

Houston HISTORY

VOLUME 10 • NUMBER 2 • SPRING 2013

Protecting Our Green Heritage

UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON**
CENTER FOR PUBLIC HISTORY



DIRTY HABITS

While doing research for my dissertation last century, I stumbled across a report on oil pollution of coastal waters in the United States published in 1923. I was surprised to see Houston, Galveston, and Port Arthur mentioned prominently among the most polluted waterways in the nation. Oil-led development on Sabine Lake near Port Arthur had been underway for about twenty years at the time; the Houston Ship Channel (HSC) had been opened for less than a decade.

According to the report, oil entered the region's waters from every direction. Under appalling—but accepted—business practices, many tankers coming into Galveston harbor and the bay simply dumped oil-contaminated ballast out at sea, where it rode the waves onto the shore. Bad equipment and sloppy procedures in the transshipment of oil from refineries to tankers put much more oil on the water. Indeed, one refinery in Port Arthur found it profitable to employ “crews of men and equipment for skimming the surface of the harbor waters” and returning oil to the refinery. But “they appear to be doing little more than holding their own...” The regular operations of the growing refineries along the HSC left large amounts of crude oil on the ground, waiting for the region's hard rains to wash it into the channel. There it joined oil-contaminated cooling water and used crank case oil dumped

into the city's bayous and sewers to make the HSC “one of the worst oil polluted localities in the nation.” Down the ship channel, Galveston's beaches were a mess. Oil discarded from producing wells into nearby streams found its way down the Brazos River and out into the Gulf, where the current often took it up to Galveston to join the tourists. Hotels placed cans of gasoline on the beach so that their guests could clean up after swimming in the ocean.

Looking back at our history, these practices are hardly surprising. The region was booming, and there was little time to waste on strengthening local regulations, which one critic called “trifling matters to harass companies which had invested millions on plants along the waterway.” Around the nation, not just in Houston, pollution was still viewed as an “externality” separate from economic considerations. At the time, the federal government lacked effective powers to address the problem, and state and local agencies had limited resources and authority. Oil was, after all, the engine of growth in the region, and jobs trumped pollution control. Houston—the city of opportunity—was too busy to clean up.



Changes bring Houston HISTORY into the future

Beginning with the next issue,

Houston History will produce a digital issue in the summer followed by two print issues in the fall and spring. Subscribers will enjoy added content in the digital issue that is not available in the printed magazine, including videos, audio of interviews, and additional photos.

You will access the Summer digital edition Aug. 1 through our website at www.houstonhistorymagazine.org using the **password: subscriber**.

Thank you for your continued support of *Houston History*.

— Joe Pratt, Editor in Chief

In the ninety years since the 1923 report, much has changed. Strong environmental laws are in place at all levels of government; public attitudes toward pollution are dramatically different; industry has put in place cleaner operating procedures, at times to respond to new regulations and at times to limit waste. Yet in a region that grows and grows, pollution control remains a difficult issue. Our air and water continue to bear the burden of emissions from our giant refineries and petrochemical plants and our regional “mass transit system” of sprawling freeways packed with gasoline-powered vehicles—often carrying a single passenger. These drivers, more than refineries and tankers, have become the symbol of the Houston area's race to balance economic growth with improved environmental quality. The race is still on, and slowly we are gaining ground. But we have a long way to go to make up for decades of environmental neglect as our city grew into the Oil and Gas Capital of the World—and its oil pollution capital as well.

Beginning with this issue, we will be listing those who have generously donated to the Houston History Project and *Houston History* magazine in support of our ongoing mission to keep the city's history alive. We greatly appreciate the support of the following people and foundations that made contributions October through January.

Dr. Wiley and Gloria Biles
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Houston History

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Protecting Our Green Heritage

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Houston History is published three times a year by the Center for Public History in the History Department at the University of Houston. We welcome manuscripts, interviews, and photographic essays on the history and culture of the Houston region, broadly defined, as well as ideas for topical issues. All correspondence should be sent to *Houston History*, University of Houston, Center for Public History, 337 McElhinney Hall, Houston, TX 77204-3007 (713-743-3123), or emailed to: HoustonHistory@uh.edu.

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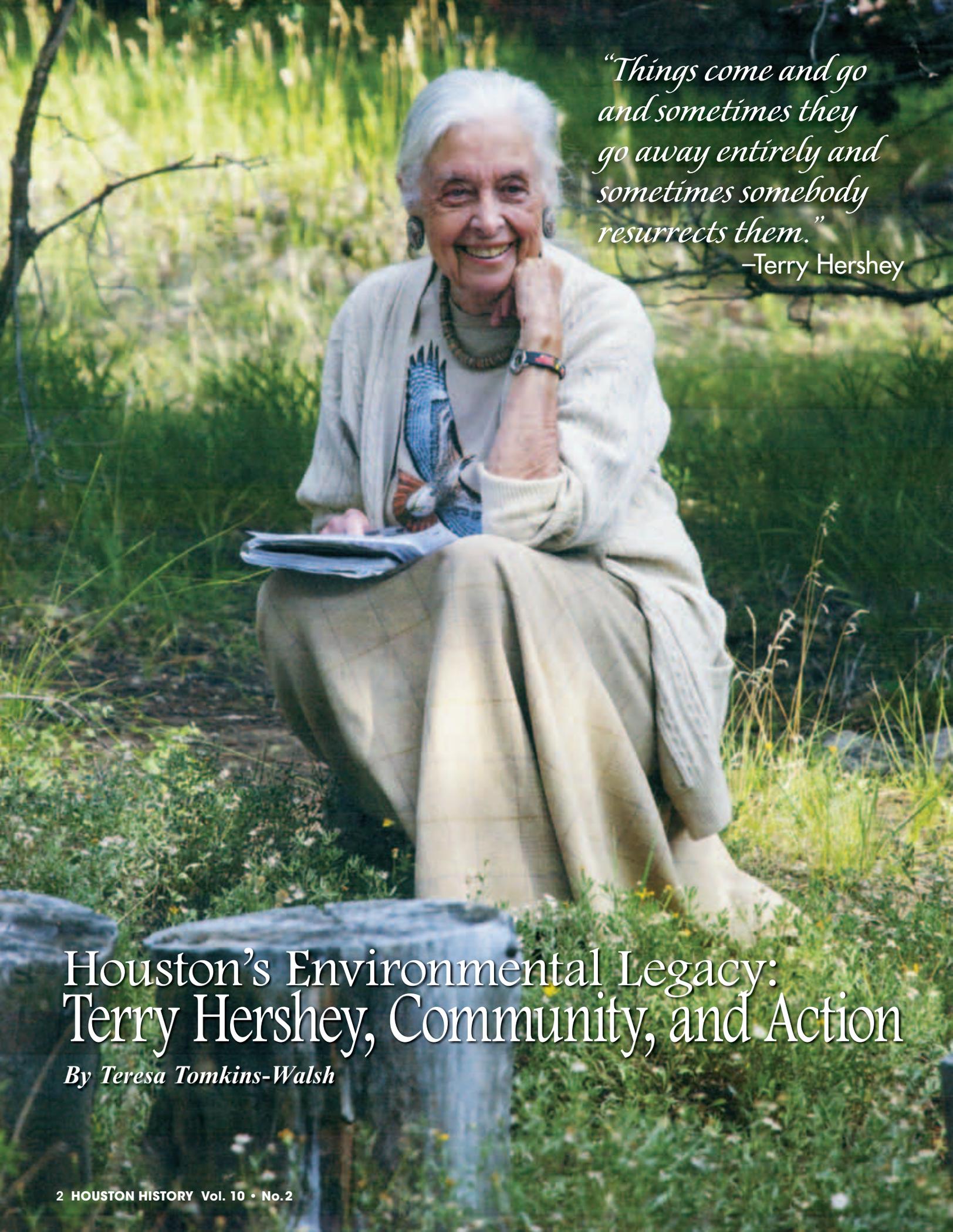
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News Updates & Books

By Barbara Eaves

Cover Photo: Duckweed floats on a still portion of Cypress Creek in Harris County within the Cypress Creek Greenway.

Photo by Jennifer Lorenz, Bayou Land Conservancy.

A photograph of Terry Hershey, an elderly woman with short white hair, smiling warmly. She is sitting on the ground in a lush, green field with tall grasses and some bare tree branches in the background. She is wearing a light-colored cardigan over a patterned top, a necklace, and a watch. Her right hand is resting on her chin, and her left hand is holding a book or a folder.

*“Things come and go
and sometimes they
go away entirely and
sometimes somebody
resurrects them.”*

—Terry Hershey

Houston’s Environmental Legacy: Terry Hershey, Community, and Action

By Teresa Tomkins-Walsh

Houston has a rich environmental past. From Joseph Heiser's Outdoor Nature Club and the garden clubs in the early twentieth century to Sarah Emmott's Texas Beaches Unlimited in the 1950s and Terry Hershey's Save Buffalo Bayou Campaign in the mid-1960s, these groups laid the foundations for a strong environmental community. Throughout, Houston activists fashioned a legacy of conservation, preservation, and environmental action in Houston that continues today.

More than forty years ago, Terry Tarlton Hershey became the most visible representative of environmental action in Houston as she fought to preserve the natural beauty of Buffalo Bayou west of Shepherd Drive. She continues as a *magna mater* in the environmental community, but her campaign to save Buffalo Bayou drew in part from a coterie of Houstonians committed to wilderness recreation and urban beautification, organized in the wake of the First World War. Eventually, through Terry Hershey's collaborative efforts and influence, an environmental community emerged to address the full spectrum of environmental issues.

Terry Tarlton moved from Fort Worth to Houston in the 1950s to marry Jake Hershey. The couple spent the better part of ten years sailing international seas in yachting competitions. When Terry was in Houston, she joined in activities sponsored by the Junior League and garden clubs, but it was 1966 when, by chance, she discovered her avocation.

Hershey's debut on Houston's environmental stage came in 1966 when she and several other Memorial area residents observed an area along Buffalo Bayou near Chimney Rock Road ravaged by fallen trees and bulldozed undergrowth. They soon learned that Harris County Flood Control District was re-routing Buffalo Bayou without public notification. Outraged by the condition of the bayou and the county's failure to proffer public notification, Terry Hershey discovered and then joined the Buffalo Bayou Preservation Association. She quickly became its most visible activist, energizing the association to move beyond its prior desultory efforts to monitor projects along Buffalo Bayou.

Sociologists identify three phases for social movements, which Save Buffalo Bayou followed, beginning with this "precipitating event." Observing the damage to Buffalo Bayou was a call to action and life changing for Terry Hershey. Once she realized that Harris County officials would not change course, Hershey embarked on the next stage of a social movement: mobilization. Hershey contacted neighbors who shared the bayou surrounds, then other associates, including members of a number of garden clubs and the Houston branch of her University of Texas sorority.¹

After alerting this circle of friends and acquaintances to the need for action, Hershey appealed to other organizations. An obvious choice for preservation volunteers was the Outdoor Nature Club. Founded by Joseph Heiser in 1923, the Outdoor Nature Club studied flora and fauna, organized wilderness outings, and spearheaded

protection and conservation of the Little Thicket Sanctuary in the Big Thicket and the Vingtune Islands in Trinity Bay. According to Hershey, Joseph Heiser was Houston's John Muir. He had campaigned to preserve holly along Buffalo Bayou during the 1920s and actively promoted the natural assets of the Houston Gulf Coast region. Both Houston Garden Club and River Oaks Garden Club had been involved since the 1920s in wilderness recreation and urban beautification and had supported Heiser's programs for the Outdoor Nature Club.²

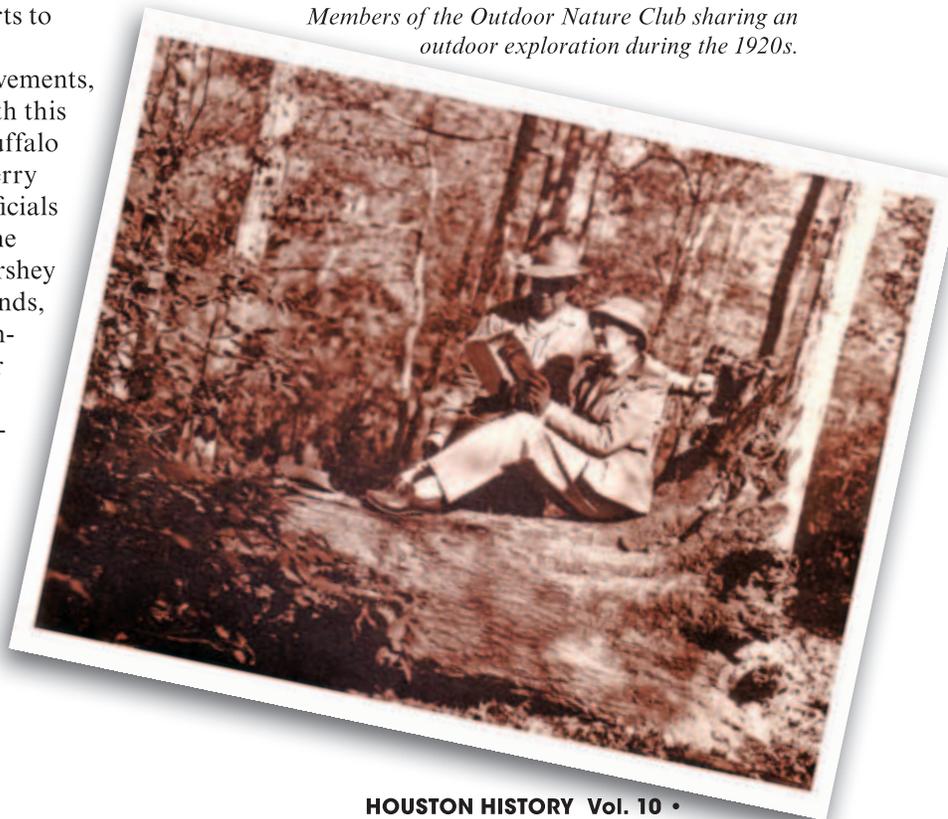
Because Hershey was a relative newcomer to Houston and had spent only sporadic intervals in town during her first decade as a resident, she depended on the help of those embedded in the community. Sarah Emmott was among those who stepped forward to help in the early days of the Save Buffalo Bayou campaign. Emmott was the daughter-in-law of Catherine Emmott who had waged the campaign to designate and preserve Memorial Park in the 1920s.³

With Emmott, Hershey engaged an experienced conservationist. Sarah and Army Emmott were longstanding members of the Outdoor Nature Club. In the late 1950s, they along with other club members formed Texas Beaches

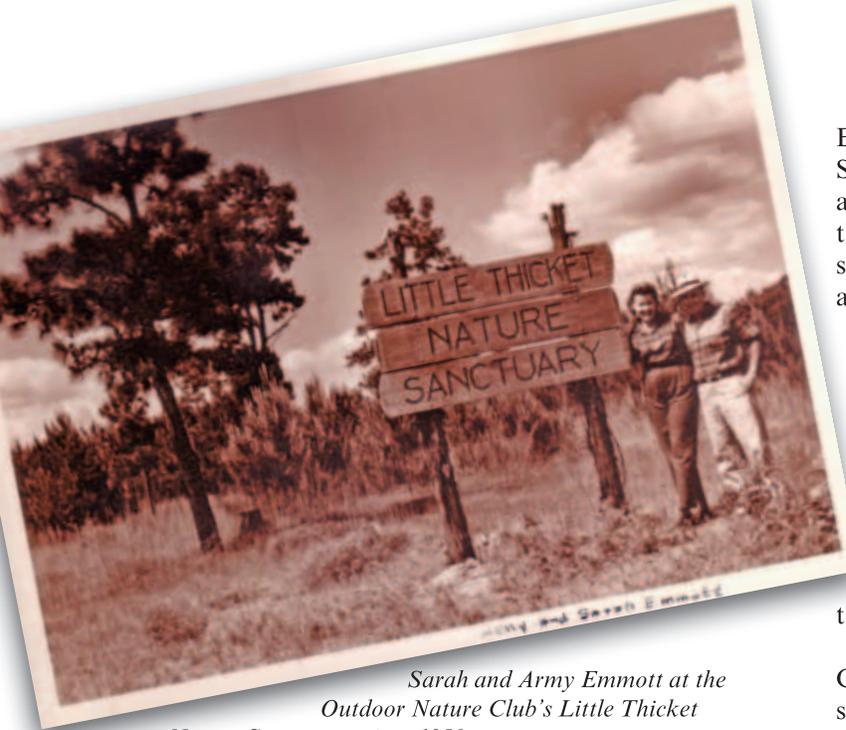


Joseph Heiser as a young man, circa 1920s.

Members of the Outdoor Nature Club sharing an outdoor exploration during the 1920s.



◀ *Terry Hershey has addressed numerous environmental issues in Houston since the 1960s.*
Photo courtesy of author. All other photos courtesy of Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.



Sarah and Army Emmott at the Outdoor Nature Club's Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary, circa 1950s.

Unlimited to challenge a Texas Supreme Court decision that allowed private ownership of shoreline property along the Gulf Coast, a decision that opened the way for oil drilling along Texas beaches.⁴

Working with Anella Dexter, Sarah Emmott spent days and nights researching to determine that public access to Texas beaches was a legally-upheld residual from Spanish law. They worked in libraries, copied notes by hand, and typed them laboriously at home. Texas Representative Bob Eckhardt of Houston agreed that beaches were a public resource to be preserved for the future. Facing tremendous opposition and supported by some legislative technicalities, Eckhardt's Texas Open Beaches Law passed on July 16, 1959, the first such law passed in the United States.⁵

As an experienced and successful campaigner, Sarah Emmott volunteered her voice, energy, and money to the Save Buffalo Bayou campaign. Joe Heiser, the Emmotts, and garden club members added an Old Houston context to the campaign, but Hershey's mobilization efforts in television interviews, newspaper coverage, and town meetings attracted newcomers to the campaign.⁶

Appealing for support in the campaign to save Buffalo Bayou during a television news segment, Hana Ginzburg was inspired and offered her services for the first time in an environmental action. Ginzburg joined the Buffalo Bayou Preservation Association and set up a table in Memorial Park to collect 2,000 signatures supporting a re-study of Buffalo Bayou flood management plans and documenting abuses along the bayou, foreshadowing the incredible energy and tenacity that she applied to the preservation of Armand Bayou in 1970.⁷

A "drawing of the battle lines" commenced after a Commissioners' Court hearing in April 1966 when commissioners agreed to cease work for six months. Campaigners remained skeptical and continued their efforts to appeal to Congress and the Army Corps of Engineers at the federal level. Newly elected to Congress, George H. W. Bush began his term in January 1967 representing Terry Hershey's district. Bush became interested in the campaign and invited Hershey to testify before the Appropriations Sub-Committee in April 1967. Successful in their appeal to Congress to order a re-study and have the Army Corps of Engineers cease working on Upper Buffalo Bayou, Bush and Hershey were less effective in convincing local flood control authorities to reconsider destructive flood control technologies.

With deeply rooted battle lines, Save Buffalo Bayou entered the third and longest phase of a social movement: entrenchment. During this phase, lasting from 1967 to 1971, Terry Hershey and those fighting to preserve Buffalo

HANA GINZBARG'S ROLE was singular and instrumental in the campaign to preserve Armand Bayou as "a small urban wilderness reserve" and protect it from impending residential development. Armand Bayou presented a significantly different challenge from Buffalo Bayou. Friendswood Development Company owned the land surrounding Armand Bayou. As preserved by the campaign, Armand



Hana and Arthur Ginzburg on Armand Bayou, undated.

Bayou includes 2,500 acres of the natural wetlands forest, and prairie and marsh habitats once abundant in the Houston/Galveston area. In 1964, however, when a member of the Outdoor Nature Club had proposed a nature sanctuary, company executives were less than enthusiastic. After extended negotiations, the company refused to donate the land but agreed to sell if preservationists could meet the price, so raising the required money became a centerpiece of the campaign. By 1969, the City of Pasadena held municipal jurisdiction over the area after rebuffing Houston's annexation advances. Pasadena, a largely industrial and working class area, embraced a park project that would bring the area recreational and environmental ambience. Money, land, and development were the triggers in the Armand Bayou preservation campaign, rather than the contest with local and federal government policy that characterized the Save Buffalo Bayou campaign.*

*Hana Ginzburg, "How Armand Bayou Park and Nature Center Came to Be: Setting the Record Straight," transcript of talk for Armand Bayou volunteer organization, October 13, 2005, Hana Ginzburg Papers, Box 1, Folders 1-5, courtesy of Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.



Terry Hershey conducting a meeting of the CEC Land Use Planning Subcommittee in 1970.

Bayou continued to challenge the Army Corps of Engineers, Harris County Flood Control, and Commissioners' Court. Activists studied and proposed new technologies, conducted community education campaigns, and appealed to local and federal authorities at every opportunity.⁸

Houston's Save Buffalo Bayou campaign finally succeeded in 1971. Passage of the National Environmental Policy Act required that the Army Corps of Engineers request public input on an environmental impact statement and schedule a public hearing. With the feedback from Hershey, Ginzburg, and others, the Corps cancelled the Buffalo Bayou project from Barker and Addicks dams to Shepherd Drive. The victory was narrow with only the single project cancelled. Neither technological approach nor political will had been affected. It took almost twenty years of constant challenge before flood control approaches in Houston began to reflect community respect for the natural resources and amenities of the Houston Gulf Coast region.

Early in the mobilization phase of the Save Buffalo Bayou campaign, Hershey realized that quality of life issues in Houston went beyond a single segment of one bayou, and she also encouraged a broader organized effort. By 1969, Hershey and Houston oilman George Mitchell (second president of Buffalo Bayou Association) advocated a change of name and emphasis for the association. "Buffalo" was dropped from the name, and Bayou Preservation Association became a watchdog for all twenty-two watersheds in the region.⁹

While the Save Buffalo Bayou campaign played out, Hershey and sixteen other women organized Citizens Who Care, the forerunner of Citizens' Environmental Coalition (CEC). CEC's mission was to provide an information nexus for the burgeoning environmental community. Hershey and her colleagues believed that activists should have access to a calendar of events, a resource guide, and community education. In June 1970, CEC members met to organize with Articles of Incorporation and bylaws, and by August, it had twenty-seven member groups.¹⁰

CEC's first successful outreach effort was an air quality

information campaign that educated and encouraged voters to attend the June 1970 Texas Air Control Board Hearing. CEC's second major undertaking, carried out over the second half of 1970, was a Land Use Planning Subcommittee sponsored by the Sam Houston Resource Conservation and Development Area. The subcommittee planned to study existing legislation first, define current and projected problems, and finally make recommendations for future legislation and policy. Terry Hershey acted as co-chair along with chair Leo Theiss. She assigned study areas: the Sierra Club assumed responsibility for reporting on the National Land Use Policy of 1970, the Junior Bar Association helped with interpretation of existing bills and policies, Houston-Galveston Area Council reported on the other councils of government in Texas and elsewhere, Planned Parenthood studied population trends, and the Audubon Society researched activities of other Audubon chapters regarding land use issues, and so forth.¹¹

As work of the subcommittee continued into fall 1970, Theiss and Hershey set up a meeting to include the "real estate and development community." Having received acceptances to five of eight invitations the day before the meeting, the plan went forward. Only a representative from the Houston Board of Realtors attended. Neither the development community nor local governments were ready in the 1970s for the recommendations of the CEC's Land Use Subcommittee, which recommended eight actions, including support for a National Land Use Policy Act, (S.B. 3354), proposal to amend the Water Resources Planning Act (79 Stat. 244), acceleration of soil surveys, and strengthening Soil & Water Conservation Districts.¹²

Successful culmination of the Save Buffalo Bayou campaign strengthened Houston's maturing environmental community as new organizations emerged and confronted entrenched infrastructure problems. Hershey's influence expanded with her local activism and her participation on the boards of directors of national organizations. Although controversial, Hershey's CEC work on land use issues prepared her for a challenging opportunity.¹³



Ada Grundy, Terry Hershey, and Hana Ginzburg, founding members of Citizens Who Care, attending a CEC event, circa 2002.

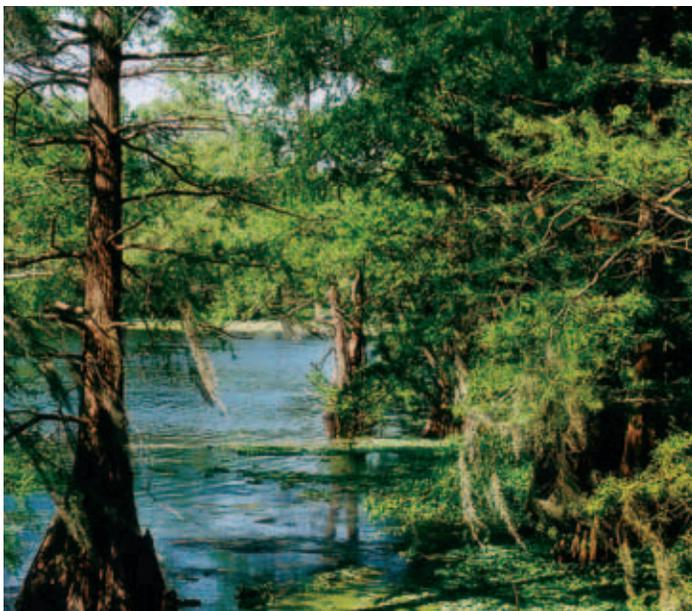
Initially focused on preventing destruction of Upper Buffalo Bayou, the Save Buffalo Bayou campaign also highlighted problems associated with weak or non-existent land use policies. By the early 1970s, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) appeared to offer a partial solution to escalating flood damages for communities and individuals, but local government resistance to mandatory land use policies threatened the potential benefit of the NFIP across the country.

In Harris County, a history of anti-zoning and unregulated development threatened to undermine county government's considerations in applying to the NFIP. The Save Buffalo Bayou campaign prepared activists with sufficient community standing to counterbalance forces hostile to land management policies and encouraged Harris County Commissioners' Court to adopt the minimum land use policies necessary to apply for NFIP coverage. Having succeeded, with the help of the National Environmental Policy Act, in defeating a destructive neighborhood flood control project during the 1960s, supporters of Save Buffalo Bayou acquired sufficient skills, voice, and influence to have some persuasive effect on Houston and Harris County governments.

When Harris County officials formed the Harris County Flood Control Citizens' Advisory Task Force to consider application to NFIP, development interests dominated appointees, but commissioners also appointed representatives from the environmental community, Terry Hershey among them. Deliberations were rancorous, but ultimately the Task Force recommended application to the NFIP with the required land use limits.¹⁴

Although Bayou Preservation Association, Citizens' Environmental Coalition, and the environmental presence on Harris County Flood Control Task Force offered a voice supporting what became later in the century "quality of life," "sustainability," and "green" positions, individuals associated with those efforts often suffered disparagement from the development community and segments of local government. Explanations are understandable.

Houston's green heritage is evident in the archival collection of The Park People.



Terry Hershey and Glenda Barrett at an event for The Park People, 1981.

Development and government interests had been synonymous since Houston's founding; challenges were rare. Bayou Preservation Association emerged during the 1960s as a vehicle for protest and, after a successful campaign, maintained a watchdog posture to identify and challenge watershed management policies. Many of the Buffalo Bayou protestors, including Hershey, Emmott, and Ginzburg, founded CEC. In the 1970s, both organizations carried the stain of local protest action.¹⁵

By 1978, The Park People emerged as a very different kind of organization from its predecessors, in both function and perception. From its inception, The Park People sparked a collaborative spirit by operating from a coalition mindset. Where Bayou Preservation Association reflected a spirit of challenge, The Park People developed a reputation for consensus building. Glenda Barrett, one of the ground-floor organizers, was a consummate people person who set the organizational tone for thirty years. Ann Hamilton, The Park People's first executive director, made diplomacy a priority. However, one of the early actions of The Park People was formation of a Flood Control Committee to identify bayou lands that could be converted to parks.¹⁶

When The Park People materialized sixty-six years after Arthur Comey cited Houston's urgent need for park space, Houston still faced a critical lack of parks and open space. A National Urban Recreation study conducted in 1977 found Houston and Harris County deficient (104th in the nation) in park space. Terry Hershey and Glenda Barrett initiated The Park People as an organization dedicated to improving parks and open space in Houston to demonstrate that there was sufficient interest in Houston to support a field office for the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation headed by Cris Delaporte, an undersecretary of the Interior.¹⁷

The Park People's original mission was advocacy, and their goal to assist other groups in acquiring and maintaining park land. That mission included raising Harris County residents' awareness of the importance of urban parks, communicating a park ethic, and preserving and augmenting park space. Over the years, The Park People organized projects such as Jesse H. Jones Park, drainage and irrigation

for San Jacinto Battleground, landscaping for Project Row Houses in Third Ward, and wildflower planting programs. Another accomplishment was the Greenway Trails Map for Houston-Harris County, which shows 600 miles of actual and proposed greenway trails, parks greater than five acres in area, and parking areas for trails and parks.¹⁸

Hershey's persona incorporates both the protestor and the peacemaker, a complexity that is apparent now forty years after she first observed the destruction on Buffalo Bayou. Hershey describes herself as a catalyst, as someone who brings people and ideas together. She is also, according to George H. W. Bush, "a force of nature." Hershey works with boundless energy to promote, support, encourage, advise, and listen to people and ideas that reflect her abiding love of nature. Hershey epitomizes historian Stephen Fox's concept of the radical amateur: "heart and soul of the American conservation movement."¹⁹

Houston is sometimes perceived as a city that sheds its history and looks perpetually to the future. In conservation efforts and environmental causes, however, a legacy of action and concern reaches across the twentieth century to impact public works and government decisions in the twenty-first. That legacy lives through the work of hundreds of activists.

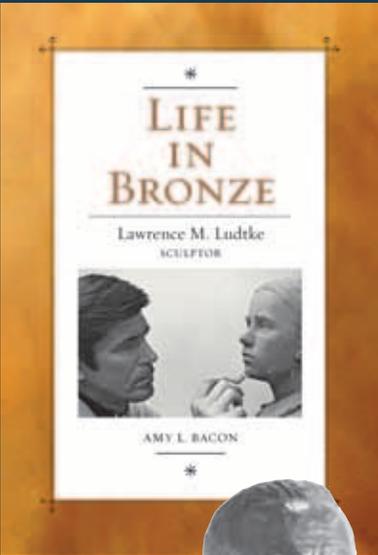
In 1966, Hershey tapped into an established legacy of conservation action. She followed Joe Heiser and Sarah Emmott and established her singular brand of action, encouraging and educating as she mobilized volunteers. Hershey is a

pivotal figure in Houston's environmental past, bridging the wilderness conservation of the first half of the twentieth century with the urban improvements of the early twenty-first century. Because of Terry Hershey, her mentors, and all those she inspired, Houston is a better place to live. 🌱

Dr. Teresa (Terry) Tomkins-Walsh manages the Houston History Archives and writes environmental history with special attention on Houston's environmental action.

The environmental collections currently open to the public in the Houston History Archives in Special Collections in the M. D. Anderson Library at the University of Houston include the following:

- Bayou Preservation Association (BPA), 1929-2003
- Citizens' Environmental Coalition (CEC), 1966-2000
- Sarah and Army Emmott Environmental Papers, 1912-1991
- Hana Ginzburg Papers, 1962-1991
- Terry Tarlton Hershey Papers, 1962-2010 (partial collection)
- Joseph M. Heiser, Jr., Papers, 1897-1987
- Outdoor Nature Club, 1923-2007
- The Park People, 1970-2009
- Scenic Houston – Scenic Texas, 1966-2007
- *This is Our Home, It Is Not For Sale* Film Collection (paper only), 1925-2011



Life in Bronze

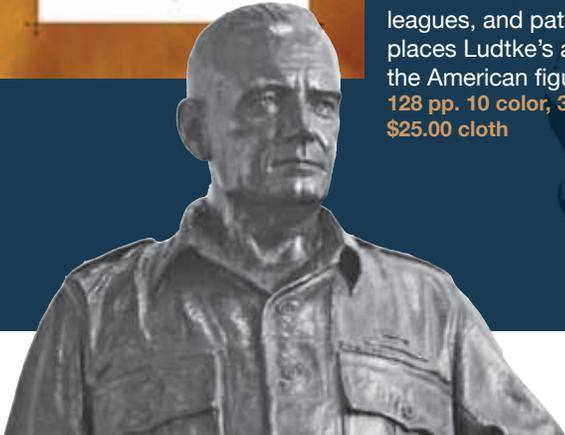
Lawrence M. Ludtke, Sculptor

AMY L. BACON

A skilled athlete who played professional baseball for the Brooklyn Dodgers organization, Ludtke brought to his art a fascination with musculature and motion that empowered him to capture the living essence of his subjects. Based on personal interviews with the artist as well as his family, friends, colleagues, and patrons, *Life in Bronze* places Ludtke's art within the context of the American figurative art tradition.

128 pp. 10 color, 39 b&w photos. Bib. Index. \$25.00 cloth









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GALVESTON BAY: A BRIEF HISTORY OF ONE OF AMERICA'S GREAT WATERS

By Courtney Smith

Roseate spoonbills and laughing gulls wade near stands of California bulrush on Galveston Bay Foundation's Sweetwater Nature Preserve on Galveston Island.

Photo by Andrew Hancock, courtesy of Galveston Bay Foundation.

Galveston Bay is the most prominent geologic feature on the upper Texas coast. It is the state's largest bay, covering about 600 square miles, situated in one of its most urbanized and industrialized areas. The positioning and viability of Houston can be traced to its proximity to Galveston Bay. Beyond this, the Galveston Bay watershed—or the area of land that drains into a given waterbody—is about 24,000 square miles, stretching from the Houston metropolitan area north along the Trinity River basin past the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. Half the population of Texas currently lives in the Galveston Bay watershed. Yet few know of its worth and even fewer of its rich history.

Galveston Bay is, by definition, an estuary—a semi-enclosed coastal body of water which has a free connection with the open sea and within which sea water mixes with fresh water from the land. In the case of Galveston Bay, it is where fresh water from the Trinity and San Jacinto Rivers and the extensive bayous and creeks of the “Bayou City” and surrounding areas mixes with the salty water of the Gulf of Mexico. With an average depth of about eight feet, the bay contains approximately three million acre-feet of water. Inflows of fresh water from rivers, bayous, and streams are the lifeblood of an estuary, bringing in nutrients that fuel the food chain and sediments to replenish our wetlands. Because of this, estuaries are among the most productive ecosystems in the world. They are home to a huge amount of plant and animal life and can produce large harvests of recreational and commercial fish and shellfish. Ninety-five percent of commercially and recreationally important fisheries species in

the Gulf of Mexico are dependent upon estuaries like Galveston Bay during some part of their life cycle. Galveston Bay is *the* most productive bay in Texas and one of the most productive bays in the country, trailing only Chesapeake Bay, which is eight times its size.

Chances are if you live, work, study, or recreate in or around Houston, you depend on Galveston Bay in some way. The bay supports a wide array of human uses, including marine transportation, industrial, agricultural, fisheries, residential, recreational, and tourism. The Houston-Galveston region owes much of its economic viability to ports and shipping, and its area grew as a result of its proximity to good ports. The Port of Houston ranks first in the nation for waterborne commerce and is the second largest port in the United States, based on tonnage. The Galveston Bay area is the petrochemical production capital of the nation, and the second largest complex in the world. Approximately one-third of the nation's petroleum refining occurs in the bay area. Agriculture mainly occurs on the eastern side of the bay, with the most important products being livestock, rice, sorghum, soybeans, and corn. Commercial and recreational fishing are also very important to the region. According to NOAA's State of the Coast website, in 2010, Texas ranked first in the nation for commercial catch of important species such as brown shrimp and second in the nation for white shrimp, Eastern oysters, black drum, and red snapper, among others. Recreational boating in this area remains popular, with Galveston Bay having the third highest concentration of privately-owned marinas in the nation. Recreational hobbies



such as birding are popular in and around Galveston Bay, and people come from all over the world to witness bird migrations in the spring.¹

All of these facts, figures, and statistics provide a snapshot of what Galveston Bay is and of its importance today. But how did it get here? What were the geologic, cultural, societal, political, and economic factors that put it where it is today? The following paragraphs attempt to summarize 18,000 years of the history of Galveston Bay by consolidating the work of noted historians from the Houston-Galveston region who have put together exhaustive studies of our region's history, mostly at the commission of the Galveston Bay Estuary Program, a program of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

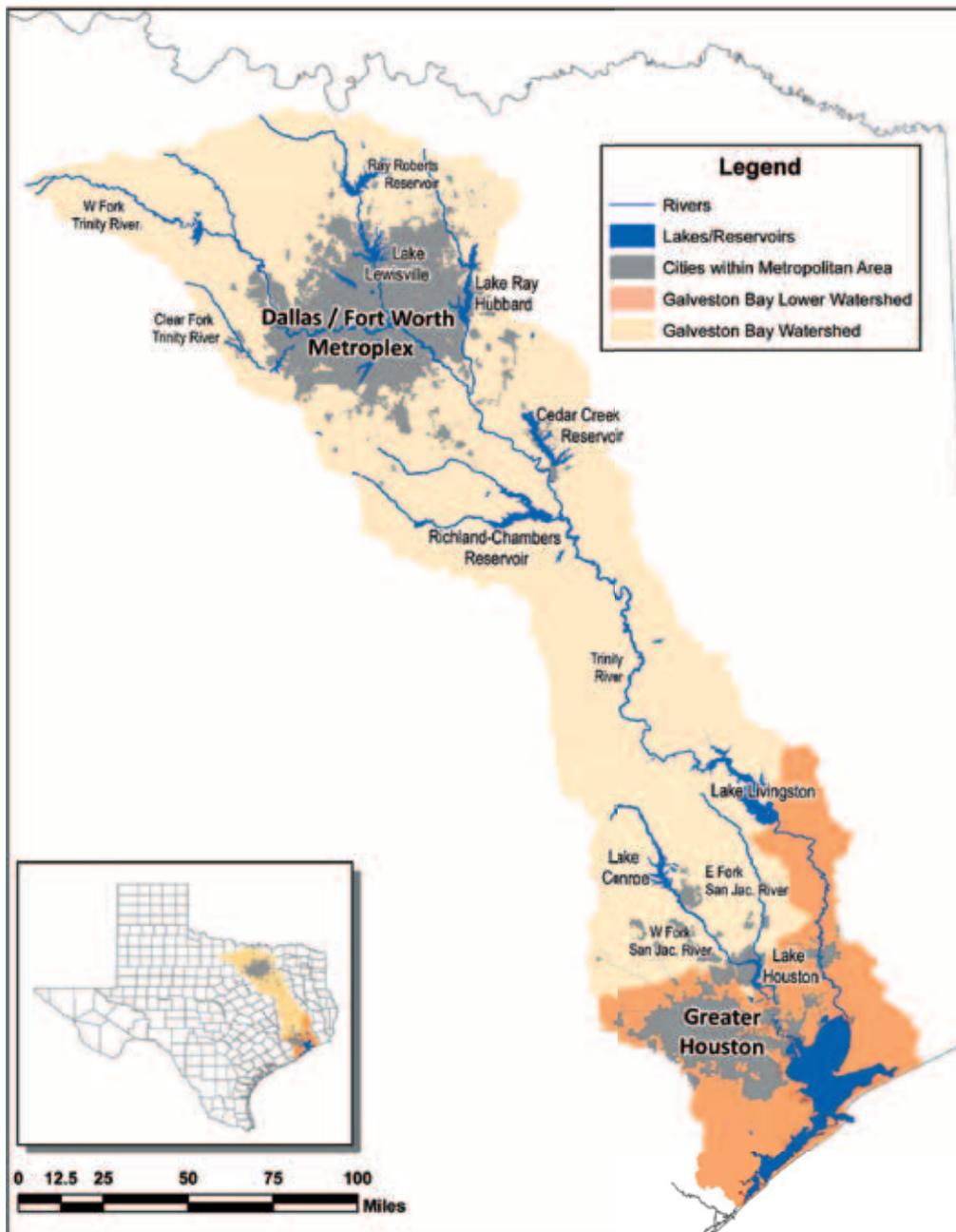
The Galveston Bay we enjoy today had its beginnings following the last Ice Age, less than 18,000 years ago. As the last Ice Age came to an end, the Earth warmed, Pleistocene mammals which roamed this area became extinct, the ice sheets withdrew, sea levels rose, and the shoreline moved to near-present locations, all over many thousands of years. The longshore currents along the new shoreline deposited sediments, eventually creating the sandbars we now know as Galveston Island about 5,000 years ago and Bolivar Peninsula about 2,500 years ago. Behind these barriers, Galveston Bay was formed and is classified as a "bar-built estuary in a drowned river valley."²

Fossilized bone and stone artifacts uncovered in the area date back to Paleo-Indian residents between 14,000 and 8,000 years ago. These nomadic peoples used the bay area as hunting grounds for life's necessities. Shell middens—or areas where clam and/or oyster shells were piled in large mounds—were created over thousands of years beginning about 8,000 years ago by hunter-gatherers along Galveston Bay and its tributaries. Galveston Bay's earliest known named inhabitants are the Akokisa (or Orcoquisa) tribes who lived here between 7,000 and 5,000 years ago. Other Native American tribes that seasonally frequented and moved into the area included the Karankawa, Coco, and Tonkawa tribes. The first European account of the natives of the Texas coast occurred with the Spaniard Cabeza de Vaca getting stranded here in 1528. Cabeza de Vaca encountered the native people near Galveston Bay and wrote an account of his experiences and the appearance and culture of the natives when he returned to Spain in 1542.³

Although Spain laid claim to the Western Hemisphere by right of Columbus's voyages, soon Spain had to defend its claimed territories from other Europeans, namely the French, in the 1600s and 1700s. Both Spanish and French explorers made efforts to map the bay. The earliest known map of Galveston Bay is the French map produced by La Harpe

in 1721. In 1783, the Spanish Governor of Louisiana, Bernardo de Galvez, commissioned Jose Antonio Evia to survey the entire Gulf coast. Evia named both a bay and an island on the upper Texas coast for his patron, Galvez. The 1799 map produced as a result of Evia's surveys and notes show for the first time the label of "Galveston Bay."⁴

Around this time, the newly named Galveston Bay began to transition from that of a food source to that of a place of settlement and colonization. With the arrival of European and Anglo American privateers, adventurers, and filibusters in the early 1800s, the annual visits by native, nomadic tribes greatly declined. The privateer Jean Lafitte arrived in Galveston from New Orleans around 1817 and built a settlement called Campeachy consisting of 100 to 200 houses, stores, inns, and even a billiard parlor. The hurricane of 1818 destroyed this settlement, and Lafitte was gone by 1820. In 1822, Stephen F.



The Galveston Bay watershed stretches to north of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex and houses half of the population of Texas. Image courtesy of Houston Advanced Research Center.



Volunteers have actively restored intertidal marsh lost in Galveston Bay for decades. Photo courtesy of Galveston Bay Foundation.

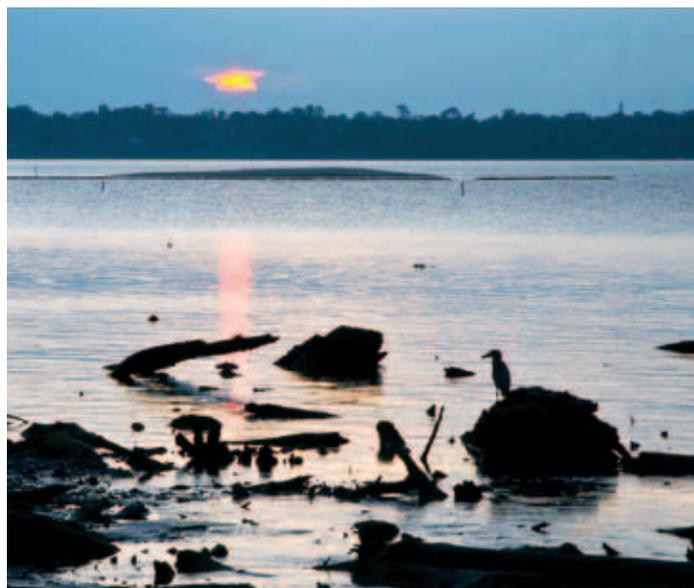
Austin established Anglo American settlements in the Galveston Bay area. For the first time, the bay became a main conduit for water transportation to trade goods. The first vessels used for this purpose were small schooners and sloops. In 1828, the bay was again surveyed for depths due to several incidents of boats running aground, particularly at Red Fish Bar, a shallow bar and reef that stretched from present day San Leon to Smith Point. The era of steamboats in Galveston Bay began in the mid-1830s. The *Cuyuga*, *Laura*, and *Yellowstone* were some of the steamboats that served Galveston Bay. The new colonists established settlements, like Harrisburg, and landings such as Morgan's Point and Lynch's Ferry. The convenient locations of Houston and Galveston led them to rise to prominence as important Texas cities in 1836 and 1837. Perhaps as a first indication that Houston could and would be a port city, the Allens, developers of Houston, commissioned the steamboat *Laura* to travel up Buffalo Bayou in 1837. An important observation to the future of Galveston Bay is that, during this time of rapid colonization, settlers manipulated their new land to more closely resemble the land from which they came. They attempted to "tame the wilderness" of Galveston Bay and, in doing so, cleared woodlands, imported plants and animals from their homelands, and built permanent homesteads. This process of clearing the land brought about erosion and silting of the waterways, an occurrence we are infinitely more familiar with now.⁵

The Galveston Bay area played an integral part in Texas' independence from Mexico. The deciding battle was fought at the confluence of the San Jacinto River and Buffalo Bayou, at what is now called the San Jacinto Battleground. Mexican President Santa Anna was captured here and taken on the steamboat *Yellowstone* to Galveston. In 1845, the United States annexed Texas nine years after it won its independence from Mexico. This was a prosperous time for the bay area, with the importance of the maritime industry reflected in the 1850 U.S. Census identifying Galveston as the largest town in Texas with 4,177 people. Galveston Bay's main function at this time remained a transportation system, and many more residents identified themselves as mariners or boatmen by trade rather than fishermen or oystermen. Many navigational improvements were made to the bay during this time, including updated charts, the deepening and straightening of Buffalo Bayou, a lightship, lighted beacons, and eventually the Bolivar Point lighthouse.⁶

Although a rivalry for dominance had formed between

Houston and Galveston, the onset of the Civil War briefly united residents of these two cities in support of the Confederacy. Union vessels began a blockade of Galveston in July 1861 that continued through the end of the war in 1865. For most of this time, the Confederates maintained control over Galveston, and blockade runners successfully bypassed Union ships in getting supplies in and out of Galveston.⁷

Following the war, the commercial rivalry between the port cities of Houston and Galveston resumed, and exploitation of the Galveston Bay area's resources sharply increased. Deep water channel dredging to Houston occupied the decades to follow. The Corps of Engineers initiated a series of channel dredging projects. Another Corps of Engineers project involved the construction of a pair of jetties into the Gulf of Mexico—a project which changed the bay forever. After some trial and error, the jetties were eventually completed in 1897, with the south jetty extending six and a half miles and the north jetty five miles into the Gulf. The jetties lived up to their intended purpose; the channel into the bay reached twenty-six feet deep, and the city of Galveston benefited immensely. Galveston maintained its status as the largest city in Texas in 1880, with 22,248 persons; Houston was but the third largest with 16,513. Railroad building in other parts of Texas elevated the populations of Dallas and San Antonio, which soon bypassed Galveston. Plans for a Houston Ship Channel were in play, however, which soon proved to end any commercial rivalry that existed between Houston and Galveston, solidifying Houston's fate as a major port city and the state's most populous city. The great hurricane of 1900, which devastated Galveston and killed an estimated 6,000 people, resulted in many Galveston businesses relocating inland. The Houston Ship Channel project created an eighteen foot channel and a turning basin by 1908, but the ever-present need for bigger and deeper won out, and by 1914, the Houston Ship Channel was deepened to twenty-five feet. Concurrently, Texas City created a twenty-five foot channel into its new port and an extensive dike into the bay to protect its new channel. The Texas City dike later proved to have significant impacts to the ecology of West Bay.



Sunrise over Burnet Bay, named for David G. Burnet, interim president of the Republic of Texas in 1836.

Photo by Bob Dempsey, courtesy of Galveston Bay Foundation.

The era marked a time of manipulation of the natural features of Galveston Bay to rapidly develop and protect transportation channels to benefit the economy.⁸

In the early 1900s, the petroleum era in Galveston Bay began on the shores of Tabbs Bay. The Goose Creek oilfield's peak years of production occurred from 1917 to 1919, with seven to nine million barrels produced per year. The Humble Oil Company (later ExxonMobil) constructed the first oil refinery on Goose Creek in 1919. Humble Oil named the landing Baytown and built the refinery and a town for employees west of Goose Creek. Industrialization continued in the Galveston Bay area, with various oil and chemical companies coming for its deep water channels and ports, wide open spaces, underground sources of fresh water, and general lack of regulations. Demand for more and larger barge access resulted in the deepening (and widening) of the Houston Ship Channel to thirty-four feet in the 1930s, to thirty-six feet in the 1940s, and to forty feet in the 1950s. Presently, the Houston Ship Channel is a fifty-two mile long channel dredged to forty-five feet deep.⁹

Beginning in about 1910, the public began to be aware of a "polluted" Galveston Bay. They noted oily water and declines in fishing and began to blame the industries. Two major projects that had the potential to have massive impacts to the bay began their planning stages in the 1950s and 1960s. The first was the Wallisville Lake Project, a plan to dam the lower Trinity River south of Wallisville. Despite initial objections by landowners whose land would flood with the construction of the dam, the project began in 1966. The second large project was the next phase of deepening and widening the Houston Ship Channel, which surfaced in 1967. The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 reviewed both the Wallisville Lake Project and the ship channel project. In accordance with the new policy, the Corps of Engineers had to put together environmental impact statements (EIS) for these projects. Both projects met much opposition from the public, including fishermen and shrimpers, landowners, and other citizens of the bay area.¹⁰

Around this time, small groups of local conservation-minded interests began gathering and talking, with environmental attorney Jim Blackburn at the lead. The impacts of the two major bay projects were, of course, main topics of conversation. In 1987, forty individuals became the charter members and incorporators of the Galveston Bay Foundation, a new environmental

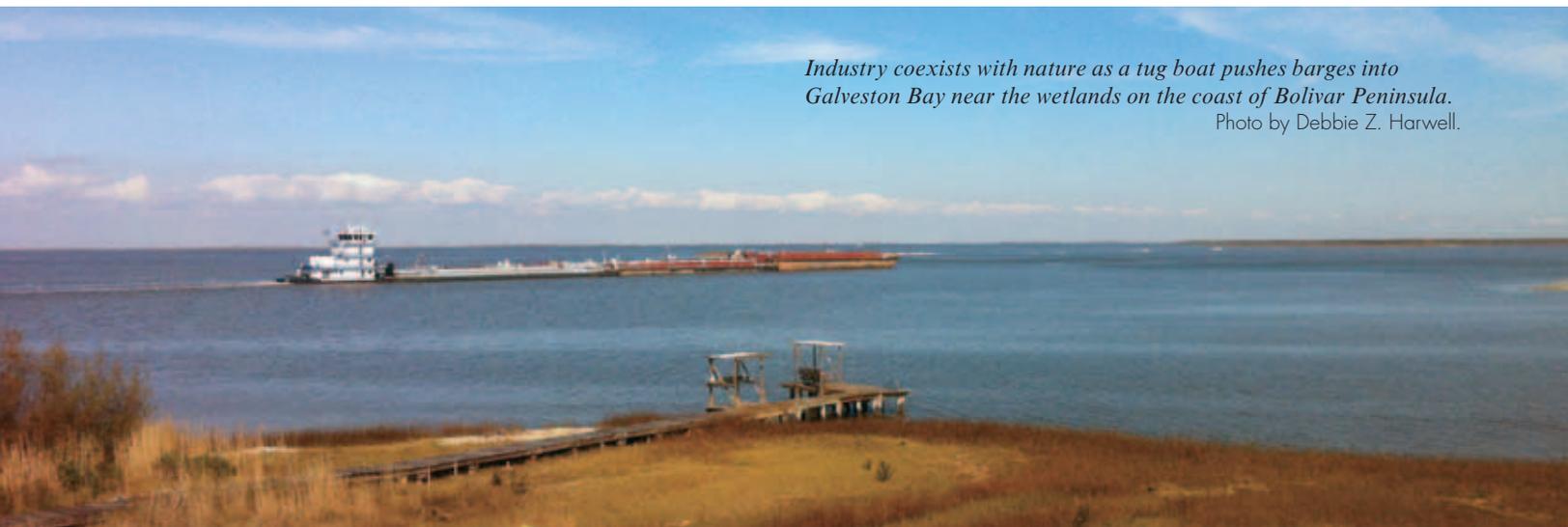
nonprofit corporation focused on the interests of Galveston Bay. Linda Shead, founding executive director of the Galveston Bay Foundation states, "Looking back, it seems that the Galveston Bay Foundation was an idea whose time had come. In the mid-1980s, several major construction projects were on the table which would significantly impact the resources and the uses of the bay system. Also at that time, some of the failures of environmental organizations to make progress in protecting Texas natural resources were weighing heavily on the minds of local conservationists."¹¹

The Galveston Bay Foundation was designed and structured to represent a true cross-section of bay interests to address issues and concerns related to Galveston Bay. A strong board of trustees whose members represent diverse user groups, such as sport and commercial fishing groups, recreational users, environmental groups, shipping, development, industry, and business interests, manages the Foundation. The mission of the Foundation is to "preserve, protect, and enhance the natural resources of the Galveston Bay estuarine system and its tributaries for present users and for posterity." The Foundation's programs in advocacy, conservation, education, and research strive to ensure that Galveston Bay remains a beautiful and productive place for generations to come. In addition to its official mission, the Foundation's trustees established several "unwritten" guidelines by which to operate. One was "to agree to disagree" and another was "to work together whenever possible." Though these may seem simple concepts for adults to grasp, they have proven integrally important to the success of an organization managed by trustees of such diverse interests. At an early meeting of the Galveston Bay Foundation, representatives from the typically feuding commercial and recreational fishing industries saw the need to work together to "ensure there is a resource." This is a prime example of the mindset on which this organization was built and one of the big reasons why it has been so successful in its mission.¹²

In 2012, the Galveston Bay Foundation celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. Also in 2012, the Clean Water Act (CWA) celebrated its fortieth anniversary. Over the last several decades, the bay has continued to change. There have been gains and losses in areas such as water quality; the extent of important habitats such as coastal prairie, coastal marsh, seagrass meadows, and oyster reefs; and levels of freshwater inflows. Overall,

Industry coexists with nature as a tug boat pushes barges into Galveston Bay near the wetlands on the coast of Bolivar Peninsula.

Photo by Debbie Z. Harwell.





A sea nettle sits among the saltwort at Galveston Bay Foundation's Sweetwater Nature Preserve on Galveston Island.

Photo by Andrew Hancock, courtesy of Galveston Bay Foundation.

water quality is much better than in the 1970s when the CWA became law and placed strict regulations on industrial and municipal discharges. But today, we still battle issues such as poor water quality in creeks and bayous, illegal discharges of boater wastes, and seafood consumption advisories resulting from legacy pollutants that remain in the system to remind us of our past transgressions against the bay. The trends of extreme losses of important coastal habitats, too, have seen change. Historically, these habitats suffered and declined due to development, land subsidence resulting from groundwater and oil extraction,

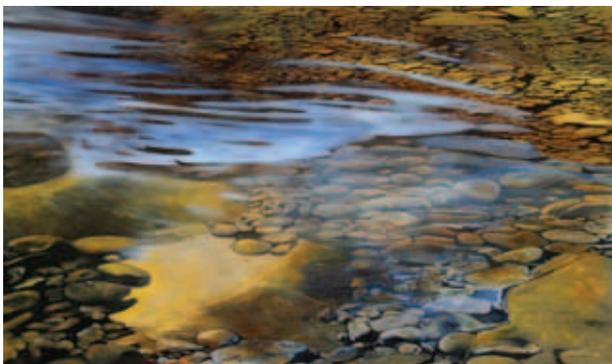
shoreline erosion, and poor water quality. Emergent wetlands, for instance, were estimated to have declined by 35,100 acres between 1953 and 1989. Land subsidence in the Galveston Bay area has been reduced to near background levels due to a switch from the reliance on groundwater to surface water and the work of the Harris-Galveston Coastal Subsidence District. This has afforded groups like the Galveston Bay Foundation the opportunity to restore wetland habitats that previously sunk and drowned and protect the vulnerable shorelines from erosion. Since the early- to mid-1990s when the Foundation began doing restoration work, it has restored over 620 acres of marsh and (to a lesser extent) seagrass habitat, protected over sixteen miles of Galveston Bay shorelines from erosion, and placed nearly 3,400 acres of quality habitat into permanent conservation.¹³

But the job is not done. The Galveston Bay Foundation and other like-minded organizations, agencies, and individuals continue to diligently work every day to protect the resource that is Galveston Bay, one of our nation's great waters. To find out more about the Galveston Bay Foundation, to support its cause, or to become a member or volunteer, please visit its website at www.galvbay.org. History—particularly recent history—has been hard on our bay, but given the right stewardship and care as well as the bay's natural resiliency, we can find a balance between meeting our human needs and having a healthy bay ecosystem for present users and those who follow. ♻️

Courtney Smith serves as vice president of operations for the Galveston Bay Foundation. She has a degree in environmental science from the University of Houston – Clear Lake and has worked with the Galveston Bay Foundation for eleven years.

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Debbie Stevens, *Rio Frio*, 2013, oil on panel, 48x72 inches

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Houston's Own Historical Forested Wetlands: The Spring Creek Greenway

By Jennifer Lorenz

My first recollections of Houston were always visual, looking up from the back area of our family van where my parents had pulled out the back seat so my brothers and I could lay on blankets (no seatbelts required back then). During our frequent trips from our home in San Antonio to visit my grandparents on Crosstimbers off of I-45, I always knew we were getting into Houston when I would see the billboards on I-10 popping up and passing above my head with more frequency.

For close to forty years of my life, my vision of Houston was predominantly concrete and billboards and spaghetti-bowl freeway intersections. The little interaction I had with the “bayou” system also included concrete—the rounded-out culvert ditches in front of my grandma’s house where we splashed around after rainstorms. I remember that horse-play as great fun but not the slathering of calamine lotion for the itchy bites that followed those “swims” in the run-off.

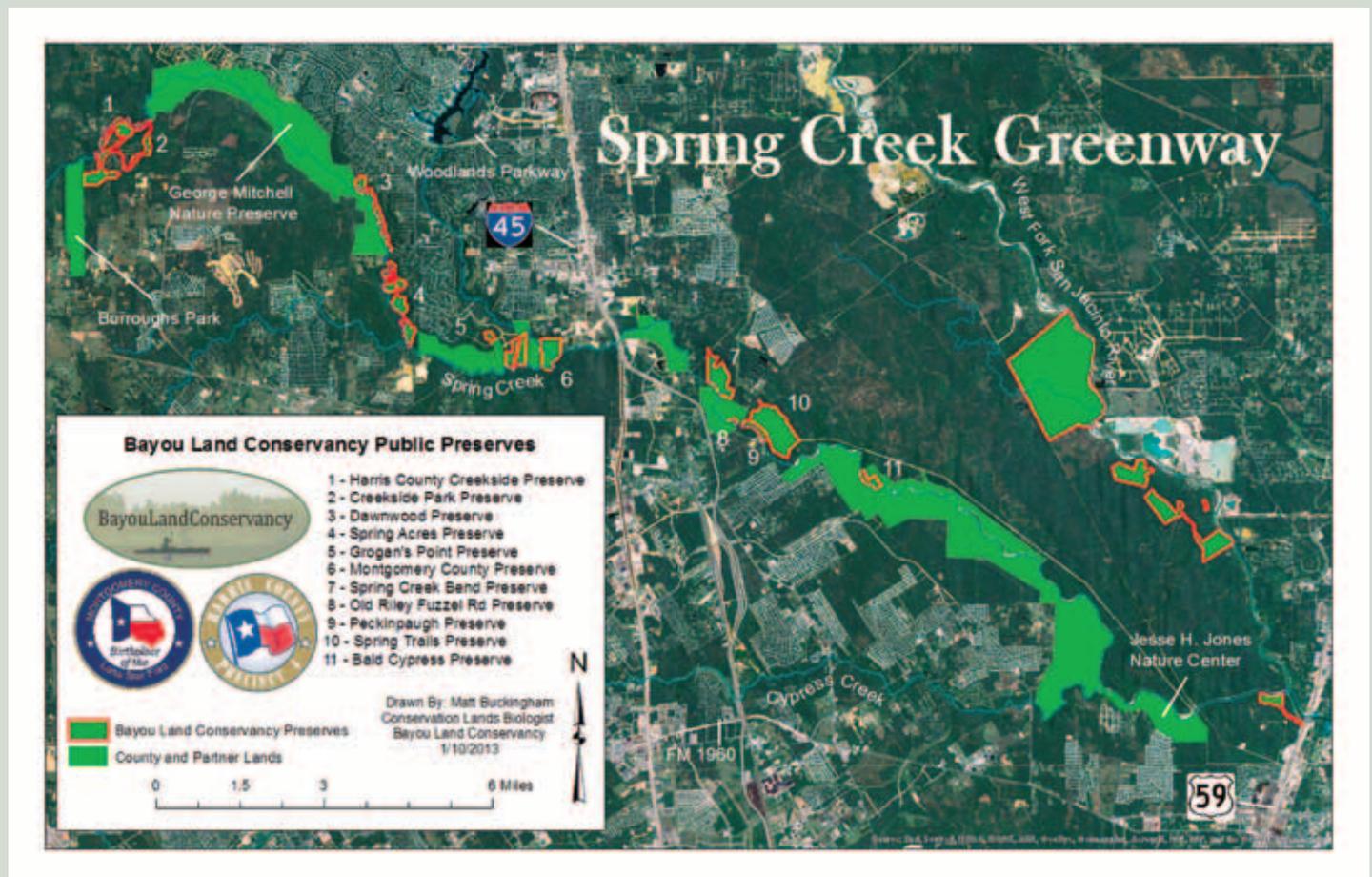
Fourteen years ago, my husband’s new job brought us back here. And while I did come a bit reluctantly (okay, there was some kicking and screaming) to the home city of my parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents—back to the “concrete jungle”—I can now say how wrong I was

about Houston. I am thankful and proud that, every day, I get to work on the longest, contiguous urban forested corridor in the nation—the Spring Creek Greenway—right here in “concrete” Houston.

History of the Spring Creek Greenway

This major green corridor, now close to 75% complete, will ultimately be thirty-three miles long and over 12,000 acres. Spring Creek comprises the liquid border between Montgomery and Harris Counties. Between northern Harris County’s Precinct 4, which includes Tomball and Humble, and Montgomery County’s Precinct 3, which includes The Woodlands, this area represents one of the most densely populated areas in the country—yet it still provides habitat for gray foxes, bald eagles, salamanders, and centuries-old palmettos, sycamores, and bald cypress.

The methodical preservation of this greenway actually began on another nearby bayou system, Cypress Creek. Early in his tenure, Harris County Judge Jon Lindsay (1975 - 1995), a resident of northern Harris County, started putting together bits and pieces of properties along the floodway of Cypress Creek, which became the Cypress





Paddlers enjoy quarterly canoe / kayak trips of Bayou Land Conservancy on Spring Creek, passing white sand beaches and centuries-old trees.
Photo by Jennifer Lorenz.

All images courtesy of Bayou Land Conservancy.

Creek Parks Project. “Working with the Harris County Flood Control District,” recalled Lindsay, “we were able to take advantage of the new guidelines for floodplains that came out in late 1975 and early 1976. We took advantage of that reduction in value of those floodways and bought out some tracts and then also had others donated to us.” Giving some credit to his assistant, Judy Overby-Bell, Lindsay said they organized early donors and sellers including Rice University, Mischer Development, and what was then Humble Oil.¹

One of Lindsay’s biggest and earliest successes was expanding Mercer Park on Cypress Creek; but rather than

stopping with Cypress Creek, he moved projects further north and west onto Spring Creek when he had the opportunity. “Houston Endowment gave us the money to buy what is now Jesse Jones Nature Center [just west of 59]. And then we took the opportunity to apply for a grant from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and they helped us buy what is now Burroughs Park,” said Lindsay.² He worked to expand Meyer Park on Cypress Creek and then began focusing on Spring Creek where he directed Overby-Bell to write grants and spend park bond money to purchase as many contiguous acres as possible of the floodway and floodplain of this northern Houston region.



The purported “Springs of Santa Rosa.” In the middle of the photo are sensitive ferns and the top and top right are woodferns around this clear seepage area located directly northward across Spring Creek from Jones Nature Center. Photo by Robert Collins.

Montgomery County’s entry to the Greenway

January 22, 2002, marked Montgomery County’s Precinct 3 official “entry” into the Spring Creek Greenway, although The Woodlands Development Company had been (and still is) setting aside vast portions of their floodway and floodplain along Spring Creek for years. On this date, Montgomery County Precinct 3 Commissioner Ed Chance signed an agreement to permanently set aside land with Bayou Land Conservancy (then Legacy Land Trust). Understanding the need to guard against development of the creek’s floodway and floodplain in order to protect his constituents’ homes and businesses, Chance agreed to the first conservation easement with a county in the state of Texas: the 71.43 acre Montgomery County Preserve. Today, hundreds of acres make up the partnership between the county and Bayou Land Conservancy that grew from this first conservation easement.

For many years, Bayou Land Conservancy was the only federal U. S. Army Corps of Engineers-approved wetland mitigation In-Lieu Fee program holder in the state. The organization has moved millions of dollars to Montgomery County to purchase development rights that provide in-perpetuity protection of major portions of the Spring Creek Greenway. These preserves will never be commercially developed—ever—but may include low-impact pervious surface hike and bike and equestrian trails. In addition, they have provided much-needed funding to protect connecting

puzzle pieces between Montgomery County purchases of floodway along this corridor.

Although Bayou Land Conservancy is based in northwest Harris County, the organization has predominantly worked for fifteen years on the northern side of Spring Creek. Commissioner Jerry Eversole explained the reason for that years ago, “It doesn’t do much good paddling down the creek to just look at one side of the creek.”³ Since Montgomery County has never had a formal parks department, park land needed to be purchased on the northern side of the creek to match what took place on the southern side in Harris County.

As a result of the foresight of Judge Lindsay, the greenway connectivity pursued by Commissioner Eversole and The Woodlands Development Company, and the support of Commissioner Chance and Bayou Land Conservancy, the Spring Creek Greenway will be enjoyed in perpetuity for generations to come.

Thankfully, Harris County Commissioner for Precinct 4, Jack Cagle, continues to rank the Greenway as a high priority for his administration, seeing it as “a river of enormous importance.”⁴ The new Montgomery County Precinct 3 Commissioner James Noack has expressed his keen interest and desire to continue his precinct’s involvement “especially for hiking and equestrian use.” For the many creatures that inhabit this border between the two counties, their connected, viable habitat will remain for years to come.⁵

Early History of the Spring Creek Region

The Spring Creek area has a fascinating history. At its juncture with the San Jacinto River lay the tribe of Canos, an Orcoquisa tribe (others later spelled this Akokisa) made up of two villages on the Montgomery side of Spring Creek directly across from the modern site of Jesse Jones Nature Center, the 300-acre Harris County Precinct 4 Park. The Orcoquisa were, and still remain, one of the most unknown



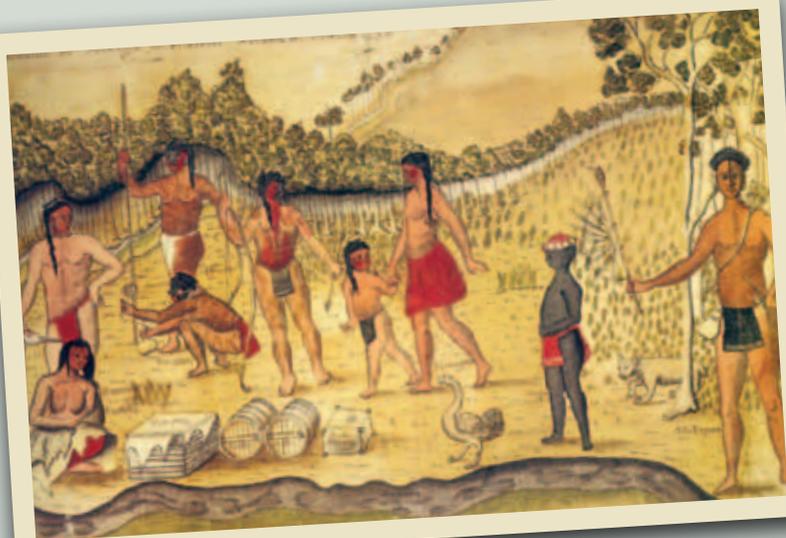
Evidence of earlier residents, the sharpened tool and red ochre pottery pieces were excavated on June 27, 2002, within a power line easement very close to what are considered to be the “Springs of Santa Rosa.” These items are held at the Jesse Jones Nature Center.
Photo by Matt Buckingham.

of native tribes within North America. The first southeast Texas tribe contacted by Cabeza de Vaca in 1728, it had no other documented contact with the outside world, except passing French traders, until 1746. That same year, Spain entered this area, specifically Joaquin de Orobio Bazterra, who was searching for French infiltrators there.⁶ Orobio stayed with the Orcoquisa at a place he named Puesto de San Rafael.⁷

The Spanish again contacted the Akokisa (Orcoquisa) in September of 1756. Bernardo de Miranda, lieutenant governor of Texas, met with chief “Antonio el Gordo” at his Akokisa “Rancheria,” on a heavy flowing stream, that was ten leagues west of the San Jacinto and one league east of the junction of another stream. El Gordo’s village, on a stream named Santa Rosa del Alcazar, was called Arroyo de Santa Rosa. In his report to Governor Barrios, Miranda stated that the two springs of Santa Rosa del Alcazar and the surrounding area met all the requirements for water, fields, and pastures needed to sustain a settlement.⁸

Harris County educational programmer for Jones Nature Center, Monte Parks works just across the creek from this site, which might be the “Springs of Santa Rosa.” He teaches Spring Creek history to children and adults of the Houston region and gets folks out onto the creek in canoes, kayaks, and pontoon boats. While archeological digs have not been done at the site, Parks says, “two histories specifically mention the site as being approximately a mile from the confluence of Spring and Cypress Creek and approximately a mile from the confluence of the west fork of the San Jacinto River and Spring Creek.”⁹

Parks and other Harris County officials, including Commissioner Cagle, believe that this area across from Jones Nature Center is the site. “Looking at Spring



Indians of Several Nations, New Orleans (1735) by French artist Alexander de Batz depicts four Illinois warriors, their women, and a child; a black slave and one Akokisa warrior (far right) stand in the foreground. The painting depicts the French alliance with the Akokisa against France’s enemy, the Natchez tribe. It represents one of the few eyewitness depictions of the Akokisas’ appearance.

Creek,” said Parks, “this is the only high point on the creek. It’s very fertile ground behind this bluff and if I were a Native American, this is exactly where I would put my village – next to these clear flowing springs with a regular temperature.”

The site clearly has a number of ferns, a great indicator of seepage areas, says Bayou Land Conservancy conservation lands biologist Matt Buckingham who has studied natural spring areas throughout the country. Harris County Precinct 4 parks director Dennis Johnston believes the area might be across the creek from “his side” because the village tribe would have benefited from the prevailing southeast winds, and the higher elevation provided a better vantage point to watch the comings and goings of traders along the creek.

Johnston is not completely sure the formal “springs” were solely based on the other side. “I’ve seen many arrowheads and clay middens on the Harris County side, and there are much larger natural pond areas on this side of the creek,” Johnston explains. He conjectures that quite a bit of movement possibly occurred between the two areas, particularly when the residents could so easily walk across the creek when the water was low.¹⁰

David Martin, who has lived in Spring in Montgomery County for years and belongs to the Sons of the Republic of Texas (one of the “Original 300”), has visited the Montgomery County site. Martin noted that Robert S. Weddele’s *The French Thorn* references the springs and the original French and Spanish explorers of the area. He agrees with Johnston that no definitive answer on the location exists at this time. Martin, a lecturer at local colleges and schools, agrees that the area has a rich history.¹¹

Natural History of the Greenway

In my thirteen years working with Bayou Land Conservancy, landowners have granted me access to some amazing privately- and publicly-owned lands in the Houston region. Exceptional biologists and naturalists who specialize in various areas, including mushrooms, birds, amphibians,



Smallmouth salamanders are sensitive to pollution and poor water quality. That they persist in the seasonally flooded wetlands adjacent to Spring Creek is a testament to the quality of its waters.

Photo by Matt Buckingham.



Luna moths are one of the largest moth species in North America and can be found around their necessary host plant species, sweetgum trees, along the Spring Creek Greenway. Males can be identified by their feathery antennae, which help them pick up female chemical cues.

Photo by Matt Buckingham.

insects, flowering plants, and even soil types, have joined me on these site visits. Many of these people serve on our advisory board, and our staff refers to them as our “Star Team.”

For more than twenty years, my work has taken me to some incredible places, including one of the most famous forested areas—Walden Pond, which many know from Henry David Thoreau’s writings. The trees around that pond, however, have been cut many times since then. While still a wonderful area today, you are not seeing the same trees that Thoreau wrote about in the mid-nineteenth century, but trees that are sixty to eighty years old.

Contrast that with the forested floodway lands of Spring Creek that Bayou Land Conservancy and our county partners protect. As I walk there, I get goose bumps thinking about these massive trees, knowing that I am standing in the shade of the same trees the Spanish and French explorers encountered. Perhaps one of these same towering bald cypress provided respite for an Orcoquiza child after swimming in the creek. How lucky we are to have centuries-old trees in this corridor in Houston, Texas, in a landscape of historic beauty and significance. We need more people to know about it—to experience it—and to learn to love it and write about it like Carmine Stahl, our own Thoreau. He helped me understand that the Houston region is NOT just a concrete jungle; rather, it holds more biodiversity than many places across the country. This quickly rang true as I verified more than forty different tree species on a single twenty-acre piece of land along the Spring Creek Greenway. 🌿

Jennifer Lorenz is a native Texan and the executive director of Bayou Land Conservancy, a nationally Accredited Land Trust, which has permanently protected more than 10,000 acres in the Houston region. She is a certified Texas Master Naturalist (and yes, now loves Houston).

I will always hold dear the time that I spent with Harris County parks naturalist Carmine Stahl before he retired and moved out of state. The author of one of my favorite field identification books, *Trees of Texas: An Easy Guide to Leaf Identification*, Stahl was the pre-eminent naturalist of the Spring Creek area. His quiet voice and slow, lumbering gait belied his immense excitement at the myriad wonders of the flora and fauna that he happily shared. Listening to him explain with touch, sight, and smell (and years of experience) why particular bald cypresses were clearly more than 400 years old was like taking lessons from a “Jedi” naturalist. His incredible knowledge and love of the area’s flora and fauna changed me as I learned about lands that became Bayou Land Conservancy preserves. Stahl wrote many details about the ecosystems of Jones Nature Center and the adjacent northeast Harris County area. Some excerpts from that natural history follow.¹²

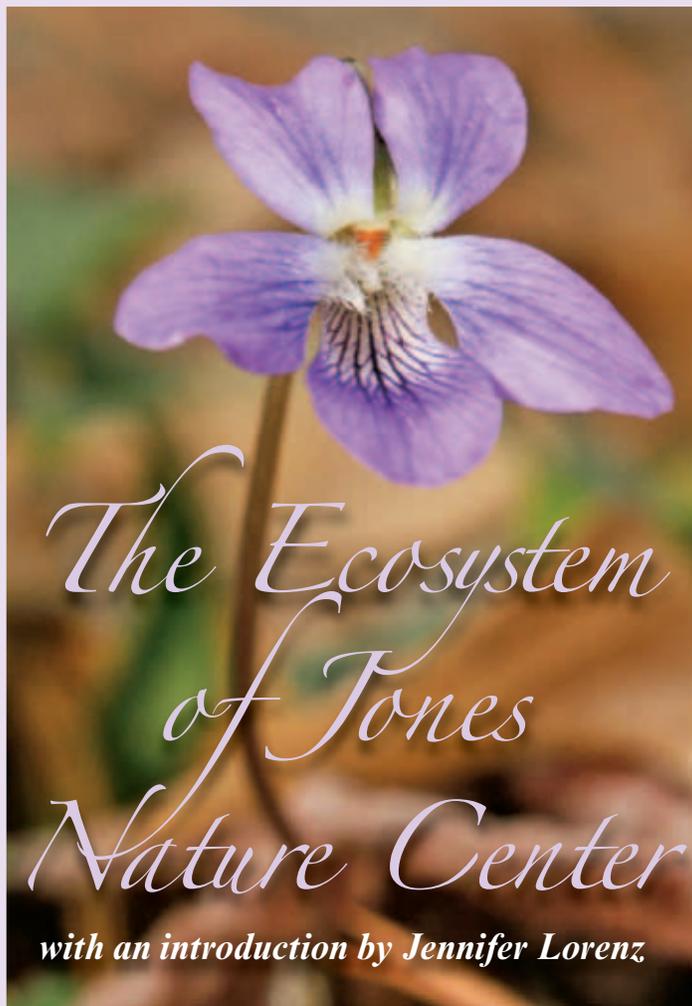
In and above the floodplains a mixed pine-hardwood forest dominates. Northern and Eastern Harris County, in fact, represent the southwestern-most extension of the great southern pine forest that begins at the Atlantic coast. A number of Microsystems exist within the area, giving rise to a rich and diverse flora.

The forest is dominated by Loblolly Pine (*Pinus taeda*). This fast growing tree overtops the rest of the canopy layer and is the most visible tall tree year-around. The only other native pine, Shortleaf (*Pinus echinata*), occurs in scattered spots on the higher and drier slopes. Both of these trees can attain heights of 100 feet or more . . .

Century-old Magnolias are a striking feature of these woods in their large bronze-green leaves and fragrant white flowers. Their ancient trunks are often hollow, providing homes for various forest creatures.

“Cypress Ponds” are an important feature of the floodplain forest. Paralleling the streams in a general west-to-east drainage, some of these hold water even through drought periods and are rich in aquatic life. Fish of many kinds, frog, turtles, aquatic insects, freshwater shrimp and clams inhabit the ponds. This attracts herons, egrets, wood ducks and other waterfowl. Raccoons patrol the edges at night seeking a crawfish, frog or clam for a meal.

The Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) once threatened by DDT and other pesticides, is increasing in the area and is frequently seen in its feet-first dive on fish in Spring Creek. Many other bird species are found throughout the woodlands. One very special small bird, the Swainson’s Warbler (*Lymnophylis swainsonii*), draws birders from many countries of the world to Jones Park. This bird makes its nest



A harbinger of spring, the common blue violet is a frequent site on the floor of diverse, healthy forests including Spring Creek from late February to early April.
Photo by Matt Buckingham.

in thick, tangled vines and canebrakes, a habitat found within the park and adjacent woods. It is extremely hard to find in other areas, and birders wishing to add it to their “life lists” come to the park to see it.

In fall, multitudes of migrant songbirds converge on the forest, fattening and preparing for their long trip southward across the Gulf of Mexico to the tropics. In spring the woods again afford rest, refuge and food after the 600 miles non-stop trip across the Gulf.

One of the chief characteristics of this forest is the vine that everywhere climbs the trees and droop from their branches to give a jungle-life effect. Among the chief species are Pepper Vine (*Ampelopsis arborescens*), Alabama Supplejack (*Berchemia scandens*), Trumpet Creeper (*Bignonia radicans*), Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), Cross Vine (*Bignonia capreolata*), Muscadine Grape (*Vitis rotundifolia*), and River-bank

Grape (*Vitis cordifolia*). The grapes provide food for a multitude of birds and mammals, and most of the other vines also have seeds that are attractive to birds.

The ubiquitous Poison Ivy (*Rhus toxicodendron*) runs over the ground and climbs trees with big, hairy vines. Humans are the only creatures sensitive to the plant, and it is an extremely valuable wildlife food. Deer and rabbits browse the foliage, and more than 70 species of birds depend on the small yellow berries in the winter. It also provides some of the most colorful fall foliage in the woods. . . .

This rich biome of plant and animal life should be preserved for itself and for human enjoyment, education and research. Its proximity to a major city makes it singularly valuable and special. ♻️

TEJAS: Environmental Justice Texas Style

A conversation with Juan Parras and Natalie Garza



JUAN PARRAS, executive director of Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services (TEJAS), was born in Big Spring, Texas, in 1949. Following his high school graduation from St. Anthony's Seminary in San Antonio, he took courses both at St. Mary's University and the University of Houston. Juan Parras dedicated his professional life to fighting injustices, first with Harris County social services, then with AFSCME, a national public services employee union. He later used his unionizing skills to provide organizational support for the community of Convent, Louisiana, in their fight for environmental justice. Eventually, Green Peace hired Parras, a move which he believes was the organization's first permanent Latino appointment in the nation. He worked with them on the "Toxic Campaign" against polyvinyl chloride (PVC) before budget constraints ended his job. From there, he did community outreach work for the Texas Southern University – Environmental Law and Justice Center, which led to the founding of TEJAS. Parras, who resides in Segundo Barrio, sat down with UH-Oral History of Houston director, Natalie Garza, in August 2009 to talk about his work.



In August 2012, and then again in September, the TPC Group petrochemical plant in southeast Houston released a burn-off flare in response to power outages. The thick black smoke blowing over Chávez High School spread for miles and is an indication that the flare was not burning "clean."

All photos courtesy of TEJAS.



The car crusher is one of the stops on the toxic tour at the corner of Navigation and Harrisburg. In a classic tale illustrating the “law of unintended consequences,” President Barack Obama’s Cash for Clunkers program unleashed an environmental nightmare through shredding, not recycling, many of the 690,000 cars people traded in for credit toward a new car. E–The Environmental Magazine claims recycling parts would have saved tens of millions of barrels of oil.

Natalie Garza: How did you get involved in environmental justice?

Juan Parras: One thing that I learned [from my Boy Scout leader, Bird Andrews] ... sort of lead me into environmental work. ... I remember going camping. ... If we went to a state park, or even a national park, we would camp out two or three days, and before we left ... he would line us up in a single file. He said, “Spread your arms and everybody just line up,” and he would make us walk all the way through our camping area and beyond the camping area and clean up everything. He says, “If it doesn’t belong in the dirt, pick it up.”... We would say, “Yeah, but, you know, this was filthy when we got here and now you’re making us clean up.” But, he said, “Well, you enjoyed it and if we clean it up, others can enjoy it.” ...

To me it’s important that all communities in a sense be treated equally. ... If I take you to some of those [poor] neighborhoods, again they all pay taxes, they’re all entitled to good city cleanup services. But, if you see the neighborhoods, they’re not getting it ... Why is it that poor communities have all the waste water treatment plants? Why is it that they get all the chemical plants? Why is that they get things, as they say, we don’t want those things in our backyard. The conclusion [in a recent] study was that those businesses come to low-income communities, African American, Latino, and poor whites because they don’t have the political resistance ... they don’t have the political connections. That’s one thing. And the other thing is they don’t have the resources. Because if you want to fight an environmental issue, you’re going to have to

“We’re not against jobs. But, wouldn’t you rather have a company that comes in here and you get hired, but it doesn’t have an impact on you? It doesn’t pollute you, it doesn’t cause cancer in the community, no birth defects, tumors. That’s what we want. We want a clean environment.”

– Juan Parras

a federal program to clean up uncontrolled hazardous waste sites.]

Four of us started it. I was working at the law school at the Environmental Justice Center, and ... TSU had an environmental justice clinic, and what we did is we provided legal assistance, technical assistance, and education. ... We had been thinking about starting our own nonprofit ... [because] if you’re going beyond what [the university] sees as trouble for them getting money from foundations or corporations, they’ll say, “Hey, you need to back off of this case ... or you can do this, but don’t do that.” ...

retain an attorney that deals with environmental issues, and it’s going to take a lot of money. ...

A lot of people that I take on toxic tours, they think, “Man, this is like a third world country.” “Yeah, it’s because you live in a third world neighborhood.”... I can take you right now and show you all the nasty things in our community like that scrapping yard there. They won’t build that in River Oaks, or they won’t build that in, the Medical Center. They won’t even build it downtown. But they’ll put it in our backyard. ... We have eighteen-wheelers left and right, I mean when I talk to groups in better off communities I tell them, “If you go into my neighborhood, an eighteen-wheeler is like a family car, because at a stop light you’ll see fifteen eighteen-wheelers ...” That creates a lot of pollution, and of course, we have the Houston Ship Channel ...

NG: Can you tell me the name of your organization?

JP: Ours is TEJAS; it stands for Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services. We want to deal with statewide issues, communities of color, in Mission, Texas, as well as Odessa, Texas, and Lubbock, Texas, and East and West

Texas. It has more of a universal tone than just simply one location. Some folks initially wanted to call it, “Houston Environmental Justice Center.” Then, if you’re outside of Houston that means that we couldn’t help you out. ...

NG: What are the goals of the organization?

JP: The goals are to fight environmental justice issues. The way to do that is to do it through education, through workshops, through training, to teaching people who to call in case there’s an accident or who to contact if they have a certain environmental issue because in the greater Houston area, all the way from here to Texas City, then Galveston Bay, we have a lot of water quality issues. ... There’s some that are dealing with land contamination, the Superfund sites, but our focus right now is on the environmental justice communities all around the Houston Ship Channel. It’s a big mission. [Superfund is



Members of TEJAS protest Valero and the Keystone XL pipeline as part of the Tar Sands Blockade, a broader coalition of Texas and Oklahoma residents using nonviolent direct action to physically stop the building of the pipeline. The Valero refinery, nestled against the Manchester neighborhood, is one of the destinations for the tar sands pipeline. Among other issues, protesters object to the potential for dangerous leaks and intimidation of residents to sign contractual agreements for their land. Visit www.tarsandsblockade.org for more information.

[It began with] my son, Bryan Lucas, or Lucas, and then my wife Anna, and then I have a real good friend named, Krish Navini (she's from India), ... John Sullivan, and we had another young lady, Pakistani, that helped us iron this out, do the nonprofit application, and we finally got nonprofit status in 2006. Once we got the status, then we got this building, and the way we financed this building was that each of us contributed to pay for the rent. We split it up, and so we maintained this building until we got a little grant for \$20,000, and we used most of that money for rent, because everybody is practically volunteers here.

NG: What activities has TEJAS been involved in since then?

JP: There're a lot of activities. [Educating the public in programs on KPFT, local PBS, the *Texas Observer*, CNN, the Center for Health and Environmental Justice has featured us on their national magazine two or three times.] ... I have served on the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council, which is a federally appointed position to be an advisor to the EPA, and then, I'm on several boards, national boards, Alliance for Healthy Homes, they deal with childhood lead poisoning. ... The Gulf Restoration Network ... deal[s] with coastal issues, erosion, wetlands, over-fishing, the oil rigs, the wetlands. ... About ten of us were invited to a personal meeting with [EPA administrator] Lisa Jackson, and I think that says a lot for our organization because in a very little time [2006-2009] we've made an impression or we've at least been noticed to where now we've been invited to the table. If you're not at the table, you're not making decisions and you're not influencing anyone.

NG: What kind of projects did you work on in Houston while at TSU?

JP: The first project that we started was the César Chávez High School. It is a quarter of a mile from an Exxon [plant that] is no longer there. We still have Texas Petrochemical and we still have Goodyear Tire and Rubber. Those three major facilities are within a quarter of a mile from the school. ... That area right there, Milby, the Chávez School, the Manchester community, numerous studies have shown

that out of twelve what they call hazardous air pollutants, they found eight are cancer-causing, and they're daily being exposed to those eight cancer-causing chemicals. ... We did not want the school to be built there because we know that over time, people are going to be having cancer and birth defects, and leukemia.

But, the school district, they claimed they made an air sampling study, and that we didn't have anything to worry about. Then we complained to the city because initially the city said, "Well, what do we have to do with that? We're not building the school and, and those are not our industries." We said, "But, you do have something to do with it ... You can deny permits for health and safety reasons." We complained against the school, the city, and the county, and everybody we could. But, in the end, they went ahead and built the Chávez High School. ...

As a Latino community ... we didn't have the political clout, but we went to our politicians for help. We went to Leonel Castillo and we said, "Leonel, help us. You know we can't have this school here," and we talked to him about all the environmental issues ... [He] basically told us, "Well look, there's so many environmental issues in that area that I'm going to recommend to the school district that they make this an environmental magnet school." Like a slap in the face. Because of all the issues, he should say, "We need to move this school, but being concerned about the environment, maybe we ought to have an environmental magnet school, but certainly not here." ... It was upon his recommendations that they made it an environmental magnet school ... [At least three other state and city elected officials] stated that there were no environmental problems that we should be concerned about at that location. ... We found a lot of documentation to show that it's not a safe school, and it's still not a safe school. The people that could have helped us did not help us. ... All three Latino groups [National La Raza Council, United Farm Workers, and MALDEF] basically told me the same thing, "We have other priorities when it comes to environmental stuff. We have teenage pregnancy, we have high Latino drop-outs, we have immigration issues, we have separation of families. The environment we care about, but we don't have anybody to help you with that." That's why the environmental justice is defined as we don't have the political clout or the political connection. Everything passed and they built the school.

NG: I read a 2007 *Texas Observer* article about you and Chávez High School, and it said that the city health department was going door to door to document the prevalence of cancer.

JP: There is a study that's being done. ... But they haven't been successful because they've been going into the houses, and one of the criteria they develop[ed] for themselves is, first of all, *mira*, cigarettes have benzene ... once you find a smoker, they're not eligible. That household doesn't qualify for the study ... [because] if you smoke, you're going to find it. ... Too many studies show that we have a serious problem there. We actually don't need any more studies ... There's money in research versus money in actually solving the problem. ... Communities are always saying, "Look, you are always studying us, but you're never helping us" because studies [don't] ... come up with real solutions. Real solutions

would be to ... relocate people, move them out. But then, they say, "Who pays for the relocation?" Well, the polluters. We are known in our state for having the least fines on industry than any other state. We do basically a slap on the hand. ...

NG: Where is Manchester?

JP: If you go straight down Harrisburg, the next community is Manchester. It's adjacent to Magnolia ... It's bordered by the Houston Ship Channel to the north and then, it's bordered by Valero to the east and then, it's bordered by railroad tracks, train yards, *y luego* there's one or two entrances into that community. It's literally a hub surrounded by chemical plants and train yards and everything that again, nobody wants it. And it's the worst community in the city [for pollution] in addition to the Deer Park area. ...

NG: What do you think the solutions would be at this point?

JP: [It] depends on views, right? Because the Environmental Protection Agency [says], "If we get them to reduce their emissions of toxic chemicals into the air, won't that make the [Chávez] school a safe place?" I told them, "Yes, as far as exposure, yes, but what, what about the case of an explosion? You're too close."... [If there] could be an explosion, I'd rather that school be shut down, and relocate the students.

...

[In 1996, the EPA asked for a study of the "worst case scenario," which the industries renamed a "risk management plan."] If there's an explosion here [the plant], the end point is like nothing happened. You didn't even know an explosion happened because the chemicals and the impact of that explosion didn't get to this point. But, then they have ... the "near point." The near point again, is injury, bodily harm, or death. The school is in the near point of those three facilities. ...

Anybody with sense would say, "Well, why do I want to put three thousand kids so close to harm's way, when I could put them at the end point or the far point?" But the school district says, "Well, that's the only place we could find this amount of land ... I say the community needs to wake up and just demand that they get another school. ... [In response to politicians who do not want to tell the public



Manchester Terminal is located at the intersection of the Houston Ship Channel and Sims Bayou, just east of the East 610 Loop, covering 72.4 acres. In the background is a fire at the Lyondell-Citgo refinery, May 17, 2010.

Photo by Bryan Parras.

that they wasted \$100 million to build the school, Parras asks,] "What are you going to tell them if two or three kids, or more, die because of us building a school there?"

NG: Why do you think environmental issues are so low on people's radar?

JP: When it comes to Latinos it ranks pretty high. The environment, they care deeply about it. ... Our politicians say, "Hey, there's nothing wrong here. I grew up here, and besides you live in Houston, it's the industrial capital of the nation; this is what you have to live with because this is who we are. Houston is a big shot in industry." [Latinos] need to be more active ... anyone who cares about the environment, they ought to be supportive of groups like us, and others that are trying to change the environmental situation. We're nonprofit and I'm telling you, we are working with nickels and dimes. ... I have a lot of college students that come in here, they volunteer, in kind and then I have a lot of other groups that say, "Well, you guys are doing a good work and keep it up," but no finances, and that's what it takes. That's what I'm telling you about environmental justice ... poor people can't give you the money to help them out.

NG: Are the people you take on toxic tours from this neighborhood?

JP: No, they're mostly a lot of outsiders, college students at Rice, UH, Houston Community College. We have people that come in from Bhopal, India, China, California, because once you start connecting with other environmental



Bryan Parras, the son of Juan Parras and Media/Youth Coordinator of TEJAS, gives a speech at the Environmental Grantmakers Association, sharing his experiences with this international organization that networks environmental funders working to achieve healthy, equitable, and sustainable ecosystems, communities, and economies.

groups ... they'll call you up ... They say, "Hey, Juan, we're coming through Houston. Can you show us the East End, and can you tell us issues that we can take on to Atlanta, or take on to New York, or DC?" That's how you are able to network. [At one point a group of about 500 people from major cities traveling to the US Social Forum stopped in Houston.] ... We were able to invite the mayor [Bill White] to the Manchester community because the mayor also had a study done on the levels of toxins in the air, and Mayor White has been very active in trying to reduce the level of pollution. ... He wants to reduce levels of benzene. ... He [said], "Everybody's entitled to clean air," and that's a human right. ...

Sometimes you can smell a chemical like natural gas you know, they put an odorizer so you can smell when it leaks, but otherwise if you didn't have that ... you wouldn't smell that gas and it would kill you. That's the thing with air pollution and chemicals being released from the companies. Here you have ... benzene molecules in the air, you don't say, "Hey, there's benzene," ... but you're breathing all these chemicals and they get thrown into your system and some of them cause cancer.

NG: What do you think you did to get TEJAS noticed?

JP: One is that Anderson Cooper did a good story when they did *The Planet in Peril*. That featured the Manchester community and the high rates of leukemia with the people that we have been working with. ... The Center for Health and Environmental Justice posted the César Chávez School in their front page. ... That gave us national attention. And

then being on this national board [that advises the EPA,] it gives us an upper hand too, to deal with people that we can get more exposure. And, we have a good board, a good volunteer board like Krish Navini, she was the international organizer for the Bhopal incident. That was the accident at Dow Chemical and Union Carbide had in India. It killed about 25,000 people just overnight because of the plant leaking. She brings an international presence. We have an attorney, Martina Cartwright that works at TSU. She's an environmental lawyer. ... Maria Jimenez, she's on our board and she's known for all her immigration activities. She's still an adjunct professor at UH. ...

NG: How many people do you have on the staff?

JP: If you're thinking staff like paid people, we don't have anyone. I'm the executive director; we have my son, Bryan Lucas, who does all the videos, documentaries for us. He's done a lot on Katrina y Hurricane Ike, y Rita ... Right after Hurricane Ike, they were not allowing people in there [Galveston], *pero* he was able to get in there because we work closely with University of Texas Medical Branch, UTMB, and so they had badges to get into the hospital, so we were able to get in with them to do some filming about the destruction. [The Katrina documentary] actually was sent to nearly 2,500 doctors throughout the nation. ...

We also did a film here called *Wishing You Were Here, in the East End*. We actually had kids, high school kids that went out there and filmed it themselves. They did the interviews ... It's been on PBS. ... Basically it's going into the community and interviewing, "Okay, how long have you lived here? What are your concerns, and have you seen any action done?" And most of them will tell you, "No. It's like nobody cares about us." And we want that on film so that we can convince foundations that look, this community needs help, or these individuals need help. ...

We've been struggling on very little money for the last three years. The other thing that kept us afloat *es que* we all had individual jobs and this was like a side job where we come in here and just bust our tails off trying to do something. But everybody sort of has a full-time job ... I'm trying to raise money to pay myself at least, to continue doing this kind of work and keep this place open. ♻️

Toxic black smoke from a TPC plant flare fills the sky over people playing on the athletic fields of Chávez High School. Although the plant entered into an agreement with the City of Houston to reduce harmful emissions, a report filed with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for the September 2012 incident indicates the release of butadiene, a known carcinogen.



Frontier Texas Sculptor Remembered Through His Houston Monuments

By Susan Teich

Houston proudly showcases many works of art by Frank Teich (1856-1939), an early Texas sculptor originally from Germany. Teich began painting at age eight and upon graduation from the University of Nuremberg, he served as apprentice to the German sculptor Johannes Schilling; it is speculated that Teich worked on the German national monument, *The Watch on the Rhine*.¹ His artistic skill combined with business savvy enabled him to succeed in America, settling near Llano, Texas, where he bought a granite quarry that supplied rock for his statues and monuments now seen throughout Texas.

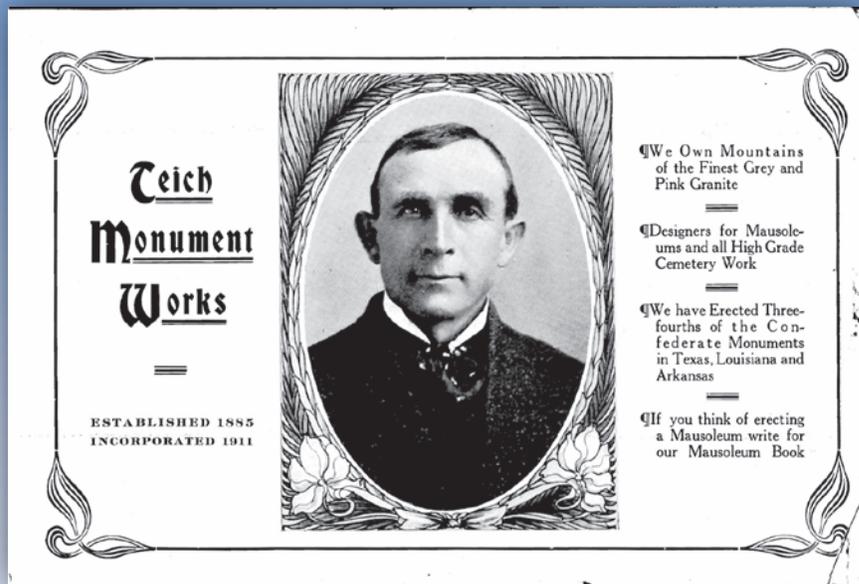


Image courtesy of Susan Teich.

In 1878, Teich emigrated from his hometown of Lobenstein (now Bad Lobenstein), Germany to the United States. He came with no knowledge of English, lived initially with grandparents in Wisconsin, and traveled broadly about the country. In Chicago, where the Cook County Courthouse was under construction, he showed the superintendent his drawings and was hired to supervise a crew of stonecutters. Upon the building's completion, Frank Teich moved to St. Louis, where he worked until he had saved \$600 to go to California. While working in a land office and traveling about the state, he heard about the discovery of gold in South Dakota. Putting together a crew of Chinese workers in San Francisco, Frank took them to the mining district of the Black Hills. From there, he returned to St. Louis, where he worked until 1883, accumulating enough money to travel to Texas, where he remained.²

The year he arrived in Texas, Frank was hired to supervise the building of the San Antonio National Bank and the San Antonio City Hall. When a frost caused cracks in the limestone gathered for construction of the bank, an affordable substitute was needed. Frank located granite at Bear Mountain, just north of Fredericksburg. The stone had to be cut and then carried over eighty miles of trail by ox-drawn sleds, resulting in the first use of Texas granite for building construction. Until that time, builders were unaware that Texas had granite of commercial quality in sufficient quantities to make its use practical. His efforts later earned him the title "Father of the Texas Granite Industry," an odd designation for an artist.³

That same year, the foundation of the new Capitol in Austin was completed, using imported granite. Gustav Wilke, contractor for construction of the Capitol, hired Teich as superintendent of the cutting and placement of stone for the remainder of the building. The Building Committee approved plans that called for the use of Texas limestone, asking Teich to look for a source. After inspecting every known quarry in the state, Teich reported that it

was not possible to obtain enough Texas limestone of sufficient quality and thickness to support the immense weight of the Capitol. He urged the use of granite instead. The Capitol has the appearance we now take for granted due largely to Frank's efforts.⁴

By 1935, the Teich Monument Works operated out of ten quarries and kept five finishing plants busy. Then, on September 17, 1936, at about 1:00 a.m., a devastating fire began in one of the shops and spread to other buildings. The *Llano News* reported that about \$4,000 of finished new work was lost in the fire. In addition, the fire destroyed raw stock valued at \$1,000. The total damage was estimated at \$50,000, and Teich had no insurance. The fire marshall ruled it as arson. The family believed that the husband of a recently fired Teich household maid started the fire by removing a gas cap from a car inside the shop and draining gas out and around the shop. The Llano Fire Department saved only Teich's studio, office, and home. Teich watched as the fire destroyed so much of what he had worked to build, and his health declined rapidly afterward. Frank Teich died in 1938.⁵

The Teich Monument Works resumed operations seven months after the fire at a reduced capacity under the management of his son-in-law Linden Foster. Now, the property is a privately owned ranch. The sign on the fence at the entrance still proclaims "Teichville, Texas."

Teich's commissions in Houston became so numerous that he eventually listed his business, Teich Monument Works, in the Houston City Directory. These listings appear yearly from 1936 to 1941. They ended three years after his death, at a time when Foster managed the business. The address given in the listings was that of his agent in Houston, M. J. Adlof, operating from a house at 836 West Cottage Avenue, now in the Norhill Historic District. Beautifully restored, the house was the subject of a feature article in *Houston House and Home Magazine*.⁶

HERMANN PARK

Driving the circular entrance to Hermann Park, the Sam Houston Monument comes into alignment with the Obelisk, a view that appears in so many photographs as to make it a Houston signature. Teich created both the fifty-foot obelisk and the massive

base for Sam Houston, each from his Llano granite.

Sam Houston came first, unveiled before an estimated 3,000 people on August 16, 1925, secure on Frank's thirty-five-foot arch. The four-year-old great granddaughter of

Sam Houston, Margaret Bringhurst, unveiled the statue while held in the arms of John H. Kirby. Also present were Sam Houston's daughter and granddaughter, Nettie Houston Bringhurst and Nettie Bringhurst Busch (the child's grandmother and mother). The headline in the *Houston Post-Dispatch* declared, "Baby Hands Tear Veil From Equestrian Statue of General Sam Houston – Thousands Cheer as Tribute Is Paid to Illustrous [sic.] Texan."⁷

The occasion was the culmination of an idea long percolating in Houston, and taken up in earnest by the Woman's City Club of Houston at a meeting on March 5, 1923, in the home of its president, Mrs. John Miles Stewart.⁸

Frank's commission came from the statue's sculptor, Enricio Filberto Cerracchio, whom the Sam Houston Monument Association selected to construct the monument and to hire a stonecutter. To fund Cerracchio's fee of \$75,000, the Women's Club secured commitments from the State of Texas for \$25,000 and from the City of Houston for \$10,000. The rest came from public donations. The Women's Club organized basement rummage sales, musical

reviews, and sold reproductions of the Texas Declaration of Independence. Despite their heroic efforts, the last \$10,000 was not forthcoming. In 1944, City Council appointed a committee to solicit private donations to that end, but there is no record that it could ever raise the money.⁹

Cerracchio presumably paid Teich out of his \$75,000 fee,

but the amount is unknown. On the day of the unveiling, Mrs. Stewart publicly stated, "I want to give due credit to Frank Teich of Llano, who has worked so faithful [sic.] with the stone work. Mr. Teich has put his very heart into the work of erecting the base. On account of delays and other things the job has cost him several thousand dollars but he has erected something which is in keeping with the monument for which it was planned."¹⁰

To prepare for the 1996 restoration of the monument, the City hired architectural archaeologists to conduct research. They interviewed Adolph Conrad, a former employee of Frank Teich, still residing in Llano. He was nineteen-years-old when he helped



Sam Houston Monument (1925).

All photos by Susan Teich.



Pioneer Memorial Shaft or The Obelisk (1936).

construct the arch, and ninety at the time of the interview. Conrad confirmed that Teich used steel pins to secure the stones, drilling into the granite to place them. Columns of stone holding up the statue weighed eight and a half tons each.¹¹

In 1936, the City of Houston threw itself a huge 100th birthday party. The four-day celebration began with a fireworks display for 45,000 people in Hermann Park. Describing the festivities, the *Houston Post* gushed, “Houston, getting along in years, forgot that she was very old Saturday night as she hoisted her skirts and kicked and frolicked on the eve of her one hundredth birthday.”¹²

On Sunday, August 30th, a Founders’ Day luncheon, sponsored by the Junior Chamber of Commerce and the San Jacinto Centennial Association at the Rice Hotel, included a 100-pound birthday cake with 100 candles for the 600 guests. The first slice was given to John T. Browne, Houston’s oldest former mayor. Radio broadcasts and tributes all that day culminated in the dedication of Frank Teich’s fifty foot memorial shaft in Hermann Park, seen today at one end of the reflection pool.¹³

Erected to the memory of the City Founders, the *Post* called it “the tallest monolith ever quarried in this state.”

The San Jacinto Memorial Association commissioned the Pioneer Memorial Shaft. Mary Austin Beard, ten-year-old daughter of Colonel and Mrs. Norman H. Beard, did the unveiling and Mayor Oscar F. Holcombe received the monument.¹⁴

Elsewhere in Hermann Park, drivers dart past Houston’s first public work of art, a vigilant statue of Dick Dowling, “The Hero of Sabine Pass.”¹⁵

Having emigrated from County Galway, Ireland, to New Orleans in 1837, and then to Houston in 1857, Dowling was already a successful businessman by the outbreak of the Civil War. He was a charter member of Houston’s first fire department (Houston Hook and Ladder Company No. 1), on the board of Houston’s first public utility company (the Houston Gas Company), and the first person in Houston to install gas lighting in his home and business (a saloon known as “The Bank”). As a first lieutenant in the Davis Guards, an Irish unit from the Houston area, he distinguished himself on September 8, 1863, by leading a force of only forty-seven men in blocking Sabine Pass to prevent an invasion of Texas by 5,000 Union troops on twenty-two ships. He died at age thirty from yellow fever contracted while tending the sick during the epidemic of 1867. Mayor Alexander McGowan and the entire Houston Fire Department served as pallbearers.¹⁶



Dick Dowling Statue (1905).



One of Teich’s Glenwood commissions was the Henderson obelisk, the tallest monument in the cemetery. It was erected in 1931, two years after the death of Frank W. Henderson, whose will provided that the monument be built for the grave of his father, James Wilson Henderson, the fourth governor of Texas. At forty-four feet, it was said to be the largest one-piece stone monument erected in the United States at the time.¹⁷

His statue is located on a grassy median at the intersection of Cambridge Street and MacGregor Drive. Frank Teich was a fitting choice to make the statue. It is estimated that he made a third of all Confederate soldier statues in the state of Texas. The Daughters of the Confederacy recognized his service when, incongruously, a Dallas chapter made him an honorary “Daughter.” Representatives of the Confederate Veterans (Dick Dowling Camp, No. 197, of Houston), The Ancient order of Hibernians, and the Emmet Council (a Catholic organization) commissioned the statue to honor Dowling. Joined by many prominent citizens, the groups raised Frank Teich’s fee of \$1,900.¹⁸

The statue was dedicated on St. Patrick’s Day in 1905 at its original location in front of City Hall on Market Square. The parade through downtown was illuminated with green lights, and the carriages of dignitaries included three of the five surviving soldiers of the Battle of Sabine Pass. At City Hall, John H. Kirby, who had contributed \$250 toward the cost of the statue, served

as master of ceremonies. Annie Dowling Robertson, the daughter of Dick Dowling, unveiled the statue and presented it to Mayor Andrew Jackson, who accepted it for the citizens of Houston. Since then, the statue has been on the move. In 1939, it followed City Hall across town to stand in Sam Houston Park. The statue moved again, in 1958, to Hermann Park.¹⁹



World War I Memorial (1920).

SAM HOUSTON PARK

The Dowling statue was not the only one of Teich’s works at Old Market Square. April 25, 1920, marked the dedication of a memorial erected by the Houston War Mothers to honor servicemen from Harris County who died in World War I. The ceremonies began with a shower of flowers from the sky, dropped by a formation of four airplanes

from Ellington Field. The commander of the Thomas Dismuke Post of the American Legion conducted the program. The Reverend Harris Masterson, Jr., delivered an address describing his service in a base hospital in France. At the conclusion, someone played taps and the audience joined in singing “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.”²⁰

Originally named the *Cenotaph to the Unknown Soldier*, it was more accurately renamed the *World War I Memorial*. In fact, all 199 of the known war dead from Harris County are specifically named on a plaque attached to the large boulder of Frank’s Llano granite. This cenotaph, like Dowling, moved to Sam Houston Park in 1939 when City Hall made its move. It remains there today, displayed in the courtyard at The Heritage Society Museum.²¹

GLENWOOD CEMETERY

As with many sculptors of the time, the “bread and butter” commissions came from those wanting memorial art to grace the graves of their loved ones. Glenwood Cemetery, where the elite of Houston were buried from its opening in 1872, is a natural setting for Teich’s work. With its entrance at 2525 Washington Avenue, it is more than a cemetery. It is a garden park that embraces ravines left by Buffalo Bayou, a place for the living to walk as well as a place for the dead to rest.

Frank sometimes worked in marble, but primarily in granite, a substance so hard that it proved more difficult to carve than other rock, so hard that it endured time and weather better than other rock. Granite became the preferred stone for memorial art when improved rail transportation in the 1880s made it easier to transport.²²



Another angel, bearing a spray of marble lilies, leans against the Dunn family monument. Frank Dunn, Jr., who died in 1903, worked for \$40 a month at the store then known as Sweeney and Coombs. He later opened a highly successful pawnshop at Smith Street and Rosalie Avenue and left an estate of \$250,000.²⁴



Michael the Archangel himself, ready with sword, guards the grave of Captain William Dunovant. The monument honors a planter and manufacturer of sugar, cotton, and rice. A former business partner killed Dunovant in 1902 during a confrontation on a moving train when Dunovant drew a gun. The partner was acquitted on grounds of self-defense.²³



An angel balanced on stacked granite bases marks one of the best known family plots, that of James A. Baker, Sr. He was a banker, founding partner of the Baker Botts law firm, personal attorney to William Marsh Rice, and the grandfather of James A. Baker III, who served in the administrations of three U.S. presidents.²⁵

Angels watch over most cemeteries, and Frank Teich provided a flock of them. Examples known to be his work, or attributable to him, include the graves noted here.

Finding Glenwood monuments by Teich Monument Works is not easy, however. Only a few recent monuments in Glenwood bear the names of the artist stonecutters. However, there is help from newspaper descriptions of major works and from the illustrated sample books that Frank Teich carried on his many trips to Houston to secure orders.

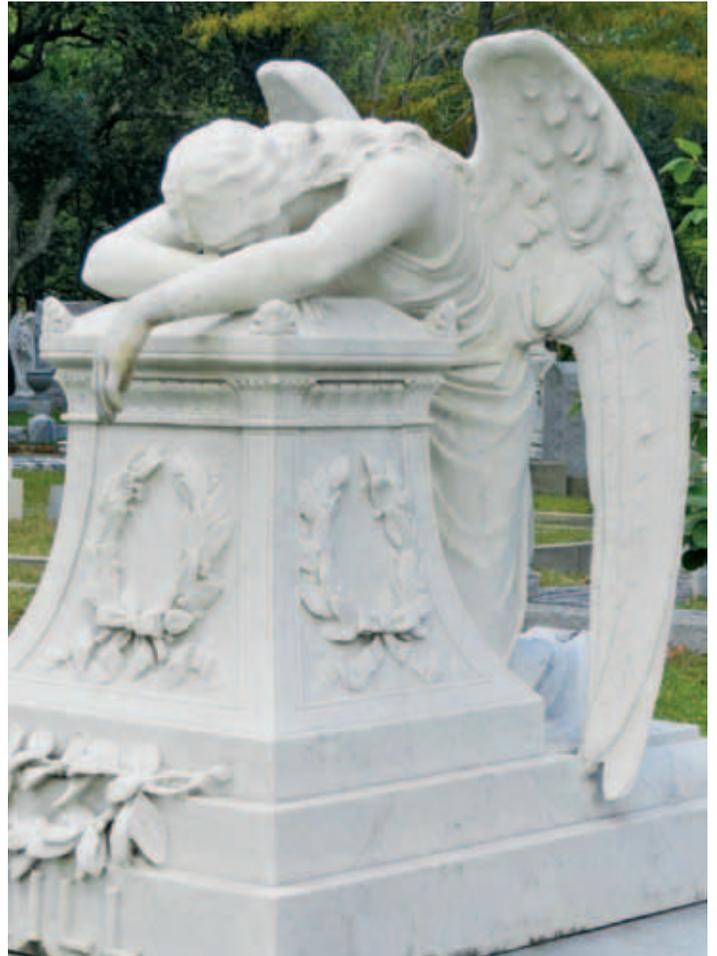
The one word that summarizes Frank Teich is “granite.” Granite, his chosen medium, links his work on the Austin State Capitol with his works in Houston, where Teich granite stretches from Hermann Park to Sam Houston Park to Glenwood Cemetery and reminds us of our past.

Names fade into history. Stone endures. Frank Teich’s Houston monuments, whether or not they bear his name, remain lasting reminders in granite of his pioneer presence.

Susan Froehly Teich is a retired attorney from Conoco Inc. (now ConocoPhillips Company) and lives in Old Braeswood. She is compiling a history of her neighborhood and researching other aspects of Houston history. Her husband is a great grandnephew of Frank Teich.

An angel prostrate with grief drapes over the Hill family monument. ►

The plot was opened in 1903 for the burial of Abbie Hill, eldest daughter of Judge E. P. Hill, a president of the Houston Daily Post and founder of the Houston Land and Trust Company.²⁶



Gustav Adolph Sternenberg’s angel holds a marble trumpet at her side. Sternenberg, who owned a lumber company and numerous downtown buildings in Houston and San Antonio, died in the 1908 typhoid epidemic.²⁷



◄ A pensive angel, finger pressed to cheek, watches over the 1903 grave of Gus Fredericks. Houston’s second oldest commercial building, the Sweeney, Coombs and Fredericks Building (301 Main Street), is named for the Houston jewelry firm of which Frederick was an owner.²⁸

► Among other Glenwood monuments carved by Teich, one adorns the particularly notable grave of Frederick A. Rice, younger brother of William Marsh Rice. Frederick Rice joined Captain James A. Baker in rescuing the Rice fortune following the murder of William Marsh Rice and the filing of a forged will. Their actions kept the fortune intact for the purpose stated in the actual will—to establish a university, which became Rice Institute, now Rice University. Frederick Rice was a founding director of Glenwood Cemetery and served as its treasurer for many years. He died in 1901.²⁹





Houston History Association Third Annual Houston History Conference

ROGUES, RASCALS, AND ROLE MODELS: *Famous and Infamous Residents of the Bayou City*

WHAT: Throughout its history, Houston has attracted many ambitious, interesting people—with both nefarious and noble intent—who saw it as a place of great opportunities. Join us at the Third Annual Houston History Conference where we will explore the lives of these fascinating Houstonians, “Rogues, Rascals, and Role Models: Famous and Infamous Residents of the Bayou City.” Conference participants will enjoy a morning panel discussion, breakout sessions presented by local historians, exhibits by local historical organizations and a tasty box lunch.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Rick Casey, award winning journalist and host of *Texas Talks*

WHEN: May 4, 2013, 8:30 A.M.—3 P.M.

WHERE: Julia Ideson Building—Houston Public Library, 550 McKinney

Registration: Visit houstonhistoryassociation.org for registration fees and special pricing for teachers, students and seniors.

SPONSORED BY:  Humanities Texas and The Summerlee Foundation, with additional support from (as of January 15, 2013) University of Houston Center for Public History, Houston History Magazine, The City of Houston, Houston Public Library, The Lancaster Hotel & The Lusk Family, The Heritage Society at Sam Houston Park, Texas State Historical Association, Texas Historical Foundation, Houston Independent School District.

* The Lancaster Hotel is the official hotel partner for HHA; contact for special rates.

For conference information for participants, exhibitors and sponsors visit houstonhistoryassociation.org. For more information contact info@houstonhistoryassociation.org or call 713-542-3856 or 713-578-0342.

The Houston History Association is an independent 501(c)3 organization dedicated to promoting Houston area history and serving as a resource for existing historical, preservation and educational organizations and institutions.

The Houstonians in the photograph are not necessarily representative of the conference topics but may be included

The Romance of Absolute Truth:

Henry McArdle, James DeShields, and the Meaning of Texas History

By James E. Crisp



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Henry A. McArdle's *Battle of San Jacinto* (1901) was meant to be a twin to Onderdonk's painting of Crockett at the Alamo—but it disappeared from DeShields's possession during the Great Depression, only to re-appear in 2010 when McArdle's descendants discovered it in a West Virginia attic. The author of the present article and Houston History wish to thank Kyle Stallings, the new owner of this important painting, for allowing us to reproduce this long-lost work in its newly-restored condition.

Photo courtesy of Kyle Stallings.

In 1901, Texas businessman, art patron, and amateur historian James T. DeShields commissioned two paintings intended to represent the height of heroic valor in the two most important battles of the Texas Revolution. Each canvas was to be five by seven feet in size, and each artist was to be paid \$400 for his labors—Robert Jenkins Onderdonk for *The Fall of the Alamo* (a work which DeShields fondly called *Crockett's Last Fight*), and Henry Arthur McArdle for *The Battle of San Jacinto* (adapted from his much larger painting by the same name completed in 1895).¹

The larger San Jacinto painting has graced the Senate Chamber of the Texas State Capitol for the past century, where it is paired with McArdle's last great

work, *Dawn at the Alamo*. Onderdonk's portrayal of David Crockett's last moments found a permanent place in the Front Entry Hall of the Texas Governor's Mansion more than three decades ago. But its companion piece, McArdle's smaller *Battle of San Jacinto*, had until its dramatic discovery in 2010 spent an even longer time moldering in a West Virginia attic.²

The painting's reemergence offers an opportunity to reexamine just what DeShields, Onderdonk, and McArdle believed they were doing when they sought to bring history to life with the paintbrush as well as the pen. An important clue comes from a document signed at the Texas Veterans Association in Brenham on April 21st—San Jacinto Day—1891. Moses Austin Bryan, Walter P. Lane,

and over a dozen other TVA members proclaimed: “We the undersigned, participants in the Battle of San Jacinto having examined McArdle’s painting of said battle do hereby certify to its absolute historical truth.”⁷³

The fact that this proclamation came four years before the painting’s completion could cause the pedant to question the changes made during that time period, but a more fundamental criticism of McArdle’s undertaking comes from two prominent scholars of Western historical art. Said Brian Dippie in his 2003 presidential address to the Western History Association: “Western art, to put it baldly, is western myth in visual form.”⁷⁴

The late William Goetzmann, Pulitzer-prize winning director of American Studies at the University of Texas, specifically proclaimed that “. . . the entire visualization of the Texan Revolution, however much the artists claimed to have done research, was a product of the imagination.” In *The West of the Imagination*, Goetzmann wrote, “The plain fact is that the visualization of the Texan Revolution—one of the most dramatic events in Western and American history—was badly served by artists, most of whom painted long after the event and would not even have done so then except that they were prodded and supported by the indefatigable antiquarian historian, James DeShields.”⁷⁵

This charge clearly does not apply to Henry McArdle. He had worked on his great Alamo and San Jacinto paintings for years before DeShields entered the picture as his patron. Moreover, McArdle was himself quite indefatigable in his historical research.

McArdle’s labors in preparation for his first *Battle of San Jacinto* were described in excruciating detail by C. W. Raines in the 1901 *Year Book for Texas*: “First, all obtainable published matter bearing on the history of Texas . . . as well as manuscripts, letters, etc., were consulted.”⁷⁶ He interviewed and corresponded with survivors (including Santa Anna), visited the battlefield to study the topography and vegetation, and examined Mexican uniforms, arms, and paraphernalia, as well as weapons and equipment contributed by Texan veterans.

He secured models of men and horses, located portraits of actual San Jacinto soldiers, and created the “esquisse”—the elaborate preliminary sketch that, according to McArdle, he executed “on a sheet of paper some eighteen inches wide,” and took more than a year to complete. The canvas required another seven years of effort, during which the artist claimed that for months his “sleep did not average two hours per night.” “My position and views in art,” declared McArdle, “. . . may be summed up as follows: No color, however magnificent, no line, however subtle, can make a work of art. Without *truth, and a story told*, the canvas had better been left untouched.”⁷⁷

DeShields and Onderdonk could not have agreed more. Wrote Onderdonk to his patron describing his image of Crockett’s last fight, “I feel that I am without doubt correct in my conception and have ample proof to back it up—no fairy tales or dramatic sentiment about it.”⁷⁸ DeShields, the self-taught historian and self-described hero worshipper, wrote that “In the siege and fall of the Alamo, there is glory



McArdle’s original Battle of San Jacinto, like its enormous twin, Dawn at the Alamo (each more than twelve feet wide and almost eight feet high), is displayed in the Senate Chamber of the Texas State Capitol in Austin. The artist gave much of his life to completing these two paintings.

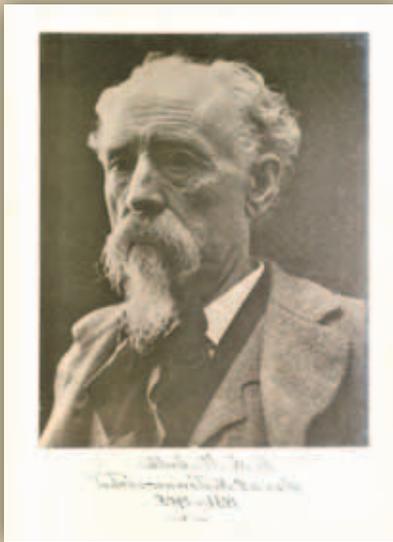
Photo courtesy of Texas State Library & Archives Commission.

enough for all the future ages of Texan renown, without the least detraction from the real facts[.] . . . when the truth of history is distorted history passes into the realms of fable.”

“Truth, and a story told,” thundered McArdle—but what kind of truth, and what kind of story? The great irony is that both McArdle and DeShields *knew* the story they planned to tell even before they began their exhaustive researches. The *plot* was a given—only the physical details of the battles needed to be authenticated.

Not only were these battles to be imbedded in a particular narrative, told from the Anglo-Texan point of view, but they also were to be grounded in a distinctive narrative *structure*, common to nineteenth-century historical writing in Europe and the United States. What constituted this narrative structure? What was included and excluded? What did these men know, and how did they know it?

McArdle and DeShields learned the history they purported to paint from the men who made it, after each had moved to Texas following the Civil War. McArdle, born in Northern Ireland in 1836, came to America as a teenager and studied art in Baltimore. He turned his training to the service of the Confederacy as a draftsman and cartographer for Robert E. Lee during the war. After Appomattox, he began teaching art at Baylor Female College in Independence.¹⁰ Here he began painting portraits from life of many of the men who had won and preserved Texan independence in the Revolution and the Republic. From them, he first heard—and was profoundly stirred by—the stories of the heroic *redemption* of Texas



Henry Arthur McArdle (1836-1908) created more iconic works depicting the history of Texas and its Revolution than any other artist, but he had great difficulty getting paid for his work by the State of Texas, even after he agreed to hang his paintings in the Capitol. Almost twenty years after McArdle's death, the Legislature finally agreed to purchase the paintings of the battles of the Alamo and San Jacinto, along with McArdle's research materials, for \$25,000.

Photo courtesy of Texas State Library & Archives Commission.

from what these men called the wilderness, from those they called savages, and from what they branded a tyrannical Mexico.

DeShields arrived in Salado from Louisiana around 1865 at age four or five. Here he heard the same stories of the Revolution and Republic as McArdle.¹¹ DeShields became convinced, as he told a Dallas reporter over sixty years later, that Stephen F. Austin, Sam Houston, and William Barret Travis were “the most important men in the world.” As he grew older, he became determined “to learn everything there was to be learned about them and to place their likenesses on his walls where,” in his words, “he could receive inspiration and enjoy their glamour.”¹²

Admittedly, not everyone raised in Texas has responded in the same way to this overdose of heroic history. Listen to contemporary Western historian Elliott West: “I am a fifth generation Texan. I grew up hearing plenty of Texas history at home and almost as much in the classroom. We had heavy doses in elementary school, a full year of it in the eighth grade, and in all history courses there were lots and lots of references that students elsewhere probably did not hear. I doubt, for instance, that someone taking world history in say, Iowa, would learn that

Charlemagne was the Sam Houston of France. I came away so deeply imbued with its characters and events, that the slightest mention of Texas history made me almost physically ill.”¹³

Charlemagne, the Sam Houston of France? Still, I must admit that my childhood response to Texas history growing up in Clay County came a lot closer to that of James DeShields than to Elliott West. So rather than turning away from our Texas heroes altogether, allow me to pursue a more thorough understanding of the Texas historical mentality—or perhaps the *mentalité*?—by making another connection between a transplanted Texan and a famous Frenchman.

Consider McArdle and DeShields in relation to Jules Michelet, the leading historian of France in the mid-nineteenth century. “Meta-historian” Hayden White chose Michelet to epitomize the “Romantic” approach to history in White’s classic, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. The “redemptive” plot structure through which McArdle and DeShields understood the Texas Revolution represents the very same Romantic, *dualistic* plot structure by which Michelet understood the French Revolution.¹⁴

Michelet’s history was the triumph of virtue over vice, of good over evil, of a democratic future over the burden of the past—and in the end, mankind’s progress achieved by this triumph.¹⁵ Michelet thought that he could see, amid the welter of “facts” of the French Revolution, the *structure* of historical change—and he was not alone.¹⁶



Through his once-popular writings, and more so through his patronage of artists such as Robert Onderdonk and Henry McArdle, James T. DeShields (1861-1948) gave shape to Texans’ collective memory of their heroic past in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The ubiquity and lasting fame of these iconic images suggest that the influence of DeShields remains strong today.

Photo courtesy of DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, AI991.1750.



Henry McArdle's last great work, *Dawn at the Alamo*, was completed two years before his death in 1908. He began work on the painting in the mid-1870s, but put it aside for two decades to finish its matching masterpiece, *The Battle of San Jacinto* (1895). He wanted to research and complete the *San Jacinto* work before too many more of the Texan eyewitnesses had passed from the scene.

Photo courtesy of Texas State Library & Archives Commission.

Historians of the nineteenth century—and not just the Romantics—wanted to know: What does history mean? Where is it going? What can it teach us? Many answers to these questions arose besides those supplied by Michelet and his fellow Romantics. Note that the “dualism” posited by the Romantics is no Hegelian (or Marxist) “dialectic.” In this dualistic vision, thesis and antithesis do not clash and combine to produce a synthesis. It is rather a vision in which the superior, progressive forces of history—military, political, social, economic, even moral—are at war with the inferior and the backward.¹⁷

In a dualistic interpretation of the Texas Revolution, no dialectic emerges: no Mexican Thesis faced by a Texan Antithesis, culminating in some Hegelian Synthesis of the two. This dualistic interpretation had no *mestizaje*—no blending of races, cultures, legal systems, music, cuisines, economies, clothing, techniques of working cattle, or of smoking one's tobacco. This mutual acculturation and evolutionary change—recognized in retrospect by many historians today—is *not* what nineteenth-century Anglo-Texan historians and artists portrayed, even as the processes of *mestizaje* took place right under their noses, especially in the San Antonio where McArdle and Onderdonk settled and lived for most of their professional careers.

Michelet's story of triumph, as well as that of McArdle, Onderdonk, and DeShields, represents instead a victory achieved by the heroic valor of the representatives of a superior civilization over a lesser one. As historian Paul Andrew

Hutton has shown, the inherent dualism at the heart of what he calls the Texans' “creation myth” may be expressed in a series of related opposites—a set of metonymical dichotomies—representing a holistic contest of civilizations.¹⁸ Hutton's list of interrelated opposites are: freedom versus tyranny; democracy versus despotism; Protestantism versus Catholicism; the New World culture of the United States versus the Old World culture of Mexico; Anglo-Saxons versus a mongrelized mixture of Indian and Spaniard; and ultimately, good versus evil.¹⁹

Romantic historians, according to White, often used *metaphor*—especially in the form of the chivalrous hero—to make their points about the clash of opposing civilizations and cultures through which historical progress occurred.²⁰ This held true in McArdle's Texas as it did in Michelet's France. The use of the metaphor of the hero to portray, as DeShields said of San Jacinto, the clashes that “settled the fates of nations and races by . . . valor and fortitude on that bloody field” is even more vivid in the visual arts.²¹ And in the Texan context, this clash of opposites, as Hutton suggests, often took on a more starkly racial dimension than in Michelet's Europe.²²

McArdle made especially powerful use of such a racialized metaphorical hero in his last major work, *Dawn at the Alamo*. Art historian Emily Cutrer has described this painting as a “Manichean vision of the combatants,” with this dualistic historical plot embodied in the dark and “apelike” Mexican soldier locked in combat with a Davy Crockett whose whiteness and noble bearing are highlighted by the artist's tech-

nique (right foreground). “Crockett and the Mexican are not merely two men,” writes Cutrer, “they are two races that represent opposing forces in the painter’s mind.”²³

McArdle and DeShields were aware of their kindred spirits in nineteenth-century Romantic historiography. In the introductory paragraph of one of DeShields’s unpublished manuscripts, he proclaimed: “The fall of the Alamo! The theme is one worthy of an able pen—of a Bancroft, a Prescott, or a Parkman.”²⁴ These three men—George Bancroft, William H. Prescott, and Francis Parkman (along with a fourth, John L. Motley)—were the American historians chosen by Stanford scholar David Levin to represent (as in the title of his 1959 book) *History as Romantic Art*.

Levin found dualism imbedded in these historian’s plots: “[both] Prescott’s *Conquest of Mexico* [and] Motley’s *Rise of the Dutch Republic* . . . centered on the conflict of two irreconcilable ‘races,’ political systems, and religions, and Motley believed that the conflict . . . aided . . . democratic progress.”²⁵ In *Montcalm and Wolfe*, writes Levin, “one decisive conflict brings together all the racial, moral, and natural forces depicted in [Parkman’s] earlier volumes. The issue is decided in battle between the two most admirably representative soldiers of France and England . . . by the torpid corruption of the *worst* representation of ‘Absolutism’ and the ‘vigorous’ patriotism of the *best* representative of Liberty.”²⁶

“Furthermore,” says Levin of Parkman’s larger vision, this European war that began with the young American hero George Washington fighting the French in the wilderness made the Revolution inevitable, opened the West to colonization, ruined France as a world power, and established Britain as the “mother of nations.”²⁷ Doesn’t this sound like those words we all know that are carved on the San Jacinto monument?

Measured by its results, San Jacinto was one of the decisive battles of the world. The freedom of Texas from Mexico won here, led to annexation and to the Mexican War, resulting in the acquisition by the United States of the states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California, Utah, and parts of Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas, and Oklahoma. Almost one-third of the present area of the American nation, nearly a million square miles of territory, changed sovereignty.

Texas State Senator John Evans McComb described McArdle’s portrayal of “one of the great decisive battles of history, compassing the hopes and destinies of a great people engaged in a sublime struggle, [that] changed the course of Western empire and widened the boundaries of civilization. The vision of that sublime field of heroism which gave Texas to liberty, to civilization, and to hope, as



The Fall of the Alamo, by Robert Jenkins Onderdonk, was commissioned in 1901 by James T. DeShields — who preferred the title Crockett’s Last Fight. Completed in 1903, it has become in the past century the most reproduced single image of the Battle of the Alamo.

Photo courtesy of the Friends of the Governor’s Mansion.

preserved in this splendid work of the painter . . . will have a . . . beneficent educational influence upon patriotism of the present and succeeding generations of Texas."²⁸

McComb's words bring to mind another important way in which McArdle and DeShields fit the mold of the Romantic historian: their conception of the historian's and history's role in society. Michelet, notes White, saw that role not as mere "narration," nor primarily as "analysis," but rather as bringing about a "resurrection."²⁹ By bringing history to life, history itself could perform a part of the work of patriotic redemption.

DeShields's correspondence with artists he patronized reveals that he often played an important role in shaping the final version of the paintings through which he wanted to bring history alive.³⁰ Without doubt, the goal of the two works DeShields commissioned in 1901 was to reproduce on canvas—for *maximum* inspiration—the *decisive moment of heroic valor*—whether the result was "the moral victory" (as McArdle described the fall of the Alamo) or the unbridled triumph at San Jacinto.³¹

Indeed, Levin found that like McArdle and DeShields, the Romantic historians "sought . . . to give the *meaning* as well as the experience of history an immediacy in their own time." Levin contended that "they all shared . . . an affection for grand heroes," and they recognized that "their moral drama . . . was most effective when they could embody the [the warring] principles [of history] in heroic flesh-and-blood characters."³² Most perceptively, Levin stressed that for Parkman, Motley, Bancroft, and Prescott, "the assumptions on which [their Romantic] formulas were based already pervaded the historians' conception of the Past before they began writing; the assumptions, indeed, had affected each man's decision to write history in the first place, and they had also helped to attract each of them to his particular subject."³³

For these historians the dualistic, Romantic employment of the story *preceded* the research and the discovery of the specific historical "facts"—and so it was for both DeShields and McArdle in Texas. *Their* Alamo, and *their* San Jacinto, were part of a highly structured (and thus a *mythic*) narrative of facts selected (both consciously and unconsciously) to tell a familiar and comforting story—a myth that served the needs of the dominant forces in Texas. Thus, they stood in the mainstream of historical thinking and writing in Texas. It is astonishing, in fact, to see the degree to which Texan historiography, well into the twentieth century, embodied the Romantic and dualistic approach so palpable in the paintings of McArdle and Onderdonk.

The late Dan Kilgore struggled to understand why, despite evidence to the contrary, the heroic version of David Crockett's death had prevailed in scholarly and popular history for over a century. He found an enormous influence wielded by the nineteenth-century writings of Reuben Marmaduke Potter and William Physick Zuber, contemporaries of the Texas Revolution, whose early histories and memoirs DeShields, Onderdonk, and McArdle used explicitly and extensively in their historical creations.

What Kilgore found is that Potter and Zuber understood the Texas Revolution *a priori* as "a great heroic epic," and that this preconception shaped their view of the physical

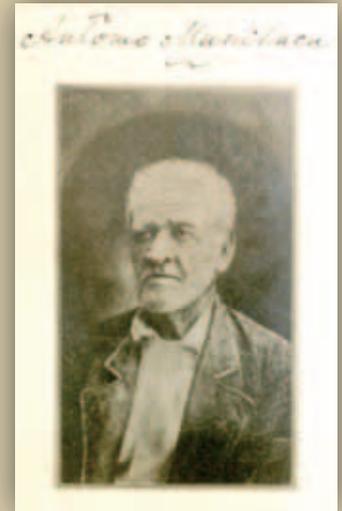
facts.³⁴ "Potter," writes Kilgore, "did not justify his views by hard evidence" but by preconceived notions, "which required the events to follow a given sequence."³⁵ To question Davy Crockett's willingness to fight to the last breath would be to fly in the face of what a later generation would call "the Power of Myth."³⁶

A final thought: Reuben Potter's great friendship with José Antonio Navarro notwithstanding, the power of the Romantic, dualistic version of the Texas Revolution left little room in the Texas Creation Myth for Navarro and his fellow Tejanos who supported and fought for independence from Mexico.³⁷ These men virtually disappeared from Texas history in the late nineteenth century, and they remained obscured for nearly a century. They are *almost* absent from McArdle's work.

In June of 1893, over two years after the San Jacinto veterans testified to the "absolute historical truth" of McArdle's battlefield painting, Texas Ranger John S. "Rip" Ford wrote to the artist asking that "Capt. Manchaca . . . a lieutenant of a company of Mexicans commanded by Col. Juan N. Seguín at the battle," be added in the painting's final version. "It is just to the Mexicans who sided with the Americans," argued Ford, and "it would cause you some more friends in San Antonio."³⁸ Ford included a photograph of Manchaca with the letter.³⁹

So, Antonio Manchaca, in both paintings, stands between Colonel Ned Burleson's rearing horse and the viewer, in the center left foreground.⁴⁰ This is despite the fact that Manchaca and the rest of Seguín's company fought on the Texan left with Sidney Sherman's regiment, and not the Texan right foregrounded in McArdle's San Jacinto paintings.⁴¹ If this is a triumph of justice over "absolute historical truth," I think we can forgive McArdle. But he may have lost his new San Antonio friends when, a few years later, they first laid eyes on *Dawn at the Alamo!*⁴²

James E. Crisp is Professor of History at North Carolina State University and author of *Sleuthing the Alamo: Davy Crockett's Last Stand and Other Mysteries of the Texas Revolution*. For the past decade, he has served as the moderator of the annual San Jacinto Symposium, which will meet in 2013 at the University of Houston on April 15.



Antonio Manchaca fought under the command of Sam Houston at San Jacinto in Captain Juan Seguín's company of Tejano rebels. His likeness was a late addition to McArdle's first canvas depicting the battle. Manchaca also appears in the smaller version of *The Battle of San Jacinto* commissioned by James T. DeShields in 1901. John S. "Rip" Ford sent this photograph of an elderly Manchaca to McArdle in 1893. Photo courtesy of Texas State Library & Archives Commission.



The 1847 Kellum-Noble House served as Houston Parks Department headquarters for many years.
 Photo courtesy of Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, Reproduction number HABS TEX, 101-HOUT, 4-1.

SAM HOUSTON PARK: Houston History through the Ages

By Wallace W. Saage

The history of Texas and the history of the city of Houston are inextricably linked to one factor – land. Both Texas and Houston used the legacy of the land to encourage settlement, bringing in a great multicultural mélange of settlers that left a lasting impression on the state. An early Mexican land grant to John Austin in 1824 led to a far-reaching development plan and the founding of a new city on the banks of Buffalo Bayou. In 1836, after the Republic of Texas won its independence, brothers John Kirby Allen and Augustus C. Allen purchased several acres of this

grant from Austin’s widow, Mrs. J. F. L. Parrot, and laid out a new city.¹ They named it Houston.

The growth of Sam Houston Park, originally called City Park, has always been closely related to the transfer of land, particularly the physical and cultural evolution of Houston’s downtown region that the park borders. Contained within the present park boundaries are sites acquired by the city from separate entities, which had erected private homes, businesses, and two cemeteries there.

Over the years, the city has refurbished the park, made changes in the physical plant, and accommodated the increased use of automobiles to access a growing downtown. The greatest transformation of the park, however, grew out of the proposed demolition of the original Kellum House built on the site in 1847. In 1954, a group of concerned citizens banded together to save the house and, under an agreement with the city, turn it into a museum. This original group, Harris County Heritage and Conservation Society (now known as The Heritage Society), restored the home and opened it in 1958, establishing a place where structures representing a window into Houston’s past could be preserved for future generations.

GATHERING THE LAND

With the Allens’ purchase of the tract to found the city of Houston, land began to change hands throughout the city for residential and commercial ventures. An eight-acre tract of land, made up of subdivided city lots, which became the future nucleus of Old City Park, was no exception.



Children flocked to the cool waters in Sam Houston Park’s wading pool.
 Postcard, c. 1908. All images courtesy of The Heritage Society Permanent Collection unless otherwise noted.

The various deeds trace this transformation:

- July 20, 1824 John Austin—Granted two leagues by the government of Texas
- 1836 A. C. & John Allen—Tracts bought from Austin's widow, Mrs. Parrot
- May 3, 1837 Wm. N. Mock—Allens deeded Mock eight acres
- Jan. 22, 1838 Robert P. Stewart—Deed from Mock for eight acres
- June 26, 1839 M. Dyer/Peter Elgart—Bought two town lots from the eight acres
- June 26, 1839 Thomas C. Dobbs—Bought the two lots and improvements
- July 14, 1839 H. Baldwin—Three acres out of the eight acres survey for \$2,500
- Aug. 4, 1839 W. Colton—One acre of Baldwin's three acres for \$400²

Despite the many changes in ownership associated with the property, all claims were nullified except the original transfer from Allen to Mock. The Allens had a lien against the property and on May 2, 1839, the Harris County sheriff seized the property, which T. M. Bagby bought at public auction in 1843.

The history of Sam Houston Park begins here, when Nathaniel Kelly Kellum purchased the tract of land from Bagby to use for business purposes and to construct his residence on the south bank of Buffalo Bayou.³ A native of Virginia, Kellum had immigrated to Houston in 1839 and became involved in construction. Credited with constructing several commercial buildings in Houston, he operated a brick factory, lime vats for making mortar and plaster, and a tannery for hides, which were made into boots and sold by businessman B. A. Shepherd.

After buying the eight acre tract, Kellum began buying other property in the general area. Paying \$200 to James S. Holman, he purchased "2 1/10 acres of land on the south side of Buffalo Bayou south of and adjoining a tract of land now occupied by the said Kellum as a brick yard and west of a tract known as the City Hospital." On November 22, 1845, Kellum purchased "8 town lots known as the hospital lots" from Francis R. Lubbock.⁴ These two land acquisitions along with the original eight-acre purchase were then combined into one tract of land containing approximately thirteen acres known as the Kellum property.

Nathaniel Kellum built a two story brick home for his family on the southern portion of the tract in 1847. The bricks undoubtedly came from the brickyard on the property. The family had not lived there long when Kellum decided to liquidate his Houston holdings and move to Grimes County. He gave power of attorney to sell the property to B. A. Shepherd who purchased the house, thirteen acres, business properties, and a

Kellum-Noble House's second parlor includes a mahogany square grand piano and a pine and ash Texas six-leg daybed, both c. 1850.

Photo by Annette Boatwright.

store with frontage on Main Street for \$8,000.⁵

Within a few months, Shepherd put the original thirteen acres and house on the market again; and A. W. Noble and his wife Zerviah purchased the property, agreeing to pay the note by a certain time. The family lived there for several years, but the marriage proved to be unstable and was dissolved. By court decree, Zerviah Noble got the Kellum House and property in the divorce settlement. To retire the debt owed to Shepherd, Mrs. Noble and her daughter Catherine A. Kelly paid \$2,045.35 for the property.⁶ The property, obtained in 1856, stayed in possession of Mrs. Noble and her heirs until 1899 when the City of Houston, led by Mayor Samuel Brashear, acquired it.⁷ The area was called City Park until 1903 when the city renamed it Sam Houston Park, and the brick house built by Kellum became the headquarters for Houston's Parks Department.

The owners of other city lots bordering the original Mock survey developed them in various ways, constructing residences and businesses closely linked to Bagby Street. At various times, the City of Houston acquired these properties to expand the park, including the purchases of the Episcopal and Masonic cemeteries. Christ Episcopal Church established the Episcopal Cemetery in 1848; however, when Glenwood Cemetery opened in 1871, many graves from the Episcopal Cemetery were re-interred there. The Episcopal Cemetery's designation was removed June 22, 1938, and the remaining graves moved to Brookside Memorial Park in 1948. Christ Church sold the property to the city for \$52,500 and the city added the acreage to Sam Houston Park.⁸ Also bordering the original Mock survey, the Masonic Cemetery was established in 1856 by Holland Lodge No.1, which purchased the property from Peter Gray. It became a burial place for many prominent Houstonians, but several of its graves were also moved to Glenwood. The Masons had the cemetery dedication removed in 1959 and sold the property to the city in 1960 for \$289,964. Although initially used for a parking lot, the land was eventually incorporated into Sam Houston Park.⁹



The city acquired additional tracts of land in 1913 and 1914 at a cost of \$45,675. It purchased a parking lot on the corner of McKinney and Bagby from the De George estate in 1959 and the street-front lots on Bagby and Lamar in 1961. This enlarged the park space to nearly twenty-one acres.¹⁰

Just as the land purchases added to Sam Houston Park's size, municipal development dramatically changed its character. Access to Houston's business district apparently acted as the driving force to change access patterns through the park, replacing the old graceful drives with simplified urban roadbeds. In 1938, the City of Houston constructed the Fire Alarm Building on the northwest corner of Bagby and Lamar adjacent to the park entrance, further changing its atmosphere. Although the Kellum-Noble House still made its presence known and the city had moved several civic memorials to the area, the park no longer served as an active leisure site for Houstonians.

Perhaps the greatest damage to the character of the original park occurred as a result of the Interstate Highway System's decision to construct an elevated freeway loop along the park's western edge. The Highway Department removed an almost 1.8-acre tract of land from the park to provide support piers for the Interstate 45 elevated roadway, exit, and access ramps.¹¹

PRESERVING THE PAST

Ironically, the Kellum-Noble House became the catalyst that returned Sam Houston Park to its original mission as a gathering place for Houstonians. In a city often criticized for placing little value on its historic buildings, it was inevitable that a structure as old as the Kellum-Noble House became a target for destruction. Vacant for several years, it had deteriorated to the point that in 1954 the City of Houston announced plans to raze the building. A vanguard of prominent preservation-minded citizens banded together to save this important part of Houston history. As a result, the city agreed to allow the Harris County Heritage and Conservation Society to stabilize the building and convert it into a museum. The Kellum-Noble House opened for public tours in 1958.



The Nichols-Rice-Cherry House, built in 1850, was originally located on Courthouse Square before Emma Cherry moved it to the Montrose area. In 1959, it became the first historic structure moved to the park.

Very soon thereafter, another opportunity arose to save an important historic building, the Nichols-Rice-Cherry House. Originally built downtown in 1850 by Ebenezer B. Nichols, the Greek Revival-style house was also home to Houston businessman William Marsh Rice for a time. In 1899, Emma Richardson Cherry moved it to the Montrose area where it stayed until 1959 when it became the first historic building moved into Sam Houston Park by the Harris County Heritage and Conservation Society.

Over the past six decades, The Heritage Society has moved eight more historic structures to the park. Additionally, the organization constructed replicas of one of Houston's first office blocks and of City Park's original bandstand, as well as the Museum Gallery for permanent and temporary exhibitions. Sculptures and monuments have also been added to the original park acreage.

The Heritage Society has helped Sam Houston Park re-emerge as a popular gathering place for Houstonians and tourists. An estimated 250,000 people visit the park each year for guided tours of the historic buildings, festivals, sporting events, and everyday recreation. Because demands on the park have increased dramatically, the City of Houston is implementing a new master plan during 2013. Among other improvements, the plans include reconfiguring sidewalks, adding lighting, relocating and restoring the 1866 4th Ward Cottage and park bandstand, repaving parking lots, and installing markers to identify the park's entrances. These changes will enable Sam Houston Park to continue educating visitors about Houston's fascinating history for years to come.

Wallace W. Saage has served as collections curator for The Heritage Society (THS) since 1996. He previously served as curator of the Alamo. During his tenure with THS, several important items, including numerous Texas Decorative Arts, have been added to THS's Permanent Collection.



Postcard, c. 1907, showing the bandstand in Sam Houston Park as a popular gathering place for visitors.

SAM HOUSTON PARK is open daily dawn to dusk. The Heritage Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Guided historic structures tours are available at 10:00 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 1:00 p.m., and 2:30 p.m. For more information about The Heritage Society or to make a donation, visit www.heritatesociety.org.



Old Place was moved from the west bank of Clear Creek to Sam Houston Park in 1973. Its roughly hewn cedar logs and mortise and tenon jointure represent defining elements of Texas frontier architecture. The cabin's interpretive features illustrate the hardships faced by early settlers.



Moved to Sam Houston Park in 2002 from 809 Robin Street in Freedman's Town, 4th Ward Cottage dates back as far as 1866, when Houston's first City Directory indicates that Charles Englehard and his family lived there. The house will be moved next to the Yates House, where it will be rehabilitated and interpreted as an architectural archaeology exhibit using the building's materials to tell its history.



Built by Eugene Pillot at 1803 McKinney Street in 1868, this Eastlake Victorian Style house was continuously occupied by the Pillot family until 1965 when they donated it to The Heritage Society to move to the park. Pillot had an intricate copper gutter system installed to provide fresh water to the house.



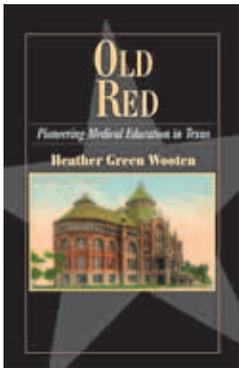
Originally built in 1870 at 1319 Andrews Street in Freedman's Town by Reverend Jack Yates, the Greek Revival structure serves as a repository of Yates family belongings. The home was moved to the park in 1994.



Relocated to the park in 1963, San Felipe Cottage serves as an example of the vernacular architecture and the culture of Houston's German working-class population of the late nineteenth century. Originally located at 313 San Felipe Road and built in 1868, the structure holds The Heritage Society's collection of Texas Decorative Arts.

News Updates & Books *by Barbara Eaves*

LITERATURE & TEACHING AIDS



Old Red: Pioneering Medical Education in Texas, by Heather Green Wooten, Texas State Historical Association, 2012, \$15.95.

“In 1937, with a medical doctorate from Yale and a year of medical study in Paris under his belt, Ashbel Smith arrived in Texas ... befriended General Sam Houston, and was quickly appointed surgeon general of the army of the Republic of Texas.” Smith was one of few doctors here with a formal education, and he spent

his next fifty years trying to remedy that. His labors began paying off in 1881 when the Texas Legislature established the University of Texas and a medical department to go with it. Ten years later, following the selection of architect Nicholas L. Clayton, a fact-finding tour of notable medical schools, and Smith’s death, the new department received its first students. Wooten traces the legacy of the Ashbel Smith Building at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston (fondly nicknamed “Old Red”) in a fascinating, well-written account in which the building is a major actor.

TEXAS HISTORIC COURTHOUSES – The Texas Historical Commission’s *Courthouse Cornerstones* highlights the success and potential of THC’s nearly fifteen-year-old initiative, which provides partial matching grants to counties to restore their historic courthouses. More than fifty courthouses have been restored (including Harris County’s), with eight more on tap for 2013-2014. Visit www.thc.state.tx.us; to order, call (512) 463-6094.

TEXAS HISTORY CURRICULUM GUIDE – A redesigned curriculum guide for Texas history that adheres to the revised Texas Education Agency objectives (TEKS) was released by the San Jacinto Museum of History in January. Its more than ninety lessons were taken from primary and secondary source documents in the museum’s collections. Educational consultant Yvonne Jackson Pittman wrote the guide, with assistance from museum curator Elizabeth Appleby and librarian Lisa Struthers. For information and to download this important new resource, visit www.sanjacinto-museum.org.

EDUCATIONAL AIDS – Vernon Gillette, a member of Friends of the Texas Room, has partnered with the Houston Metropolitan Research Center staff to develop lesson plans for K-12 teachers incorporating primary sources.

Another aid? Mike Vance’s *HAM Slice of History* with two-minute vignettes of Houston regional history. The lessons also serve as examples for students making their own videos.

AWARDS

TEXAS STATE HISTORICAL ASSOC. AWARDS – TSHA recognized outstanding books on Texas history at its 117th annual meeting in February. The Coral H. Tullis Memorial Prize for Best Book on Texas History went to Jan Reid for *Let the People In: The Life and Times of Ann Richards*. It shared the Liz Carpenter Award for Research in the History of Women with Mary L. Scheer’s *Women and the Texas Revolution*. Kate Sayon Kirkland’s *Captain James A. Baker of Houston 1857-1941* received honorable mention. The Ron Tyler Award for Best Illustrated Book on Texas History and Culture went to *River of Contrasts: The Texas Colorado* by Margie Crisp. David Bush and Jim Parsons shared honorable mention for *Fair Park Deco: Art and Architecture of the Texas Centennial Exposition*. *Fighting Stock: John S. “Rip” Ford* by Richard B. McCaslin won the Kate Brooks Bates Award for Historical Research.

CONSERVATION SOCIETY 2013 BOOK AWARDS – Every two years, the San Antonio Conservation Society recognizes authors for their works on Texas history. The winning authors for 2013 include Steven Fenberg for his biography *Unprecedented Power: Jesse Jones, Capitalism, and the Common Good*. Other winners are: Phil Collins, *The Alamo and Beyond: A Collector’s Journey*; Patrick Dearen, *Devil’s River: Treacherous Twin to the Pecos, 1535-1900*; Marcia Hatfield Daudistel, ed., *Grace & Gumption: The Women of El Paso*; Chris Meister, *James Riley Gordon: His Courthouses and Other Public Architecture*; David McDonald, *José Antonio Navarro: In Search of the American Dream in Nineteenth Century Texas*; Gayle Brennan Spencer, *Last Farm Standing on Buttermilk Hill: Voelcker Roots Run Deep in Hardberger Park*; Jesse O. Villarreal, Sr., *Tejano Patriots of the American Revolution, 1776-1783*; Lonn Taylor and David B. Warren, *Texas Furniture: The Cabinetmakers and Their Work, 1840-1880*, revised edition, Vol. 1; and Jason Walker and Will Erwin, *Texas State Cemetery*.

GOOD BRICK AWARDS – Preservation Houston celebrated its thirty-fifth birthday in 2013 by presenting its Good Brick Awards and other honors, as well as adopting a new motto, *history in progress*. The ten projects win-



Good Brick winner, Fire Station No. 6 at sunset.

Photo courtesy of Pete Lacker.

ning Good Bricks are: Tom Hair, restoration and adaptive re-use of Fire Station 6 (1903); Cheryl and Dave Bowman, renovation of their 1954 Glenbrook Valley house; Krissy and Will Hirtz, restoration of their 1934 Southern Colonial River Oaks house; Annunciation Catholic Church (1871, 1881, 1900) and the Archdiocese of Galveston/Houston, restoration of the church's steeple, façade, and stained glass windows; 500 Fannin LLC, preservation of the 1932 Art Deco Wilson Building; Cynthia and Ben Guill, renovation of their John F. Staub River Oaks home (1936); Laura and Evan Michaelides for their Victorian First Ward cottage (c. 1905); Louisa Meacham and John Faraguna, renovation of their 1907 Woodland Heights Craftsman bungalow; 1101 McGowen Group Ltd./INFILL Planning + Development for Mongoose versus Cobra, adaptation of a Midtown grocery building (1915) into a craft beer and cocktail bar; and Matt Pasternak, renovation of Joseph Finger's Georgian Revival house (1936) in Boulevard Oaks.

Three educational Good Bricks went to Madeleine Callery Hussey for documenting and conserving the collection of Weber Iron Works; Texas Foundation for the Arts for the documentary, *The 1910 Harris County Courthouse*; and the Texas DAR and Houston Arts & Media (HAM) for the video, *With Respect: Conserving Historic Cemeteries*. Beth Madison and J. P. Bryan were recognized as Community Pillars for their contributions to Houston's growth and prosperity. Finally, Anna Mod with SWCA Environmental Consultants earned the group's Martha Peterson Award for her pro bono efforts on behalf of historic preservation.

FRIENDS OF THE TEXAS ROOM – Mike Vance's video, *HAM Slice of History, Volume 2*, won the 2012 Julia Ideson Award. The prize, commemorating the library's first director, recognizes research projects documenting Houston and Texas history and culture that significantly rely on collections from the Texas Room/Houston Metropolitan Research Center. The deadline for 2013 entries is June 1.



Woodway Square fire, from Mike Vance's HAM Slice, is in the Houston Post archives at the HMRC.



EVENTS

SATURDAY, APRIL 13: San Jacinto Symposium, Wars, Treaties and Boundaries – a Look at the Shape of Texas. The 13th annual symposium examines how wars, treaties,

controversies, and compromises between 1819 and 1850 resulted in the state's modern borders.

Speakers are: Gene Allen Smith, TCU; Jerry Thompson, Texas A&M International; Mark J. Stegmaier, Cameron University; and Manuel González Oropeza, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. \$55 covers lunch, parking, exhibits, and more. \$125 covers all of the above, plus an invitation to the Patrons' Party to meet the speakers and tour the collection of Texas maps in Frank Holcomb's offices. Symposium is 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at the University of Houston Hilton Hotel & Conference Center. To register, visit www.sanjacintoconservancy.org.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, APRIL 12-14: Caseta, which promotes the preservation, study, and appreciation of Texas visual arts and history, kicks off its second decade with a new chairman, Houston gallery owner William Reaves, and its 13th Annual Symposium and Texas Art Fair at San Antonio's Witte Museum. Keynote speaker is Ron Tyler, art scholar and former director of the Amon Carter Museum and TSHA. Presenters will discuss Julian Onderdonk, Porfirio Salinas, and more. Visit www.caseta.org.



SATURDAY-SUNDAY, APRIL 20-21: San Jacinto Battle Re-enactment and Commemoration – The annual San Jacinto Day Festival and Battle Re-enactment is from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, followed by the San Jacinto Commemorative Ceremony

the next day, at 2:00 p.m. On Saturday, re-enactors spend the day “living in the past,” with the historically-accurate battle – complete with horses, cannons, and pyrotechnics – beginning at 3:00 p.m. Both events are free, and open to the public at the battleground. www.sanjacinto-museum.org.

MONDAY, APRIL 29: John Nau will speak about the new Center for Texas Cultural Heritage at the Friends of the Texas Room meeting, 6:30 p.m., Houston Public Library's Julia Ideson Building, 500 McKinney Avenue.



SATURDAY, MAY 4: Houston History Association 3rd Annual Conference – Rogues, Rascals, and Role Models: Famous and Infamous Residents of the Bayou City. From

the beginning, Houston has attracted people, both nefarious and noble, who saw it as a place of opportunity. Who were the standouts? What contributed to their fame (or infamy)? What is their legacy? The 8:30 a.m.-to-3:00 p.m. event will be in the Julia Ideson Building, Houston Public Library; registration is \$50. Visit www.houstonhistoryassociation.org.

SATURDAYS, APRIL 6, and MAY 8: Buffalo Bayou Tours – Louis Aulbach guides these two-hour trips from Allen's Landing starting at 10:00 a.m., fee is \$40. Call Jessalyn Giacona (713)752-0314 ext. 4; visit www.buffalobayou.org.

JUNE 9, JULY 14, AND AUGUST 11: Preservation

Houston Tours – Go back to summer school with architecture walks at Rice University (June 9), University of Houston (July 14), and University of St. Thomas (August 11), each of which has its own distinct style and interesting history. Ninety-minute tours begin at 6:00 p.m. \$10 per person, \$7 for members and students with valid IDs. Visit www.preservationhouston.org/tours.

EXHIBITS, HOUSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY – The Julia Ideson Building showcases the collections housed there, lectures (through Second Saturdays), and music (through Tunes at Noon), film previews, and community discussions. The events are free and open to the public. A retrospective of Houston’s first modern artist, Emma Richardson Cherry (1859-1954), is hanging in the gallery through May 4. In 1900, Cherry organized the Houston Public School Art League, now Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Visit www.houstonlibrary.com/julia-ideson-building or call (832)393-1662.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW DEPARTMENT FOR *Houston History* – Last year, the UH College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences hosted “Immigration and the Immigrant Experience: Houston and Beyond,” a symposium promoting collaboration on integrative projects related to immigration. Faculty and students across the UH System presented recent research that will appear in the next issue of *Houston History* under a new department-highlighting Houston’s diverse communities.

FILM DEBUT – The UH Center for Public History and Digital Library recently debuted the film *University of Houston: War and Growth, 1939-1950*. The film, produced entirely by university faculty, staff, and students, makes use of images from the University’s archives and the Houston Public Library to show the interrelationship between the growth of the city and the University during the World War II era.



NAU CENTER FOR TEXAS CULTURAL HERITAGE – A center to welcome visitors to Houston and immerse them in Texas history will open in about two years on Chenevert between Minute Maid Park and the George R. Brown Convention Center. Businessman John Nau has contributed \$8 million to the \$55 million project and is raising an additional \$32 million. Houston First, the agency that runs the city’s convention business – and will operate

the new center – has committed another \$15 million. The 60,000-square-foot structure will include interactive exhibits where visitors will meet the Allen Brothers and Sam Houston, watch Spindletop erupt, get lost in the thrill of Mission Control, and more. The Foley and Cohn homes, the only remaining structures from the Quality Hill neighborhood, will be restored as part of the complex.

HARRIS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION – The HCHC implemented a new county marker program in 2012 and dedicated its first two medallions – one for Harris



Unveiling of the second Harris County historical marker on November 9, 2012, honoring Phillis Wheatley High School. Left to right: Kelsea Fields, Debra Blacklock-Sloan, Al Edwards, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, David Edgerson, Elaine Williams, and Larry Murchinson. Photo courtesy of Maurice Toliver.

County on May 24, and one for Wheatley High School, on November 9. The county marker eligibility criteria and requirements resemble those for state markers, but the county has greater flexibility on content and scheduling. For example, a sponsor may include maps, photos or other graphics on the front and back of the county markers. The Commission dedicated eight Texas markers, including one at San Jacinto College, one at Rice University, and one at the home of Governor John B. Connally, Jr. Projects in the pipeline will commemorate John T. Biggers and Barbara Jordan at Texas Southern University, the home of architect Maurice Sullivan, the El Dorado Ballroom, Washington Cemetery, Bayland Orphanage, and Channel 8 at UH.

BUFFALO BAYOU PARTNERSHIP – Changes are coming in Buffalo Bayou Park between Shepherd and Sabine. Three pedestrian bridges are under construction: the Shepherd Bridge should be complete by spring, the Jackson Hill Bridge by summer, and the Police Memorial Bridge by fall. TxDOT is installing new trails, and the Harris County Flood Control District is conducting channel work along this stretch of the bayou. Visit www.buffalobayoupark.org.

Houston First Corporation is purchasing the 1910 International Coffee Building at Allen’s Landing for use as Partnership headquarters. A canoe, kayak, and bike rental facility will occupy the first floor, Partnership offices will be on the second, and meeting and rental space will be on the third. A rooftop terrace will round out the building. You can help by donating or buying a custom Bayou Blend bag of coffee at Katz’s, Whole Foods, and several other Houston stores. Fifty cents of each purchase goes to the Partnership. Visit www.buffalobayou.org/internationalcoffee.html.



*Mayor Annise Parker declared December 11, 2012,
Houston History Day,
and congratulated the magazine in celebrating
its tenth year of publication.*

The Mayoral Proclamation, sponsored by Council Member Melissa Noreiga and presented by Council Member Ed Gonzalez, reads in part, "**Houston History** magazine seeks to educate and entertain while exploring and preserving important aspects of Houston's history and culture. With the goal of producing the best magazine about the history of any city in the nation, **Houston History** strives to make our region more aware of its history. **Houston History** presents original research . . . and features articles of people and communities who might otherwise be neglected from the historical record."



Pictured left to right: Council Member Ed Gonzalez, UHAA president Mike Pede, Mayor Annise Parker, managing editor Debbie Harwell, associate editor Aimee Bachari, program coordinator Wyndham Bailey, social networking coordinator Ann Lynd, and oral history director Natalie Garza.

Photo by UHAA communications director Jeff Sutton.

ENDNOTES

HOUSTON'S ENVIRONMENTAL LEGACY

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- 2 For more on the founding of Outdoor Nature Club in 1923 see the Joseph M. Heiser, Jr. Papers, Box 1, Folders 1-5, Outdoor Nature Club, Box 1, Folder 2, courtesy of Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.
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- 5 Eckhardt later went to the U.S. House of Representatives and was the "brains behind the Clean Air Act" according to Molly Ivins. *The Free Press*, November 12, 2001, www.freepress.org/columns/display/1/2001/646.
- 6 Barbara Karkabi, "Naturalist Citizens: Living a Legacy of Respect for the Earth Is Second Nature for the Emmotts," *Houston Chronicle* 2 STAR Edition, April 21, 1991, 1.
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- 10 Citizens' Environmental Coalition Records (hereinafter CEC), Box 1, courtesy of Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.
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- 12 W. Leo Theiss and Mrs. J. W. Hershey, letter n.d.; "Recommendations," document explained in subheader: "The Land Use Planning Task Force of the Citizens' Environmental Coalition, headed by Sam Houston Resource Conservation and Development, recommends the following," CEC, Box 55, Folder 2; Terry Hershey letter to Mr. N. Robert Batten, Executive Vice President, Greater Houston Builders Association, October 15, 1970, CEC, Box 55, Folder 2, courtesy of Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.
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- 14 Harris County Flood Control Task Force, 1972-1980, Bayou Preservation Association, Box 37, Folder 4, courtesy of Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.
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- 3 Jerry Eversole, conversation with author, 2011.
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- 5 James Noack, conversation with author, January 2013.
- 6 Vince Keegan, conversation with author, January 2013.
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