedford Ideson: Houston Librarian 1880-1945” (master’s thesis, University of Texas, August 1966), 5, 8.
- 3 Ibid., 6.
- 4 Houston High School, Program of 21st Annual Commencement, May 31 and June 1, 1899, Julia Ideson Scrapbook, Ideson Collection.
- 5 McSwain, 15.
- 6 Estelle Montpelier to Board of Trustees, Houston Lyceum & Carnegie Library, June 20, 1902, Ideson Collection. There is no evidence that Julia Ideson received a B. A. degree from the University of Texas nor did she ever refer to herself as a graduate.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Julia Ideson to Edgar Watkins, June 2, 1902, Ideson Collection.
- 9 Albert E. Bolton to Edgar Watkins, July 2, 1902, Ideson Collection.
- 10 Eleanor Edwards to Edgar Watkins, May 14, 1903, Ideson Collection.
- 11 Mrs. Henry F. Ring to Julia Ideson, August 4, 1903, Ideson Collection.
- 12 Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 285-86.
- 13 For a comprehensive account of Andrew Carnegie’s funding of libraries in the United States, see Abigail Van Slyck, *Free to All: Carnegie Libraries & American Culture 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995). Over a period of two decades, Carnegie funded thirty-six public libraries in Texas.
- 14 Julia Ideson to Board of Trustees, Houston Lyceum & Carnegie Library, November 10, 1903, Ideson Collection.
- 15 “Miss Ideson To Be Honored at Banquet,” undated clipping, Torchbearer Scrapbook. For many years Ideson continued to frequently staff the circulation desk, an unusual task for a library director.
- 16 Julia Ideson to Board of Trustees, November 10, 1903.
- 17 Orin Walker Hatch, *Lyceum to Library: A Chapter in the Cultural History of Houston* (Houston: Texas Gulf Coast Historical Association, September 1965), 9-10.
- 18 Mrs. W. E. Kendall and Miss Mamie Gearing to Andrew Carnegie, October 11, 1899, Jewel Boone Hamilton Gunter, *Committed: The 100-Year History of the Woman’s Club of Houston 1893-1993* (Houston: D. Armstrong, Inc., 1995), 61-62.
- 19 “The Library Dedicated: Handsome and Commodious Structure Thrown Open to Citizens of Houston,” *Houston Daily Post*, March 3, 1904.
- 20 Hatch, 48.
- 21 U. S. Bureau of the Census, *12th Census of the United States 1900* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1902); U. S. Bureau of the Census, *14th Census of the United States 1920* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1922). The city’s population in 1900 was 44,633 while the population in 1920 was 138,276. The population would double in the next decade.
- 22 Julia Ideson, Annual Report to the Board of Trustees 1905, Houston Public Library Collection, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library; Betty Trapp Chapman, *100 Years – 100 Stories: Houston Public Library, 1904-2004* (Houston: Houston Public Library, 2004) 11, 16, 18; McSwain, 35. Schools were not the only location for book stations. In an effort to reach the entire community, they were also placed in churches, settlement houses, small businesses, and even factories.
- 23 McSwain, 65.
- 24 Julia Ideson, Annual Report to the Board of Trustees 1921, Houston Public Library Collection.
- 25 Minutes, Houston Public Library Board of Trustees, October 11, 1921, Houston Public Library Collection.
- 26 Drexel Turner, ed., *Lyceum to Landmark: The Julia Ideson Building of the Houston Public Library* (Houston: Architecture at Rice and the Friends of the Public Library, 1979) 3-5; Minutes, Houston Public Library Board of Trustees, August 8, 1922, Houston Public Library Collection.
- 27 “Your Library – A Story of 25 Eventful Years...” (Houston: Houston Public Library, 1951), 2. Ideson wrote in a letter to architect William Ward Watkin, March 9, 1927 (Ideson Collection) that the Carnegie building “was the typical building of the day, elaborate in architecture and spacious and attractive inside, but without special adaptation to the use to be made of it.”
- 28 Chapman, 22.
- 29 Turner, 15.
- 30 Chapman, 25.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 McSwain, 99-101.
- 33 Julia Ideson, Speech to League of Women Voters, November 1, 1941, Ideson Collection.
- 34 *Mien Kampf*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mein_Kampf (accessed October 25, 2008).
- 35 Speech to League of Women Voters, Ideson Collection. As further evidence of Ideson’s thinking, this note was found among her papers: “...let us not yield the freedom that man has fought for. If we begin to suppress books, we are no longer a democracy.”
- 36 McSwain, 111.
- 37 “A Page to Be Devoted to the Interest of Equal Suffrage for Women,” *The Houstonian*, February 24, 1917, 11.
- 38 “Women Speak in Open Air on Equal Suffrage Problem,” *The Houston Chronicle*, n.d., Ideson Collection.
- 39 Janelle Scott, “Local Leadership in Woman Suffrage,” *The Houston Review* 12, no.1 (1990): 8-9.
- 40 “Miss Julia Ideson Delivers Talk on Women’s Rights,” *The Houstonian*, March 31, 1917, 3-4. Apparently Ideson saved a ribbon inscribed, “Votes for Women,” which the suffragists wore while campaigning. The ribbon in the Ideson Collection is one of the few identifiable items that has survived from Houston’s woman suffrage campaign.
- 41 The Commission on Interracial Cooperation was formed in the U.S. South in 1919 in the aftermath of violent race riots. The Texas Commission was introduced into the state the following year to promote racial goodwill through education. The Ideson Collection contains a folder of materials pertaining to the activities of the Texas Commission, 1940-1942. Although bound by segregation laws and social customs, Ideson became an advocate for moving toward equality of opportunity for all people. As early as 1923, she had addressed a meeting of the American Library Association about providing more library services for blacks in the South.
- 42 Scott, 17, 19.
- 43 Malcolm G. Wyer to Julia Ideson, October 7, 1918, Ideson Collection.

- 44 "Houston Librarian Has Rendered Valuable Service During Two War Emergencies," *Houston Post*, September 23, 1943.
- 45 Julia Ideson to Houston Public Library Staff, May 1919, Ideson Collection. Before the adventurous librarian returned home, she flew on one of the first airplane passenger flights from Paris to London.
- 46 "That's One for the Books: Librarian Julia Bedford Ideson," *Houston Post*, August 22, 1985.
- 47 Sharon Bice Endelman, "The Open Forum, 1926-1938: The Lecture Platform and the First Amendment in the Bayou City," *The Houston Review* 4, no.1 (1982): 5,6,13.
- 48 Programs, Houston Open Forum Collection, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.
- 49 Julia Ideson to Margaret Sanger, September 21, 1931, Ideson Collection; "Protests Fail to Halt Birth Control Talks," *The Houston Chronicle*, November 4, 1931; "Birth Control Defended by Mrs. Sanger," *The Houston Chronicle*, November 7, 1931.
- 50 Endelman, Open Forum, 18.
- 51 Sharon Bice Endelman, "Julia Bedford Ideson," *The New Handbook of Texas*, Vol. 3 (Austin: The Texas State Historical Association, 1996), 816. The central library building was renamed for Julia Bedford Ideson in 1951. Today it houses the Houston Metropolitan Research Center of the Houston Public Library. During Ideson's forty-five-year tenure, the collection of books increased to 265,707 volumes; the size of the staff grew from one assistant to forty-seven persons; and the library system expanded to six branches in addition to the central facility.
- 52 Swain, 110. Swain interviewed Louise Franklin, a staff member with Houston Public Library from 1921 until her retirement in 1963.

M&M BUILDING ENDNOTES

- 1 Garna L. Christian is professor of history at the University of Houston-Downtown and a Fellow of the Texas State Historical Association.
- 2 For histories of Houston see David G. McComb, *Houston, A History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969); Marguerite Johnston, *Houston, The Unknown City* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991); Marvin Hurley, *Decisive Years for Houston* (Houston: Houston Chamber of Commerce, 1966); Joe R. Feagin, *Free Enterprise City: Houston in Political and Economic Perspective* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1988); Ray Miller, *Ray Miller's Houston* (Austin: Cordovan Press, 1984). Quotation from "New Home for Trade and Industry," *The North Side of Houston*, vol. 2, no. 1 (April 1929) 26.
- 3 Donald B. Cole, *Handbook of American History* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1968), 211; McComb, *Houston*, 84, 97; *The Houston Chronicle*, April 17, 1930; *Houston Post-Dispatch*, April 18, 1930. April 17 was a Thursday.
- 4 Houston City Directory, 1930-1931; "New Home," 29 (quote); *The Houston Chronicle*, April 17, 1930; *Houston Post-Dispatch*, April 18, 1930; Emory E. Bailey and staff of selected writers [eds.], "Frazier, Rex Dunbar," *Who's Who in Texas*, a biographical directory, being a history of Texas as illustrated in the lives of the builders and defenders of the state, and of the men and women who are doing the work and molding the thought of the present time, 57. Herring: (Houston: Herring Press, 1990) p. 38
- 5 *The Houston Chronicle*, April 17, 1930; *Houston Post-Dispatch*, April 18, 1930; "New Home," 28; City Directory, 1930-1931; *George Fuermann, Peden—1965: Seventy-five Years and Just a Beginning* (Houston: Premier Printing Company, 1965) 17-48; Johnston, *Houston*, 213.
- 6 *The Houston Chronicle*, April 17, 1930; *Houston Post-Dispatch*, April 18, 1930.
- 7 Ibid.; "New Home," 28-29; *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "Baker Botts," <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/BB/jybl>.
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- 12 Hurley, *Decisive Years*, 71-72, 93; McComb, *Houston*, 175, 118; Houston City Directory, 1941-1045, passim; Johnston, *Houston*, 392; *The Houston Chronicle*, July 9, 1948; "M&M Building Sold to Rockdale Oilman," *Houston*, XXIII, no. 8 (September, 1952) 92.
- 13 *The Houston Chronicle*, July 9, 1948; December 23, 1948; June 26, 1952; May 13, 1956; June 1, 1979; *Houston Post*, June 25, 1972.
- 14 *The Houston Chronicle*, April 6, 1958; January 16, 1966; October 29, 1973.
- 15 Ibid., July 9, 1948; Advertisement, *Houston*, XXIII, no. 9 (October, 1952) 52.
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- 17 McComb, *Houston*, 160.
- 18 *The Houston Chronicle*, January 16, 1966; May 3, 1966.
- 19 Interview of Al Parker by author, *Houston*, January 16, 1981; Interview of Elliott Johnson by author, *Houston*, January 22, 1981; Interview of Edgar E. Townes by author, *Houston*, January 24, 1981.
- 20 Johnson interview; Townes interview; *The Houston Chronicle*, February 5, 1967; February 12, 1967.
- 21 *The Houston Chronicle*, January 6, 1972; *Houston Post*, June 3, 1974; June 4, 1974.
- 22 Financial Statement, South Texas Junior College, n.d., UH-Downtown Archives.
- 23 Statement of Ted J. Montz, Summer, 1985 in UH-Downtown Archives.

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- 2 Davis, *Corduroy Road*, p. 57-58.
- 3 Davis, *Corduroy Road*, p. 124-127.
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- 53 Davis interview.

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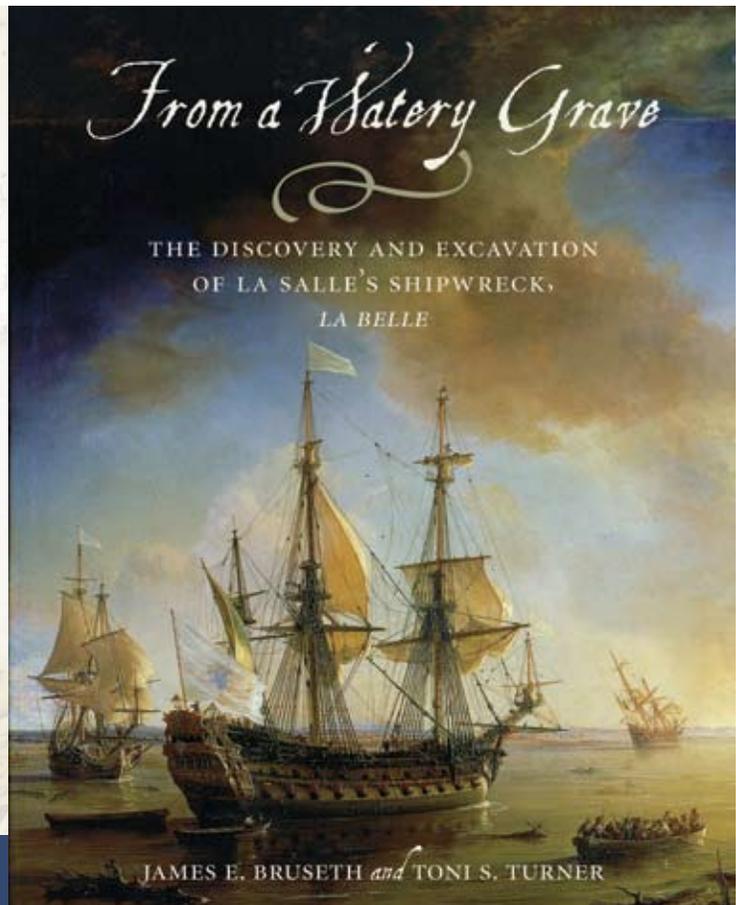
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San Jacinto Museum

Discover Texas
at the San Jacinto
Museum of History

Vist the Monument
and walk in the
footsteps of history

Open Daily
9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
For information &
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San Jacinto Battleground
State Historic Site

