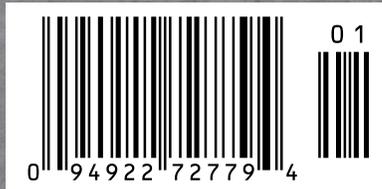


Houston HISTORY

VOLUME 8 • NUMBER 1 • FALL 2010

CONFRONTING JIM CROW



UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON**
CENTER FOR PUBLIC HISTORY

Letter From the Editor: Confronting Jim Crow

As a white boy with working class parents, racism was in the air I breathed in my youth. Jim Crow touched every part of my life. Racial attitudes handed down by poor whites in the South for generations remained pervasive and unrelenting in my world in the 1950s and early 1960s. The underlying reality was stark: We did not have much else in life, but we did have our white skin. Jim Crow laws embodied these attitudes, while providing the legal means to enforce them.



Dr. Joseph Pratt

Port Neches, Texas, was a strange battleground in the war over segregation. A refinery town in “mid-county” of Jefferson County, it had grown up as a place for white refinery workers to live. In Houston, deed restrictions segregated neighborhoods by assuring that blacks could not buy houses. We took it one step further. Our town was covered by one overarching, unwritten deed restriction: No blacks were allowed in Port Neches. My mom worked for a time at “Van’s Frosty,” a family-owned burger joint down the street from our home. In keeping with Jim Crow tradition, it had a separate window marked “Colored” around on the side. Surely that window was never opened. Blacks who lived in the neighboring cities of Port Arthur and Beaumont drove through mid-county only out of necessity. They did not take leisurely stops at Van’s Frosty for a burger, shake, and fries.

Yet even without blacks, we were obsessed with race. Our Southern Baptist preacher felt compelled to tell us that the Bible endorsed slavery and white superiority. Our politicians, unions, and newspapers reinforced Jim Crow attitudes. Our teachers remained silent on the subject, even after the civil rights movement began to deliver “teachable moments.” Although some in our town did not preach or practice racism, few if any voiced opposition. Adults around us used racist language considered so vile today that people substitute such phrases as “the N-word” for the historically-correct word that embodied Jim Crow attitudes and power relationships. Whites took this racially charged word as a common name for their black dogs, and they used it to refer to black people as regularly and as matter-of-factly as they said “Hello.”

But racism in Port Neches seemed tame in comparison to that in rural Texas. On my dad’s weekends off, we often drove back into the late nineteenth century to Hemphill, Texas, some hundred miles to the north. This was the county seat of Sabine County in East Texas, where my parents had grown up. Here poor white and black subsistence farmers and tenant farmers lived together, and Jim Crow lines were more clearly drawn and more enthusiastically enforced. Small dramas of black subservience played out daily on the town square. Black men addressed whites with eyes deflected and often with a short “Yesuh,” or “Nosuh,” in response to a question. If whites and blacks met on the sidewalk of the square, blacks stepped down and allowed whites to pass. Just beneath the surface of such encounters lay the threat of violence and the shared memory of violence.

I remember a family of blacks stepping down for me when I was a boy. I had been taught to be respectful of my elders, and this was an important lesson that race trumped even age in the order of things under Jim Crow. Only decades later, as I raised my own child, did I reflect on the pain and humiliation it had to cause parents to practice such subservience in front of their own children.

A division grew steadily between my parents and me. They held to the uncompromising racism of the rural South, while I absorbed new perspectives from a more open world amid an expanding national culture that reached into all of our lives. In this world, sports were an obsession. My sports heroes were three fiercely successful competitors, the basketball player Bill Russell, the baseball pitcher Bob Gibson, and the football player Jim Brown. All three were black and proud. Courtesy of my older brother, I heard Delta Blues singers like Jimmy Reed. The music of Little Richard and Chuck Berry was in the air on the Beaumont radio station, as was the amazing sound of Ray Charles. At the movies I watched Sidney Pottier in *A Patch of Blue*, and cheered the newsreel of Floyd Patterson, an African American, reclaiming the heavyweight championship by demolishing the Swedish boxer Ingemar Johansson. When I began to choose my own books to read, I admired the dignity and strength of “Nigger Jim” in *Huckleberry Finn*, enjoyed the sarcastic observations about the defense of segregation in New Orleans in John Steinbeck’s *Travels with Charley*, and was strangely moved by the little book *Black Like Me*, which recounted the “adventures” of a white man passing for black in our Jim Crow world.

The pivotal media message in my personal confrontation with Jim Crow was the television coverage of the demonstrations in Birmingham in May of 1963. I watched Bull Connor use his fire hoses and dogs to protect me—and states rights and the Southern Way of Life—from the communist menace presented by dignified, orderly protestors demanding their Constitutional rights as American citizens. And the question arose: “Which side am I on?” The answer was easy: “The one standing up to Bull Connor.” The harder questions came later, with the growing realization that I was breaking ranks with my parents and almost everyone else who had helped raise me in the village that was Port Neches, which in addition to being a good place to come of age was also racist to the core.

My parents made clear their position: “Joe, this is how we were raised. You are not going to change our minds. If you can’t accept that, then leave our house.” I left at seventeen when I moved away to college. By the luck of the draw, as a freshman at Rice I was the suitemate of the first black undergraduate there, Charles Freeman. That year, my education began in earnest with exposure to ideas and people from outside the South and with daily contact with my suitemate. For the first time, I came to know a black person as an individual, not a political or cultural abstraction.

Like the vast majority of white Southerners, I gradually adjusted to a better world, one without Jim Crow. I finally came to rest in a teaching job at the University of Houston, which has enjoyed one of the most diverse student bodies in the nation since its desegregation in the early 1960s. The world of UH is so far removed from the world of my youth that at times I smile in wonderment—and wish that my mom and dad could have lived to see this new world and the place I have made for myself in it. 

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Cover Photo: Dizzy Gillespie and Ella Fitzgerald walk into the Houston Police Station after being arrested in between sets at the Music Hall. Newspapers reported that Fitzgerald was the most handsomely dressed woman to ever walk into the Houston Police Station.

Photo courtesy of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

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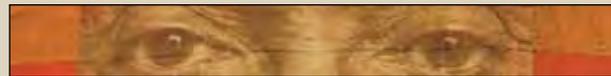
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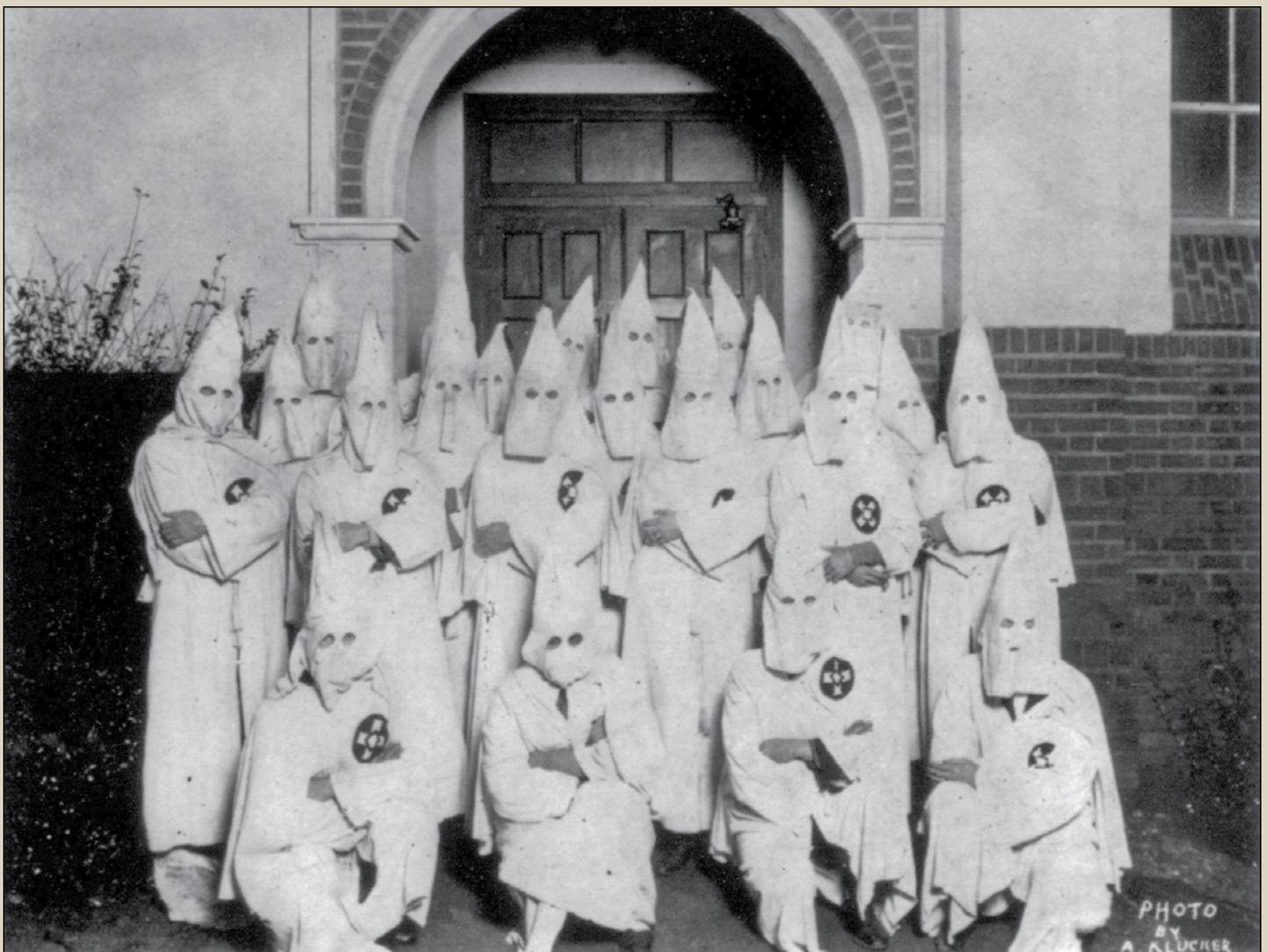
Guardians Against Change: The Ku Klux Klan in Houston and Harris County, 1920-1925

By Casey Greene

The following essay is an excerpt from an article of the same name that appeared in the Houston Review Vol. X, No. 1, 1988. It is reprinted with the author's permission.

On the evening of November 27, 1920, some two hundred mysterious figures threaded their way behind a torch bearer through the downtown streets of Houston. A hush fell over thousands of onlookers as the hooded figures silently "passed like specters from another world."¹ The second Ku Klux Klan had arrived.

Several days earlier, the *Houston Post* had announced the Klansmen's appearance. Colonel William Joseph Simmons, the second Klan's founder, spoke about its goals and objectives at



This picture appeared in the student organizations section of the 1922 Rice Institute yearbook, the Campanile. Klan activity in Houston was apparently a controversial issue among students, as the humor section of the same yearbook included a supposed student letter to "Col. Billie's Great Religious(?) Weekly" spoofing Mayfield's frequent tirades on the immoral dancing of modern youth. Colonel Mayfield's Weekly purchased space in the advertising section at the back of the yearbook, however.

The author searched the Rice Student Association minutes for 1921-1922, without finding any mention of the Klan's presence at Rice Institute. However, the student newspaper, the Thresher, Vol. VII, November 25, 1921, mentions the emergence of a new campus organization, the "Koo Klucks."

Photo courtesy of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

the First Christian Church. His address, "The Ku Klux Klan, Yesterday, Today, and Forever," was phrased in the rhetoric of "pure Americanism" and white supremacy. He praised the order for its role as the nation's greatest benefactor and claimed that racial mixing would lead inevitably to the destruction of the white race.²

Simmons founded the second Klan on Stone Mountain outside Atlanta, Georgia, in 1915. As late as 1920, it was still a chiefly Southern fraternal organization, although it would soon grow to more than two million members and encompass the Southwest, the Midwest, and the West Coast. Primarily responsible for this expansion was Edward Young Clarke, appointed in June 1920 as king klegle, or chief recruiter, in charge of the Klan's Department of Propagation. Under his direction, the secret order spread from Georgia into Alabama and Florida, and then into Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. Its first Texas klavern (chapter) was organized in Houston in September 1920 as Sam Houston Klan No. 1.³

PHILOSOPHIES OF THE SECOND KLAN

Although the second Klan adopted the name, the costume, the symbolism, and the languages of the first Ku Klux Klan (in operation from 1866 to about 1871), it was in fact a new and separate organization, with motivations and agendas specific to the social conditions and turmoil of the 1920s. . . .

The new Klansmen eagerly embraced a philosophy of fundamentalism, resistance to change, moral certitude, and Americanism. They adopted the little red schoolhouse as a symbol of their cherished values and resisted foreign influences, primarily Roman Catholicism.⁴

The most ardent public spokesman for the Klan in Houston was Billie Mayfield, publisher of *Colonel Mayfield's Weekly* from 1921 until he sold it to Charles K. Diggs of San Antonio in September 1924. . . . *Colonel Mayfield's Weekly* endorsed "one hundred percent Americanism" and the restoration of morality. After 1922 it put more emphasis on news but continued its strident propaganda against Catholics, Jews, racial mixing, and lax morals. Mayfield claimed that in 1923 his newspaper sold a million copies per week, although this was certainly an optimistic estimate.⁵ In its focus on values and resistance to change, *Colonel Mayfield's Weekly* mirrored the concerns of Klansmen nationally as well as those of Houston and Harris County. . . .

UNREST IN HOUSTON AND HARRIS COUNTY

Despite the Klan's fierce bigotry toward a number of groups, however, the key motives underscoring the order's existence in Houston and Harris County appear to have been moralism and resistance to change. The secret order emerged and thrived during a period of unparalleled growth. Rising unemployment, crime, and a perceived weakening of community morals all contributed to tension. The Klan offered a stable reference group to many alarmed by the march of events. Although only a minority of its members were involved in the group's acts of violence against transgressors of "acceptable morality," many more of these self-styled guardians against change undoubtedly applauded swift retribution against those who offended traditional community sensibilities. The Klansmen saw their role as an important moral contribution to their city; only they were willing to act in order to give Houston "the kind of cleaning it needs."⁶ . . .

HOUSTONIANS JOIN THE KLAN

Sam Houston Klan No. 1 made its first public appearance in the Confederate veterans' parade of October 9, 1920. Its members entered a huge white float which followed banners announcing, "We were here yesterday, 1866"; "We are here today, 1920"; and "We will be here forever." Klansmen marched in line, wearing hoods and robes, on horses and on foot.⁷ The Houston klavern grew rapidly. Mass initiations added impact to the Klan's presence. In December 1921, five thousand Klansmen gathered in a twenty-acre field near Bellaire, around a giant cross of red electric lights. One witness reported that "the whole field, as far as the eye could reach in the glare of calcium lights and bonfires, was filled with hooded and shrouded figures, il-limitable and uncountable." Hooded figures stood guard every ten feet. (Later, Mayor Holcombe reportedly investigated charges that Houston police officers were among those serving as guards for the ceremony.) Supposedly, 2,051 initiates took their oath that night. *Colonel Mayfield's Weekly* praised the ceremony as the greatest spectacle that had ever taken place in the South. *Houston Post* reporters were invited to watch, although this courtesy was not extended to the *Houston Chronicle*, an anti-Klan newspaper.⁸

The Klan continued to grow and to maintain public visibility, despite increasing controversy over its existence and purpose. In September 1923, more than thirteen thousand people reportedly watched the initiation of 348 new Klansmen on the Gulf Coast Speedway. *Colonel Mayfield's Weekly* blamed an arsonist for a grandstand that caught fire several minutes after the onlookers left.⁹ In November 1923, Klansmen entered a float in the Armistice Day parade which carried a little red schoolhouse, complete with the slogan, "One flag, one law, one school, the nation's hope." So incensed at their presence were other parade members, including the Knights of Columbus, the American Legion, and various Jewish organizations, that they withdrew from the occasion.¹⁰ But still the Klan grew. Billie Mayfield claimed in early 1924 that new initiates were being added at the rate of fifty to sixty per week, although his figures are obviously suspect. In February, he reported that twenty thousand people watched as 750 men became Klansmen. An airplane lighted on its underside to resemble a "fiery red cross" flew over the ceremony, which followed a barbecue and a parade of four hundred Klansmen in full regalia.¹¹

Generalizations about the size of the Klan in Houston and Harris County are difficult to make, since no official records are known to exist. Kenneth T. Jackson estimates the total size of the Klan in Houston at eight thousand between 1915 and 1944.¹² The *Houston*



The Houston Chronicle addressed an open letter to alleged Klan members and Harris County citizens, calling for an end to violence. Harris County Sheriff, Thomas A. Binford, was named among other notables.

Photo courtesy of Bob Bailey Studios
Photographic Archive, Dolph Briscoe
Center for American History,
The University of Texas at Austin.

Chronicle gave a figure of four thousand in January 1923, which seems likely. However, the *Chronicle* placed the strength of nearby Goose Creek Klan No. 4 at one thousand, whereas the isolated acts of violence there would suggest that no more than a hundred persons were involved.¹³ Any estimate of size in both instances is compounded by the problem of fluid membership. Men came and went, and many, like Mayor Holcombe, went to one meeting and never returned.¹⁴

The nature of the Klan's membership in Houston and Harris County is also difficult to judge, since no membership lists are available. Some of Houston's leading citizens were said to be Klansmen at one point. Calling for an end to Klan-attributed violence, the *Houston Chronicle* addressed an open letter to "twenty representative citizens who joined the order in its early days" and were supposedly still members in January 1923. The letter named the following persons: Ross S. Sterling, Chester Bryan (county court judge), Wiley C. Munn (president of a department store), Boyd T. Collier (insurance), Joe Green, William I. Shotwell (realtor), Court Norton (businessman), Dixie Smith, Murray R. Jones (district court judge), Elbert Roberts (attorney), H. C. McCall, Gordon Murphy (former Houston police chief), W. A. Cathey (attorney), John E. Green (pastor of Denver Methodist Church), Henry D. Morse (businessman), Albert Townsend (country clerk), Thomas A. Binford (county sheriff), James H. B. House (city water department commissioner), W. R. Britton (city, street and bridge commissioner), and Lewis A. Hartwig (businessman).¹⁵

THE VIOLENCE BEGINS

Soon after their initial organization, Klansmen began a terror campaign against Houston citizens. During February and March 1921, they mailed hundreds of threatening letters bearing the signature of the Ku Klux Klan. The first violent act came on February 5, 1921, with the abduction of B. I. Hobbs, a lawyer. He was known for the large number of divorce suits he filed on behalf of both black and white clients. A party of Klansmen led by George B. Kimbro, Jr., cut his hair off, coated his legs with tar and feathers, warned him to leave town, and left him in the middle of San Jacinto Street. At the time this crime occurred, the Klan posted signs throughout Houston on telegraph poles and trees, which warned against racial mixing.¹⁶

H. C. McCall, Exalted Cyclops of Sam Houston Klan No. 1, organized the abduction of A. V. Hopkins in March 1921. Hopkins had allegedly insulted high school girls. Three young men kidnapped him from his workplace and drove him to a location one mile south of Rice Institute where they beat him severely. Hopkins caught a streetcar back into town, called a physician, and left town the next day. The incident drew the attention of Judge Cornelius W. Robinson, who authorized an investigation by the Harris County Grand Jury. He warned that "either the courts of this country, as now organized under the laws and the Constitution, must fall at the hands of the mob, or the mob must be subdued and held in check by the laws of the country."¹⁷

McCall, Kimbro, and others next claimed a car salesman, William J. McGee, whom the police had charged with several counts of indecent exposure. He had reportedly been annoying young girls near a neighborhood park for eight or ten months before he was arrested and charged. Late in the evening of April 26, 1921, several men abducted McGee. His assailants reported-

ly castrated him and gave him twenty-four hours to leave town. When he appeared in court the next day, McGee wore a bandage over one eye. He pleaded guilty and received the maximum fine in each case. He told reporters that he needed only six hours to leave Houston, and that he had stayed only for his court appearance.¹⁸ Billie Mayfield commented on the McGee assault in an article entitled "The Ku Klux Klan is Here to Perform a Mission No Other Agency Can Reach," which claimed that Klansmen gave the needed remedy when the mothers of the young girls involved in the incidents had been unwilling to speak up. Mayfield spoke approvingly of the Klan's watchful and protective eye:

. . . the best men in each community [would ask] . . . a delinquent brother to live the part of a man, to show him that the community in which he lives will not tolerate the libertine and the rake . . . that the community in which the Ku Klux Klan exists . . . is no place for the white man who consorts with negroes; is no place for prostitutes, bootleggers, and sure-thing gamblers.¹⁹

This emphasis on guarding community morals is one that surfaced time and again with Klansmen in Houston and Harris County.

A black dentist, J. Lafayette Cockrell, fell victim to a group of unmasked men on May 1, 1921. Several weeks earlier, he pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor involving relations with a white woman and had paid the maximum fine. Cockrell was abducted at gunpoint from his car, taken to a deserted shack near Pearland, anesthetized, and castrated. Several hours later, an anonymous caller directed an ambulance to the location, and he was taken to St. Joseph's Infirmary. Incensed over the continuing violence, Mayor Holcombe demanded that it be stopped. Rumors of an uprising in the black community fortunately proved false, although, soon after the abduction several leading blacks left Houston.²⁰

THE KLAN'S PUBLIC IMAGE

The city's elite did not look kindly on the growing threat. Judge Robinson praised the first Ku Klux Klan of 1865-1871 for saving the South but argued that the second Klan was unnecessary. He believed that the law as it stood sufficed to assure law and order and the supremacy of the white man, and that the laws of the country should be respected. "If we want tar and feathers for punishment, it is the duty of the people to write it into the laws," he said. On at least two occasions he barred Klansmen from selection to serve on Harris County grand juries.²¹ Calling on Klansmen to disband, lumber magnate John Henry Kirby wrote the *Houston Chronicle* that the second Klan violated constitutional guarantees of due process and trial by jury.²² Oilman Joseph S. Cullinan turned down a request from the Student Loan Fund of Rice Institute in 1922 because of "substantial" numbers of students there who were Klan supporters. Both he and Kirby later helped to organize an American Anti-Klan Association.²³ Another opponent, Marcellus Foster, publisher of the *Houston Chronicle*, editorialized:

Why the mask, if only law and order are desired?
Why anonymity, if the common good is sought?
Does decency need a disguise?²⁴

Hoping to raise their public standing, Harris County Klansmen frequently gave charitable contributions. . . .

THE DECLINE OF THE KLAN

By 1924, anti-Klan organizations and court investigations of Klan activities were widespread in Texas. In conjunction with the improved economy and the resultant increase in community stability, these actions contributed to the second Klan's decline in Texas. In 1924 the Klan-sponsored candidate for governor was strongly defeated, a signal of the Klan's decline in the political arena as well. Locally, the 1924 school board race provided evidence of the Klan's lack of political clout. Although the Klan endorsed the four candidates (A. C. Finn, L. A. Godbold, Mrs. O. M. Longnecker, and F. M. Lucore) sponsored by the Women's Protestant League, only A. C. Finn won. The *Chronicle* labeled the defeat the end of efforts of secret organizations "to dominate the political affairs of the city."²⁵ The new exalted cyclops, Sam T. McClure, announced on September 6, 1924, that Sam Houston Klan No. 1 was washing its hands of politics and would focus instead on being a secret order. Klan Hall changed hands at the end of the year when the city purchased it for \$187,000. The Klan was allowed to keep its offices in the building for six months.²⁶ . . .

Litigation between Sam Houston Klan No. 1 and its former grand goblin, George B. Kimbro, Jr., also focused public attention on the secret order. The klavern had tried unsuccessfully in 1923 to force Kimbro to release financial records he had kept while grand goblin. In March 1925, the Klan filed suit to recover \$25,000, which Kimbro allegedly had failed to turn over as grand goblin. Kimbro filed a countersuit against the Klan for \$50,000 for money he alleged the Klan owed him and \$500,000 for defamation of character. The court ruled that testimony about the Klan's activities was admissible. It threw out Kimbro's countersuit. Six days later, the court awarded the Klan \$17,500 from Kimbro.

In a real sense, the Ku Klux Klan in Houston and Harris County itself fell victim to change. By the spring of 1922, Houston had reason for optimism. Unemployment had improved and crime had dropped, so Houstonians felt less pressure to join such an organization. The Klan's donations stirred controversy, and violence against the local citizenry tarnished its reputation and brought condemnation from the local media and business and government leaders. The Goose Creek investigations further highlighted its record of violence. Outrageous acts, such as recruiting police officers, encountered the resistance of a mayor determined to prevent the extension of the secret order's tentacles.

The Klan's inability to assert itself in the 1922 mayoral and 1924 school board races showed that its focus was too narrow to attract broad support. Klansmen simply could not impose their will on an increasingly resistant and distrustful community. The litigation between the Klan and Kimbro revealed a badly split organization and brought more unfavorable publicity. In the *Houston Post-Dispatch*, for example, the trial was a front-page item for twenty days between March 3 and 31, 1925.

The Ku Klux Klan failed because of its contradictions. No group, including the Klan, which tried to conceal its members under robes and met secretly at night in fields, could hope to survive and grow in the public eye. Controversy and violence divided the organization while its leaders sought to broaden its following. Guardians against change, the group flourished briefly so long as rapid change seemed threatening to many Houstonians. Yet, as that instability lessened and the guardians themselves were perceived as a greater threat than those they guarded against, the Ku Klux Klan in Houston and Harris County became just one more narrow issue group whose time had come and gone. 

Casey Greene is the head of Special Collections at the Rosenberg Library, Galveston and Texas Historical Center.



This 1983 Klan Rally was based on anti gay sentiments. Several hundred Houston police kept the crowd from interacting with the march. The KKK had their own guard dressed in camouflage and carrying shields.



With American, Texas, and Rebel flags flying, this group of KKK used the police as a buffer while they taunted the crowds of onlookers with words of hate in 1983.

Photos courtesy of Story Sloane, III, Story Sloane Gallery, Houston, Texas.

Illinois Jacquet:

Integrating Houston Jazz Audiences . . . Lands Ella Fitzgerald and Dizzy Gillespie in Jail

By Aimee L'Heureux

The integration of Houston jazz audiences followed a route of unexpected twists and turns that included the Catholic Church and the arrest of two jazz legends—singer Ella Fitzgerald and jazz trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie. The man behind this mayhem was Jean-Baptiste Illinois Jacquet, a tenor saxophonist from Houston, Texas.

Born in Broussard, Louisiana, in 1922, Jacquet moved to Houston's Sixth Ward with his family at six months old. His mother was a Sioux Indian, and his nickname, Illinois, came from the Indian word "Illiniwek," which means superior men.¹ Playing music ran in his family, with both his father and grandfather playing multiple instruments, and he counted his siblings among some of the many music teachers throughout his life. At age three, Illinois, one of six children, began tap dancing with his siblings for his father's band and later played drums in the Gilbert Jacquet band until he discovered his true love, the saxophone. Illinois Jacquet went to Phillis Wheatley High School in the Fifth Ward and could not wait to start playing in the marching band, which, like the football team, rivaled Jack Yates High School in the Third Ward.

Discussing his time in Houston during segregation, Jacquet recalled, "When I was here I didn't even know there was segregation in Houston until I would leave school or something and go downtown, and I'd see the signs because Phillis Wheatley was such a school [that] there was so much happening . . . they were winners in football team, basketball team, track. We had the best band at Phillis Wheatley, the better-looking girls, and they were light, just like white girls. They were black. They



Illinois Jacquet played an instrumental role in changing racial attitudes through jazz music, which Norman Granz called "the music of democratic America."

Photo courtesy of the William P. Gottlieb Collection, Library of Congress.



were all kinds. We didn't think about segregation at that time. We didn't realize that was really happening because we had such a great band, you know. . . ." As Jacquet grew older, he began noticing signs of segregation, but he maintained his focus on learning to play music and getting an education.²

By contrast, Catholicism, Jacquet explained, influenced integration of audiences and the jazz scene, both in Louisiana and Houston. In Louisiana, when bands would make their way through the state en route to New Orleans, Kansas City, or Texas, the Catholic churches would give them a place to stop and host dances. The Catholic Church, Jacquet said, "played a big role in jazz music, which probably had never been recorded in history." Jacquet attended St. Nicholas Catholic Church, a black congregation in the Third Ward, where Father Shepherd hosted similar dances on Sundays. Jacquet remembered the integrated audiences for the Sunday dances, "The white people want[ed] to come. They want[ed] to hear the music. There was no one going to stop them . . ." He reminisced, "And I grew up under that influence . . ."³

In the 1930s, Illinois Jacquet's Phillis Wheatley band was set to play the mezzanine at the Rice Hotel; however, because it was an African American band, the hotel instructed them to enter through the back door. Jacquet became the spokesman for

Elaine Clauder, though not allowed to go to the Houston show, received a signed photograph from Ella Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald's signature is on the back of the photo, encased in matting, which would have damaged the photo if removed.

Photo courtesy of Elaine Van Horn.

the group and informed the band director that they would not play the gig unless they could come in through the front door like everyone else. Finally, the Rice Hotel agreed to the demand. Jacquet's comments about the incident were quoted in an article in the *Houston Press*: "If you don't say anything, nothing happens."⁴

Jacquet left Houston after high school to pursue his dream of playing music around the world. At age nineteen, during the first recording session of his career, his classic solo on "Flying Home" recorded with Lionel Hampton Band at Decca Records in New York City on May 26, 1942, produced a new sound and style for tenor saxophone. This solo boosted Jacquet to international fame and the solo became more famous than the song itself. Just two years later, jazz impresario Norman Granz produced a benefit on July 2, 1944, at the Los Angeles Philharmonic Auditorium in which Jacquet played for an integrated crowd. "I seem to excel on my instrument when I play for an integrated audience," he said. "When I look out there and it looks like polka dots and moonbeams, I play better. . . ." And he did indeed. While improvising with Nat King Cole on piano and Les Paul on guitar, Jacquet discovered what would become a permanent expansion of the upper register on the tenor saxophone. He contrasted these notes with sounds from the lowest notes on the horn and gave birth to "the honking tenor," which became the hallmark of rock and roll and greatly influenced rhythm and blues.⁵

Norman Granz believed in using jazz as a vehicle for social change to fight discrimination and segregation. He told Scottish radio and record producer Elliot Meadow in 1987: "I used jazz because I loved jazz." The first Jazz at the Philharmonic followed the Zoot Suit Riots in Los Angeles where a series of brutal and bloody confrontations took place between Hispanic zoot suiters, police, and military during World War II. Granz used this concert to raise money to support the defendants in the Sleepy Lagoon Case, a trumped-up murder case involving twenty-two alleged gang members.⁶ Occasionally, Jazz at the Philharmonic raised funds to support the NAACP, and also to further the cause of anti-lynching legislation, which stalled in Congress in the 1940s.⁷

Witnessing how jazz had the potential to change racial attitudes, Jacquet told Granz that he would not play for a segregated audience in his hometown. "I didn't want to come to my hometown after playing all around the world without doing something," Jacquet explained. "I love Houston, Texas. . . . This is where I went to school. This is where I learned everything I know. I was just fed up with coming to Houston with a mixed cast on stage and playing to a segregated audience. I wanted Houston to see a hell of a concert, and they should see it like they were in Carnegie Hall. I felt if I didn't do anything about the segregation in my hometown, I would regret it. This was the time to do it. Segregation had to come to an end." And so Jazz at the Philharmonic featuring Illinois Jacquet, Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald, Oscar Peterson, Buddy Rich, and others,

scheduled their annual tour—stopping in Houston on October 5, 1955, to play Houston's Music Hall.⁸

Granz recalled: "I knew the story of Houston. It was one of the richest, if not the richest, city in America in terms of the oil that it has and what it represents. Usually a city that's very rich is a difficult city to break and change tradition. The people who run things, the rich whites, could come as strong as they wanted, and the police department would of course agree with that. Their point is 'Don't come here.' But I wanted to play one southern city where, being a rich city, we had a chance to sell out."⁹

In Dizzy Gillespie's out-of-print autobiography, *To Be, or not... to Bop*, Granz stated that when he rented the Music Hall, he added a non-segregation clause to the contract. Granz removed the racial signs denoting the "white" versus "black" restrooms, and refused to pre-sell tickets in case patrons attempted to section off parts of the venue for whites only. Maintaining his spokesman role, Illinois Jacquet discussed the reasons for not pre-selling tickets at Texas Southern University, local high schools, and on the radio. Granz and Jacquet intended for the gig to become the first major concert in Houston with a desegregated audience.¹⁰

Granz knew that with such a prominent line up, he could make some demands of Houstonians. "A lot of people never saw Ella, or they may have seen Ella but not a lot of the musicians. I got to the concert hall early, and somebody came up and wanted to change tickets because they were sitting next to a black. And I said, 'No, you can have your money back, but we're not going to change your seat.' (The customer took the money.) We did everything we could, and of course I had a strong show. People wanted to see my show. If people wanna see your show, you can lay some conditions down."¹¹

Fearing problems from the audience because of the forced integration, Granz hired eight Houston Police Department officers as guards, including Lieutenant Sam Clauder, the driver for Mayor Roy Hofheinz. At the time, Sam Clauder's daughter was eighteen-years-old and wanted nothing more than to go see Ella Fitzgerald perform. Her father refused to let her go to the show for fear of the risk of violence from the crowd but promised he would bring her something to make it up to her. True to his word, when Clauder returned from work, he brought his daughter, Elaine Clauder (now Van Horn), a signed photograph of Ella Fitzgerald.¹²

Although no crowd disturbances or violence occurred that evening, for Ella Fitzgerald, her personal assistant Georgiana Henry, Dizzy Gillespie, and Illinois Jacquet, trouble was waiting in the wings. Houston's vice squad, headed by Sergeant W. A. Scotton, planned and operated a racially motivated sting mission to arrest the performers. Five officers in regular clothes obtained backstage access and burst into Ella Fitzgerald's dressing room with guns in hand. In the corner, Jacquet and Gillespie played craps, while Fitzgerald and Henry drank coffee in between sets.¹³

Elaine Clauder Van Horn recalled attending a Nat King Cole show at Club Matinee on Lyons Ave in the center of Fifth Ward. A large restaurant and club, it stayed open all night and brought in many big names. Her dad was friends with the owner, a black man, whose name escapes her. Elaine's parents went there occasionally to eat in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Club Matinee had a special room that the Clauders entered from the side parking lot, which was for "Whites." Elaine remembered that the restaurant/club had a nice large dance floor, but that whites could only watch the show; they could not enter the other area, dance on the dance floor, or mingle.

Granz recalled the incident in Gillespie's book stating that he heard the commotion, and when he came in, he saw a police officer headed to the bathroom, and immediately suspected he would plant drugs. Granz said to the officer, "I'm watching you," and the officer put his gun on Granz's stomach and said, "I oughta kill you."¹⁴

The vice squad made their arrests of Gillespie, Jacquet, Fitzgerald, Henry, and Granz for gambling. Granz told the manager of the Music Hall that the second set would have to be cancelled, which would likely cause the crowd to react unfavorably in an already tense situation. The vice squad brought the group to the police station, booked them, made them pay a fine, all the while asking for autographs. Reporters and photographers greeted the group at the station—suggesting the operation was indeed planned. The performers made it back to play the second set of the show, without the audience ever knowing what happened.¹⁵

Although that night was eventful, the Jazz at the Philharmonic concert did make way for more integrated audiences in Houston. In 1956, the concert returned, this time without Illinois Jacquet, and played to an audience of black and white with no police interference. "Houston is a hell of a city," Jacquet stated. "It's always been a hell of a city, but it had its habits, and segregation was one of those bad habits. I'm proud of what I did because I had no choice. If you're not going to do anything about it, then you don't care about where you came from. I wanted to do it for the younger people that were com-

ing up. Whatever I could do to improve our standards of life, I thought that was the appropriate thing to do, and it worked."¹⁶

Illinois Jacquet is said to have recorded over 300 original compositions, with many of these tunes conceived between 1945 and 1951. In 1983, Harvard University invited Jacquet to speak, and subsequently offered him a two semester Kayden Artist-in-Residence position—the only jazz musician to ever serve a long term residency there. His Harvard students encouraged him to form his professional big band in 1983, which performed all over the United States and Europe. His grammy-award nominated song, "Jacquet's Got It," was recorded with his band in 1987 for Atlantic Records. Illinois Jacquet and his band became the subject of Arthur Elgort's award-winning documentary, *Texas Tenor, The Illinois Jacquet Story*, released in 1991.¹⁷ Jacquet went on to play *C-Jam Blues* with former President Bill Clinton on the White House lawn during the 1993 inaugural ball. The Juilliard School of Music awarded Illinois an honorary Doctorate of Music degree on May 21, 2001. Illinois Jacquet died on July 22, 2004, of a heart attack, and the Illinois Jacquet Scholarship in Jazz Studies at The Juilliard School of Music was established to honor his memory.¹⁸ Jacquet will be remembered for his swinging improvisations, his screech and honk style, but Houstonians will likely remember him for his leadership role in desegregating jazz audiences in the Bayou City. 

Aimee L'Heureux is a master's student in history at the University of Houston and associate editor of *Houston History*.

Reporters and photographers greeted the group upon their arrival at the police station—indicating that the operation was planned. From left to right: Ella Fitzgerald, Georgiana Henry, Illinois Jacquet, and Dizzy Gillespie.

Photo courtesy of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.



WILLIAM S. HOLLAND: A MIGHTY LION AT YATES HIGH SCHOOL

By Debbie Z. Harwell



Yates High School, shown circa 1930s, was opened as the city's second black high school in 1926.

Photo courtesy of Story Sloane Gallery, Houston, Texas.

In 1958, Jack Yates High School moved from its original location at 2610 Elgin Street in the Third Ward to its current location at 3703 Sampson, just a short distance away. It should have been an improvement—modern building, larger facility—but instead it marked a reversal from the school's position as a central, guiding force for the community.



William Holland excelled at sports and was nicknamed "Babe" for his talent on the ball field.

Photo from Wabash Valley Profiles.

Jack Yates High School was named for civic leader and Baptist minister, Reverend John Henry "Jack" Yates. It opened in 1926 as the city's second "colored" high school to relieve overcrowding that resulted from the growth of the city's African American population, which tripled between 1924 and 1929. James D. Ryan served as the school's first principal until 1941, when William S. Holland succeeded him. During this time, the school acted as the community's anchor. The building was the location for meetings and community events for the bustling African American community. Further, Holland not only

ran the school, he also set the tone for expectations of success throughout the community.¹

Yates encompassed grades seven through twelve. The building on Elgin was intended to accommodate 1,600 students, but by the mid 1950s the student body was over 2,200. The overcrowding made the Southern Association of Secondary Schools try to revoke its accreditation, but Holland kept the school operating and became an outspoken advocate for the students until the new facility could be constructed. When the new building opened, the Houston Independent School District (HISD) board replaced Holland with Dr. John Codwell, the principal from Yates's staunch rival, Phillis Wheatley High School in the city's Fifth Ward. This act destroyed the community's cohesiveness and hampered its leadership. Once integration began in earnest in the 1960s, many of the black middle-class moved away, sealing the fate of the community as the neighborhood and the school declined. Over the last forty years, Third Ward has witnessed higher rates of poverty and crime, but its heritage and the memories of Professor William Holland remain alive.²

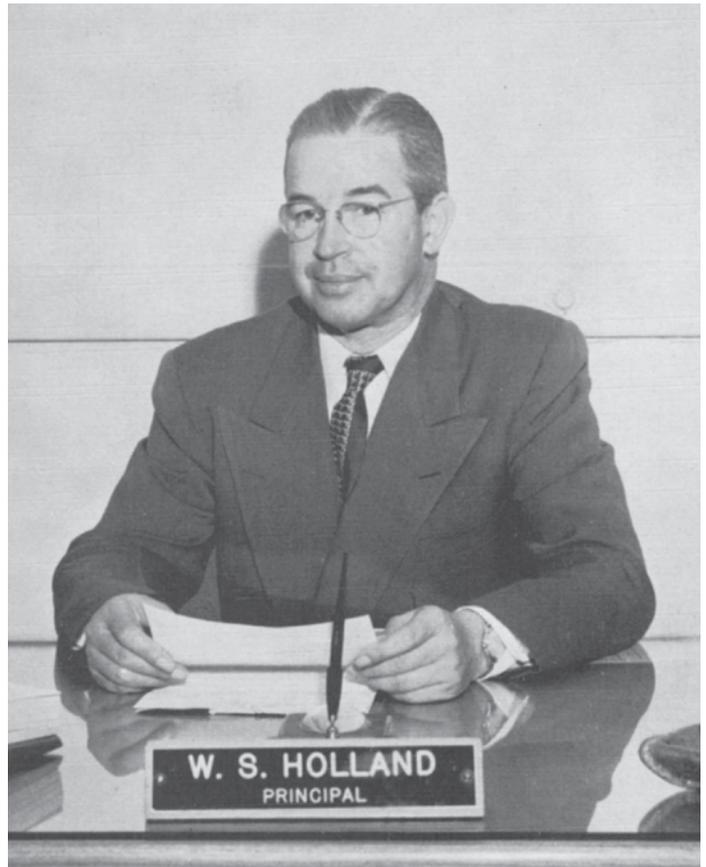
In 2008, members of the Jack Yates Class of 1958—the last class to graduate from the original building, and the last under Professor Holland's direction—took part in the Ryan Middle School Oral History and Digital Media Project, which brought together current Ryan students, former Yates students, two of

Professor Holland's children, students from the University of Houston's Center for Public History and the School of Art, and members of the Center for Digital Storytelling to preserve and share the Yates story as a window into the history of the Third Ward. These interviews revealed a rich legacy of leadership, education, and community.

William "Babe" Holland, born in Terre Haute, Indiana, on March 2, 1904, went to Wiley High School and graduated from Indiana State Normal School in 1925. He attended graduate school at Tennessee State College (now University) and Indiana State Teachers College (formerly the Normal School and now Indiana State University). He played baseball—hence the name Babe—and basketball, and excelled in track, competing in the decathlon. His son, Bill Holland, said that white athletes from other schools and colleges would get together and pick one or two athletes and throw their points to them to keep his father from winning. As a result, William Holland learned "early on that there are things that you have to overcome. You either give in or you overcome."³

Holland came to Houston in 1927 with a letter of introduction from Birch Bayh, Sr., athletic director at Indiana State. Edison Oberholtzer, superintendent of the Houston schools and the first president of the University of Houston, hired him to coach at Yates where he led the football team to the 1930 Texas Negro High School title and numerous track titles. He was promoted to assistant principal and, later, principal on Ryan's death in 1941. When Holland retired in 1974, he was the longest tenured principal in the district's history.⁴

Students who graduated in 1958 were aware of a number of important events in the fight for desegregation and civil rights,



A leader in the Third Ward community, William S. Holland served as principal of Jack Yates High School from 1941-1958.

Photo courtesy of Deloris Johnson.

William Holland took part in the groundbreaking ceremonies for the middle school named in his honor. He is the participant shown second from left with a shovel.

Photo courtesy of William S. Holland Middle School.



Napoleon Johnson, Yates class president in 1958, graduated from Highlands University. He served in the military, worked as a technical editor for NASA, and made his mark in news broadcasting with Houston's KPRC-Channel 2. He retired after twenty-five years as a professor of journalism and mass communications at Houston Community College. He currently teaches part-time at Texas Southern University.

Photo by Debbie Harwell.



including the *Brown* decision in 1954 and the confrontation at Little Rock's Central High School in 1957. While these events drew notice, class president Napoleon Johnson explained nothing changed in Houston, so the Yates students focused on graduating from high school. Johnson remembered Holland speaking at assemblies and hearing "the pain in his voice because he saw students acting in any way that was probably natural to some degree, with being playful . . . just too much play and not enough seriousness. He would get on the microphone, and he would tell us about how difficult it was going to be, and that you are going to have to be twice as good, work twice as hard, and



Rev. Donald Dickson, a hall-of-famer from the Turkey Day game, was born in the Cuney Homes in Third Ward. After graduating from Yates, he attended TSU, served in the military, played football in Canada, and returned to graduate from TSU. He became HISD's first black head coach at a predominately white school, Fonville Junior High School. He also served as an assistant principal and retired after ten years as the director of Barnett Stadium.

Photo courtesy of Victor Matsumura.

those kinds of things. . . . He was basically saying you need to wake up. You don't have time to act the fool. . . . We can prepare you, but you've got to be serious about getting prepared."⁵

Yates Class of 1958 graduate, Reverend Donald Dickson, described Holland as a "personable administrator" and "a stern man . . . a principal who did not play with children, but he would do anything that he could to help children." Deloris Johnson, who acts as the class liaison, described Holland as a "man of great courage, of great responsibility, [who] just led his students to perfection. He told us we had to be the best that we could be because there was going to come a time when integration would come, and we were going to have to be able to fit in . . . to be able to work in the world." Edith Holland Nealy said her father motivated students to go beyond what they thought they could do. "If you were having problems other than just being mentally off the pace, then you had a visit with him in the office to discuss your underachievement. There wasn't a choice. You did it. . . . It was expected."⁶

Holland did not stand alone in the quest for excellence. He set the example, and the teachers followed suit. Nealy recalled, "All of the teachers expected you to achieve. . . . The parents were, I think, very happy to see that their children were being educated that way, that somebody really cared about their children." Dickson agreed with that and explained that many of his teachers, who had also taught his mother, "would not allow you to fail. . . . They would tell you that failure is not an option . . . and they meant that. If it came to chastising you to get your attention . . . or come to your house to tell your parents that you weren't getting it done, or tell the coach that you are not passing . . . you knew what was going to happen." He said the students also worked for many of their teachers. Dickson cleaned his home-room teacher's house on Saturdays, wiping the windows and beating the rugs. "Our teachers lived in the same places where we lived . . . so, they saw to us," he said. Everyone knew everyone—between school, and church, and home, the paths they traveled were well-watched—they looked out for each other, and they also disciplined when necessary. "[The teachers] were just like our parents, our uncles, and our aunts . . . so they saw to it that we did what was necessary . . . so that when we left that class, we not only passed the class with flying colors, but we knew the content."⁷

Judge Robert Anderson moved from Houston to Austin County, Texas, and later to Montclair, New Jersey, where he started high school before returning to graduate from Yates. This gave him the unique perspective of someone who had experienced both integrated and segregated school environments in the rural and urban South, as well as the North. Going to an integrated school broadened his opportunities in many ways, including an expanded curriculum and the chance to take field trips to Broadway plays. Nevertheless Anderson noted, "The teachers at Jack Yates took personal concern whereas, in New Jersey, you didn't get that kind of personal interaction and concern on the part of the teachers." Looking back, he sees that both Holland and the faculty were "very outspoken" and the type of role models that were really quite necessary. They were leading both students and the community.⁸

Professor Holland understood the importance of education, having been schooled in the era of racial uplift; and the community shared his views. Bill Holland stated that his father's approach to education was "more than his personal philosophy,

Judge Robert Anderson grew up in Houston and Austin County, Texas. He moved to New Jersey where he started high school, and returned to Yates for his junior and senior years. He attended TSU, served as a captain in the Air Force, and returned to TSU Law School. He worked with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, cofounded the city's first black law firm, and was appointed by Mayor Louie Welch to the Municipal Court for the City of Houston, where he served until going back into private practice.



Photo courtesy of Victor Matsumura.

it was the community philosophy. . . . It is the way black folks thought and how they valued education.” He went on to explain:

What people forget [is that] in the days of segregation, the public schools had the best and brightest in the black community as teachers because basically, the jobs that black folks could get—good jobs—were post office, public school system, and a handful of doctors and lawyers. So, your teachers may have a master’s degree or Ph.D. in physics or chemistry or mathematics. You had really smart people teaching you. You also had an understanding during segregation that the future generation, the generation being educated—the student—was the future of the race, and that meant something. People were expected to take responsibility for their actions for what they did to achieve. . . . It was a different time.⁹

Professor Holland was not only outspoken about education, but also about segregation. Edith Holland Nealy explained, “The standard in our household was if you couldn’t go the day you wanted to go, then you didn’t go at all. That applied to the rodeo, it applied to Playland Park, it applied to the department stores downtown where they made you try on clothes in a broom closet.” Deloris Johnson recalled Professor Holland advising the students not to go to Playland Park on the one day they admitted blacks, Juneteenth, the anniversary that marked the freeing of Texas slaves. During segregation, Houston had a thriving black business and social community. Bill Holland said that, “We were raised with certain golden rules, and one of those rules was ‘why are you going to be stupid enough to give your money to someone who won’t let you through the front door?’” William Holland accepted “no excuses.” The problems of integration were “obstacles to be overcome, and that one must take responsibility in his or her own hands.”¹⁰

The Yates graduates all remembered Holland coming to the defense of the marching band. Holland arranged with the principals of Wheatley and Washington High Schools to present

a united front to district officials in refusing to march in the rodeo parade behind the multitude of horses and wagons, where they had to dodge the droppings. They were moved in front of the animals. When the text books they received had been passed down through so many students at the white schools that there was no room left for his students to write their names, Holland petitioned for materials equal to those received in white schools.¹¹

Another source of dissension with the school board centered on the revenues the school received from the Turkey Day game that pitted Yates against its Fifth Ward rival, Phillis Wheatley High School. First played in 1927, the game became an annual tradition that created a strong bond in the community, drawing an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 spectators to Jeppesen Stadium (now Robertson Stadium at the University of Houston). Deloris Johnson remembered, “People dressed up in their finest and after they ate their Thanksgiving dinner, they were out and on the way to the football game.” The event was one of the largest money makers for the district, and yet, Holland had to fight for the school’s fair share of the revenues. Not until the principals banded together and threatened to quit playing did the district share the funds in a percentage comparable to events at white schools.¹²

While Holland’s outspokenness made him a hero to the students at Yates and the Third Ward community, it did not sit as well with school district administrators. Deloris Johnson pointed out, “Mr. Holland was so controversial because he spoke out about what he thought was best for his students no matter what it was, no matter to whom he was speaking, he did not bite his tongue about what was right and wrong in the community.” In 1958, after thirty-one years of service at Yates,



When Deloris Johnson came to the Third Ward from Louisiana as a young girl, her heavy dialect caused others to call her “geechee.” Since speech therapists were not available for black children, she became one, graduating from Hampton University. During her career with HISD, the district promoted her to Speech Therapy Coordinator, and Governor Ann Richards appointed her as the first black member of the State Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology.

Photo courtesy of Victor Matsumura.

seventeen of them as principal, he was told he would not move to the new Jack Yates High School. He would stay at the old building, which would become Ryan Junior High School, where he was essentially being demoted.¹³

The community presented the school board with a petition signed by 3,635 residents in a plea to reconsider—students also signed a petition. The board refused to change its ruling. Two board members Walter W. Kemmerer and Mrs. A. S. Vandervoort voted against all of the administrative assignments in protest. While the community did not win a reprieve for Holland, they may have had the last laugh when, later in 1958, voters stunned the conservative politicians by electing the city's first African American to the school board, Hattie Mae White. Two years earlier, White had used the board's own records to illustrate how Houston's system did not provide an equal education to black students, from facilities to courses offered and textbooks. No doubt White received support from some of the same constituents who had voted 22-to-1 in favor of challenger Louis Cutrer to defeat incumbent Mayor Oscar Holcombe who had attempted to exploit race as an issue to garner support of the elite.¹⁴

Holland's children remember that members of the community wanted to bomb the new school or set it on fire, but Holland called for calm and told them he would take care of it. Bill Holland recalled his father believed that there was a fine line, which the district could not cross: Professor Holland thought the school board had the right to reassign him, but not the right to fire him. He told the school board, "If you try to fire me, and I can't support my family, I'll kill you." He was retained at Ryan Middle School.¹⁵

Rev. Dickson expressed the disappointment they felt, "Finally, the things that he had fought so hard to get for us—new chemistry labs and new auto mechanic buildings and just an upgrade in the school itself. . . . We felt that the man who worked so hard to get us to that point should be able to enjoy the fruits of his labor but that was not the case." The insult did not stop there, however. "The slap in the face was that they brought a principal from our rival school . . . they brought him from Wheatley." The district brought in a principal from their fiercest rival, and that principal took many of his teachers with him. Dickson surmised that the "premise was to really show him [Holland] that next time, maybe you will keep your mouth shut . . . 'Yes, we know you deserve it but you ain't gonna get it.' So, they didn't give it to him."¹⁶

The results were devastating. "It killed the school spirit," Dickson stated. Deloris Johnson agreed and explained that with the family of Yates teachers split between the new high school and Ryan Middle School, and with Mr. Holland no longer at the helm, the traditions vanished. It also changed the community. "Yates did not have that decorum that they always had. They didn't have the faces of teachers . . . [It had a] negative impact on the neighborhood and on the community . . . the morale and the character of the school began to degrade, began to go down because we were hurt," Dickson said. "Yates has never been the same since then."¹⁷

Integration further exacerbated the negative effects felt by the Third Ward—not that anyone would have said segregation was a better system. Some claimed that the district sent inferior teachers to the black neighborhoods, and sent the best black teachers to the white schools. Bill Holland pointed out that if,

for example, you look at athletes then and today, no one at Yates prior to the 1960s believed the students were only capable of "C- or C average" work. Athletes excelled in school and on SAT test scores. So integration was not the "panacea" it was supposed to be for improving education.¹⁸

Edith Holland Nealey observed that integration "tore part" the sense of community. Deloris Johnson agreed and commented that the gains from integration came at the price of change in the schools and neighborhoods. Homeowners moved to new neighborhoods and their houses became rental property; stores closed and people no longer shopped in the Third Ward.¹⁹ In 1966, the University Interscholastic League and Negro Scholastic League merged, which brought a halt to the Thanksgiving Day game tradition. The 1958 graduates said the game was never the same after the placement of the Wheatley principal at Yates. Although the two schools still compete against each other, the rivalry is nothing like past years.

Holland retired after forty-seven years of service to HISD and was elected to the school board of trustees. The district named a middle school after him; it opened in 1979 and is located at 1600 Gelhorn on the city's east side. William Holland died on July 22, 1981, at the age of seventy-seven.²⁰

The Third Ward and Yates High School lost the once thriving community. The people, however, did not lose the all-important lessons they had learned from Professor Holland, and they applied them in their own work and in raising their families. Deloris Johnson, who like Holland spent her career as an educator in HISD, said one guiding principle Holland instilled in his students was, "You are tomorrow what you were yesterday, plus the few changes that you make today." To this day, she keeps that thought in mind as she approaches her life and work. Dickson, a retired coach and assistant principal in HISD, added, "I guess one of the greatest things that we learned from Mr. Holland was that we didn't have to take a back seat to anybody and that is because we were not inferior to anybody. We had a brain, we could think; we had eyes, we could see; we had a tongue, we could talk; we had legs, we could run; and we had a mind, we could think. He wanted us to use all of those contributing factors to become good and viable and productive men and women."²¹ And that they did. 

Debbie Z. Harwell is a Ph.D. candidate in history at the University of Houston and the managing editor of *Houston History*.

The Ryan Middle School Oral History and Digital Media Project is ongoing to accumulate more stories about Jack Yates High School, Ryan Middle School, and the Third Ward. If you are interested in participating or wish further information, please contact Principal Michael McKenzie, Ryan Middle School, 713-942-1932, mmckenzi@houstonisd.org.

The Dawn at My Back: Memoir of a Black Texas Upbringing

By Carroll Parrott Blue

The Dawn at My Back: Memoir of a Black Texas Upbringing explores what it means to grow up in a racist society. It describes the injustices endured daily and vividly paints a picture of the pain they carry with them. Blue's story demonstrates the power of racism to rip families apart, even as one consciously fights against the fear, violence, and oppression it generates. The following excerpt is used with the author's permission.

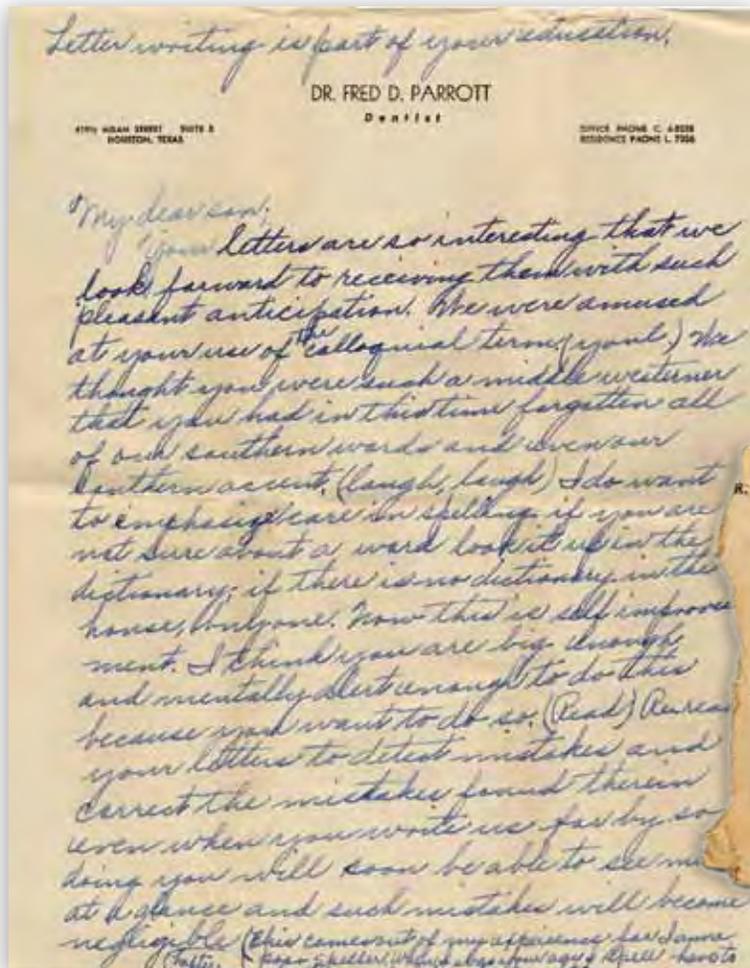


Just ten days before the birth of her daughter, Carroll Ann, Mollie Carroll Parrott wrote a letter to her sixteen-year-old son, Frederick Douglass Parrott, Junior, who she had sent to Chicago so that he could graduate from an integrated high school—an opportunity she hoped would enable him to “move up in a racist world.”

CHAPTER I. LIFE

“My dear son,” my mother opens her letter. And so she begins instructions to my brother as to how he is to live his life. For her, academic degrees were the key to achieving a better standard of living. And age was not a factor to her continuing dreams of success. Shortly after my birth, she returned to college to obtain a master's degree in special education. At the time, she was fifty years old, with me, a six-year-old, in tow. To the very end of her life I observed her becoming all that she extolled her son to be in her August 1943 letter to him. She taught the same values to me. How my mother lived her life became my greatest model.

“Now this is self improvement,” she tells him. Diligently, she maintained a lifelong record of the same quality of self-improvement and community activism that she describes as a pathway to her son in this letter to him. Over time, my parents did achieve a modicum of success. They enjoyed a certain quality of status as professionals and community leaders in Third Ward, one of Houston's Black neighbor-



The first page of the letter Mollie Carroll Parrott wrote to her son in Chicago instructing him on how to improve his lot as a black man in a Jim Crow world.

All images courtesy of Carroll Parrott Blue.

hoods. Yet their rugged, tough love brand of optimism faced what to this day seems to me to be eternal obstacles. I do believe the challenge was too great for them. The story of their struggle seems to have disappeared with their deaths. For this reason, I am compelled to write our story. . . .

[My mother's] biggest challenge was to make the best of her life in a deeply embedded racist environment. The world surrounding her life had been so assuredly arranged to destroy her spirit. In time, the multiple rejections daily visited upon her conspired to take their toll on her zest for life. Her justified anger at these inequities had no where to go but inward.

"Fred, that condition (segregation) that you have met is why mother is always so serious, that is why I go to so many clubs, that is what I spent my leisure time doing—trying to fight in a small way that very condition so you will not have to face what I had to face."

— Mollie Carroll Parrott

"Yes, Fred, there is segregation in Chicago—there is segregation or discrimination either by word, sign or action all over the United States." My mother's letter to her son reveals her anguish over the eventual effects of racism on her child. Her fear of its power forced her to expel her sixteen-year-old boy from her Houston home and send him to the North. In Chicago she felt that he could learn first hand about white people.

If you were Black and lived in the South, you especially

could not escape the punishment that came with being Black. At the turn of the twentieth century, there had been a great migration of Blacks to the North to escape this tyranny. When my parents were teenagers in Houston, the Black press pointed out to them the logic of this mass migration:

Some are decrying this exodus and scoring the Negroes for doing what they believe to be best for them. Every man ought to make an effort to improve his condition. But there is a reason why these people are leaving the south in such numbers and going to the North. (*Houston Observer*, October 21, 1916.)

My parents did move unsuccessfully to the North in the 1930s, only to be forced for financial reasons to return back home. Here they stayed. Yet, they encouraged both their children to leave the South.

"Were the girls pretty, with good hair?" My mother tells my brother that the woman he chooses to mother his children must look white and have "good" or straight hair. She denies her children even a casual enjoyment of the beauty and company of black-skinned people with woolly hair. She requires that my brother keep uppermost in his mind that his future children must conform in appearance to white standards in order to fare well in this society.

She, in turn, will continue "to fight in a small way that very condition." She names this "condition" as segregation. This "condition" drove my mother to a form of self-repulsion. Her denial of her own Blackness and her simultaneous need to be a "race woman" propelled her into a just-below-the-surface, persistent anger that I label as a kind of lunacy.

The invisible quality of the nature of racism makes it difficult



Mollie Parrott (third from right, standing), joined by daughter Carroll, attended numerous club meetings with other African American women in her effort to combat society's racism.



The Parrott family.

for me to get at the impact of its entangled, complicated, and deeply entrenched roots—roots that grew outside the reach of my parents. I suspect racism’s consolidated power is frozen inside the values, goals, and aspirations of our very institutions. It can be traced, in part, to the values and cultures that come from the combined, yet largely uncoordinated, work of Congress, courts, corporations, church-

es, schools, prisons, and mass media. My story concentrates on the cumulative effects of mass media’s racist stereotypes on my life.

As I tell my story, certain values extracted from events, books, magazines, entertainers, songs, television, and film begin to surface. And so my personal history is joined with a larger, more public story. This larger narrative is one of my society’s history. It is a mass cultural, collective vision of values based on appearance (the right race, sex, and class) and the ability to consume. Appearance counts; money counts; things count. . . .¹

CHAPTER III. HOUSTON

My mother was a race woman. Being a race man or woman in the 1950s meant you had dedicated your life to uplifting the Negro race. Your decision also meant that you had consciously endangered yourself. Your surrounding environment would always be hostile and perhaps violent because of your commitment.

One of the safest ways to survive was to form groups of like-minded people and work together. This joint effort provided protection. Someone had to organize these groups and mobilize them toward an action that would effect social, political, and economic change. And so my mother’s natural next step after becoming a race woman was to become a community organizer. Primarily she worked through Houston’s Negro women’s clubs.

While browsing in a bookstore a few years ago, I discovered a remarkable book that gave me insight into the enormous impact of my mother’s volunteer work. Ruthe Weingarten’s book, *Black Texas Women: 150 Years of Trial and Triumph*, is the first comprehensive history of Black Texas women who toiled like my mother all over the state for over a century. As I rushed through the index of the names of women listed from Houston, I was upset to see her name was missing in the book.

What I did learn was that my mother’s seemingly isolated activities reflected a pattern that was part of a historical loss of memory, both nationally and in Texas. This book mirrors my mother’s public life completely. It focuses on the Black women’s club movement and its contribution to the state’s workforce, education, culture, religion, politics, civil rights, and community building. Conversely, my mother’s life adds one more piece

to the 150-year puzzle of how Black women in Texas came together to create a better life for all Texans. My mother was more like a worker bee or a soldier ant. Historically, she is faceless.

Today, as I write from a vantage point of a certain maturity, I am stunned by how brave, feisty, and relentless my mother was. She worked courageously and tirelessly to right the world’s horrible wrongs. Now I place her extraordinary efforts alongside those of Mary McLeod Bethune, Dorothy Height, Marian Anderson, Coretta Scott King, Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, Daisy Bates, and Houston’s own Christie Adair. All of these women were supported by workers like Mollie Carroll Parrott.

It disturbs me that my mother, my heroine, is invisible to historical record and that her remarkable contributions to Texas life go unmentioned. The Houston women named are the ones I stand on the shoulders of my mother’s work. I think it is because the book references only the women who made the newspapers or some other public record. These papers became historical records, and so the people written about inside them also became historical record. Very little is written in public records about my mother.

Remember now, I am talking about the South in the 1950s. These were the days when we were “colored,” when any white person could publicly humiliate and denigrate any Negro and get away scot-free through the privilege of public, legal, and social sanction. The days when Black men and women were being killed for the simple act of attempting to register to vote, even though their reasons for wanting to vote were perfectly rational. As American citizens, they paid taxes, and so they wanted to have the right to vote that goes with the money they contributed. By having the vote, they could take part in determining who would best represent their interests in public office.

My parents held still-fresh memories of the times when southern lynchings were widespread. They remembered when the peculiar American phenomenon of lynchings occurred almost daily. At one time, Texas had the third highest number of lynchings in the nation. Today Texas still ranks high in deaths resulting from hate crimes and capital punishment, also known as a modern, legalized form of lynching. . . .

Daily, my mother and father woke up to this kind of world — a world that my mother had resolved to change. The tragedy in my mother’s struggle is that, in the end, she could not triumph. Instead, she left this battle for equality to us, the living. Even though slavery officially ended in this county in 1865, its racist violence, perpetrated through well-placed hate crimes and government-sanctioned capital punishment, continues to this day.² 

Carroll Parrott Blue is a research professor at the University of Houston Center for Public History. She is an award-winning filmmaker, author, and interactive multimedia producer. *The Dawn at My Back: Memoir of a Black Texas Upbringing* is a combination book and DVD-ROM. In 2004, the American Library Association selected it as one of the thirty best American Association of University Press publications, and the DVD-ROM won the 2004 Sundance Online Film Festival Jury Award. As a small child, Blue joined her mother at many Black women’s club meetings, having the opportunity to see Mary McLeod Bethune, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., and Thurgood Marshall conference with these Houston activists.

One of the most significant socio-economic impacts resulting from the notion of white supremacy, and its attending corollary of Black inferiority, was the use of race as a determinant of residential housing patterns, which caused African American families to be forced into the isolation of segregated neighborhoods. For Zinetta Burney and her African American neighbors in Houston's Third Ward, Alabama Street was the de facto color line that, throughout most of the twentieth century, divided this central city community according to race.

In urban communities throughout the nation, the enforcement of allegedly "legal" race-based deed restrictions and other residential restrictions were common practice. In Houston de facto law—meaning it was custom but not written city code—dictated that homes south of Alabama Street were reserved for white families, while African Americans were confined to the northern section, above Alabama. As one of those families, the Burneys resided at 2828 MacGregor, which was renamed Winbern. Burney asserted that changing her street's name reflected a practice used to preserve exclusivity and racial demarcations as increasing numbers of African Americans



At age fourteen, Zinetta Burney "passed" to gain entrance to a movie but left soon after arrival in fear of being caught.

University. I always wanted to go there. I guess I got that from my father. I never felt free. Always conscious of the isolation. Always conscious of the restriction. Always wanted to walk across Alabama. Just walk across it." Visits to Hermann Park were never completely satisfying for a young Zinetta. She now laments that "you could visit, but I never felt I could get out and roam free."⁴ The rigidly enforced Jim Crow rules of a segregated Houston denied Burney and other young African Americans such opportunities.

African American kids experienced a childhood filled with contradictions when it came to accessing the public places and resources of the city. Local amusements like Playland Park at Main and Kirby restricted the access of African American children to only one day a year—June 19. Known as "Juneteenth" that day has been commemorated by African Americans since Reconstruction as the day that enslavement ended in Texas.⁵

Amidst the gathering momentum of the modern civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s, downtown Houston remained a bastion of segregation. Unable to even try on clothing in downtown stores prior to purchase, African Americans were

Zinetta Burney: Crossing Alabama Street

By J. R. Wilson

moved into Third Ward. Thinking back to the 1940s and 1950s, when her mother was cleaning houses as a maid "over on the southern end past Alabama," Burney pointed out that Blacks now live in houses that are in areas that "as a kid, we could not have visited . . . We lived in a segregated world."¹

Even in childhood, the lack of respect shown her father and other African Americans always distressed Burney and contributed to the deep sense of justice, fairness, and civic obligation that has become evident in her adult life. Reminiscing about her highly intelligent father who only finished the third grade, Burney recalled, "I always thought it was disturbing to him, and I guess it was, with going to work, with the seeing of the things he always wanted to explore. I could feel it in him. He wanted the freedom. I could always feel it."² She observed her father's struggles as he redeemed his dignity by repudiating the racial degradation and subservience of the Sambo role that he was expected to fulfill as a rail car porter. She proudly remembers that he ". . . one day just told them he was sick of it; he was tired and quit."³

When he found other work, Burney and her mother often drove him to his various jobs in their family Chevrolet. As they rode along, journeying through Hermann Park and well-off white neighborhoods, she found it disturbing that she had no access to the things she saw around her. "[There were] . . . places that as a kid, I just always wanted to go to visit. I'd see Rice

urged to shop in the bargain basement of Foley's department store where the "colored restroom" was housed. Unwelcome even in the balcony, they were prohibited from entering downtown theaters such as the Loews or Metropolitan to go to the movies. Burney remembers Houston having only three "colored theaters," though they lacked the luxurious red carpet and gilded moldings of the white theaters. These included the Deluxe Theater near Lyons Avenue and Gregg Street in the Fifth Ward, and the Park and the Dowling on Dowling Street in the Third Ward.⁶

One Saturday afternoon in 1955, fourteen-year-old Zinetta was amazed to find herself sitting in the darkened confines of the all-white Loews Theater. Her pervasive childhood curiosity about what lay beyond the "veil" of segregation had taken her to the other side of the color line on an incredible downtown adventure. On this day, choosing not to wait for "ten years" for the *Tarzan* movie playing at the white theaters to get to the Black theaters, Burney decided to "pass" for white to gain entrance.⁷

The daughter of Louisiana French Creoles, the teenaged Burney had fair-skin, straight-hair, and sharp European facial features, leading to her often being mistaken for Latina. On that particular Saturday afternoon, Burney, a student at St. Nicholas High School, joined a friend from Yates High School who looked white, bought tickets, and nervously sat down to watch the film. But, as Burney sat there, a sense of foreboding

and menace overcame her. Unable to ward off her growing trepidation about being detected and arrested, Burney leaped from her seat and ran out of the theater to the bus stop, where she boarded the first bus out of downtown and back to the security of her Third Ward community.⁸

Zinetta Burney dropped out of high school and got married in August 1957. Her daughter Sharon (who completed her studies at Texas Southern University's Thurgood Marshall School of Law in 2007) was born the following year at Connally Air Force base in Waco, Texas. Within a couple of years, however, Burney found herself a single parent without an education and living with her parents. She described herself as having been "uneducated, unemployed, and unemployable."⁹

Recognizing her own predicament, Burney enrolled in the licensed vocational nurse [LVN] program at St. Elizabeth Hospital, intending to "study her way through something and become somebody through education."¹⁰ After becoming an LVN, she returned to HISD night school and completed high school. With her high school diploma in hand, and working as an LVN, Burney determined that the best use of her savings was for college tuition and enrolled at Texas Southern University, the historically Black university located in the Third Ward. The initial transition into college was an overwhelming shock for this working single mother. After flunking the entrance exams, she had to take remedial classes while reserving afternoons as dedicated time for her daughter. After six years, Burney completed her undergraduate degree in mathematics in 1967.¹¹

She worked as a substitute teacher, before landing a position at Shell Research and Development writing computer programs.¹² However, Burney's dream was to be a physician;



Cousin Willie Senegal, Zinetta, and her brother John "Butch" Arceneaux, (left to right) celebrate Easter on Winbern Street in 1955. Her father's Chevrolet is in the background.

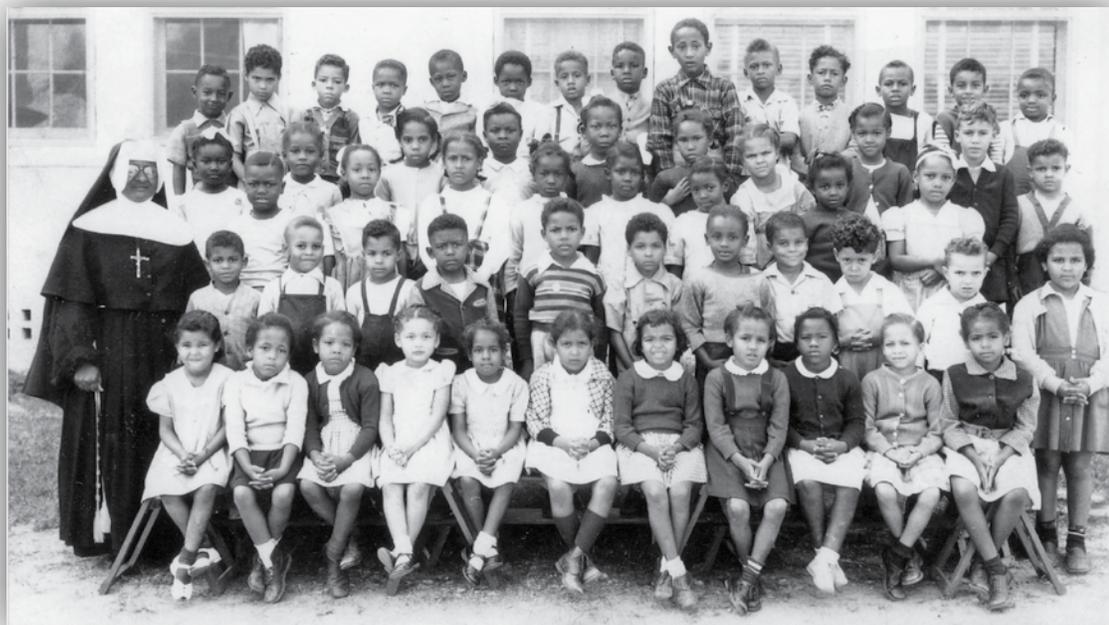
All photos courtesy of Zinetta Burney.

but with a young daughter to raise and no African American medical school in the city, she instead chose to study law. She "went back to nursing . . . held down a forty hour per week job, and completed law school in 1974" at thirty-four years old.¹³ By 1976, Burney along with four other Houston lawyers, Joan Edwards, Shelvin Louise Hall, Haroldeen Hartsfield, and Algenita Scott Davis, founded the first African American female law firm in America — Burney, Edwards, Hall, Hartsfield, and Scott — known affectionately as "The Sisters in Law."

Burney served on numerous leadership and development boards throughout the nation and is now presiding judge of Harris County Justice of the Peace Court, Precinct 7, Place 2. Prior to her election to the bench, she was senior partner in the law firm Burney and Foreman for more than thirty years, and served on the University of Houston Board of Regents and the Board of Commissioners for the Housing Authority of the City of Houston.¹⁴ Numerous awards from local,

state, and national organizations attest to the integrity, forthrightness, and generosity of Zinetta A. Burney. She currently resides in Third Ward, south of Alabama Street. 

J. R. Wilson is a product of the undergraduate and graduate history programs at the University of Houston. He is associate professor in the Department of History at North Harris College and absolutely loves students and teaching. His scholarly research focuses on the intersection of Houston's white and Black civic leadership in the early twentieth century, and he is the author of *Origins: The Houston NAACP, 1915-1918*. J. R. is also an oral historian for the Oral History Project in the Center for Public History and an adjunct history lecturer at UH.



Zinetta Burney attended school at St. Nicholas Catholic Church, the oldest black Catholic church in the city, founded in 1887. Zinetta, age six in a plaid jacket, is seated in the center of the front row of the 1947 class photo with Sister Patronella.

The University of Houston and Texas Southern University: Perpetuating “Separate but Equal” in the Face of *Brown v. Board of Education*

By Andrew Joseph Pegoda

Sometimes the most illogical ideas have the strongest hold on a society’s hopes and fears. Such is the case with race. The various attributes that identify race are merely social and cultural constructions that vary according to time and place. Events that occurred in the 1950s in a tiny corner of Houston occupied by the University of Houston (UH) and Texas Southern University (TSU) provide a unique glimpse into the consequences of giving undue significance to individual differences—namely skin color—that we falsely define as race.

In 1927, the Houston Independent School District (HISD) created two colleges during a local economic boom: Houston Junior College, and a “separate but equal” branch, Houston Colored Junior College. Eventually, Houston Junior College became the University of Houston in 1934, and Houston Colored Junior College became Texas Southern University in 1951.¹

As segregation had arisen socially in the 1880s and legally in the 1890s, the University of Houston and Texas Southern University were segregated. Until slowly overturned in the 1950s and 1960s, “separate but equal” doctrines said that segregation was legal as long as the separate white and black institutions were equal; however, they were rarely—if ever—actually equal. Across time and place, there is always a gap between the law and the reality. While *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), the landmark Supreme Court case that outlawed segregation in public education, is likely the most well known, other cases also made progress toward overturning apartheid conditions beginning in the late 1920s. This included two 1950 Supreme Court decisions that preceded *Brown* and specifically addressed the inequalities created by segregation in higher education institutions: *Sweatt v. Painter* against the University of Texas, and *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* against the University of Oklahoma.

What became TSU only admitted black applicants until 1956, and UH only admitted non-blacks until June 1962. UH admitted women, Mexican-Americans, and international students excluding those of African or African American ancestry. UH employed a few African Americans in service positions, including a black maid and a black bus driver in the 1940s. Segregation, then, was about maintaining the white status quo.²

Nonetheless, administrators at UH had less difficulty excluding African Americans than other institutions of higher education throughout the United States, and especially in the South, because of the co-existence of TSU and UH, located less than two city blocks from each other. Although available documentation does not clearly define the complete relationship, some University of Houston officials had occasional administrative and/or teaching responsibilities at their neighboring institution. Anecdotal evidence holds that Houston College for Negroes, formerly Houston Colored Junior College, was originally going to be located on a portion of the UH campus established in 1937 with donations from wealthy Houston families. Tradition and anecdotal evidence further holds that Hugh Roy (H. R.) Cullen,

the University of Houston’s most noteworthy and generous benefactor, was reputed to be a racist who never wanted African Americans to attend UH. In order to maintain segregation, he donated land for TSU a block away from the University of Houston. The presence of TSU made it possible for the two schools to hold some “separate but equal” courses, and hopes of maintaining that system continued well into the 1960s despite *Brown v. Board of Education*.³

Throughout the University of Houston’s debates regarding segregation, desegregation, and admission of blacks, the



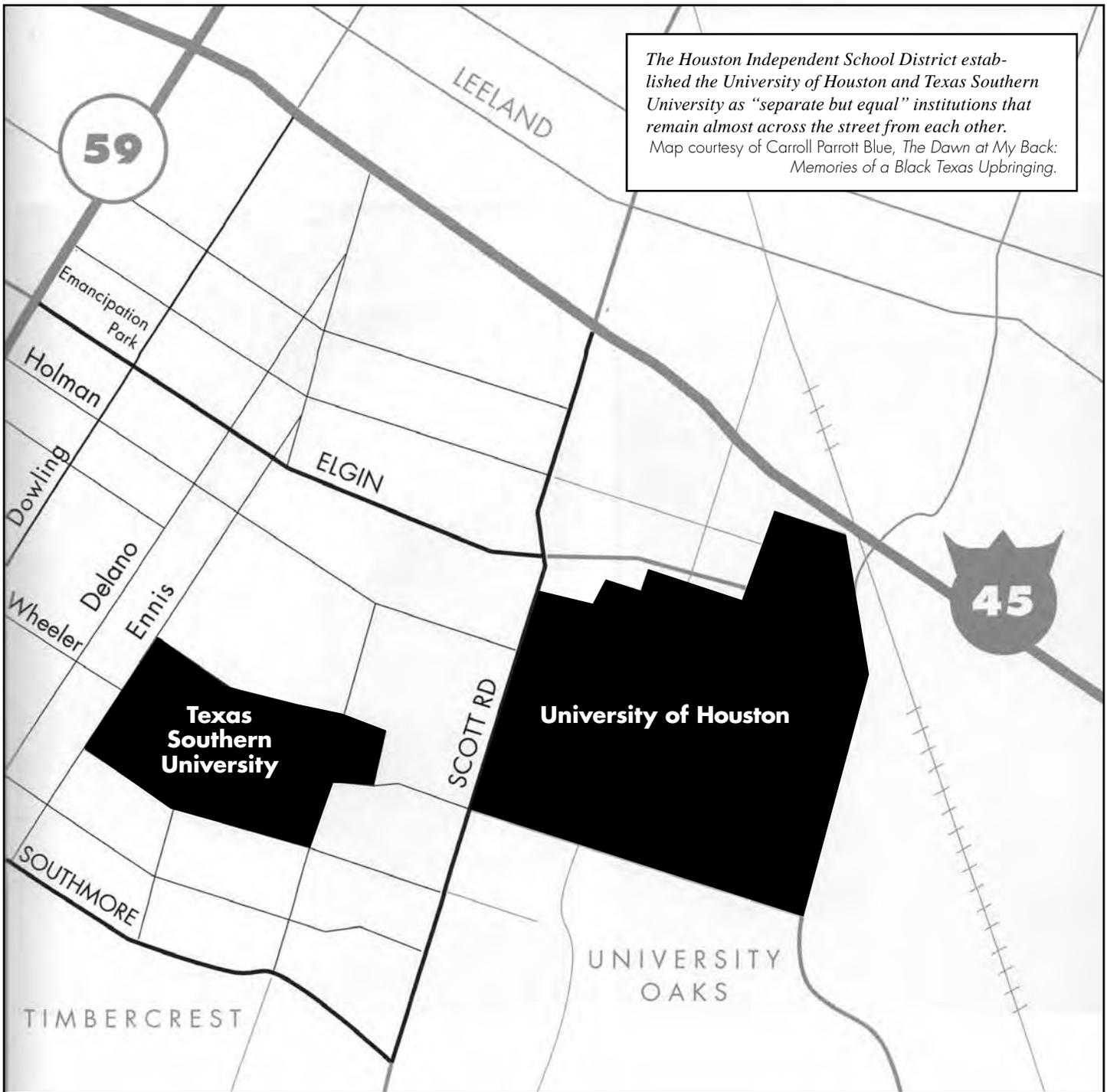
A. D. Bruce, Clanton Ware Williams, and H. R. Cullen shake hands at the University of Houston during the 1950s. As administrators, these three men were important in deciding issues related to desegregation.

All photos courtesy of UH Photographs Collection, 1948-2000, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries unless otherwise noted.

Office of Admissions did not make the decisions. Chief campus administrators—the president, or vice president, or sometimes a dean—with a handful of exceptions, directly handled the entire situation when a black individual was involved. High-ranking officials treated seemingly everyday matters, such as a misplaced wallet, as urgent, suspicious situations if they involved a black person; and these “unusual” circumstances were handled very quickly.

UH (like other places) did not necessarily officially practice segregation. All of the University of Houston’s admission requirements, mission statements, and founding goals and principles said UH welcomed anyone and everyone. The exclusion of blacks and those with African ancestry was so assumed in this apartheid society that it was not viewed as necessary to officially exclude them in writing.⁴

Beginning in at least 1956, black Americans wrote the University of Houston requesting admission. Some of these potential pupils directly wrote UH inquiring about its attitude regarding African Americans. Others wrote campus administrators and asked for information—such as a catalog and



application. In various examples, some of these students would communicate back and forth with officials at UH several times until the registrar knew the person's skin color or ancestry. The UH application asked, with two separate blanks, "What is your race?"—"What is your color?" To "what is your race," students put "Negro." To "what is your color," some put "Negro" again, while others put "dark brown," or "light brown," or "black," or "brown." Most of these students were referred to TSU.

As would become increasingly feared, some African American students did not send a letter or call seeking admission. Rather, some came to one of the UH campuses and stood in line to register for classes. University of Houston officials worried about what these black students might be capable of doing. Would they cause a disruption? Because they feared the

unknown, UH would later implement a policy indicating exactly what to do in such a situation.

A revealing event took place when two African American students from TSU appeared at the Downtown School of the University of Houston. The Downtown School, originally serving the business community, operated from 1942 to 1979 when it became its own university, the University of Houston Downtown. Starting in the 1950s, this branch also housed all of the university's continuing education programs.⁵

Walter Petteway visited on September 13, and Lorenzo Lucas followed on September 14, 1957. Lucas and Petteway wanted to enroll at UH to take an accounting course, since TSU had discontinued its parallel accounting class because of low enrollment. Apparently, UH had already planned to provide the same

course. Additionally, UH offered this course at the same time as the course canceled at TSU. After waiting in line to register, the Registrar's Office explained to both Lucas and Petteway on their separate visits that the Board of Governors took the matter seriously, that once a policy had been reached they would hear about it in the news, but that UH did not admit African Americans and operated as a segregated educational institution. Additionally, an unspecified individual at UH criticized TSU for no longer offering the accounting course in demand.⁶

For unexplained reasons, Petteway also had a private meeting with Myron "Bud" Swiss, Director of Admissions, lasting about twenty minutes. No record exists of exactly what these men said, but twenty minutes could indicate that the conversation was more than the typical explanation given to black students about why they could not enroll at UH. In official reports, Swiss said that this private session "was most polite" and was "free of any emotional display." This statement, especially that the meeting was free of emotional display, must be questioned. Significantly, Petteway's supposed emotions—not what he and Swiss discussed—received documentation. Just as with other black students UH encountered and documented, Petteway's behavior, not his academic desires and needs, received emphasis.⁷

Unlike other black students who were rejected, Lucas and Petteway continued trying to enroll at UH to take the desired accounting course. Both worked for George West of A. J. Folger & Company. One morning they asked West if they could continue trying to gain admission to UH with the help of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) without endangering their jobs. According to University of Houston President Clanton W. Williams's official report, West replied that they could do as they pleased but should be prepared for the consequences. West warned Lucas and Petteway that prematurely forcing desegregation at UH would upset Folger employees and would further divide the entire city of Houston.⁸

West contacted Reagan Cartwright, the University of Houston's lawyer, and President Williams on September 18, 1957, resulting in an additional series of events. First, Williams asked West if he would excuse Petteway and Lucas from work so that they could attend a meeting with him the next morning at 9:30. West agreed. Then, Williams called Samuel Nabrit, the second president of TSU, who "knew nothing about the matter." Nabrit, again according to Williams's report, agreed to investigate the situation and find a way to reimplement the course rather than "have the University of Houston embarrassed by a law suit." That evening at ten, Nabrit followed up with Williams, requesting that UH provide an instructor for the course. They "agreed that such an attempt would be made unless it were ascertained that Petteway and Lucas with NAACP backing were determined to bring a test case anyway."⁹

On September 19, I. E. McNeill, chair of accounting at UH, and the dean of TSU's College of Business visited over the phone to discuss arrangements for an instructor.¹⁰ At exactly 9:30 a.m., Petteway and Lucas arrived as arranged through West. McNeill, Alfred R. Neumann, and President Williams also attended this meeting. Reportedly, "*the boys* were told of developments and were quite pleased" (italics in original). Additionally, Petteway confessed, according to official reports, that he only used the threat of court action and alliance with the NAACP as leverage in hopes that the course would be created at either TSU or UH. Forty minutes later, the UH president and

TSU president conferred once more to polish the agreement and ultimately continue an idealized "separate but equal" philosophy at the twin schools.¹¹

Representatives at UH and TSU created the course on September 19, 1957, just one week after Lucas and Petteway's first attempt to take an accounting course at the Downtown School. TSU offered the course at the time these two students sought and did not seek additional enrollment. The two universities agreed that the students could watch accounting instructor McNeill's lectures through the University of Houston's distance education program delivered through the UH television station, and that TSU would provide additional instruction and a graduate student to answer questions, hold laboratory sessions, and grade papers. (UH was the first university in the nation to offer distance learning through television.)¹²

Williams sent an official report to General and Chancellor A. D. Bruce, Cartwright, and others detailing the encounter with Petteway and Lucas. It is possible that Williams provided a softer version of events; for example, he repeatedly emphasized that "the boys" were very agreeable when approached.¹³

One year earlier, a similar situation occurred in the Houston Independent School District (HISD). Residential requirements said that Beneva Williams had to attend E. O. Smith Junior High School, instead of McReynolds Junior High School. Williams, a black youth, did not want to continue attending the all-black



As student activists, Lynn Eusan and Gene Locke worked tirelessly to gain equal rights for African American students at the University of Houston.

junior high because it was twenty blocks from her home instead of seven blocks to the white school. To avoid making real plans for desegregation, HISD instantly promoted her to high school. She started attending Phillis Wheatley Senior High School, a school that was closer to her residence than the white high schools. At UH and HISD, leading officials tried to solve specific disturbances or problems as they developed rather than addressing the larger issues and finding long-term solutions that would promote equality for everyone involved. Throughout the 1950s, “separate but equal” remained strong, as all parties carefully watched developments on local and national stages.¹⁴

Ultimately, the story of Petteway and Lucas was an exception. In many other cases, TSU did not have “separate but equal” counterparts compared to UH, especially for African Americans seeking a doctorate. TSU did not offer the Ed.D. or Ph.D. until 1974 and 1984, respectively. Moreover, UH provided the only optometry school in the region.¹⁵

The existence of “separate but equal” greatly influenced Freda Celestine Gooden Richardson, whose voice is the most complete in the historical record. On January 18, 1956, Richardson wrote to UH seeking refresher courses in optometry. After graduating from Wiley College in 1949 with her Bachelor of Science degree, she enrolled in the Chicago College of Optometry. In 1953, she graduated with her Doctorate of Optometry and returned to her home in Galveston, Texas. At some point during August 1954, Charles M. Babb contacted Richardson because she had failed the exam given by the Texas State Board of Examiners in Optometry for the second time. Babb told her that in order to take the exam again, she would be required to present evidence of having taken additional courses in optometry. Babb also informed her that if she did not successfully pass the exam on a third try, she would never be able to take the exam again and, therefore, would not be able to practice in the State of Texas.¹⁶

The Board’s standards remain unknown. Considering the general attitudes of the 1950s, it is possible that the Board’s unwritten requirements in order to pass the examination included that the individual not be an African American or female, especially since Texas did not have a school for black optometry students.¹⁷

In her first letter to the registrar, without making any mention of her ethnicity or of having failed the Board’s exam twice, Richardson requested a catalog of courses and provided her credentials. A little more than one week later, Charles R. Stewart, dean of the College of Optometry, replied. He thanked Richardson for her interest, apol-

Since its beginnings in the 1920s, the University of Houston has never stopped growing. In 2010, the University of Houston occupied almost 700 acres of land. The student body consisted of more than 37,000 students from more than 137 nations around the world.

ogized for not responding sooner, and indicated how she could proceed to take the necessary classes. Following this correspondence, Richardson completed her application to UH on February 10, 1956, hoping to begin coursework in the summer. The application included the questions, “What is your race?” and “What is your color?” Richardson responded, “Negro,” and “Colored.”¹⁸

After staff members exchanged several internal memos, including one specifically noting the applicant’s skin color and an-

other one drafting part of a reply, Williams finally replied on April 26, which was an unusually long wait time of more than two months since the last correspondence with Richardson. Williams informed Richardson that issues related to desegregation were currently under study but that UH had never admitted a black individual. Although Richardson supplied all of her background information in her application, Williams requested that she provide the information again. In this reply, he also said he was looking for several “highly qualified” black candidates who might be interested in helping UH quietly desegregate that fall semester. Richardson replied with all of the requested information but did not make any mention of helping UH achieve the first steps toward desegregation. Richardson also indicated for the first time that she needed to take classes in an effort to pass the state’s exam and receive her license.¹⁹

Stewart’s next letter on June 5, 1956, contained subtle and not-so-subtle racism. First, Stewart lambasted other schools and their graduates. He indicated that UH had its own method of teaching and training and that professors wasted their time because newcomers had always been slow to adjust. Second, Stewart singled out black patients and students, saying that UH did not see black patients and that some white patients would not approve of being examined by an African American. Stewart felt this possibility would be embarrassing to everyone, assuming Richardson had encountered similar difficulties in Chicago. Finally, Stewart indicated that Richardson might have great difficulty passing a course at UH because of its higher standards. Richardson’s past grades, as indicated by her transcripts, reflected that she would have been perfectly capable of passing a course at UH. Stewart further suggested that Richardson retake basic courses in optometry.²⁰ Richardson replied with her usual positive outlook on June 27, 1956, agreeing that a review of the basic courses would be helpful, that while earning her doctorate she had worked with whites and blacks without any embarrassing situations, and that she understood the concerns about working with a non-white individual.²¹

On July 5, the final exchange of letters between Richardson and officials at the



Charles Churchwell became the first African American employed in a professional status at the University of Houston in 1967. After completing his doctorate, he became a librarian and an advocate for increasing the presence and equality of diverse peoples on campus.

University of Houston occurred. Williams wrote to inform her that the Board of Regents had decided to wait at least one additional year before addressing the issue of desegregation again.²²

In reality, the Board waited six more years until 1962, when UH, a private institution, was completely out of money and had a great amount of debt, before it admitted the first African Americans. Charles P. Rhinehart became the first African American student in June 1962. Several years later UH hired the first African American, Charles D. Churchwell, in a professional capacity.²³

In an official statement, "Summary of Action of Board of Regents Desegregating the University of Houston," the Board of Regents and their allies attempted to rewrite the University of Houston's history in September 1969. This report says that UH admitted black students in 1956 without any formal board action. Moreover, this report stated that more African American students enrolled every year starting in 1956; and that in 1963, when UH became a public institution, "it was taken for granted by all concerned that no racial discrimination was in effect."²⁴

Clearly, these issues were not resolved at UH specifically or in society generally. UH still worked on welcoming African Americans but used TSU to continue "separate but equal" southern mores. In 1965, although desegregation had begun at UH, it yet again partnered with TSU for students at UH to take courses at TSU in African or African American studies. Then in 1969, black UH students, tired of discrimination, issued their famous "Ten Black Demands." A little over one month later on Monday, March 17, 1969, white students attacked Eugene (Gene) Locke; later that day, the campus broke into violence. While investigating the situation, UH took testimony solely from white

students who accused only black students of causing the trouble. All fourteen individuals who were arrested and punished were African Americans.

Administrators at UH quickly and specifically handled any situation involving black Americans such as those with Petteway, Lucas, and Richardson in order to maintain the inequalities created by Jim Crow customs and laws. But Petteway, Lucas, Richardson, and many others fought to change this and to see *Brown v. Board of Education* mean something by seeking admission at the University of Houston. Efforts by these brave trailblazers helped begin the transition by administrators, faculty, and staff at the University of Houston to commit to having a diverse body of students. Moreover, in 1990 the University of Houston selected Marguerite Ross Barnett, an African American female, as the institution's president. She served until 1992; sadly, her tenure was cut short due to a battle with cancer. As an indication of how far the university has come, in 2009 *U.S. News and World Report* selected UH as the second most ethnically diverse university in the nation. Seventy percent of the student body is non-white. On the other hand, seventy percent of the faculty is white. Clearly, UH has come a long way, but still has a long way to go.²⁵ 

Andrew Joseph Pegoda finished his M.A. in April 2010 with a thesis entitled "Watchful Eyes: The Struggle for African Americans to Gain Admission and Equality at the University of Houston, 1927-1969." He is a doctoral student and instructional assistant at the University of Houston studying U.S. history. He has also taught as an adjunct faculty member at Brazosport College.



Established as a community college, transformed into a private university, and then dealing with what seemed to be a never ending battle between campus administrators and African American students, the 1990 appointment of Marguerite Ross Barnett, a female and African American, as the University of Houston's president was an important milestone for the campus.

THE DAILY COUGAR



FRIDAY'S RALLY AGAINST RACISM RESULTS IN PEACEFUL MARCH ON PRES. HOFFMAN'S OFFICE
Group Breaks Up With Promise From Hoffman To Meet With Three Leaders At A Later Date

Photo By DAVID LYONS

A group of racially diverse students marched to President Hoffman's office on March 7, 1969. Their banner reads "Fight Racism - Support the Black Demands."

All photos are courtesy of Special Collections, M. D. Anderson Library, University of Houston unless otherwise noted.

Afro-Americans for Black Liberation and the Fight for Civil Rights at the University of Houston

By Robinson Block

The University of Houston (UH) is celebrated today as one of the most diverse research institutions in the nation. It also has one of the oldest African American Studies programs in the country. Located at the edge of the predominantly African American Third Ward, the university's student body today is thirteen percent African American and more than fifty percent students of color. The transition that UH has made from its foundation as an exclusively white university, to becoming a diverse school with ethnic studies programs, owes a great deal of credit to the trailblazing work of the Afro-Americans for Black Liberation student organization. Known as AABL (pronounced "able"), this group of students created and organized around a list of grievances in the spring of 1969 that led to rapid and profound changes for students of color at UH.¹

Initially, black students had a hard time at UH where they

remained a small minority throughout the 1960s. Although classes had become integrated, most student groups remained segregated, and few restaurants would seat black students. Quality student housing near campus was also very difficult to find. By the late sixties, black students began staging sit-ins against segregation at Woolworth's lunch counters in Houston.

Several national social movements of the late 1960s influenced the events at UH. The civil rights movement had mobilized youth from the North and South to oppose Jim Crow, and the Black Power movement was growing. These movements had taken root in Houston as well, and conflicts inevitably followed. Students at TSU supported Friends of SNCC. In 1967, the Houston Police Department raided the campus, culminating in the arrest of the "TSU Five," only after a fire in which a police officer was killed, most likely by a fellow police officer's

bullet. In 1968, black student activist Lee Otis Johnson was railroaded into prison, sentenced to thirty years for handing a marijuana cigarette to an undercover police officer.

Other social movements gained ground at UH, lending their support to AABL, including a chapter of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), which was extremely radical in 1969. The Mexican American Youth Organization and the League of Mexican American Students supported AABL's goals, specifically the creation of ethnic studies programs. Some voiced fears, however, that if African American students won black faculty or an African American studies program, Mexican American students might lose hope for similar advancement.²

AABL was founded initially as the Committee on Better Race Relations (COBRR) in spring 1967. Following a visit by Stokely Carmichael in 1968, COBRR changed its name to Afro-Americans for Black Liberation to reflect a changing consciousness, an acceptance of Black Power politics, and participation in the national and international struggle of African and other oppressed peoples for human rights, economic rights, and self-determination.³ AABL bridged the gap between the civil rights movement and black liberation and, in fact, maintained strong ties to established civil rights organizations in Houston and Texas.

AABL was active as a social as well as a political organization. AABL fielded an intramural football team, created and raised money for a scholarship for black students in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and tutored youth in Houston's Third Ward. The unlikely election victory of AABL leader Lynn Eusan as the first African American homecoming queen at UH in 1968 put the group on the map. Eusan and other contemporary accounts concluded that many whites voted for her in order to counter the ascendancy and exclusivity of the white Greek system, and that their success was the start of AABL activities in other areas of student life.⁴ Eusan made national news, was featured in *Ebony* magazine and several newspapers, and earned AABL a good deal of respect from the black community in Houston.

The endeavor that caused the biggest stir and has left AABL's greatest legacy came out of the creation of a list of demands they devised and, flanked by seventy-five student supporters, presented to UH President Philip Hoffman on February 7, 1969.

Ester King, a student at Texas Southern University, worked closely with the leadership of AABL. He explains their twofold strategy: "Certainly you wanted to get to a point where you could get those demands met, which was gonna take some negotiation . . . but the primary reason for all that was to heighten awareness to create tension on the campuses to get attention of other students."⁵

AABL saw the university as reluctant to take action to eliminate racism or modify policies that had negative social impacts on black students. "Through our eyepiece, we see the university imitating the racist society at large, Black students are the victims of 'refined racism.' Plainly stated, we feel that the University of Houston is a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant institution. . . . We as Black people struggling for survival in a racist country must exercise control over political, economic, social, spiritual, and physical aspects of our lives."⁶

AABL demanded that the university create a Department of Afro-American Studies, hire more black university faculty and staff, recruit and admit more black students, and provide expanded financial aid and adequate housing for black students, improve conditions for black athletes, tackle racist practices in grading and instruction, establish a Black Student Union, award credit for black students doing community work, and raise the wage scale of the school's service workers.⁷

President Hoffman took these demands seriously. His files show that the day after receiving AABL's demands, the vice president of staff services responded with a written appraisal of the costs involved in raising the wages of service workers on campus. Staff services supported some raises but calculated that it would cost more than \$100,000 to raise the wages of all employees to \$2.00 per hour.

President Hoffman facilitated a good deal of research about AABL's demands, and issued a point-by-point reply on February 14, 1969.⁸ He read the document in its entirety at a meeting of AABL and then left the meeting without taking any questions. The statement struck a very conciliatory tone. Hoffman answered "no" to only a couple of the demands: the creation of a university funded Black Student Union, under the justification that the only government funded student organization was the existing Student Association; and a minimum admission percentage for black students or a designation of



Lynn Eusan was elected the first African American homecoming queen at the historically white University of Houston on November 23, 1968. The Cougars celebrated by defeating Tulsa 100-6.

financial aid resources exclusively for black students, based on a rejection of any type of quota system.

At the same time, Hoffman did not answer “yes” to any of the demands. Hoffman offered to create a task force of students, faculty, and administrators to review several grievances, including the creation of an Afro-American Studies Department, and the predicament of black athletes. He proposed that many of the demands put forth in the AABL list could be dealt with by existing or newly created institutions and bureaucracies. For example, the newly formed University Student Assistance Committee could handle faculty grading practices. Also, Hoffman agreed to ask the University Council and Academic Deans to secure more minority faculty.

Hoffman also announced plans to take action on some of the points, including filing a complaint with the Federal Housing Authority over the racist practices of landlords of properties near the university, the creation of a recruitment committee, publication of promotional materials to distribute to high schools that discuss financial aid, and possibly modifying admission criteria with the goal of accepting more black students to UH. The president of UH also supported the creation of a program to give credit to students who do work in the black “ghetto” community.

President Hoffman found himself in the delicate position of trying to resolve the demands of black students on his campus with the concerns of many faculty and alumni who remained hostile to AABL and other Black Power movements of the times. Hoffman’s archive contains correspondence from

numerous people, some alumni, some seemingly completely unconnected to Houston in any way, who encouraged him not to surrender to the demands of “communist” and “negro” students. In particular, letters expressing concern from executive officers at the Continental Carbon Company, a continuing donor of funds to the university, must have given Hoffman pause.⁹

The student government system at UH had to address AABL’s political demands and mobilizations, particularly as student elections happened at the same time. Independent John Sayer, campaigning for president, supported AABL and attended their demonstrations. His opponent, Bob Ulmer of the Representative Government Party, advocated “law and order,” and Ulmer’s election signs contained slogans such as “VOTE for RESPONSIBILITY and against DISRUPTION” with images of confrontations between police and students at other universities. Sayer, who ended up losing the election, wrote a letter to the editor of the *Daily Cougar* on March 20, 1969, explaining his position: “You who criticize so loudly should remember that the black people on this campus have been asking quietly through the regular channels for a long time, but they never got attention until they made a ‘demand.’”¹⁰

Other white students and white organizations supported AABL’s demands. In a period of four hours, a group called Students for the Eradication of Racial Injustice gathered 350 signatures of white students, and then delivered the petition to the Board of Regents, city officials, and local media.¹¹

The campaign gained a new urgency and visibility as tensions at UH exploded on March 17, 1969. When Gene Locke arrived on campus that morning, three white students attacked him. By one o’clock, students rallied to protest the attack and marched to the UH Safety and Security Office to demand immediate action. According to the university’s press release: “At approximately 1:40 p.m. some of the students, both white and black (estimates vary from twenty-five to forty) left the Safety and Security Office and went to the Cougar Den where a disruption took place. The students overturned tables and chairs, broke dishes, destroyed food, and broke out four glass windows. Upon dispersing from the Den at the urging of Gene Locke and Dwight Allen, a smaller number (ten to twelve) broke into the bookstore and damaged property. No one was seriously injured in the incidents and the extent of property damaged was estimated at \$2,000.”¹²

In the weeks following, the police failed to find the men who assaulted Locke. The students involved in the resulting unrest expected to face charges at the University Student Court, as prescribed by the Student Life Policy. Instead, on April 7, 1969, arrest warrants were issued for twelve UH students and three non-students at the request of the Harris County District Attorney, charging them with crimes relating to the property damage in the University Center. The students—including Gene Locke, Dwight Allen, Deloyd Parker, TSU student Ester King, and Doug Bernhardt, a white UH student and member of SDS—became known as the UH Fourteen. (The numerical discrepancy between those initially arrested and those facing charges is never made clear.)

AABL and their allies regarded the cooperation between UH administrators and the district attorney’s office as a violation of trust between the university and the student activists. Dwight Allen spoke to the *Daily Cougar* about the charges, “Dean Yardley told Gene Locke and myself that the matter would be



A police officer stands in the UH bookstore after the March 17, 1969 disturbance.

within the confines of the university, and Dr. Hoffman sat right across the table from Yardley and agreed.”¹³

President Hoffman must have felt considerable pressure to circumvent the Student Court. The March 17, 1969, events had been reported in the *Houston Post*, which drew much attention from conservative alumni and citizens, many of whom wrote to Hoffman to encourage him to take harsh disciplinary action against the students. The conservative student organization Young American Independents boasted of delivering a petition of over 2,000 signatures the day after the “mini-riot,” in “support of non-disruption on campus” and demanding “to prosecute those rioters or disrupters to the full extent of the law and to cooperate fully with all police authorities.”¹⁴

Although it was common practice across the country for the justice system to obstruct the activities of social movements by entangling its leaders in the court system, AABL used the charges against the UH Fourteen as a platform to campaign both for their acquittal and to continue building momentum for their demands on the university. AABL and its allies on campus formed a “Majority Coalition,” which hosted rallies and facilitated other events. Previously hostile Student Government president Bob Ulmer spoke at a rally April 23, 1969, to condemn the lack of transparency



Student Leader Gene Locke prepares for a May 18, 1969 rally.

in administration-student relations. In the community, AABL earned significant public support from the civil rights movement. On May 18, AABL held a rally in Emancipation Park in support of the UH Fourteen with speakers from the NAACP, Hope Development, and several black churches.¹⁵

Harris County D.A., Carol Vance, took the prosecutions of black activists very seriously: he personally prosecuted Charles Freeman of the TSU Five (charges were dismissed following a hung jury) and went on to prosecute Gene Locke and Dwight Allen (also failing to convict them). Eventually the D.A. accepted plea bargains and dropped charges against the other defendants.¹⁶

Through editorial and news coverage, the *Daily Cougar* proved to be one of the most insightful places to see multiple perspectives on the struggle over AABL’s demands. The student paper published letters to the editor from white students both supporting and critical of AABL. Overall, the editorial content of the *Cougar* remained supportive. For example, columnist Tim Fleck, an Anglo who wrote “The Grapevine” column, concluded that AABL’s demands “represent a sane, logical step towards an escape from the vicious race cycle so easily observable within our own little pearl of a city.”¹⁷ The *Cougar* also gave Dwight Allen a weekly column called “The Black Perspective,” which Allen used to explain AABL positions and discuss other issues on campus.

The *Daily Cougar*’s news coverage frequently covered AABL press conferences and protests—generally in a neutral or positive light. At the same time, some provocative editorial choices were made, including The *Cougar*’s February 18, 1969, report focused on Dwight Allen’s statement at a student rally: “You white students had better wake up. If we can’t have our black studies, you can’t have your white studies.”



A group of protestors gather outside the courthouse downtown in opposition to the arrest of the TSU Five.

Photo courtesy of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.



Dwight Allen addresses a crowd in front of the University Center on February 17, 1969.

The brisk pace of events at UH in spring 1969 may be seen as a result of the university's eagerness to defuse any possibility for campus unrest. In comparison to other public universities in the South, the university's willingness to enter negotiations and make changes can now be viewed as quite progressive. President Hoffman seems to have had sympathetic attitudes on racial justice, but he made it clear that he regarded preservation of "law and order" as a vital responsibility of his office. No doubt university administrators hoped to avoid a scenario like the 1967 police raid on TSU. Nevertheless, AABL leaders considered the institutional and bureaucratic responses too slow. They worried that the university might adopt the tactics used by other universities to stall until the end of a semester or the summer, when students would leave campus and then would have to struggle to resume their momentum the following academic year.

AABL continued to hold small "rap sessions" and informational events for students of all races almost daily throughout March, as well as press conferences and appearances on radio programs. On March 6, 1969, one of the task forces created in response to the AABL demands recommended the creation of an Afro-American Studies Program by the start of the summer term. On March 7, AABL and allies held a rally of 600 students, followed by a march of around 200 to the Cullen Building. By March 27, just ten days after the "mini-riot" and less than two months after AABL first delivered their demands, Douglas MacLean, vice president of staff services, released a sixteen-page report on the status of negotiations between the university and AABL. This document addressed each of AABL's ten demands, presented commentary on AABL reasons, and spelled out the university's initial response as well as actions taken.¹⁸

The creation of the African American Studies Program became the most visible and transformative response to the AABL agitations. A task force to consider the program included students like Gene Locke and two other AABL members, faculty, and Chester Bratton, the assistant dean of students, and one of the first African American administrators at UH, who enjoyed

a good working relationship with AABL. They called for the creation of a degree-granting department. A second task force with more faculty and fewer students announced in April a few of the course offerings: Afro-American history, Afro-American literature, as well as Afro-American culture.¹⁹

In May, President Hoffman announced the appointment of white history professor Robert Haynes as acting director of the new Afro-American Studies Program. Over the summer, Haynes stated the objectives of the program: to instill the concept of black awareness and identity as well as a community orientation. The program grew so rapidly that Haynes was later quoted as saying "that pamphlets listing the courses to be offered are almost outdated by the time they come from the printer."²⁰

Although it has never gained the status of a degree-granting department, the African American Studies Program still operates on the UH campus, as does the Center for Mexican American Studies, which was established in 1972. These programs represent important examples of the university's response to student demands for educational programs to meet their needs. AABL's leadership regarded this as the most significant victory of their campaign.

During the next school year, much of the leadership of AABL moved off of the UH campus and allowed for a new generation of black student leadership to emerge. Dwight Allen told the *Daily Cougar*, "We concluded that the black community is of primary importance and that UH should serve as a base for recruiting black students to return to their communities."²¹ They went on to build political support and raise funds for the UH Fourteen, and established service programs in the black community, primarily in Third Ward, including athletics programs for youth and black history classes. Later, AABL went on to support national liberation struggles in southern Africa, to promote the SHAPE community center, to support HOPE Development, and to campaign on behalf of blacks running for political office.

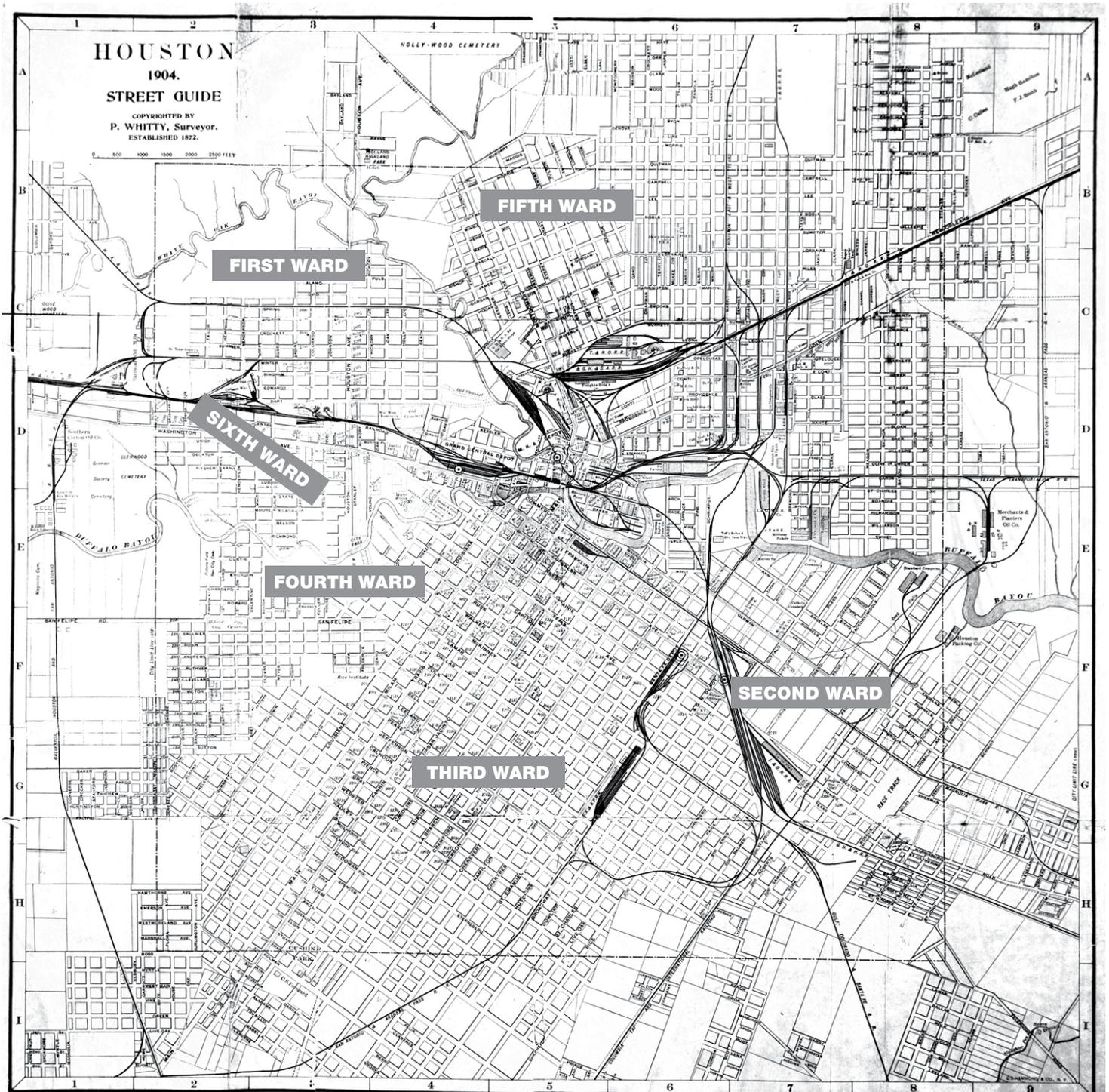
AABL's struggles at UH and in the Houston community have fundamentally transformed UH as an institution and the City of Houston as a whole. AABL alumni have gone on to participate in a variety of social movements and institutions. Gene Locke ran for mayor of Houston in 2009, and lost by a small margin to Annise Parker in a run-off election. His fellow AABL alumni continue to do progressive political work on a grassroots level: Deloyd Parker is the director of the SHAPE Community Center, which has operated for more than forty-five years and continues to offer service programs to the community of Third Ward, and Ester King continues as an activist for progressive causes.

AABL's work helped UH to evolve from a white institution to one that embraces diversity, and now celebrates itself as one of the most diverse research universities in the country. Today, students at the university continue to want their voices heard and to make changes to curriculum, to administrative policy, and to conditions for workers and students. Afro-Americans for Black Liberation built a strong foundation for later generations who would desire to further transform the University of Houston. 

Robinson Block is a history and Mexican American studies undergraduate student at the University of Houston.

When There Were Wards: A Series

Our series “When There Were Wards” will appear over three issues tracing the history of Houston’s ward system and featuring highlights on each of the six wards.



A System of Government Where Business Ruled

By Betty Trapp Chapman

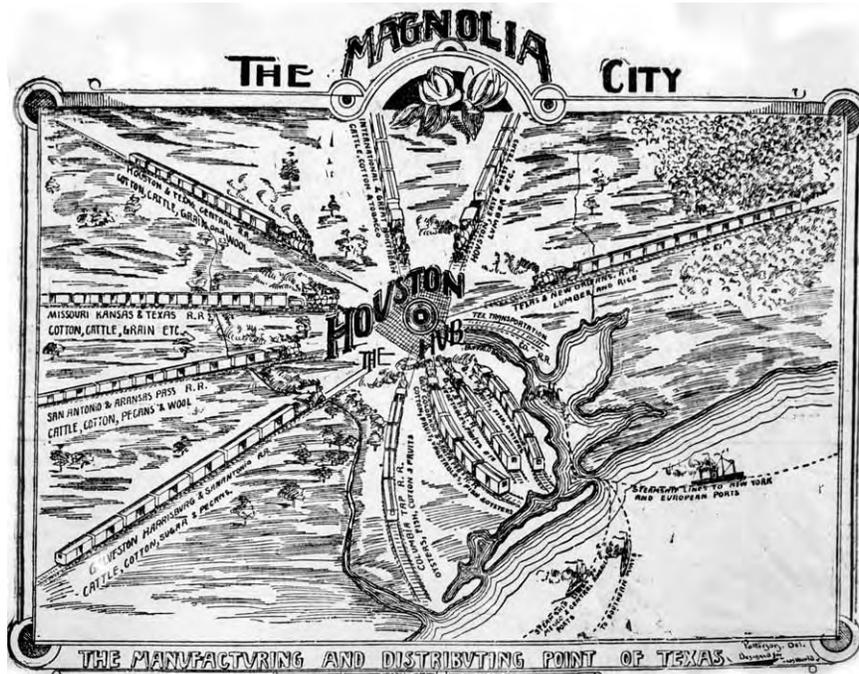
How old are the brick streets in the Fourth Ward? Who is building the new condominiums in the First Ward? Is one of the proposed rail lines going through the Third Ward? Questions like these are heard in Houston almost every day. Yet the wards as definitive areas have not existed in Houston for more than one hundred years. That reality, however, does not prevent them from being part of our collective history and continuing to exist in our present-day mindset.

The wards system of local government became a common

political tool in the early nineteenth century—based on the Jacksonian tendency for a decentralized government with numerous officials elected on a frequent basis. Thought to be more democratic than a system in which the mayor wields the greater power, the wards system began in the early years of American cities, such as New York, Boston, Chicago, New Orleans, and, of course, Houston. Chicago still uses wards, and the number has grown to fifty.¹

When the town of Houston was incorporated in 1837, the powers accorded to the government were sue or be sued, own and sell property, pass laws, assess taxes, establish schools, and maintain streets. Its charter called for a mayor and eight aldermen, although it took a subsequent charter in 1839 and a supplement in 1840 to divide the town into four wards from which those aldermen would be elected. A nine square mile area centered on the county courthouse delineated the city limits. The intersection of Main Street and Congress Avenue formed the four wards' innermost boundaries that extended out to the city limits. The land north of Congress and west of Main became the First Ward, and the four wards proceeded clockwise from there. In 1866 the Fifth Ward was added north of Buffalo Bayou and east of White Oak Bayou. A final ward, the Sixth, was carved out of the Fourth Ward North in 1877, but it was not formally given representation on City Council until 1896.²

All of the municipal offices were unpaid, part-time positions. The mayor, elected at-large, served a one-year term as did the voter-elected aldermen in their designated wards. Only white males who were citizens of Texas, residents of Houston for at least six months, and owners of at least \$100 in real estate were



"The Magnolia City" from Texas World newspaper, May 21, 1898, depicting Houston's growth in manufacturing and trade.

All images from the George Fuermann "Texas and Houston" Collection, courtesy of Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries unless otherwise noted.

eligible to hold office. Meetings of the governing body were held randomly at Kesler's Arcade, a popular gathering place. The turnover of the mayoral office four times in the first three years and a revision of the charter nine times between 1837 and 1853, demonstrated the instability of the government. The makeup of the elected leaders, who initially came almost entirely from the mercantile class, did not change.

Houston was founded on the premise that agricultural products, especially cotton, would be brought to Houston from the rich farmland

to the west and then shipped down Buffalo Bayou to the Gulf of Mexico. In return, manufactured goods came from distant ports to Houston to be sold in the mercantile establishments, which included dry goods houses, retail grocers, hardware stores, wholesale warehouses, commission merchants, drugstores, and bookstores. If Houston could become the commercial emporium of all Texas that the Allen brothers had promised, those engaged in commerce clearly had the most at stake. To realize success, they became involved in all aspects of the community's development, which included using government to promote and support their capitalistic endeavors. In essence, Houston's government became the instrument of the local business community. The numerous changes in the city's charter between 1837 and 1853 dealt primarily with transportation—essential for a trade economy. The business community focused on developing the cheapest routes to and from the market places by roadway, water and, later, rail. These priorities clearly overshadowed attempts at providing public services for the private sector as the fledgling town grew. All administrations reflected a strong commitment to business growth based on a *laissez-faire*—or "free enterprise"—philosophy characterized by an intense belief in economic growth, private property, private investment control, private profit, and government action tailored to business needs. Leaders envisioned Houston becoming "the Chicago of the South" and consistently measured their local accomplishments against the commercial development occurring in Chicago.³

By the 1850s, class stratification had developed with a small wealthy elite, a substantial middle-income group, and a large poverty-level population. A review of local government officials

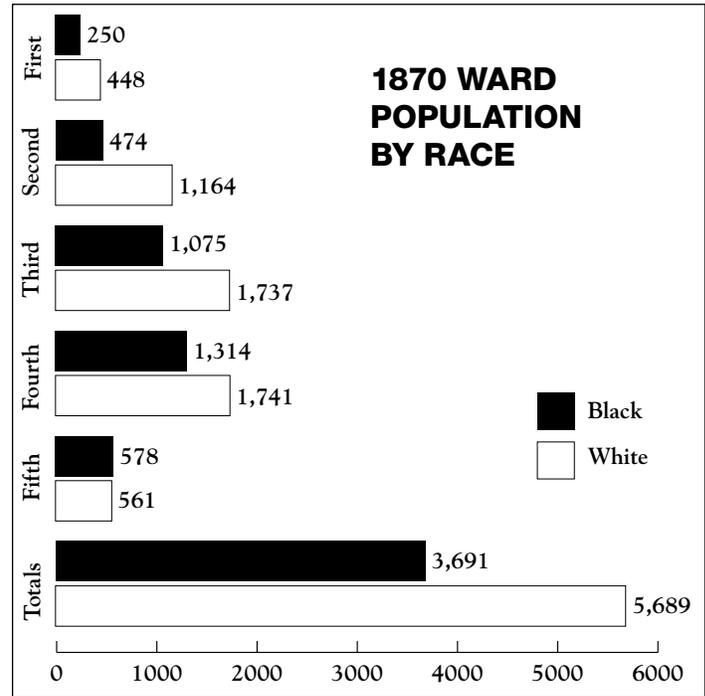
reveals that the majority of mayors throughout the nineteenth century were merchants. These men promoted the city's business interests and held positions of leadership in their churches, the volunteer fire units, and other civic organizations, becoming the "commercial-civic elites," as historian Harold L. Platt aptly named them. In time, they became the largest property owners, occupied the highest social ranking, and represented the wealthiest citizens. Between 1850 and 1860, the share of wealth held by the richest ten percent of the population increased from just over half to more than two-thirds. Many elected aldermen fell into the elite categories, as well.

During Houston's early years, each ward's population was heterogeneous in its make-up, composed of a variety of ethnic and economic backgrounds. Except for a few free black residents, slaves comprised the African American population. Although there were fewer slaveholders in Houston than elsewhere in Texas, slavery was a significant factor in the city's economic life. Urban slavery practices did not dictate that slaves live on their owners' premises. They were often hired out to work as domestic servants or journeymen for others in the community. In these instances, their domicile might move from ward to ward. This pattern of residential mobility remained in place even after emancipation of the slaves since many workers tended to live near their work place, which frequently changed. Until more homogenous neighborhoods developed in the late nineteenth century, the commercial-civic elites were elected across the city because they often dominated several wards at any given time. As the majority on City Council, they controlled decision-making in government affairs. These decisions most often revolved around trade issues to improve roads, dredge and widen Buffalo Bayou, and expand railroads crisscrossing the Houston area. Accordingly, street paving and improved drainage occurred first along the town's business corridors. These areas would, ultimately, have the first artificial lighting and the first horse-car transit. In the meantime, ward neighborhoods suffered with few improvements or amenities.⁴

The Civil War had a divided effect on Houston. Industrial activity, almost totally absent in the town's development, flourished as wartime items were produced. Yet, at the same time, the area's infrastructure deteriorated. The bayou needed dredging after years of neglect, streets remained in poor condition, the Market House was totally inadequate, and the police force lacked sufficient numbers to keep order. The town's inadequate revenue, which came from occupational license fees, merchandise tax on store goods, rental for market house stalls, and a small ad valorem tax on real estate made improvements slow. When taxpayers rejected plans to raise taxes, the municipality borrowed money by issuing bonds. Instead of buying long-term insurance-bearing bonds, they chose uninsured ones—marking the beginning of an insurmountable debt that the city faced for years to come.⁵

The composition of City Council during these years gives insight into why commercial improvements always took precedence over those that might benefit the neighborhoods or spaces shared by the general public. Business owners, cotton factors, and railroad management heavily represented wards Two, Three and Four. The First Ward's representatives were grocers and railroad laborers with a few industrialists. The newly-assembled Fifth Ward's aldermen were primarily railroad workers, mechanics and bricklayers.

African American males first voted in 1868, but they played no role in city government until the Reconstruction years when the Radical Republicans controlled local government and appointed them to the office of alderman in every ward except the Second. In 1872 when the aldermen were elected at-large, African American males represented Third, Fourth, and Fifth wards for one year. Although a new charter received approval in 1874, minorities found it difficult to gain enough votes for election due to the highly integrated make up of the wards, as shown in this table:⁶



By 1880 the city's mounting municipal debt discouraged anyone from running for mayor. A group of citizens drafted banker and railroad president, W. R. Baker, believing that he had the expertise to resolve the financial problems. Baker agreed to run if he could choose his slate of aldermen, all of whom were merchants or bankers. Unfortunately, Mayor Baker did not successfully reduce the debt and found railroad mechanic Daniel Smith opposing him in 1885. Surprisingly, Smith, a "short hair" candidate, defeated Baker. Perhaps even more surprising, Smith erased the debt and left office after two terms with a surplus in the city's treasury. Moreover, with the support of a City Council composed of fewer elites and a larger number of blue-collar laborers—namely, a painter, two railroad superintendents, a yardmaster, a saloon keeper, and a grocer—Smith addressed some neighborhood concerns. The shift of political power back into the wards resulted in an expansion of public works projects for all areas of the city. For example, City Council formulated a new lighting contract in which the locations of street lamps were divided equally among the wards rather than being placed primarily in the central business district, as would have likely been done by an administration dominated by the commercial-civic elites, that now included bankers, lawyers, and railroad entrepreneurs in addition to merchants.⁷

Aside from the political implications involved in the ward-based system of government, there were other defining characteristics of the wards. The First Ward, located near the bayou and produce row, was a workingman's community with many

residents engaged in service occupations. Bayou transportation dominated the Second Ward, offering jobs along the waterway, but it also had wealthy constituents living in the city's first upper-class neighborhood. The Third Ward developed into what was sometimes called "the city's silk stocking district," perhaps because it, unlike the other wards, remained relatively free of intrusive rail traffic. A mix of large and small businesses, churches, and public institutions made up the Fourth Ward. Industry, both heavy and light, prevailed in the Fifth Ward and gave employment to most of its residents. The Sixth Ward likely represented the city's most diverse in nationality with its residents comprised largely of European immigrants who contributed their skills to the building trade, as well as the railroads.⁸

Throughout the rest of the nineteenth century the ward-based government focused primarily on the city's business interests. The city continued to overlook ward neighborhoods as commercial interests received most of the tax-based improvements. As a result, city services were unevenly distributed. In 1882 a local newspaper reported that Houston amounted to "a huddle of houses arranged on unoccupied lines of black mud." Residents in the Fifth Ward went a step further and petitioned to secede, complaining that the ward was "mud-bound and without utilities." The city did not grant that request or a second one several years later. The ward residents did succeed, however, in having a bridge built over Buffalo Bayou to give them easier access to the heart of the city.⁹

The private sector was expected to provide those services that enhanced the residents' quality of life. Fortunately, certain groups recognized needs in the community. A Roman Catholic order from France, Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, established St. Joseph's Infirmary in 1887 to provide care for

the sick beyond that offered by the railroad hospital and a sporadically-operated charity hospital. Women's clubs agitated for years for a free public library to replace the private one to which only white males were admitted as paid members. In the absence of any parkland in the city, the congregations of Trinity Methodist Church and Antioch Baptist Church bought land in the Third Ward to establish Emancipation Park for the city's black residents.¹⁰

Samuel Brashear, a reform-oriented progressive who envisioned an expanded public sector, was elected mayor in 1898. The city made some progress in extending services to the wards during his administration. These included a more adequate sanitation system, a park system, greater emphasis on primary education, and appropriations for a public library. Brashear, however, was unsuccessful in promoting municipal ownership of utility companies. Water, gas, and public transit were provided, often inefficiently, by private companies with little regulation by local government. Brashear forced reform through building coalitions of individual ward leaders. Although this progressive element expanded public services, there was still no equality in a city as racially segregated as Houston. As neighborhoods became more homogeneous, African American areas were less likely to benefit from any of these reform efforts. The split continued between "the people" and "business interests."¹¹

In 1895 the business community formed the Business League, the primary vehicle through which local government acted. Its role soon expanded to coordinating major business groups in the city as well as political campaigns. In 1902 the Business League (later renamed Chamber of Commerce) successfully organized opposition to neighborhood oriented reform. Within three years the business elites had gained complete

Main Street looking toward Congress Avenue, 1866.



control of the political institutions. At this same time, the city faced monumental problems that demanded solutions. There was a severe shortfall in the budget, the city's sewer system was inadequate, its drinking water was frequently contaminated, surface drainage was problematical, teachers in the city schools were not being paid their salaries, and a new Market House was needed. In 1905, following the example of Galveston, its neighbor to the south, Houston residents voted 1262 to 815 to dissolve its ward-based government in favor of a commission form of government. Under this format, a mayor and four commissioners were elected at-large. For the first time, the mayor's post became a paid, full-time one. Each of the commissioners headed a department: Tax and Land, Fire and Police, Streets and Bridges, and Water and Utilities. This change enabled the city to run like a private corporation producing the greatest results with the least expenditures. Although this new government did not officially commit to any one sector, the commercial-civic elites still dominated and power was placed in the hands of a very small governing body. Minorities had little voting power with every official elected at-large. The quality of life, inevitably, diminished for the working class and racial minorities, even as the city's commercial development hit new performance levels.¹²

In conclusion, was the commission form of government better for the city than that based on ward representation? The answer would be "yes" if the progress made in the commercial sector is the determining factor. During the first seven years under the commission government, the city recorded \$2 million in improvements with much of it going to the development of the

Ship Channel. The answer would be less positive if looking at the quality of life experienced by many residents. As commercial interests continued to be the dominant force, issues dealing with public welfare remained in the background. As Jim Crow laws were enforced and as the economic divisions between segments of the public widened, the city became a less desirable place to live for many of its citizens. As Harold L. Platt points out, administrative reform and political repression as seen in Houston were typical of urban progressivism in the New South. Even more revealing, elected officials instituted a model for local government that would prevail and permanently identify Houston as a place where "business rules." Houstonians, nevertheless, continued to define themselves by the ward in which they lived regardless of the circumstances surrounding their lives.¹³

In 1987 a local newspaper reported: "Houston is a cosmopolitan city. The word 'ward' is stagnant, unsophisticated, and places areas in isolation. We should erase it from our vocabulary."¹⁴ But that has not happened nor is it likely to happen in the foreseeable future. Houston's wards are a vital part of our past and, as such, continue to play a visible—if unofficial—role in our city one hundred years after they were abolished. 

Betty Trapp Chapman is a historian who researches, writes, and lectures on Houston 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.

City Hall and Market House (1876-1901), shown in February 1895 after a twenty-two-inch snowfall.



Houston's First Ward—Producing Food from Farm to Counter

By Betty Trapp Chapman

In 1839 Houston was divided into four wards, each a geographic area which provided representation for the municipal government. The crossing at Congress Avenue and Main Street became the intersecting point for dividing the wards. The First Ward, located in the northwest quadrant of that intersection, bordered the strategic location where Buffalo Bayou and White Oak Bayou converged. By design, Main Street ended here, providing a logical docking place for boats for the next six decades. Naturally, the area around the docks fostered a warehouse district where goods were distributed for sale in mercantile establishments in town or for shipment down the bayou. As a result, Commerce Street, the artery closest to the docks, became known as “Produce Row” and a strong factor in the business development of the First Ward.¹



Commerce Street, 1890, the “heart of produce row.”

The First Ward area was also known for its natural resource of free-flowing springs. A number of artesian wells existed near the juncture of White Oak and Little White Oak bayous. In 1832 Thomas D. Beauchamp immigrated to Texas from Kentucky and settled in the bayou area. He reportedly traded with the Bidai Indians and camped with them at the local springs. In 1838 Beauchamp purchased from the Allen brothers a fifty-four-acre tract of land on the south bank of White Oak Bayou that included free flowing springs. There he established a community that he named Beauchampville. Since Buffalo Bayou was the main water supply for Houstonians and its water was frequently contaminated, Beauchamp began selling his pure spring water to Houstonians for seventy-five cents for each thirty-gallon barrel. Not only was it a cleaner water supply for the city, but it enabled Beauchamp to recover some of his investment. Although Beauchampville eventually faded, this area of his property became known as Beauchamp Springs, a location often noted on maps today.²

As Houston began to develop, most of the First Ward land outside the town's business district was laid out in farms. Some of the earliest farmers were German immigrants. Heinrich Guese, a typical German immigrant, bought two acres for fifty dollars in 1857. Guese and his wife, Hannah, built their house, a Gulf Coast cottage, on their property. (The Guese house, constructed on what later became Spring Street, is extant although it was moved to the Sixth Ward a few years ago to escape demolition at its original location.) By 1869 there were fewer than

twenty-five houses in the immediate twenty-block area containing the Guese home. Their neighbors were families by the name of Puls, Wichman, Kaertjie, Tiekoetter, and Barteles, many of whom had come from the same town in Germany as the Gueses. These farmers grew produce and sold it at the city's market, or at independently-run curb markets along Commerce Street. Heinrich Guese reportedly operated two stalls at the Market House and also worked as a gardener.³

Because of its proximity to Buffalo Bayou and the Market House, residents in First Ward became heavily involved in the community's commodity and produce business. Commerce Street was lined with storehouses for goods awaiting transport, first down the bayou and later on the railroads. A portion, however, found its way daily to the First Ward, where European immigrants established grocery stores. By the early twentieth century many of these immigrants were Italian. Names like Valenti, Mandola, Bonno, Costa, Montalbano, and Ciulla appeared on these stores, which were frequently attached to the family's house. The Bonno family had a wholesale grocery business on Commerce Street where they sold to larger grocery firms in the city. The Bonnos are credited with introducing the sale of coffee in one-pound bags, a practice still in place today.⁴

First Ward represented a typical working-man's community. Businesses other than grocery stores were boarding houses, saloons, barber shops, bakeries, meat and fish markets, and laundries. The 1866 Houston City Directory listed these occupations



Postcard: Lake, Highland Park, 1906.

All images from the George Fuermann “Texas and Houston” Collection, courtesy of Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries unless otherwise noted.

for residents: bridge builder, tailor, grocer, blacksmith, gardener, painter, carpenter, machinist, cotton broker, barber, drayman, and railroad engineer. In time, the neighborhood attracted the owners of a brick yard, ice-making plant, iron foundry, and carriage-making firm.⁵ In view of the limited means of transportation, people preferred living near their place of business



Postcard: Boathouse, Highland Park, 1908.

or employment. This made the close-in First Ward residences a popular choice for those engaged in commerce or employed in service-oriented jobs.

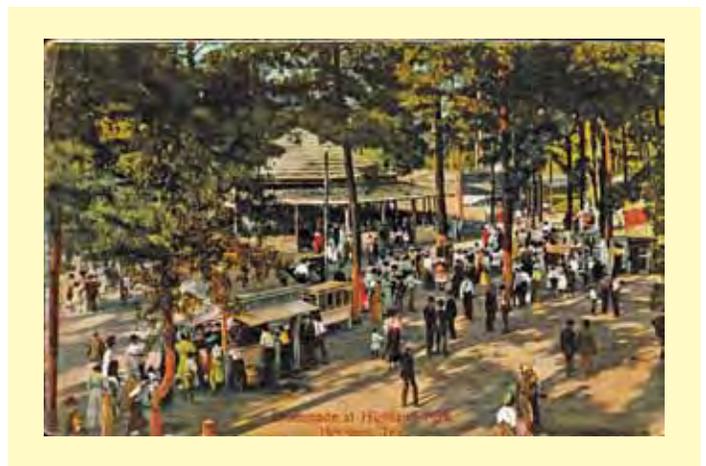
By 1890 the railroads, quickly becoming a major industry in Houston, emerged as one of the largest employers. Rail lines crossed the First Ward, giving rise to railroad shops, especially those of the Houston and Texas Central line and later the Southern Pacific. In 1887 a grand railroad depot was built on Washington Avenue (originally referred to as the road to Washington, Texas), which was near the southern-most boundary of the ward. Constructed at a cost of \$80,000, it was considered “the finest in the south.” The land near the site of the depot has a colorful history associated with it. Merchant Henry Henke’s store was located on Congress Avenue across from the Market House. When farmers arrived in Houston with wagons filled with their goods, they camped out on Henke’s property on “the road to Washington” taking them to the market square. Within a few years this area, known as Vinegar Hill, contained brickyards, iron works, slaughter houses, the city waterworks, and multiple boarding houses for the laborers employed in these industries. One block of Vinegar Hill, called Tin Can Alley, seldom appeared on maps, but nevertheless was frequently the scene of notorious activity.⁶ Tin Can Alley disappeared with the widening of Washington Avenue and the construction of I-45. Its former location now lies between the United States Post Office and the Aquarium entertainment complex.

Since Texas did not mandate public education until 1876, schooling was usually left to individuals prior to that time. When the City of Houston opened schools, the earliest one in First Ward was First Ward Colored School, a one-room frame building at Bingham and Colorado. The City Directory in 1880 did not list a school for the ward’s white children, but the directory indicated there was a Grammar School in Shepherd’s Building on Main Street. It is possible that white children may have attended this school. In 1890 Dow School on Washington served the First and Fourth North wards. Finally in 1893, Hawthorne school opened on Houston Avenue with seven teach-

ers and a principal. According to school census records, First Ward had the smallest number of white school-age children among the wards. In fact, First Ward was always the smallest ward in land area and population until the Sixth Ward was officially formed in 1896.⁷

Although First Ward had the least black residents of any ward, they established numerous churches in their community. The first was likely St. Paul’s African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, founded by former slaves in 1873, making it one of Houston’s oldest black congregations. Other African American congregations were Brown’s Chapel AME and Burton Grove Baptist. First Ward Methodist Episcopal Church was established in 1885 and renamed five years later for the denomination’s bishop in New Orleans: Willard Francis Mallalieu. The 1900 hurricane that unfurled some of its fury on Houston after devastating the island city of Galveston destroyed the church’s first building. Members of the congregation built a third structure in 1926, using materials from the dismantling of Camp Logan, a military camp in Houston during World War I. Mallalieu United Methodist Church’s building has since become a City of Houston Landmark. Other churches in First Ward at the turn of the twentieth century were German Baptist Church, Washington St. Methodist Episcopal Church South, and Houston Avenue Mission Christian Church.⁸

As in other city neighborhoods, the streetcar system was important in transporting people around town. In 1874 the original public transit system, incorporating cars pulled by mules, included a five-mile route on Washington that turned around at Glenwood Cemetery, which had been incorporated just a few years earlier. With the introduction of electric streetcars in 1892, a Houston Avenue line operated and ran as far as Crockett Street. By 1900 track had been laid on Dart, Hickory, and Shearn streets, and the tracks on Houston Avenue were discontinued until 1906 when the route returned to its original alignment and was renamed Woodland Heights after a new neighborhood just north of the original First Ward.⁹



Postcard: Sunday afternoon promenade, Highland Park, 1907.

Parks were a rarity in Houston at the turn of the twentieth century. Yet the First Ward received a grand one in 1903 when the streetcar company opened Highland Park, located on thirty acres of the Beauchamp Springs tract between Houston Avenue and the banks of Little White Oak Bayou. In addition to a restaurant and a dance pavilion, facilities included a dam built across Little White Oak Bayou to create an artificial lake large

enough to accommodate small boats. It was described as “the prettiest site for a park in the South.” To ensure that it was suitable for family outings, park officials posted this sign: “A strict watch will be kept to see that no dissolute characters get in.” Soon Highland Park attracted as many as five thousand visitors each weekend. It remained a popular destination for several years. By 1914, however, newer amusements in Houston began attracting families and the park, by then named San Jacinto Park, declined in population.¹⁰ Today a small portion of the old Highland Park remains as green space on the edge of Woodland Heights and bears the name Woodland Park.

The First Ward, like each of the other wards, elected two aldermen to represent them on City Council and served terms were for one year until 1880 when they became two-year terms. Thus, there was a rapid turnover of aldermen, especially in the First Ward. Records reveal that sixty-one men served as First Ward aldermen from 1839 to 1905, when the commission form of government replaced the ward-based system. A majority of these aldermen served only a single term. The longest-serving ones were W. J. Kohlhaup and Hugh Hamilton—each elected to four terms. Two First Ward aldermen advanced to the office

of mayor: Alexander McGowan in 1858 and I. C. Lord in 1875. During the Reconstruction period, two black aldermen represented First Ward: Jason Rice and Taylor Burke—among the first blacks to hold office in Houston.¹¹ The representatives from First Ward likely had less influence in making city-wide decisions since the commercial-civic elites held the reins of government for most of these years, and First Ward aldermen usually came from the working class.

Today First Ward is an eclectic blend of industrial factories, storage facilities, historic houses, new condominiums, artist studios, vacant lots, and small businesses in rehabbed buildings. It is truly a neighborhood in transition. Its inner-city location has driven older residents out and brought in commercial interests. That reality has dismayed longtime residents. They remember when the area was a community where neighbors knew one another and shared in both good and not-so-good times. Residents fear the loss of the neighborhood’s history as older buildings are demolished.

There are, nevertheless, bright spots in this time of dramatic change. Some older homes underwent renovations to maintain their charm and to reflect the area’s history. Avenue Community



1924 Jefferson Davis Hospital, now Elder Street Artists Lofts.

Photo courtesy of Betty T. Chapman.



First Ward house.

Photo courtesy of Betty T. Chapman.

Development Corporation, a non-profit organization committed to providing affordable housing, has redeveloped homes in the First Ward through its Move Home program in which donated houses are moved to vacant lots, rehabilitated, and sold to low-income families. The organization's first major project in First Ward was the revitalization of the old Jefferson Davis Hospital, which had been vacant for many years. The hospital opened in 1924 at the corner of Elder and Girard as a joint city-county project. Praised as one of the most modern hospitals in the nation when it was built, it was considered inadequate in just five years and was replaced in 1937 by a new Jeff Davis on Allen Parkway. The older building fell into disrepair and sat neglected for decades. Avenue CDC purchased the building and through a partnership with Artspace Projects Inc. turned it into affordable housing for artists named Elder Street Artists Lofts. The project houses thirty-four live/work units, many of them offering spectacular views of the downtown skyline.¹²

First Ward is becoming well known for its art spaces. Winter Street Studios, the largest group of artists in the Houston area, is part of the area's thriving arts community. Housed in a renovated furniture factory, Winter Street provides seventy-five studios for both established and emerging artists. Open houses and gallery shows are held frequently in order for the public to experience the art offerings.¹³

First Ward contains a one-mile railroad corridor with daily freight traffic moving through the neighborhood at all hours. The First Ward Civic Club worked with the City of Houston in addressing safety issues related to the rail traffic, as well as those of noise. As a result, the city closed several streets with rail crossings and established a "quiet zone" to improve the quality of life for First Ward residents.¹⁴

The downtown section of First Ward has remained relatively unchanged since the early twentieth century. Even some of the Produce Row warehouses that lined Commerce Street are still there, although they have different uses with different tenants. A popular restaurant, Spaghetti Warehouse, has been housed in one for many years. Other important historic buildings in the city's commercial development—Cotton Exchange, W. L. Foley Dry Goods, Magnolia Brewery Taproom, Kennedy Steam Bakery—are being adaptively reused. The Southern Pacific Building, headquarters for the rail line that employed many First Ward residents, is now Bayou Lofts, a residential high-rise, while the Hermann Estate Building has become Hermann Lofts. Two former banks on Main Street have also been converted to a new use: Union National Bank is now Hotel Icon and Houston National Bank is used as an Islamic Education Center.¹⁵

First Ward, once filled with small farms, is now an inner city neighborhood reflecting all aspects of life in a major city. Although the original ward has been divided by freeway construction and diminished by the loss of many historic buildings and institutions, it still holds the rich history of those pioneers who put down roots in the nineteenth century intent on doing their share in the development of Houston, the place they called home. In doing so, they bequeathed a significant legacy to those of us who are Houstonians in the twenty-first century. 

Betty Trapp Chapman is a historian who researches, writes, and lectures on Houston 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.

From Das Zweiter to El Segundo, A Brief History of Houston's Second Ward

By Thomas McWhorter

Why is it that the wards still persist in our collective consciousness? In the beginning, simple arbitrary boundary lines divided the wards. These sometimes split neighborhoods in half and lacked the finesse of modern day city council districts that have been redrawn and manipulated countless times to reflect socioeconomic, racial, and political concentrations. Second Ward was located east of Main Street, north of Congress Avenue, and south of Buffalo Bayou and extended to the eastern city limit. By 1900, the eastern limit of the Second Ward stood at a point roughly one and one half miles east from the city center, or to the approximate location of modern day York Street. The area was home to the extremely wealthy and extremely poor, bartenders and brewers, renters and ranchers, priests and politicians.¹ The residents lived in a variety of situations ranging from traditional neighborhoods to suburban ranches. The area boasted one of Houston's first churches, several early park and recreational areas, and the city's first suburb.

One of the areas earliest neighborhoods was Frost Town, located in a dramatic bend of Buffalo Bayou about one half of a mile northeast of Main Street. Samuel Frost, fresh from service in the Texas Revolution in 1836, originally purchased the fifteen-acre site from the Allen brothers for \$1,500. Frost set up a homestead and blacksmith shop on his land, but died shortly after of cholera. His brother Jonathan Frost purchased the land from the estate and subdivided it into ninety-six residential lots that became Houston's first suburb.²

Much of the early land ownership in the neighborhood appears to have been speculative. An estimated seventy percent of the Frost Town lots had been sold by 1840, but only twenty-five buildings are shown on the 1869 W. E. Wood map. Some of the early property owners of Frost Town lots included Michael DeChaumes, a French-born architect responsible for one of the early Harris County courthouses; Martin Floeck, a brewer; and William Settegast, a wealthy real estate investor who built a large house on Gabel Street.³

Quality Hill, another early neighborhood that stood in the Harris County Courthouse area, appears to have straddled Second and Third Wards and became home to some of Houston's wealthiest residents. According to the 1860 Harris County census, thirteen heads of household lived in Quality Hill with an estimated personal wealth of more than \$10,000. This figure starkly contrasts with the average Second Ward resident, who reported a total net worth of less than two hundred dollars at that time.⁴

One of these residents was William J. Hutchins, a wealthy merchant from New York and one-time mayor of Houston. In conjunction with his mercantile business, he operated a private bank—a common practice with several Houston merchants at the time. In 1860, his estimated personal assets and real estate were valued at \$700,000.⁵



The Nichols Rice Cherry House, also known as William Marsh Rice House, was formerly located on Congress Avenue across from Courthouse Square. It was moved to 608 Fargo Street in Montrose before being relocated to Sam Houston Park and restored by the Harris County Heritage Society.

Photo by Harry L. Starnes from Historic American Buildings Survey.

William Marsh Rice, a Massachusetts-born merchant and former Second Ward alderman, amassed great wealth investing in the area's first railroad. Rice's home was located on the north side of Congress Avenue across from Courthouse Square. Years later, the Harris County Heritage Society moved it to Sam Houston Park and restored it. The 1860 census estimated Rice's combined personal wealth and real estate at \$750,000. The endowment left by his estate established Rice University.⁶

Not all of Second Ward's well-to-do residents lived in Quality Hill. Robert Lockart was a Pennsylvania-born merchant who owned and operated a steam grist mill on San Jacinto and Franklin Streets. He married the sister of Texas governor Francis R. Lubbock who owned a large tract of land located next door to Lockart's home and which became Lubbock's Grove.



Charles Longcope House formerly located at 102 Chenevert Street in Quality Hill vicinity of Second Ward.

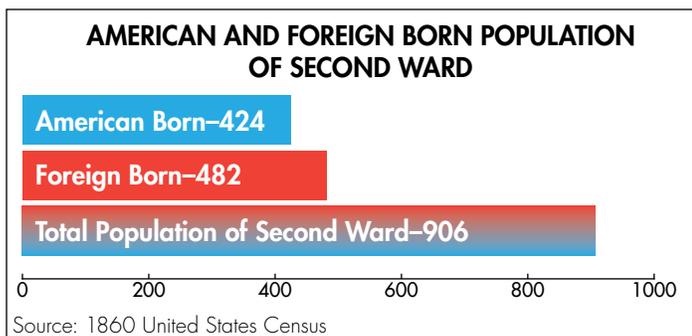
Photo from Historic American Buildings Survey.

In 1860, Lockart had an estimated wealth of \$105,000. His fine double-galleried frame house operated more like a rural plantation than the in-town mansions of Quality Hill. It was set amidst thirty-eight acres on Commerce Street about one mile east of the courthouse near the modern day site of Olshan's lumber yard. Lubbocks's Grove, located immediately to the west at Live Oak and Commerce Street, later became one of Houston's earliest privately owned parks, which was open to the public.⁷

Further to the east lived John Thomas Brady, a Maryland native who came to Houston before the Civil War. Brady was an attorney, real estate investor, Texas legislator, part owner of a railroad, and personally responsible for early improvements to the Houston Ship Channel. Brady's Island located near the Turning Basin bears his name. Brady developed the Magnolia Park neighborhood further east of Second Ward in the 1890s. He married Lenny Sherman, the daughter of General Sidney Sherman, one of the Commanders of the Texian Army at the Battle of San Jacinto. The couple lived in an impressive Greek revival home near the modern day intersection of Milby and Harrisburg. Their son, Sidney Sherman Brady, treasurer of the Cortlandt Place Improvement Company and owner of a brick yard on the banks of Buffalo Bayou, lived across the street in a large brick home at 3805 Wilmer Street.⁸ After the younger

Brady's death, the family land was subdivided as Brady Homes, which featured streets named for family members such as Estelle, Wilmer, Sidney, Sherman, and Garrow.

The church served as an important early influence on the Second Ward. In 1841, Catholic bishop John Odin came to Houston to establish Houston's first Catholic parish, St. Vincent's Catholic Church. Completed in the fall of 1842 at the southwest corner of Caroline and Franklin Streets, the church featured a rectory and a parochial school. It functioned as the hub of Catholicism in Houston until the dedication of the newer, larger Annunciation Church in 1871. After that point, St. Vincent's became a predominantly German-Catholic congregation, while Annunciation Church absorbed the original congregation. The associated St. Vincent's Cemetery was dedicated in 1852 at 2405 Navigation Boulevard.⁹

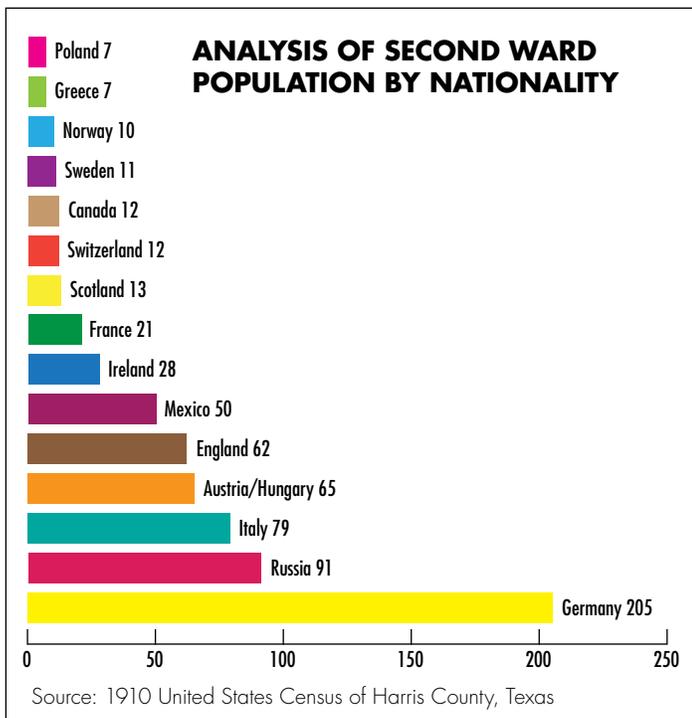


St. Vincent's Cemetery is the final resting place for many of the Second Ward's early prominent residents.

Photo by Thomas McWhorter.

The most notable of those interred in St. Vincent's cemetery is Richard "Dick" Dowling. Dowling, a native of Tuam County, Ireland, rose to celebrity status across the South as the "hero of the Battle of Sabine Pass." He is credited with turning back a flotilla of Federal gunboats attempting to travel up the Sabine River for a ground invasion of southeastern Texas during the Civil War. Dowling was also well known for his "Bank of Bacchus Saloon" located at the corner of Main Street and Congress, which advertised Dowling as "President, Cashier, and Dealer in the following exchanges: Brandy, Rum, Whiskey, Champagne, Claret, and Port." Dowling lived in Second Ward near the present day intersection of Live Oak and Commerce Streets, only five blocks from his final resting place.¹⁰ The September 24, 1867, *Houston Tri-Weekly Telegraph* reported Dowling died at age twenty-nine during a yellow fever epidemic in the city.

In 1860, the year before the start of the American Civil War, Houston had a population of 4,845. Of that total, Second Ward had 906 persons; 482, or fifty-three percent, were foreign-born from one of eighteen different countries. People coming from the fifteen different kingdoms of Germany, which existed prior to Germany's unification in 1871, represented the single largest nationality. This group made up thirty percent of the total population of Second Ward; however, that figure does not take into account the children of these families born in Texas to German parents. Other countries represented included Ireland, Poland, France, Austria, Nassau, England, Switzerland, Canada, Mexico, Italy, Scotland, Cuba, Belgium, Hungary, and Algeria.¹¹ The Germans settled in virtually every area of Houston, but the Second Ward became an unofficial hub of German-American culture and social life during the nineteenth century.



One of the German families who settled in the Second Ward was that of Joe Merkel. In 1860, Merkel and his wife, Caroline, purchased a 101-acre ranch on Buffalo Bayou, about one and one half miles east of the Harris County Courthouse. It became known as Merkel's Gove, one of the early private parks that ex-



An 1870's studio portrait of Joseph Merkel and his family.
Photo courtesy of Ann Depenbrock.

isted before the City of Houston Parks System. There the Merkel family built a house, and Joe Merkel raised cattle for his butcher business in the downtown City Market. Merkel was one of many Germans living in the Second Ward who were butchers by trade and, eventually, concentrated along a stretch of road known as Butcher's Row, now Drennan Street.¹²

During the Civil War, Joe Merkel joined a local militia, the Houston Guards, representing Houston's German-American community. From these members, Houston Schuetzenverein formed in 1869 and began meeting at Merkel's Grove. A *schuetzen verein*, which translates to "rifle" or "protection" club, typically featured grounds with shooting galleries with short stair-step shaped ramps from which the marksmen perched and took aim from 150 or 200 yards. Traditionally, the top ranked *Schuetzenkoenig*, literally King Shooter, purchased beer for all of the other members of the club. An 1889 lease agreement between Merkel and the Schuetzenverein specified that the club could utilize Merkel's Grove, which featured a ten-pin alley, dance pavilion, and rifle range. One account of the twenty-second anniversary festivities for the Houston Schuetzenverein described a full day of activities there that began with a prize target shoot, followed by children's games and prizes, a dance contest for the best lady and gentleman dancers, and ten pin rolling for ladies. The evening finished with a concert at 8:00 p.m. followed by a Grand Ball and illumination.¹³

Another German social organization with ties to the Second Ward was the Volksfest Association. Although it organized in June 1860, its annual parade and festival were delayed until 1869 as a result of the Civil War and Reconstruction. In the early years, the association held the festival at Lubbock's Grove, but in 1887, Volksfest purchased its own land for a park abutting the western edge of Merkel's Grove. The thirty-four-and-a-half-acre park was purchased from George Hermann and J. J. Settegast. In an early example of Hermann's philanthropy, five percent of the sales price was donated to the Volksfest Association.¹⁴

An article in the February 23, 1890, *Galveston Daily News* described improvements to Volksfest Park and provides insight into what the park may have looked like more than 120 years ago. Those improvements included a large stage complete with sceneries and targets, bridge repairs, construction of a base-



Modern view of a remnant of Volksfest Park, North York Street at Buffalo Bayou.

Photo by Thomas McWhorter.

ball field, and an area for cultivating indigenous Texas flowers. The Volkfest festival became so popular that the Bayou Street Railway Company established a mule car line to the location in 1889. This was mutually beneficial to neighboring Merkel's Grove, which had opened up its doors to the general public several years earlier.¹⁵

The last German social and cultural group to take root in the Second Ward was the Houston Saengerbund, organized in 1883. *Saengerbunds* were traditional singing clubs popular in areas where Germans settled outside of their homeland. In 1913, the organization purchased the former William Hamblen house at 315 Milby Street in the Second Ward. Later, it bought a large tract of land in the Jackson Hill area that operated for years as Bavarian Gardens and, ultimately, Garden in the Heights, before being sold in 2004.¹⁶ The Houston Saengerbund is now 127 years old and still meets regularly.

In 1917 and 1918, the U.S. government passed the Espionage Act which aimed to prohibit acts or the conveyance of information that could be detrimental to the war effort or promote the success of the enemy. The law's broad interpretation had a chilling effect on the local German population. The anti-German hysteria became so pronounced that, in 1918, the city changed the name of Second Ward's major thoroughfare, German Street, to Canal Street.¹⁷ This one action, however, could not change the German heritage that marked the Second Ward. The area's remaining street names represent a who's who of German Americans living in Houston during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries like Bering, Engelke, Fox, Freund, Rottman, Lemke, Schroeder, Hagerman, and Merkel.

With the dawn of the new century, changes were afoot in Second Ward. The old families who had resided in the neighborhood for decades on large suburban tracts began to sell off their properties. The availability of this land came just as industry began to get a foothold in the East End. Among the first large, semi-urban tracts to be broken up was Merkel's Grove. Joe Merkel died in 1895, and his heirs divided and subdivided the property into Merkel's First, Second, and Third residential additions. A lawsuit forced the Volksfest Association to sell their property in 1894. In 1897, the Houston Packing Company bought the former Volksfest Park and established one of the first large industrial plants, which came to define the East End. The Robert Lockart house and acreage was subdivided for a new

residential addition at the turn of the century. Lubbock's Grove fell to progress in 1902, when the elderly Francis Lubbock subdivided the remainder of his eleven-acre tract on Commerce Street that was then inhabited by his brother, T. W. Lubbock, for a new residential neighborhood of the same name.¹⁸

In addition to the new residential neighborhoods and large industrial operations on the ward's east side, the neighborhoods closer to downtown also became denser and more commercial. By the turn of the century, this part of the Second Ward had experienced a dramatic transformation. The neighborhoods located north and east of the Harris County Courthouse were ultimately transformed into the Warehouse District. The downtown portion of Second Ward became densely populated with new arrivals to Houston, many of whom appear to have been packed into the boarding houses, which often held more than fifteen persons, according to the 1910 census.¹⁹

In 1910, the federal census for Harris County continued to list the population of Houston by ward even though that political division was officially defunct. The enumeration districts for Second Ward simply state: ("Old Ward Number 2"). In 1910, Houston ranked sixty-eighth in the United States with a population of 78,800 people. The population of Second Ward was comprised of 6,814 American-born inhabitants, and 707 residents who claimed foreign birth. At 9.4 percent, this total was down considerably from the fifty-three percent reported in 1860.

Although there were fewer foreign-born residents in Second Ward, they represented a wider spectrum of birth countries compared to the 1860 census data. In 1910, German-born inhabitants still represented the largest foreign nationality in the neighborhood, but their numbers were greatly diluted. Many of the first wave of German settlers had died by 1910, although



Our Lady of Guadalupe was the first church to offer services in Spanish.

Photo by Thomas McWhorter.

the second and third generations of American-born descendants continued to live in the area. The second largest foreign-born population group came from Russia, many of whom were Jewish. A significant concentration of Russian immigrants lived in an area centered between Crawford and St. Emanuel Streets, and between Congress Avenue and Commerce Street. In the early 1870s, the third home for Temple Beth Israel was constructed in this area at the corner of Franklin and Crawford Streets just north of modern-day Minute Maid Park.²⁰

In the 1910 census, fifty people in Second Ward claimed Mexico as their birthplace, but this did not take into account those born in the U.S. to Mexican parents. Some estimates place the overall Mexican-American population in Houston in 1910 at roughly 2,000. In response to the Second Ward's growing Hispanic population, the Roman Catholic Diocese established Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, the city's first church to offer services in Spanish. The church was established in 1911 next to St. Vincent's Cemetery, where it continues to serve the neighborhood's Hispanic population.²¹

The Second Ward became a hub of Mexican American social life. The first acknowledged Mexican-American social group to emerge from the neighborhood was the "El Campo Laurel" chapter of the Woodmen of the World. Established in 1908, the benevolent aid society was the first for Mexican Americans in Houston and drew members from all over the city. This was an important step for Mexican Americans since they did not have an established social network in Houston as found in cities like San Antonio, Laredo, and El Paso. El Campo Laurel existed for many years and became the parent organization for the many Mexican social and benevolent aid groups to form here in the decades to follow.²² Much as Second Ward's German Americans sought to celebrate and share their culture in their newly adopted home in the nineteenth century, El Campo Laurel strived to keep their Mexican culture alive and share it in the early twentieth century.



Colorful mural on the outside wall of the Ripley House building.
Photo by Thomas McWhorter.

The group organized a "Diez y Seis" parade in 1917, one of the earliest public exhibitions of Mexican culture of its kind in Houston. The parade marked the anniversary of the Mexican revolution for independence from Spain, which began on September 16, 1810. The celebration included a downtown parade that lives on today as one of the Fiestas Patrias parades.²³

During the first half of the twentieth century, Second Ward was unofficially segregated between whites and Hispanics. The latter were confined to a small area east to Nagel Street in a former Frost Town neighborhood that became known as "El Alacran." According to Felix Fraga, who is a former Houston city councilman, pioneer affiliate and stalwart advocate of Houston's Ripley House/Neighborhood Centers Inc., and lifelong Second Ward resident, Nagel Street marked the de facto boundary line between Second Ward's long-established white community and the Hispanic and African American areas located closer to downtown.²⁴

One of the most enduring Second Ward institutions to provide services to the area was the Rusk Settlement, which operated out of the former William Settegast House in Frost Town. Twelve well-educated, influential women formed the settlement association in 1907 with Mrs. James A. Baker as their first president. The Rusk Settlement was part of a national trend of settlement associations that sought to provide equal opportunities for healthful and moral living conditions to all people, regardless of social standing. The Rusk Settlement provided daycare and kindergarten for the neighborhood children and took on wider social issues like eradicating vice by attempting to close a nearby, notorious red light district. The successor to the Rusk Settlement, Ripley House, continues to provide services to the area's underserved population.²⁵

World War II was a turning point for Second Ward as many Mexican Americans volunteered or were drafted. After the war, the first Mexican Americans crossed the Nagel Street dividing line between the poorer Mexican section and the older established white section of the neighborhood. This trend continued throughout the late 1940s, and by the 1960s, the area was predominantly Hispanic.²⁶

The Second Ward had a population of 12,447 people in 2000, and projections estimated 14,778 residents in 2008. Of the 2000 census totals, sixty-nine percent claimed Hispanic background although birth country was no longer recorded. The area continues to change and has become a testing ground for urban renewal with the conversion of former Brownfield sites to new parks, schools, a hike and bike trail created from an abandoned railroad bed, and another trail carved from the overgrown banks of Buffalo Bayou. The wards officially disappeared more than one century ago, but the rich cultural experience and identity of Second Ward endures in the shadows of downtown Houston. 

Thomas McWhorter is a native Houstonian and fifth-generation Harris County resident. He has had a lifelong passion for history, which began at age nine with his membership in the Houston Archaeological Society. His professional background is in archaeology and historic preservation where he has worked in both the public and private sectors. He is currently a senior historic planner in the City of Houston's Office of Historic Preservation.

ARCADIA PUBLISHING BOOKS ON HOUSTON

Since its establishment in 1993, Arcadia Publishing has created a new outlet for local history. With a list of over 6,000 titles, it has books on regions throughout the nation. This list contains numerous books by local authors on a variety of topics on the history of our region. They follow the standard Arcadia format: paperback books of approximately 125 pages in length filled with black and white photographs introduced by a short essay on the topic covered and then held together with extended captions. With a price of about \$22, these books are affordable and they bring great pleasure to people who love local history and old photographs. They allow us to look at our past, examining the details of how people dressed and where they lived, and how they worked and played. Because many of the photos are from personal collections, there is at times a sense that the people in them are looking back at us, trying to understand how the world of their grandchildren and great grandchildren has changed from their reality.

The books generally reflect an author's special interest in a place or time or event. They are written by people with a passion for the past, and this passion shows. The list of some of the titles of the books on the Houston-Galveston area now available or soon to be available on Houston reflects the variety of interests:

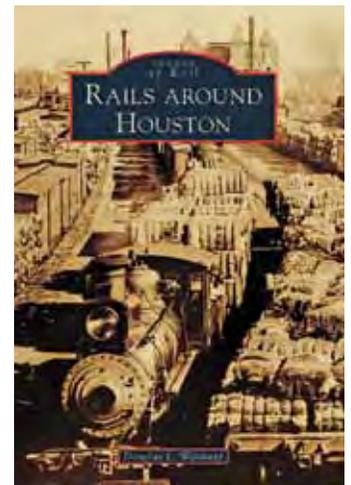
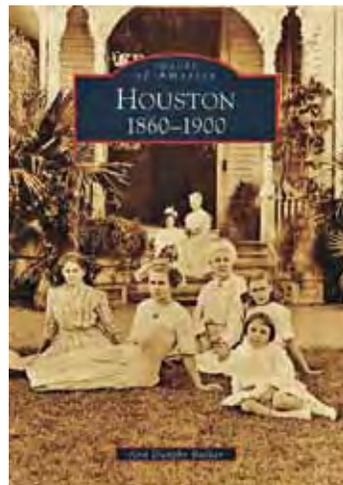
Sallie Gordon and Penny Jones, *Houston's Courtland Place*; Ann Dunphy Becker, *Houston, 1860-1900*; Story Jones Sloane III, *Houston in the 1920s and 1930s*; Anne Sloan and the Houston Heights Association, *Houston Heights*; Douglas L. Weiskopf, *Rails Around Houston*; Mike Vance, *Houston's Sporting Life*; Denise Alexander, *Galveston's Historic Downtown and Strand District*; Brian M. Davis, *Lost Galveston*; Kurt D. Voss, *Galveston's The Elissa*; Daniel E. Monsanto, *Houston*; and Lasker Meyer, *Foley's*.

Many of the authors have a long-time interest in local history, and the books are uniformly interesting.

Each retrieves its own piece of the past using a combination of text and photos that varies across the books. I prefer the format used in the Gordon and Jones volume on Courtland Place and Voss's book on "The Elissa." Both include longer essays and captions. This results in fewer, but larger photos, which are more pleasing to my aging eyes. Both Sloane and Davis had extraordinary collections of photographs on which to draw, and the quality of these photos is evident even in the small space allotted to each one. Sloane has supported our *Houston History* magazine by allowing us to use some of his photographs, which blow up into stunning panoramas of historic Houston that adorn walls around the city. As I turned the pages of his book, I could not help but think of how several of these 3" by 4" duplications would look in a 3' by 4' version hanging in my study.

The photographic essay format has limitations when the author covers the general history of the city throughout a long era. Becker solves this problem in her book on Houston from 1860-1900 by covering several specific topics in detail and also by including an arresting array of previously unseen photos. This illustrates one of the great by-products of the writing of these books—the addition of historical photographs from personal collections to the existing "public" stock of images of the past. The more narrowly focused books—for example Weiskopf's history of railroads around Houston—will prove useful in filling in gaps in the historiography of our region. The engaging portrait of the evolution of the Houston Heights neighborhood provided in Anne Sloan's book made me wish I had a collection of similar histories of all of the neighborhoods in our region.

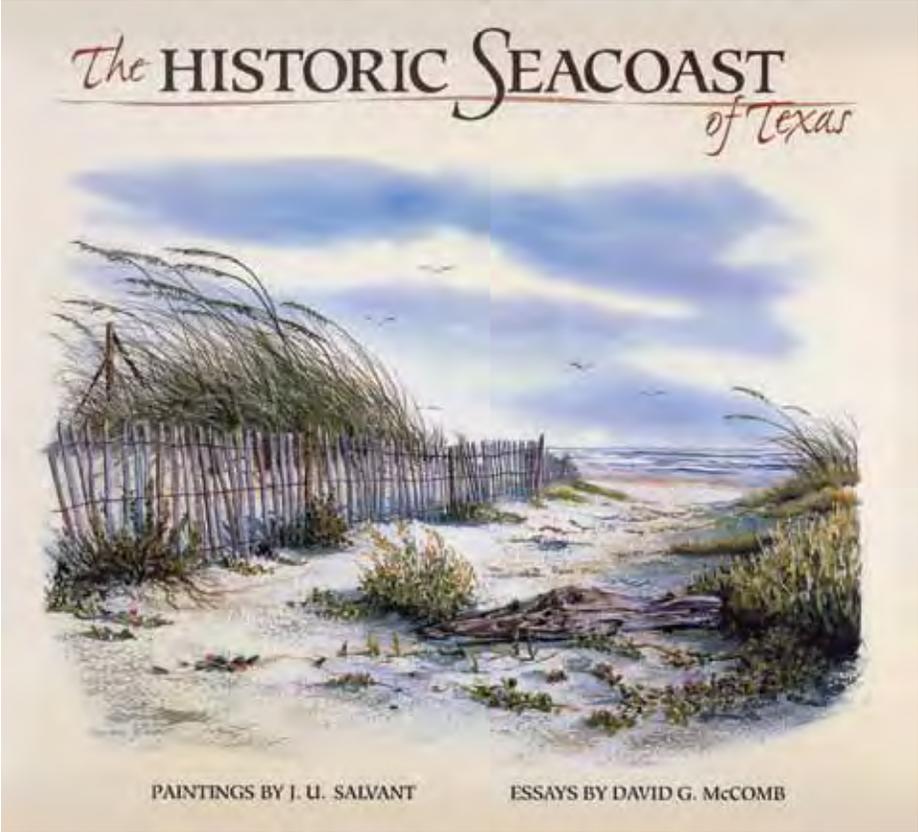
If any of the titles listed above are of interest to you, visit Arcadia's web site (www.arcadiapublishing.com) to place an order. Be warned. These books are addictive. Once you start, you might end up buying them all. Indeed, you might even get the bug and decide to put one together yourself.



Book Reviews *continued*

The Historic Seacoast of Texas,
 Paintings by J. U. Salvant,
 Essays by David G. McComb

This book first published by the University of Texas Press in 1999 recently came to my attention. It is a beautiful book. The paintings are sharp and pretty, as is the prose. Its portraits of various beaches—in words as well as paintings—make great reading at the beach or at home waiting to go to the beach. It would be a great Christmas gift for any beach lover. (This would be, of course, in addition to a gift subscription to *Houston History*.)



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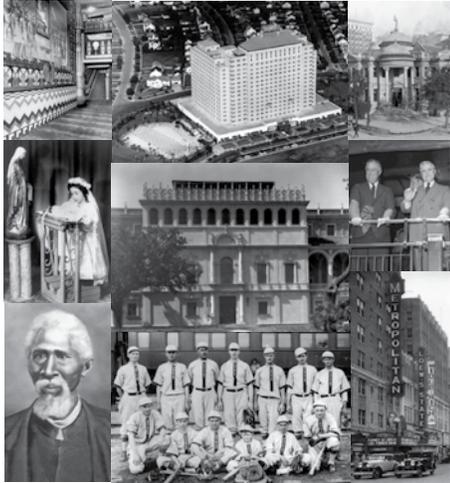
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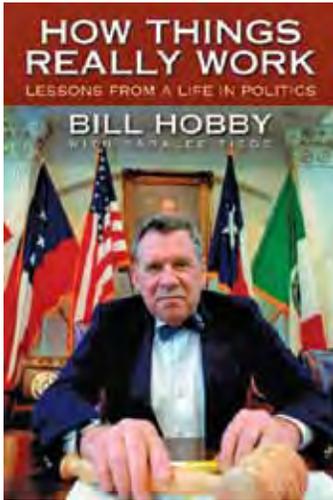
"In Search of Houston's History," copyright 2008 Friends of the Texas Room



News Updates & Books *by Barbara Eaves*

BOOK NOTES

Bill Hobby, Bob Mosbacher, and George Mitchell – three history-making leaders from Houston – are the subjects of books coming out of Texas A&M University Press this fall. All are available at River Oaks and Brazos bookstores.

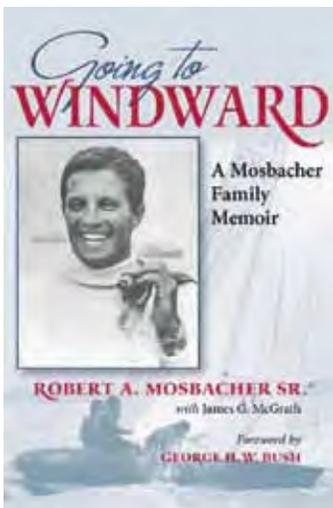


How Things Really Work: Lessons from a Life in Politics, By Bill Hobby with Saralee Tiede, \$29.95.

The son of a Texas governor and the first commanding officer of the Women's Army Corps, William P. Hobby, Jr. spent most of his life in and around government – including a record eighteen years as Texas lieutenant governor. When he was not in Austin, he did not stray far from politics – sitting in the publisher's chair at the *Houston Post*. Hobby's

time in Austin (1973-1991) coincided with Texas's transition from a state economy built on oil and agriculture to one that diversified into technology and health care. Through it all, he made education a priority. In the aptly titled *How Things Really Work*, he states what state government should and should not do. He talks about everything from partisan politics to efforts to rewrite the Texas Constitution to government wiretaps and the war on drugs. He talks about people. He enjoyed the nuts and bolts of the legislative process. "To help people, government has to work," he says. "Make the system work."

"No one knows more about Texas politics than Bill Hobby, and few people tell better stories," commented historian H. W. Brands. Well said.



Going to Windward: A Mosbacher Family Memoir, By Robert A. Mosbacher, Sr., with James G. McGrath, Foreword by George H. W. Bush, \$30.00.

This is the story of Robert M. Mosbacher, Sr., the grandson of Austrian immigrants, the son of a hard-working trader on the New York Curb Exchange (later AMEX) who pulled out of the market just before the crash of 1929, and the founder of one of the country's largest private equity en-

ergy companies, Mosbacher Energy. In 1948, Emil "Pop" Mosbacher sent young Robert to Texas for a month or two with the goal of finding out about the oil business. He discovered "very very good" reserves in Brazoria County in the 1950s. Making goals and achieving them by adhering (usually) to "Pop's" lessons in life is the underlying theme of this book. A goal might be to win an amateur sailing trophy—Bob Mosbacher won hundreds over fifty years. A goal might be to marry the woman he loved – he and the "first love of his life," Jane Pennybacker, eloped at the tender age of nineteen. Another might be to see the right man in public office – he was chief fund-raiser for five Republican presidential campaigns. Another might be to open the doors of trade for the Western Hemisphere – as secretary of commerce under George Herbert Walker Bush in the 1970s, Bob Mosbacher successfully promoted the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This is the story of a life well spent; a story that charms and instructs. Bob Mosbacher died of pancreatic cancer at M.D. Anderson Hospital on January 25, 2010. He was 82.



George P. Mitchell and the Idea of Sustainability, By Jurgen Schmandt, \$32.00.

The idea of using the universe in a way that leaves it the same (or better) for the next generation – sustainability – is one that George Mitchell has adopted with the same intelligence and energy that transformed him from a child of poor immigrants to a billionaire in the oil and gas business. Jurgen Schmandt, who worked with Mitchell for years, explains and traces the concept of sustainability, then chronicles Mitchell's commitment to the idea in projects in Texas and in the nation's capital. The book includes a chapter on the planning and ultimate success of The Woodlands. Mitchell advances his belief that humankind could create "a balance between economic and ecological well-being" by organizing and hosting conferences, awarding prizes, supporting scholars and scientists, and funding research and publications – all of which helps create a legacy for a better world.

NEWS

Houston's Living History

Seeing re-enactors present a site the way it was, then visiting that site and seeing it as it is today – this is Ann Becker's philosophy for her *Houston's Living History* segments appearing randomly on PBS's digital channel 8.2 (Comcast channel 323) as part of the *Positively Houston* series. Previous clips include the Texas Army's 1836 visit to The Old Place (in Sam Houston

Park); a picnic at the McKee Street Bridge; a 1912 visit to then brand new Link Mansion (now the administration building for St. Thomas University on Montrose); the opening of the 1910 Harris County Courthouse (now under restoration downtown); and more. Visit www.houstonpbs.org for current schedule.



Postcards Wins Two Major Awards

Houston Arts & Media was the production partner for *Postcards from Texas*, a weekly television series focusing on the history of Houston and surrounding counties. *Postcards* won the 2009 Texas Historical Commission's Award of Excellence in Media Achievement. The plaque was presented to producer Mike Vance at THC's annual meeting in Houston last

April. *Postcards* also won the Texas Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, 2009-2010 Media Award which goes to one winner statewide.

EVENTS

The Legacy of San Jacinto:

2011 Battle of San Jacinto Symposium

The 11th annual Battle of San Jacinto Symposium will be on Saturday, April 16, 2011, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at the Hilton University of Houston Hotel & Conference Center. The theme, *The Legacy of San Jacinto*, recognizes the 175th anniversary of the battle. Four speakers will discuss the battle's influence—and that of the Texas Revolution—on the United States, Mexico, Texas, and on culture through its depiction in art.

Daniel Walker Howe, winner of the 2008 Pulitzer Prize in history for his book, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848*, is professor of American history emeritus at Oxford University and professor of history emeritus at UCLA. Howe will explore the impact of the battle on the U.S. Romeo Ricardo Flores Caballero, of Monterrey, Mexico, is a noted Mexican authority on the American-Mexican frontier, director of the State Archives of Nuevo León in Monterrey, Mexico, a former member of the Mexican Congress, and former consul general of Mexico in Los Angeles. Flores Caballero will discuss the battle's legacy on Mexico. Ty Cashion, professor of history at Sam Houston State University, is an award-winning author and an inductee of the Texas Institute of Letters. He is working on a book-length study challenging the "Myth of Texeptionalism," which deals with the question of Texan uniqueness. Cashion will address the battle as it relates to Texas. Sam DeShong Ratcliffe is head of the Bywaters Special Collections at the Hamon Arts Library at Southern Methodist University. He is curator of art and teacher of history and literature of Texas and the American West. Ratcliff will speak on the cultural legacy of the battle through its depiction in art. James E. Crisp, associate professor of history, North Carolina State University, will serve as the moderator.

The Symposium is open to the public for a \$55 charge that includes lunch, parking, exhibits, book dealers, and opportunities to visit with amateur and professional Texas historians. For school teachers, the Symposium offers Certified Professional Education (CPE) credits. The Symposium's sponsor, the San Jacinto Battleground Association, also known as the Friends of the San Jacinto Battleground, is a Section 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. For additional information, call (713) 237-8997 or visit www.friendsofsanjacinto.org.

TEXAS 175TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS CALENDAR

April 21, 2011, marks the 175th year since Texas won its independence at the Battle of San Jacinto, which calls for celebration by Texas historical groups everywhere. The Texas Parks & Wildlife Department's Scott McMahon, a ranger at the revered Washington-on-the-Brazos site, has assembled this calendar which lists each event's date, city, and contact information the first time it appears. It was a work in progress at press time. Probably still is!

DECEMBER 2010

- 3-5** Battle of Bexar – San Antonio, *San Antonio Living History Association (SALHA)*, www.sanantoniolivinghistory.org/.
- 11** Battle of Bexar Candlelight Tour – San Antonio, *The Alamo*, Sheri Driscoll, SDriscoll@thealamo.org, www.thealamo.org/.

FEBRUARY 2011

- 25** The Siege of the Alamo Candlelight Tour – San Antonio, *The Alamo*, Sheri Driscoll.
- 25-27** Revolution Comes to Washington/Texas Independence Day Celebration – Washington-on-the-Brazos, *Texas Parks & Wildlife Department*, Scott McMahon, scott.mcmahon@tpwd.state.tx.us, www.tpwd.state.tx.us/washingtononthebrazos.
- 25-27** Glory at the Alamo – San Antonio, *SALHA*.

MARCH 2011

- 4-6** First Saturday – San Antonio, *The Alamo*, Sheri Driscoll.
- 4-6** Remember the Alamo – San Antonio, *SALHA*.
- 5-6** Texas Independence Day Celebration – Conroe, *Heritage Park*, 936-788-5800.
- 25-27** Fannin Massacre – Goliad, *Crossroads of Texas Living History Association (COTLHA)*, David Vickers, djvickers@hotmail.com, www.cotlha.com/.

APRIL 2011

- 8-10** Runaway Scrape – Richmond, *George Ranch*, J.R. Thomas, jrthomas@georgeranch.org, www.georgeranch.org/.



Texian Army re-enactors at the San Jacinto Battleground.

Photo courtesy of San Jacinto Museum of History.

- 16 San Jacinto Day Festival and Battle Reenactment – La Porte, *San Jacinto Battleground*, www.sanjacinto-museum.org/. Re-enactors contact Jerry Tubbs, mail@sanjacintovolunteers.org.
- 16 San Jacinto Symposium, Hilton University of Houston Hotel and Conference Center, www.friendsofsanjacinto.org, 713-237-8997.
- 21 Lone Star Monument & Historical Flag Park grand opening – Conroe, www.texasflagpark.org, 936-520-8941.
- 21 Battle of San Jacinto Commemorative Ceremony – La Porte, San Jacinto Monument, *San Jacinto Historical Advisory Board*, Nancy Burch, Nburch2@juno.com.

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ENDNOTES

GUARDIANS AGAINST CHANGE

- 1 *Galveston Daily News*, November 28, 1920; *Houston Chronicle* and *Houston Post* of the same date.
- 2 *Houston Post*, November 22, 27, 1920.
- 3 *Houston Chronicle*, March 22, 1925.
- 4 See Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930*, Urban Life in America Series (New York, 1967), 18-23 for a discussion of Klan philosophy.
- 5 *Colonel Mayfield's Weekly*, March 17, 1923, in Linda Elaine Kilgore, "The Ku Klux Klan and the Press in Texas, 1920-1927" (unpublished master's thesis, University of Texas, 1964), 183.
- 6 Charles C. Alexander, "Invisible Empire in the Southwest: The Ku Klux Klan in Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Arkansas, 1920-1930" (unpublished dissertation, University of Texas, 1962), 8.
- 7 *Galveston Daily News*, October 9, 1920.
- 8 *Houston Chronicle*, December 9, 1921; *Houston Press*, same date; *Colonel Mayfield's Weekly*, December 10, 1921; *Houston Post*, December 11, 1921.
- 9 *Colonel Mayfield's Weekly*, September 22, 1923. The *Galveston Daily News* for September 17, 1923, reported 246 initiates.
- 10 *Galveston Daily News*, November 13, 1923. Despite the Klan's worst fears, the little red schoolhouse was not yet in any danger of disappearing. The *Houston Post-Dispatch*, March 29, 1925, reported that of 13,018 buildings owned by public schools in Texas, 9,954 were wooden school buildings.
- 11 *Colonel Mayfield's Weekly*, February 23, 1924; *Galveston Daily News*, February 17, 1924; *Houston Chronicle*, same date. The *Daily News* alluded to this ceremony as a forthcoming event, but only *Colonel Mayfield's Weekly* reported that it actually occurred.
- 12 Jackson, 239.
- 13 *Houston Chronicle*, January 11, 1923.
- 14 *Ibid.*, March 25, 1925.
- 15 *Ibid.*, January 14, 1923.
- 16 *Houston Press*, February 3, 7, 1921; *Ibid.*, March 26, 1921; *Ibid.*, April 6, 1921; *Houston Chronicle*, February 6, 1921; *Houston Post Dispatch*, March 19, 1925. The *Houston Press*, February 12, 1921, reported that Hobbs left Houston to visit his sister in Alvin, where he was assaulted again and warned to leave.
- 17 *Houston Press*, March 17, 1921; *Galveston Daily News*, March 18, 1921. McCall was affiliated with W. L. Pearson & Company, a construction firm. In 1920, he was a Republican precinct chairman of Precinct No. 9, Harris County.
- 18 *Galveston Daily News*, April 28, 1921; *Houston Post*, same date.
- 19 *Colonel Mayfield's Weekly*, December 10, 1921.
- 20 *Houston Chronicle*, May 2, 1921; *Houston Press*, May 3, 1921; *Houston Post*, May 2, 1921; *Informer*, May 14, 1921. The *Press* also blamed the Klan for the beating of Ira McKeown, a taximan, on May 23, and the whippings of J. W. Boyd, an attorney, who allegedly annoyed young girls, on June 14, and of Max Masliansky on June 21. The *Galveston Daily News*, September 19, 1921, accused Klansmen of the tarring and feathering of attorney J. S. Allen on April 10, 1921.
- 21 *Houston Post*, August 2, 1921; *Ibid.*, October 22, 1921.
- 22 *Houston Chronicle*, August 26, 1921.
- 23 J. S. Cullinan to Frank Andrews, Chairman, Rice Institute Student Loan Fund, November 1, 1922, in the Joseph S. Cullinan Papers, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library; Minutes of the first meeting of the American Anti-Klan Association, December 11, 1923, Cullinan Papers. The author searched the Rice Student Association minutes for 1921-1922, without finding any mention of the Klan's presence at Rice Institute. However, the student newspaper, the *Thresher*, Vol.VII, November 25, 1921, mentions the emergence of a new campus organization, the "Koo Klucks."
- 24 *Houston Chronicle*, September 7, 1921.
- 25 *Houston Chronicle*, April 6, 8, 1924.
- 26 *Houston Post*, September 7, 1924; *Ibid.*, December 18, 1924; *Houston Press*, December 18, 1924.

ILLINOIS JACQUET

- 1 Illinois Jacquet Biography, Swing Music Net, http://www.swingmusic.net/Illinois_Jacquet_Big_Band_And_Jazz_Legend_Biography.html.
- 2 Illinois Jacquet Oral History with Dr. Louis J. Marchiafava and Charles Stephenson, June 1, 1990, Texas Jazz Archive, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library, www.digital.houstonlibrary.org/oral-history/illinois-jacquet.php. (Hereinafter referred to as Jacquet OH-HPL).
- 3 Jacquet OH-HPL.
- 4 Paul J. MacArthur, "One for All: Sax Giant Illinois Jacquet Helps Desegregate Houston Audiences," *Houston Press*, November 18, 1999.
- 5 www.illinoisjacquet.com; MacArthur.
- 6 Tad Hershorn, *Let Freedom Swing: A Biography of Norman Granz*, Unpublished manuscript, Description of Book, 6.
- 7 Tad Hershorn, *Let Freedom Swing*, for Catalogue of Danish exhibit honoring Norman Granz and Jazz at the Philharmonic, 4.
- 8 MacArthur.
- 9 Hershorn.
- 10 MacArthur; Hershorn.
- 11 Quoted in Hershorn from Dizzy Gillespie with Al Fraser, *To Be, or not . . . to Bop* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co.), 407-410.
- 12 Elaine Van Horn, personal interview with author, August 22, 2010, not archived. Clauder had also served as the driver for Mayor Oscar Holcombe for a number of years.
- 13 MacArthur; Van Horn interview.
- 14 MacArthur.
- 15 MacArthur.
- 16 MacArthur.
- 17 www.illinoisjacquet.com.
- 18 Jacquet Biography.

WILLIAM S. HOLLAND

- 1 Jack Yates High School: Mission and History, Jack Yates High School, <http://poster.4teachers.org/worksheet/view.php?id=121449>; Robert Anderson, interview by Debbie Harwell, March 31, 2009, Ryan Middle School Oral History and Digital Media Project (Houston History Archives, University of Houston, Houston, Texas; hereinafter RMSOH) 5-6; Donald Dickson, interview by Debbie Harwell, April 3, 2009, RMSOH, 4-8; Deloris Johnson, interview by Reed Amadon, March 24, 2009, RMSOH, 14-16.
- 2 William H. Kellar, *Make Haste Slowly: Moderates, Conservatives, and School Desegregation in Houston* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), 105-106; Dickson, interview, 8-10; Johnson, interview, 14; Anderson, interview, 1.
- 3 Mick McCormick, "William 'Babe' Holland," Wabash Valley Visions and Voices: A Digital Memory Project, March 16, 2006, http://visions.indstate.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/vchs&CISOPTR=1030&CISOBOX=1&REC=2; Bill Holland and Edith Holland Nealy, interview by Anna Burke, April 6, 2009, RMSOH, 14.
- 4 McCormick; Holland and Nealy, interview, 8-9; Birch Bayh Sr. is the father of Senator Birch Bayh Jr. who was elected to the Senate from Indiana in 1962.
- 5 Napoleon Johnson, Deloris Johnson, Carroll Blue, Reed Amadon, Anna Burke, Debbie Harwell, and Victor Matsumura, Ryan Oral History Project Meeting, February 26, 2009, RMSOH, 10, 14.
- 6 Dickson, interview, 4; Johnson, interview, 3; Holland and Nealy, interview, 9.
- 7 Holland and Nealy, interview, 9; Dickson, interview, 1, 10.
- 8 Anderson, interview, 4-6.
- 9 Holland and Nealy, interview, 10.
- 10 Holland and Nealy, interview, 2-3, 12.
- 11 Holland and Nealy, interview, 14; Dickson, interview, 5; Johnson, interview, 4-5.
- 12 Johnson, interview, 13; Holland and Nealy, interview, 14-15.
- 13 Johnson, interview, 14.
- 14 Kellar, *Make Haste Slowly*, 103-104, 106-108.
- 15 Johnson, interview, 14; Holland and Nealy, interview, 17.
- 16 Dickson, interview, 8-9; Johnson, interview, 14.
- 17 Dickson, interview, 9; Johnson, interview, 14.
- 18 Holland and Nealy, interview, 19.
- 19 Holland and Nealy, interview, 18-19; Johnson, interview, 11-12.
- 20 McCormick.
- 21 Johnson, interview, 14; Dickson, interview, 5.

THE DAWN AT MY BACK

- 1 Carroll Parrott Blue, *The Dawn at My Back: Memoir of a Black Texas Upbringing* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 19-21.
- 2 Ibid., 51-53.

ZINETTA BURNEY

- 1 Judge Zinetta Burney, interview by J. R. Wilson, July 2006, Special Collections, M. D. Anderson Library, University of Houston, Houston, Texas, 4-5.
- 2 Burney, 8.
- 3 Burney, 5.
- 4 Burney, 5-7.
- 5 Burney, 6.
- 6 Burney, p. 56-59; Attorney Algenita Scott-Davis, interview by J. R. Wilson, July 2006, Special Collections, M. D. Anderson Library, University of Houston, Houston, Texas, 3.
- 7 Burney, 59.
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- 9 Burney, 7.
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- 11 Burney, 9-12.
- 12 Burney, 12-13.
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UH AND TSU

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- 3 Bobby Marlin, formerly one of the University of Houston's head archivists, shared this information with me in oral interviews between July and December 2009. Information shedding light on Cullen's alignment with racist ideologies can also be found in various sources such as the The Handbook of Texas Online. See also, Elvin Hayes, *They Call Me the "Big E"* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1978).
- 4 "Objectives of the University of Houston," Box 20, Folder 20, President's Office Collection, UH.
- 5 From Clanton W. Williams, Memo For the Record on September 20, 1957, Box 29, Folder 18, President's Office Collection, UH.
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- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Address by John W. McFarland, "Problems Incident to Integration in Our Schools" to Kiwanis Club on July 8, 1959, Box 29, Folder 18, President's Office Collection, UH.
- 15 Charles M. Babb to Freda G. Gooden, August 1954; Dr. Freda G. Richardson to Registrar of Optometry on January 18, 1956; Charles R. Stewart to Dr. Richardson on January 27, 1956; Dr. Freda G. Richardson's Application to the University of

Houston on February 10, 1956; Unsigned interoffice memo to Dr. Williams on February 15, 1956; Unsigned interoffice memo to Mr. Vitulli on February 24, 1956; B. L. Horton to Dr. Charles R. Stewart on April 19, 1956; Unsigned interoffice memo to Dr. Williams on April 20, 1956; Clanton W. Williams to Dr. Freda Gooden Richardson on April 26, 1956; Unsigned interoffice memo to Dr. Williams on April 29, 1956; Dr. Freda G. Richardson to Mr. Clanton W. Williams on May 22, 1956; Unsigned interoffice memo to Dean Stewart on May 26, 1956; Unsigned interoffice memo to Dean Stewart on June 3, 1956; Charles R. Stewart to Dr. Freda G. Richardson on June 5, 1956; Clanton W. Williams to Dr. Freda G. Richardson on July 5, 1956; Freda G. Richardson to Dr. Charles R. Stewart on June 7, 1956; Eva K. Robertson to Dr. Freda G. Richardson on June 8, 1956; Dr. Freda Gooden Richardson to Dr. Charles R. Stewart on June 27, 1956, Box 29, Folder 20; and "University of Houston Application for Admission to the Junior College and Senior College," Box 29, Folders 17- 24, President's Office Collection, UH.

- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Ibid.
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- 24 "Summary of Action of Board of Regents Desegregating the University of Houston, September 1969, Box 29, Folder 19, President's Office Collection, UH.
- 25 "Which Colleges Have the Most Student Diversity?," <http://www.usnews.com/blogs/college-rankings-blog/2009/08/27/which-colleges-have-the-most-student-diversity.html> (accessed October 10, 2009); "Best Colleges: Racial Diversity: National Universities," <http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges/national-campus-ethnic-diversity> (accessed October 10, 2009); "Facts and Figures," <http://uh.edu/about/uh-glance/facts-figures/index.php> (accessed September 6, 2009).

AFRO-AMERICANS FOR BLACK LIBERATION

- 1 This article was written with the support of Professor Linda Reed, Professor Kairn Klieman, Brother Ester King, and generous editing assistance from Hank Hancock.
- 2 LOMAS statement, President's Office Records, Special Collections and Archives, University of Houston Libraries (Hereinafter referred to as SC-UH).
- 3 Ester King, personal interview, November 20, 2009.
- 4 Ibid.; *Forward Times*, Houston, November 30, 1968, 6.
- 5 King, interview.
- 6 Reproduction of the AABL Statement to Dr. Hoffman, President's Office Records, SC-UH.
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- 8 A reply to the AABL statement by President Philip G. Hoffman, President's Office Records, SC-UH.
- 9 Letter from Continental Carbon Company, March 14, 1969, President's Office Records, SC-UH.
- 10 *Daily Cougar*, March 14, 1969, 2; *Daily Cougar*, March 20, 1969, 2.
- 11 Petition of Students for the Eradication of Racial Injustice, President's Office Records, SC-UH.
- 12 Chronology of events connected with AABL matter, President's Office Records, SC-UH.

- 13 *Daily Cougar*, April 15, 1969, 1.
- 14 *Daily Cougar*, March 19, 1969, 1.
- 15 *Daily Cougar*, April 24, 1969, 1; *Daily Cougar*, May 18, 1969, 1.
- 16 Ester King, interview.
- 17 *Daily Cougar*, February 18, 1969, 2.
- 18 Inter-office memorandum: University-AABL relationship, President's Office Records, SC-UH; March 26 status report, President's Office Records, 16, SC-UH.
- 19 *Daily Cougar*, March 7, 1969; *Daily Cougar*, April 23, 1969.
- 20 *Daily Cougar*, July 10, 1969.
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- 1 Government, City of Chicago, <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/532.html>.
- 2 David G. McComb, *Houston: A History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 50-51; I am indebted to Charles Stava for sending me a newspaper article, "City Fathers in Session The Repsdorph Ordinance Creating the Sixth Ward Passed," confirming the 1896 vote that established the Sixth Ward.
- 3 McComb, 50, 51, 18. Houston and Chicago incorporated the same year (1837), but Chicago's location and rapid growth as an industrial center pushed it ahead of Houston. By 1860 Houston had 150 to 175 mercantile businesses in a town of 4,845 residents. Joe R. Feagin, *Free Enterprise City: Houston in Political and Economic Perspective* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 108-109.
- 4 Feagin, 48, 49; list of mayoral occupations compiled using *The Mayor's Book*, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library; Harold L. Platt, *City Building in the South: The Growth of Public Services in Houston, Texas 1830-1910* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), 8-9. In 1860 William M. Rice was the second wealthiest person in Texas with assets of \$750,000. Other Houstonians with wealth valued between \$400,000 and \$700,000 were W. J. Hutchins, T. W. House, Cornelius Ennis, and Paul Bremond. Hutchins, House, and Ennis served as mayor while Rice and Bremond were aldermen. Howard Beeth and Cary D. Wintz, ed., *Black Dixie: Afro-American History and Culture in Houston* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1992), 15-16; Feagin, 241; Platt, 29-34.
- 5 McComb, 51; Platt, 50-54. In 1876 the mayor and council were arrested for failure to pay on the debt. The charges were dropped when the courts held that there could be no imprisonment for debts in the U. S.
- 6 Margaret Swett Henson, compiler, *Roster Houston City Officials and Harris County Officials 1837-1975 and Volunteer Fire Company Officers to 1894* (Houston: Southwest Center for Urban Research, 1976), 120-27; *Houston City Directory for 1866* (Houston: Gray, Strickland & Co., 1866); McComb, 59-60.
- 7 "Fiscal woes familiar to past civic leaders," *The Houston Post Centennial Edition*, 1985, 17P; Feagin, 117; Platt, 99-100. The term "short-hair" refers to the blue-collar, labor vote as opposed to the "long hairs," who would be the elites (in this case, merchants, etc.).
- 8 *Houston Business Journal*, July 21 to August 10, 2000, August 18 to September 7, 2000.
- 9 *Houston Daily Post*, March 17, 1882; Stanley E. Siegel &

John A. Moretta, *Houston: A Chronicle of the Bayou City* (Sun Valley, CA: American Historical Press, 2005), 97. It was probably not a coincidence that Houston's mayor at the time was a Fifth Ward resident.

- 10 Sister Nora Marie Coffey, *Remember Rejoice Renew 1887-1987: A Centennial Celebration of St. Joseph Hospital* (Houston: Charles P. Young Co., 1987); Betty Trapp Chapman, *100 Years 100 Stories: Houston Public Library 1904-2004* (Houston: Houston Public Library, 2004), 3-5; Beeth and Wintz, 25.
- 11 Platt, 160-162; Feagin, 117-118.
- 12 Feagin, 116; Platt, 178-180; McComb, 93.
- 13 Platt, 209-215.
- 14 *Houston Chronicle*, June 6, 1987.

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- 1 *Houston Business Journal*, July 21-27, 2000.
- 2 *The Lost Springs of Woodland Heights*, <http://www.nearnorthwesthouston.com/Article49.htm>.
- 3 Protected Landmark Designation Report, City of Houston Planning and Development Department, September 21, 2006.
- 4 *Federation of Italian-American Organizations of Greater Houston, Inc.* (Cate Media: www.catemedia.com, 71-72, 116-17, 245-46, 405 (Vol. 1); 358-59 (Vol. 2).
- 5 *Houston City Directory for 1866* (Houston: Gray, Strickland & Co., 1866).
- 6 City of Houston Map, published from actual surveys by W. E. Wood, C.E., January 1, 1869; Map of Houston, Harris County, Texas, compiled published and copyrighted by P. Whitty, Civil Engineer and Land Surveyor, 1900; Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in Texas, *Houston: A History and Guide* (Houston: Anson Jones Press, 1942), 287. I am indebted to Thomas McWhorter, Senior Planner for the City of Houston Planning and Development Department for providing information on Tin Can Alley.
- 7 I want to thank Mike Vance of Houston Arts & Media for sharing his research for a forthcoming book on early Harris County Schools. *Morrison & Fourmy's General Directory of the City of Houston 1880* (Galveston: Morrison & Fourmy Directory Co., 1881); David G. McComb, *Houston: A History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 109.
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- 9 Steven M. Baron, *Houston Electric: The Street Railways of Houston, Texas* (Lexington, KY: S. M. Baron, 1996), 125.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 117-119.
- 11 Margaret Swett Henson, compiler, *Roster: Houston City Officials and Harris County Officials 1827-1975 and Volunteer Fire Company Officers to 1894* (Houston: Southwest Center for Urban Research, 1976), 120-127.
- 12 *Avenue Community Development Corporation*, <http://www.avenuecdc.org>.
- 13 *About Winter Street Studios*, <http://winterstudios.net/about.htm>.
- 14 *First Ward Community Railroad Crossing Safety*, <http://>

camachoassociation.com/lquiet.zone.htm.

- 15 All of these buildings are included within the boundaries of the Main Street-Market Square Historic District, which places them on the National Register of Historic Places and designates them as City of Houston historic buildings.

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- 1 W. E. Wood, Civil Engineer, Map of Houston, Texas, 1869; P. Whitty, Map of Houston Harris County, Texas (Houston: P. Whitty, Civil Engineer and Land Surveyor, 1900); Houston City Directories, 1866-1920.
- 2 Wood, Map of Houston, Texas, 1869; Harris County Real Property records.
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- 4 Dorothy Knox Howe Houghton, et al, *Houston's Forgotten Heritage: Landscape, Houses, Interiors, 1824-1914* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1991), 70; U.S. Census, Harris County, Texas, 1860.
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- 7 Marguerite Johnston, *Houston: The Unknown City, 1836-1914* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1991), 25; Wood, Map of Houston, Texas, 1869; Houghton, *Houston's Forgotten Heritage*, 19.
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- 15 Steven M. Baron, *Houston Electric: The Street Railways of Houston, Texas* (Lexington, KY: Stephen M. Baron, 1996), 131.
- 16 Theodore Gish, *The History of the Houston Saengerbund* (Houston: The Institute of Texas German Cultures University of Houston, 1990), 10, 16.
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- 22 *Ibid.*, 30.
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