The Houston REVIEW
OF HISTORY AND CULTURE
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Houston Remembers World War II

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON • CENTER FOR PUBLIC HISTORY

From the Editor

World War II was a pivotal time in the life of Houston. The city boomed, as workers from other sections of Texas and Louisiana poured into the region in search of jobs in the war industries that sprang up along the ship channel. Thousands of soldiers passed through Houston-area training facilities such as the giant complex at Ellington Field. At the same time, many Houstonians joined the armed services and embarked on the deadly adventure of defeating determined enemies on battlefields around the world.

The memories of the war remain all around us sixty years after the fighting ended. Veterans from both the foreign fronts and the home front still carry vivid images of their experiences. Indeed, as veterans grow older, many come to the realization that the events of World War II remain the most vivid of their lives. Their children and grandchildren have listened to their stories of the war. Many of us have felt a combination of admiration and horror as we have watched documentaries of the war, as well as dramatic recreations such as *Saving Private Ryan* and *Band of Brothers*.

In this issue, we have sought to capture some of the memories of the war and the mobilization effort at home. We have included a mixture of historical articles, interviews, and photographs. We realize that some of the photos are not of the highest quality. Some of the photographers were using cameras without the high resolution of current cameras; others were being shot at while they took their pictures. Look at the photos, listen to the voices, and join us in remembering and honoring those who helped win the war.

ON THE COVER
Robert E. Murphy, Jr., age thirteen months, receives his father's Silver Star medal of honor, awarded posthumously, as his mother looks on.

Future Issues

In November of 2005, we will publish our next issue, "**Coming to Houston**," which will focus on the stories of individuals and groups who have migrated to our region in search of better lives. Most of us who live in the city today are first or second generation migrants, and Houston has been shaped by the experiences of migrants since its earliest history.

Future issues will include the law in Houston's history, the history of the arts in our region, disasters in Houston's history, and the gradual emergence of historic preservation in our region.

We welcome your ideas for articles or interviews for any of these future issues, and we encourage you to send them to us at the addresses listed below.

The Houston History Project Center for Public History at the University of Houston

For more than twenty years, the **Center for Public History** at the University of Houston has trained students to apply the skills of the professional historian outside the university. Our former students work throughout the region in jobs in government, business, historical societies, preservationist groups, archives, libraries, professional societies, museums, and public interest groups.

Many of the activities of the Center have involved the history of our region. To coordinate these various projects, we have created the **Houston History Project**. In addition to on-going research on the various aspects of the city's history, the Houston History Project houses three new initiatives:

THE HOUSTON REVIEW OF HISTORY AND CULTURE

Generous grants from Ben Love, the West Endowment, the Hamill Foundation, and the Cullen Chair in History and Business at the University of Houston have allowed us to launch this magazine, which we hope will grow into a widely read magazine of popular history for our region.

ORAL HISTORY OF HOUSTON

Using a three-year grant from the Houston Endowment, this summer we will begin to collect names, conduct background research, and interview important Houstonians from all walks of life.

HOUSTON HISTORY ARCHIVES

Using support from the Kenneth Reese Library Fund at the University of Houston, we have begun to identify, process, and collect historical information on Houston's past. The archives will also include the transcripts completed by the Oral History of Houston project.

We solicit your ideas for these projects. To foster interchanges between the Center for Public History and others interested in the region's history, we plan to hold a "Houston History Summit" in the fall of 2005. If you would like to attend the event, please let us know.

Comments...Questions...Ideas...

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POSTMASTER:
Send address changes to University of Houston, Center for Public History, 524 Agnes Arnold Hall, Houston, TX 77204-3003

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Memorials and Memories

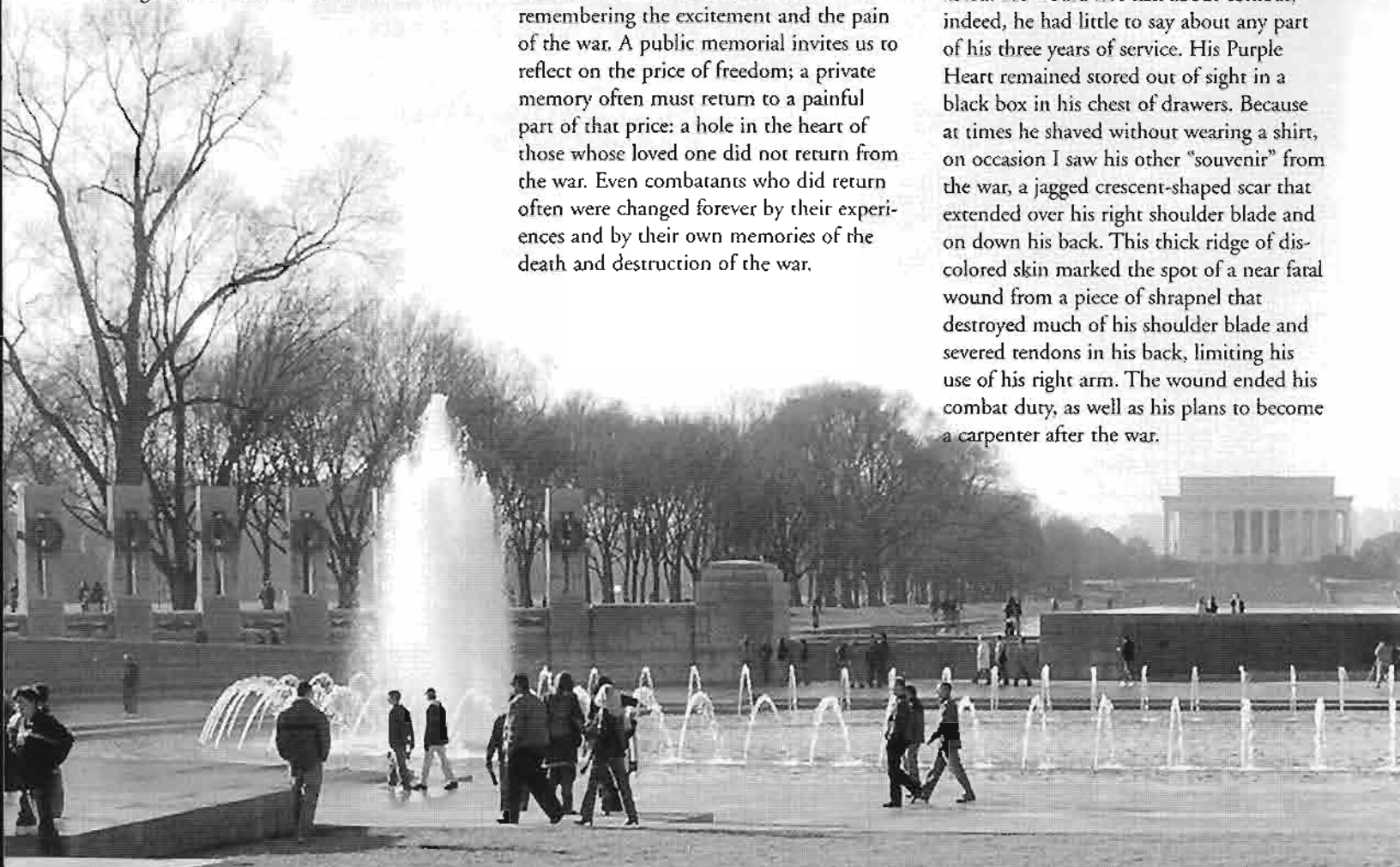
by Joseph A. Pratt
Cullen Professor of History and Business, University of Houston

Four hundred thousand Americans died in World War II; an estimated fifty million died worldwide. Millions of others fought in the war and returned home, often with serious physical and mental wounds. The war also altered the lives of most other Americans, since the battle on two fronts around the world required sacrifices at home as well as in the armed services. Sixty years have passed since World War II ended, but its impact on Houston and on Houstonians remains strong. This issue of *The Houston Review of History and Culture* looks back at our region's memories of World War II, including the memories of those who returned, those who did not, and those who supported our troops on the home front.

Although Houston lacks a major monument to those who served in World War II, we have constructed a variety of war memorials in our region. They remind us of the collective courage of soldiers who "paid the ultimate price" in defense of our liberties. Our private memories honor the sacrifice of individual soldiers while also remembering the excitement and the pain of the war. A public memorial invites us to reflect on the price of freedom; a private memory often must return to a painful part of that price: a hole in the heart of those whose loved one did not return from the war. Even combatants who did return often were changed forever by their experiences and by their own memories of the death and destruction of the war.

Four Who Returned

In my case, understanding the impact of the war meant coming to grips with my dad's experience as an infantryman in combat in France. Once I began to understand my father's refusal to talk about these pivotal years in his life, I also began to see the impact of World War II hovering all around me long after the war had ended. My father came home from France with a serious wound that left him partially disabled. He would not talk about combat; indeed, he had little to say about any part of his three years of service. His Purple Heart remained stored out of sight in a black box in his chest of drawers. Because at times he shaved without wearing a shirt, on occasion I saw his other "souvenir" from the war, a jagged crescent-shaped scar that extended over his right shoulder blade and on down his back. This thick ridge of discolored skin marked the spot of a near fatal wound from a piece of shrapnel that destroyed much of his shoulder blade and severed tendons in his back, limiting his use of his right arm. The wound ended his combat duty, as well as his plans to become a carpenter after the war.



***BACKGROUND PHOTO:** The new National World War II Memorial on the Mall in Washington, D.C., honors the 16 million who served in the armed forces during the war, the more than 400,000 who died, and the millions who supported the war effort on the home front. Fifty-six pillars stand tall to represent each state and territory that contributed to the war effort. This majestic memorial, constructed of granite and bronze, representing superior strength and durability, is open to the public 24 hours a day.*

Before dying of cancer in 1970 at 52, my dad never volunteered information about his wound or his army service. I never asked. It seemed forbidden, closed to me in the same way that I had known without asking as a child that I could never take the Purple Heart out of the drawer and use it to play army. After his death, I quickly went off for active duty in the National Guard before moving away to pursue a career as a historian and a teacher. Even though I taught about World War II in my classes, the personal saga of my dad's experiences in the war remained unknown to me, and somehow still off limits.

This changed in 1997, when I received an invitation to lecture in Delft, Holland. Realizing that this would put me near the places where my dad had spent his tour of duty in France, I decided to retrace some of his steps. To do so, I learned all I could about his service record. His discharge gave me the basics. He had served in the 320th Infantry Regiment, reaching the rank of staff sergeant. He entered the service on January 7, 1942, from a job as a service station attendant. He arrived in Europe on May 27, 1944, and departed on December 27, 1944, after being severely wounded in action on September 29, 1944.

Conversations with his younger brother and sister filled in other facts. A unit history of the 320th written just after the war recounted its training in the states and voyage to England and provided a day-to-day account of action by the unit in Europe.[1]

Reading the stories about his unit's training solved several small mysteries that remained lodged in my brain from childhood. Some old photographs showed him in his army uniform on a broad, beautiful beach; the unit history placed him in San Luis Obispo, California, where he patrolled the beaches looking for Japanese submarines in 1943. Once as we watched a broadcast of a football game from the Los Angeles Coliseum, he had pointed to a spot in the end zone from which he had watched a football game; this must have happened on a weekend pass while he was stationed near Ventura, California. When I was preparing to go off to college, my dad, who had dropped out of school after the seventh grade during the Depression and who seldom had occasion to visit a college campus, mentioned out of the blue that I should consider Duke University. His unit history recalled fondly a "carefree period" in January 1944 at "pine-treed Camp Butner, North Carolina," where the troops had a "liberal leave policy" and "found Raleigh and Durham pleasant places."

They then enjoyed leaves in New York City before shipping out for Liverpool. Once there they took trains to southern England to await duty in France. One week into their training, news of the D-Day invasion made clear to them that they were destined for the newly opened front on the Normandy beaches. As they waited to join the action, they visited London on passes, and were inspired by visits by Generals Eisenhower and Patton. Several months later in France, my dad used a short pass to visit recently liberated Paris. Except for a stint in Arizona in a C.C.C. camp in the 1930s, before the war this East Texas country boy had rarely ventured far from Hemphill, Texas. After the war he lived most of his days in the small, hundred-mile wedge of land between Hemphill and Port Neches, Texas. But during the year and a half that ended in September of 1944, he

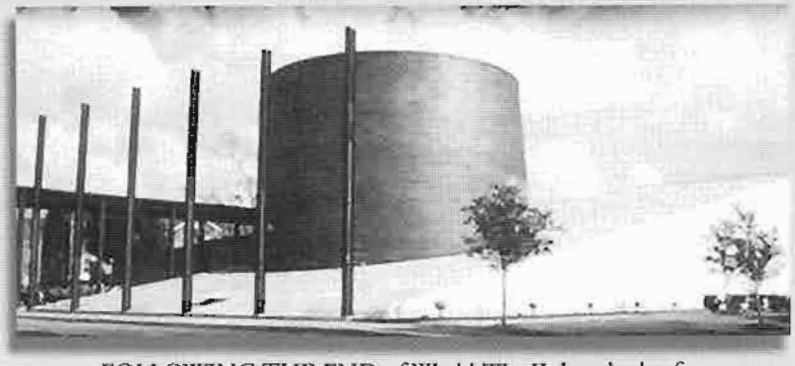
Woodrow Wilson Pratt patrolling the beach in Ventura, California in July 1942.

Public Memorials, Private Memories

By Jenna Berger and Leigh Cutler

Throughout the city, Houstonians have special places they can go to remember those they lost in World War II. For many, a public memorial gives them a sense of comfort and healing. For others, it serves as a substitute because they cannot travel to the grave of a loved one. From the Museum District to Katy to Bellaire, war memorials provide a place of solace and remembrance to those whose family members and friends are no longer with us.

Holocaust Museum Houston



FOLLOWING THE END of World War II, hundreds of Holocaust survivors came to Houston to start new lives. Many came with no money, no knowledge of the English language, and no family. Many had lost their entire families during the Nazi genocide, but had no place to mourn their loss. In 1996, Holocaust Museum Houston opened its doors in the Museum District, after years of hard work by Holocaust survivors and community members. In addition to the museum's role as a space to teach the lessons of the Holocaust, it also serves as a place of remembrance for Houstonians who lost loved ones during the genocide. Survivors now have a public space to reflect on their private memories.

EVERY MEMORIAL DAY, crowds gather together at Bear Creek Park to remember the sacrifices of Harris County residents in the wars of the past century. The Harris County War Memorial was dedicated to honor those who lost their lives fighting for this country. The idea for the memorial was driven by former Harris County Commissioner Bob Eckels and was sponsored by the Herbert D. Dunlavy Veterans of Foreign Wars Post and the Gold Star Mothers American Legion.

Harris County War Memorial

Engraved on a portion of the Texas red granite memorial are Eckels' own words: "This monument dedicated May 27, 1985, to honor those who lie silent that we may enjoy in abundance the privileges and responsibilities of freedom." Surrounded by a sea of tall green trees, a central pillar topped with a bronze eagle lists the wars the memorial represents—WWI, WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. On each side, a long, narrow rectangular wall is engraved with the names of those Harris County residents who lost their lives fighting for this country. In the center of the plaza is an American flag and a smaller pillar that states, "In Honor and In Memory of Those Known Only to God."

THE BELLAIRE MONUMENT was first dedicated on July 4, 1975 and rededicated on Veteran's Day, November 11, 1976. It was a project of the Heritage Committee of the Bellaire Bicentennial Commission to honor thirteen Bellaire residents who lost their lives in wars and conflicts. These dates were to reflect the start and finish of the American Revolution Bicentennial celebration.

Bellaire War Monument

On July 4, 1975, several hundred spectators attended the dedication in Paseo Park on Bellaire Boulevard. The Veterans of Foreign Wars District IV conducted the dedication, which ended with the Rifle Squad firing three volleys followed by "Taps." The Bayou City Unit of the Civil Air Patrol, Texas Wing, was also on hand to present the colors with Boy Scout Troupe 709 from Spring Branch. The event culminated with the firing of three rounds from a 150-year old muzzle-loading brass cannon. The dedication ceremony was a community-wide event, embraced by Houstonians of all ages.

The Texan, April 2, 1975; July 9, 1975; and November 11, 1976.

traveled across America and sailed the Atlantic while visiting Los Angeles, New York, London, and Paris. The war years provided his one and only true adventure, the highlight of a hard life growing up on the family farm during the Great Depression and then securing shift work in a petrochemical plant after the war, struggling to support a family of five. Why, I wondered, had he never talked with me about these years?

The rest of the unit history answered my question. His great adventure took a dark and deadly turn in July 1944. The 320th sailed across the English Channel, landing on Omaha Beach in Normandy on July 6, a month after D-Day. For the next 85 days, my dad was in combat or preparing for combat. His harsh introduction to the life of a rifleman came quickly. Days after reaching France, his unit was thrown into a fierce ten-day battle in the hedgerows to capture St. Lo.[2] Moving one small step at a time against entrenched German troops, the 320th suffered heavy casualties before finally taking St. Lo on July 19. After a brief, bloody detour to Mourtain to relieve a "lost battalion" of American troops cut off and surrounded by Germans, the 35th Infantry joined Patton's Third Army as it surged across France.

In August and September, the 35th Infantry took town after town in a sweep south of Paris from Normandy to Orleans to Nancy. "Clearing towns" of enemy troops was a regular challenge. The unit history records that, on at least one occasion, my father's company [consisting of about 100 soldiers] took part in a bayonet charge into machine gun fire, artillery fire, and mortar rounds to capture a town. The unit history quotes one soldier as commenting that the charge was "like Hollywood." Reading this pulled from my memory the only remark I ever heard my dad make about combat. As I watched a John Wayne army movie on late night television as a teenager, he looked at the screen for a moment, muttered "Bullshit," and walked out of the room.

As the advancing Third Army reached Nancy in the northeastern corner of France near the Rhine River, German resistance stiffened and counterattacks intensified. On September 29, in the Gremecey Forest just northeast of Nancy outside the village of Chateau-Salins, soldiers of the 320th sought to clear the woods of Germans. They met "savage opposition" that included "some of the most severe and accurate shelling of the war."

One of many casualties that day was Staff Sergeant Woodrow Wilson Pratt. One of his "ole army buddies" who visited our family from Arkansas after the war laughed as he supplied a chilling detail. When the shelling stopped, medics tending my dad's mangled body assumed him to be dead, and

"To the children of Chateau-Salins killed in the wars 1914–1918 and 1939–1945."

went on to help other wounded soldiers. Those who came after to collect his dog tags, however, discovered that he was in fact still breathing. He was then quickly evacuated and shipped to a hospital in England. After months in a body cast, he returned to the U.S. a few days after Christmas, about the time the remainder of his old unit joined Patton's tanks in relieving the 101st Airborne to end the German siege of Bastogne. As he began rehabilitation at Fort Sam Houston near San Antonio, the 320th pushed deep into Germany before V-E day.

Armed with my newfound information about his unit, I began my quest for the battlefield where my dad had been wounded. A friend from Holland volunteered to drive me on my own adventure down into France. We easily found the town of Chateau-Salins, but the smaller villages listed in the unit history proved difficult to locate. As I searched a map for them while sitting on a bench in the town square, I noticed a small monument. Drawn to it, I found an inscription that gave a sad reminder of the impact of two world wars on this region: "To the children of Chateau-Salins killed in the wars 1914-1918 and 1939-1945." After finding our bearings, we traveled through several smaller villages on ever-narrowing roads. A one-lane gravel road finally brought us to the northeastern edge of the Gremecey Forest identified in the unit history as the site of the attack on September 29.

I had arrived at the epicenter of my father's life. I could see the line of the artillery fire from the high ground held by the Germans. I could almost see the flight and hear the sound of the artillery shell. One click more on the artillery, and my dad might have fought his way into Germany and returned home injury free. A half step more before the shell exploded, and he might have died on this lovely piece of French countryside—four years before I was born. A hardened combat veteran, he must have tensed as the sound of the shell came nearer. As the hot metal entered his back, he must have wondered, however briefly: "Is this how my life ends?" He would not find out that the answer was "No" until he woke up in the hospital days later.

Standing in the Gremecey Forest, I felt closer to my dad than I had since his death twenty-seven years earlier. I realized instinctively that I would now begin to mourn him in a way I had not been prepared to do as a young man. Once I returned to my job in Houston, I realized that another, less predictable transformation had occurred on my visit to the battlefield in France. I had become much more aware of World War II and its impact on individuals around me. I now understood that talking about the war had not been forbidden to me; it had been forbidden for my dad. He could not revisit carefree days in New York and London without the threat of reviving deeply suppressed memories of death and dying in France. His great adventure during World War II had at its center the nightmare of combat, which a decent man did not talk about with others and a good father carefully shielded from his son.

Once my eyes were opened, I realized that such decent men probably had passed in front of me regularly in the years before 1997. I had known a history professor named John King for over thirty years and taught with him at the University of Houston for more than a decade. This kind and gentle man from small town Ohio had gone out of his way to help me

John King

Ben Love

J.H. Freeman

and others. At his memorial service in 2001, I listened in astonishment with others from our department as the pastor described John's military record, including a Bronze Star that he earned in the Battle of the Bulge. He had simply never talked about that part of his life.

Ben Love, a man I had worked closely with for several years in the early 1980s while writing a history of Texas Commerce Bank, now reentered my life as we began work on his autobiography. I had known that he flew over Germany during World War II, but as I read for the first time his diary of his twenty-five missions as a 19-year-old navigating a B-17 in the Eighth Army Air Corps in 1944 and 1945, I saw him in a new light. He talked in an interview about how he had applied lessons on organization and leadership learned in the Eighth Air Corps in his business career. But his diary entry about his tenth mission, which took him over Ludwigshafen, Germany, on September 4, 1944, spoke of a different sort of wisdom:

"Our plane violently lurched as a flak burst hit us. Both right engines and the right wing caught on fire. We immediately began a slow, out-of-control spin, burning as we fell... Every second seemed an eternity as we fell. I had seen too many other B-17s explode as they had been shot out of formation not to know how near death we were. [The captain] gave the order to 'bail out' as we helplessly spun down. But the spin toward earth was so steep that centrifugal force held us in our seats. None of us could move toward our escape hatches despite superhuman effort. We were certain the plane would explode at any second."

After the plane fell 13,000 feet, the fall snuffed out the fire, the captain regained controlled, and the plane limped back to England. Written after he had returned to earth, the final line of the diary entry proclaims: "At age 19, I was joyous and thankful to be alive." This is not a thought normally associated with a 19-year-old in peacetime. Indeed, the experience of combat at such an early age made men prematurely old. Those who lived through such times before they could vote were not likely to be convinced when someone after the war described a pending merger or a loan application as a matter of life and death.[3]

And those who lived through such times were not likely to forget their comrades who did not. My friend J.H. Freeman, a thoroughly decent man who helped me write a history of Baker Botts law firm, served as a forward observer in an artillery unit in the Pacific, taking part in the landings at Leyte in the Philippines in October 1944 and Okinawa, Japan, in April 1945. He later collected his letters and published them in a book for his family and friends. Before my trip to France, I had looked through the book without really understanding it. J.H. died last summer, and at his memorial service, one of the eulogists quoted from his book of letters. I went home and reread it, now understanding a bit of the foreign language in which it was written, the language of the combat veteran.

The preface says simply: "I am not the same person I would have been had I not participated in these events...I felt like one person went into battle and an entirely different one came home." Later in the book he comments, almost as an aside, about a Japanese shell that hit nearby: "One foot closer and the entire section would have been killed." Randomness was a fact of life that had to be accepted, as was death. In one hour of fighting on Okinawa, five line officers in J.H.'s company were wounded or killed.[4]

Woodrow Pratt, refinery worker; John King, history professor; Ben Love, banker and civic leader; and J.H. Freeman, counselor to lawyers. A short list of men I have known who came out of the Great Depression, fought the war, and came home marked by an uncommon decency. Could it be that their intense wartime experiences as young men made them appreciate the gift of life? Or did the randomness of battle make them understand, perhaps too well, the limits of our control over our own destinies? Maybe the thing I am searching to understand is simpler: Perhaps the war gave these men too much knowledge of themselves and of the darkest side of life at an unnaturally early age. Their precocious understanding of courage and cowardice, of life and death, was tinged by a profound sadness and perhaps even a measure of guilt for surviving when others did not. Then the truths taught by combat had to be pushed deep down within them—controlled if not forgotten—so

they could get on with life after the war.

My father was wounded roughly midway between the day he was born and the day he died. He came home with wounds and memories that plagued him for the rest of his life. But he did come home and lived half his life after the war, giving me the gift of a good father in my formative years. I trust that he has rested in peace, free of memories of death and dying from his days of combat in France.

One Who Did Not Return

The memories of the fifty million people who died in World War II are lost to us. We, the living, can only imagine their last moments. They heard a shell or a machine gun burst, sat pinned against their seat as their plane spun downward, realized their ship was sinking. Or they heard a V-2 rocket coming toward their home, huddled with their parents as opposing armies fought for control of their village, felt the heat of an approaching wall of fire from incendiary bombs, saw an intense flash at Hiroshima, trudged toward the gas chambers at the death camps. Many no doubt wondered "Is this the way my life ends?" And the answer came back, swiftly for some and slowly for others: "Yes."

Robert E. "Bob" Murphy

Virgie Breaux Murphy Rowland

Those who loved that individual carried forward painful wounds: an empty place where that person once stood; memories of a life cut short; thoughts of the life that might have been; quite simply, sadness. This heartache reaches down through generations to children with a missing parent or grandparent or other relatives who "died in the war," their lives cut short in the mass killing of World War II. Because those who did not return cannot speak for themselves, we must rely on the memories of family and friends to recall their stories.

Robert E. ["Bob"] Murphy of Orlando, Florida, was killed in action in the Pacific at age twenty-two. A year and a half earlier, as he prepared to enter the Army Air Corps in the summer of 1942, he had met Virgie Breaux of DeLand, Florida, a small town about forty miles north of Orlando. In a story often repeated during the war, they courted briefly and then married as he completed his training. She became pregnant before Robert departed for overseas duty in August 1943. Little more than two months later he was dead; two months after that, his son was born. The memories of his wife and his son, along with a scrapbook created by his long-deceased mother, recover for us his story, which is presented as a memorial of sorts for all those who did not return from the war.

Virgie Breaux Murphy Rowland is now eighty years old and lives near Port Arthur, Texas. Sixty-one years after her husband's death, I interviewed her and her son, Robert [Bob] E. Murphy, Jr.[5] As we talked before the interview, Virgie said with tears in her eyes, "I still think of him every day." She remained composed and wistful as she remembered the fifteen months she spent with her husband, and her lifetime of reliving memories of him.

"In the summer of 1942, my mother let me go spend one week with five other girls in Daytona Beach, Florida. It was the first time my mom had allowed me to go off with friends. In those days, we did not have much money, you know, to do stuff like that. All of us had to pitch in and all of us had to work and do things.

We rented an apartment.

One of the girls knew Bob Murphy, who played in the band at the Martinique. It was a big nightclub. You could have your bathing suit on there because they had a sawdust floor. Bob played the trombone in a big swing band—"Begin the Beguine" and all those songs. He was a very good trombone player, and he loved to dance. But when he played, I didn't get to dance. I had to sit it out. But I used to sit and stay there with him, sit it out with him. During his 15-minute break every hour, we would talk. Then, we would go to the beach whenever we could.

We became pretty good friends by the end of the week. After I went home, he started coming to see me in DeLand from his home in Orlando. He would drive his mother's Mercury. Just up and down the road. And then, he met my mother. Well, that went on during some of the summer until he had to leave. But that is the way we met.

He was 21 at the time. It was a break in the summer, and he was home from classes at The Citadel [which he attended for two years]. He was interested in going into the service. He wanted to get into flying in the Air Force. I knew that.

[*In early July, he received orders to report to Kelly Field in San Antonio for Aviation Cadet training by July 15.*] He went to Kelly, and then we corresponded, and in his letters is when he asked me to marry him. I had only known him just that summer, you know, until he went into the service, which was not very long. Of course, my mother took a long time. I had to talk her into it, too. She was against

Continued on page 49

The Cruiser *Houston*: Peacetime Icon, Wartime Martyr

By Jim Saye

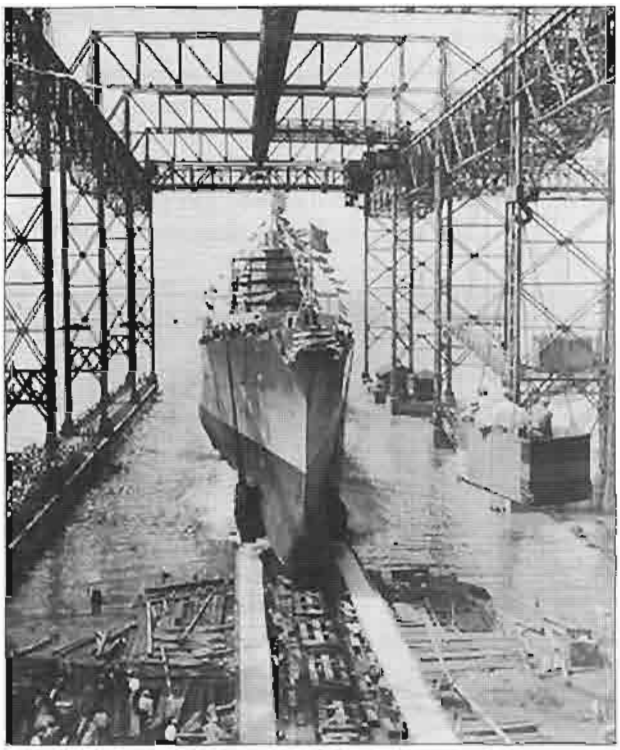
When the heavy cruiser CA-30 was launched in 1929, she was not the first ship, nor the last, to boast the name "*Houston*." It was a name derived from her proud sponsoring city, and from a man of legendary achievements. Sam Houston, born in Virginia, was elected governor of two states—Tennessee and Texas. He was the victorious general at the Battle of San Jacinto, which established the Republic of Texas, and altered the history of the U.S. and Mexico. If ever a ship carried a proud name, it was the cruiser *Houston*.

Late in the twentieth century, a nationally acclaimed professional football team from another Texas city, the Dallas Cowboys, was popularly known as "America's Team." In like manner, the cruiser *Houston* caught the public favor in the 1930s and became "America's Ship." She carried this unique esteem, this special charisma, throughout her career. And at the end, like Crockett and Bowie, the cruiser *Houston* guaranteed herself a place in history.

BACK TO THE BEGINNING

World War I, "the war to end all wars," officially came to an end on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, November 11, 1918. The victorious League of Nations promised a new world of everlasting peace. Treaties bound the nations to restrictions on the size of armies and navies—treaties that were easily and frequently circumvented.

In the U.S., the "Roaring Twenties" were carefree, with little thought for military forces. No sensible politician would think of proposing increased funds for the neglected military.



The USS Houston *(CA-30) was launched on September 7, 1929 in Newport News, VA. She earned the nicknames "The Rambler" for her far-ranging travels during peacetime, and "The Galloping Ghost of the Java Coast" for her ability to evade the Japanese during the early months of the war. Gift of William A. Bernreider.*

Still, there were a few far-sighted statesmen who knew that the preservation of liberty required eternal vigilance. This was especially notable in the Navy, where the concept of a two-ocean defense force obviously demanded a large modern fleet.

In 1925, Congress was persuaded by the arguments of the Navy and authorized funds for the construction of eight new cruisers.[1] Traditionally, cruisers are named for cities, just as battleships are named for states. When the new cruisers were authorized, a fierce contest began among cities across the nation who wanted to put their name on a powerful new ship that would travel over the seven seas.

Even before construction was started, six of the cruisers were named by the Secretary of the Navy. These were *Pensacola*, *Chicago*, *Chester*, *Northampton*, *Louisville*, and *Salt Lake City*. Eighty cities vied for naming rights to the two remaining cruisers. Houston, a young city filled with patriotism and a swelling civic pride, joined the contest.[2]

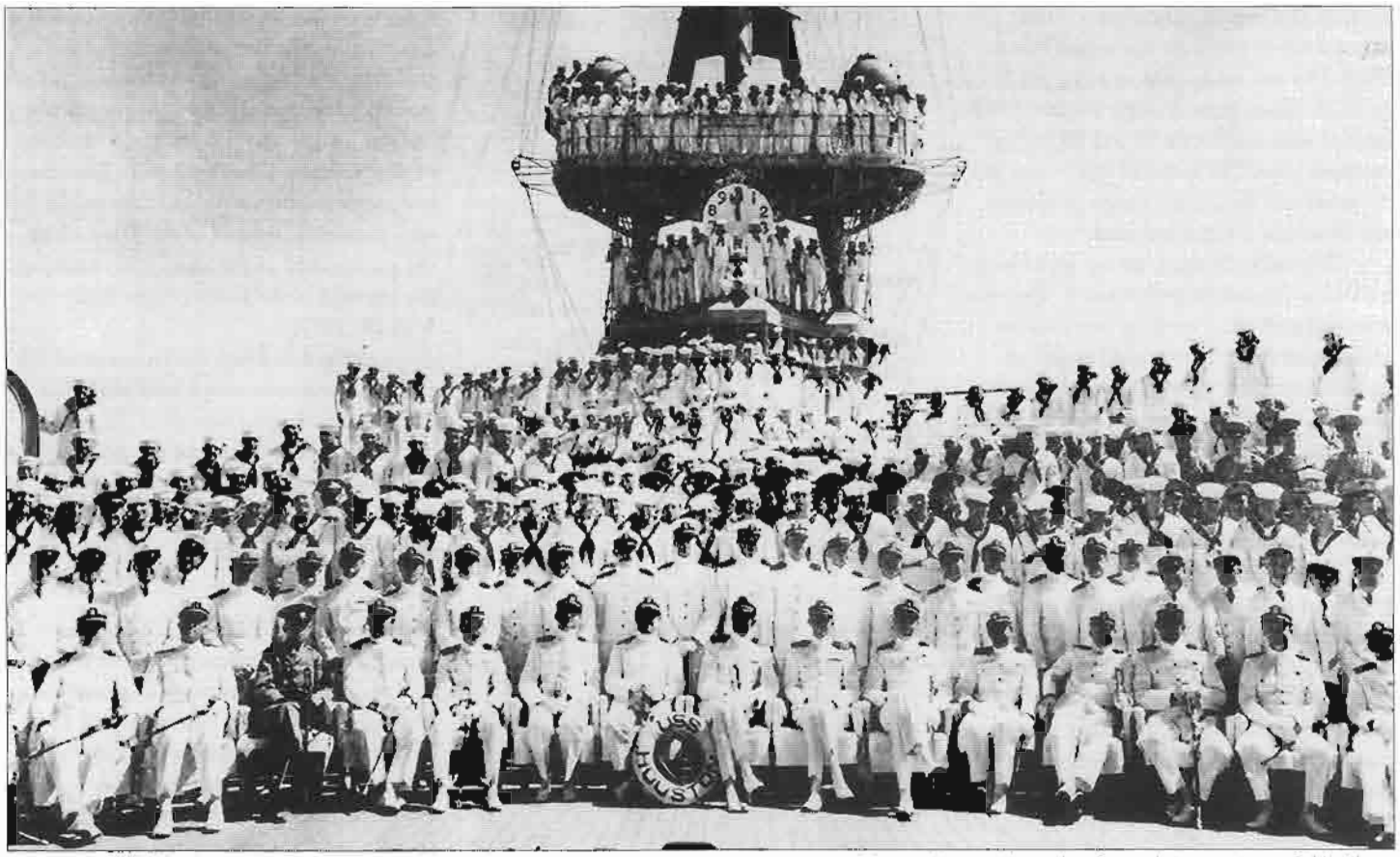
CAMPAIGN FOR HOUSTON

In early 1927, the contest for naming rights for the last two cruisers heated up. In Houston, a youthful aide to Mayor Oscar Holcombe and an officer in the Naval Reserve, William A. Bernrieder, took the lead in organizing for the city's campaign.

A committee involving all segments of the city, was formed to take bold action to persuade the Navy to name a cruiser *Houston*. Among the prominent citizens active in this project were Col. Thomas Ball, chairman of the committee; Mayor Oscar Holcombe; City Councilman H. Halverton; Dr. Oberholzer, Superintendent of Schools; Ike Ashburn, Chamber of Commerce; C. B. Gillespie, editor of the *Houston Chronicle*; General Maurice Hirsch; and William Bernrieder.[3]

Over a period of nine months, the citizens rallied enthusiastically behind this effort. School children drafted and mailed hundreds of letters. It was reported that the passageway outside the office of Navy Secretary Curtis D. Wilbur was clogged with mailbags packed with letters from Houston school children. People from all over Texas gave their support. Telegrams from prominent people flooded Washington. Legislatures of the states of Virginia, birthplace of Sam Houston, and Tennessee, where Houston had been governor, passed resolutions supporting the city of Houston. Bernrieder worked diligently to keep the enthusiasm high.

In early September, Bernrieder received notice that Navy Secretary Wilbur had scheduled a stop in Houston during a railroad journey. "We hastily summoned a delegation of the committee, city officials and civic leaders to meet the secretary at Union Station," remembered Bernrieder.



Crew of the USS Houston

Courtesy Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library

"He was traveling on the Sunset Limited with his wife and Naval aide."

On Wednesday, September 7, 1927, a large crowd waited in eager anticipation for the arrival of the Navy Secretary. There was a loud cheer when he stepped down from the train and began shaking hands. Secretary Wilbur paused when he came to Mayor Holcombe, and announced to the mayor and to the assembled crowd that one of the new cruisers would be the *Houston*. Applause shook the station.

"We celebrated, the whole town celebrated. The newspapers carried the story on the front pages the next day. We all felt it was a hard-fought victory," said Bernrieder.[4]

CRUISER *HOUSTON* GOES TO SEA

Designated CA-30, the *Houston* was built in Virginia at Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Co. at a cost of $17 million. By September 1929, she was ready to go in the water. William Bernrieder scrambled to contract governors of many states, government officials, and newspapers throughout the nation to spread awareness of the launching and draw national attention to this event.

A large group of Houstonians traveled to Newport News to attend the launching on Saturday, September 7, 1929. Among the official delegation were Texas Governor Dan Moody; Congressman Daniel Garrett; Col. Thomas H. Ball, chairman of the naming committee; Col. R. C. Kuldell, president of the Houston Chamber of Commerce; Rear Admiral A. W. Marshall, Commandant, Eighth Naval District; Col. R. W. Humphreys, Collector of Customs in Galveston; William B. Bates, School Board; W. E. Monteith, Mayor of Houston; and William Bernrieder, aide to the mayor.

Also in the official party were several young ladies. Miss Elisabeth Holcombe was the sponsor of the cruiser *Houston*. She was the daughter of Mayor Oscar Holcombe. Miss Mary Ellen Bute was the Maid of Honor. Miss Charlotte Williams, the great-granddaughter of General Sam Houston, was an honored member of the official party.

Music for the occasion was by the United States Navy Band under the direction of Charles Benter. Music included "The Star Spangled Banner," "Anchors Aweigh," "Stars and Stripes Forever," "Texas Our Texas," "The Eyes of Texas Are Upon You," and a march, "U.S. Cruiser *Houston*," composed by Charles Benter for this special occasion.[5]

As the official sponsor, Elisabeth Holcombe christened the cruiser *Houston*. It was reported that she also broke a bottle of water from Buffalo Bayou on the ship's bow. After fitting out and sea trials, the *Houston* was commissioned on June 17, 1930.[6]

The cruiser *Houston* had a displacement of 9,050 tons. She was 600 feet long, with a beam width of 66 feet. Her main battery was nine 8-inch guns in three turrets, two

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: During the Korean War, Jim Saye (LtJG, USNR) served two years at sea. The captain noted in his service record, "Saye has a flare (sic) for writing." This "flare" carried him through a four-decade career in advertising, and now spurs his passion for writing.

forward and one aft. These guns could throw a heavy projectile more than fifteen miles. Her secondary battery was eight 5-inch/25 caliber guns in single mounts. She bristled with numerous 50 and 30 caliber machine guns. The speed of this cruiser was 33 knots and she carried a crew of around one thousand officers and men.

Originally, *Houston* was equipped with a six-tube 21-inch torpedo mount. This was removed early on. Prevailing Navy theory maintained that cruisers could expect to fight at long distances, with their big guns. Torpedo tubes were mounted on destroyers, PT boats, and other small craft for striking crippling blows at very close range. Removal of the torpedo weapon was to prove very costly in the final analysis.[7]

The *Houston* had two aircraft catapults and four pontoon-rigged planes. The bulky pontoons were necessary to float the planes as they took position alongside, under the crane to be lifted aboard ship. In the air, the pontoons reduced air speed to the point where the planes were sitting ducks for fighter craft, such as the agile Japanese "Zero."

PEACE-TIME SERVICE, 1930–1941

Shakedown cruises in the Atlantic occupied *Houston* for several months after commissioning. Then she made her first visit to Houston, on Navy Day, October 27, 1930. At the time, she was the largest ship to navigate up the winding ship channel to the Port of Houston. More than 250,000 visitors went aboard the *Houston* while she was docked in her namesake city. Houstonians presented the ship a $15,000 silver service for the wardroom during this visit. Then the ship steamed to Hampton Roads and the Norfolk Naval Base to assume duties with the Atlantic Fleet.

On January 10, 1931, *Houston* was reassigned to the Pacific Fleet and departed to transit the Panama Canal, pause briefly in the Hawaiian Islands, and reach Manila. On arrival in Manila, *Houston* became the flagship of the Asiatic Station. She participated in training exercises for the next year.

When fighting broke out between Japan and China in 1932, *Houston* led the U.S. military to Shanghai. She landed Navy and Marine Corps rifle platoons to protect American lives and property. She remained in this troubled area until relieved by the cruiser *Augusta* in November 1933.[8]

"SHOWBOAT" OF THE FLEET

Following her two years of duty on the Asiatic Station, *Houston* crossed the Pacific to base in San Francisco. Here she gained a reputation for "spit and polish" and exemplary seamanship in training maneuvers. The Navy singled out *Houston* to carry President Franklin D. Roosevelt on an extended voyage.

In the 1930s, presidents did not have Air Force One for lengthy trips. FDR, paralyzed from the waist down by polio, faced obvious difficulties in traveling on any of the aircraft available at the time. The fast, powerful, impressive *Houston* was admirably suited for presidential travel. An elevator was installed to lift FDR in his wheelchair from stateroom to quarterdeck or bridge.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, shown here with a Marine guard, made four voyages on the USS Houston. *The ship was fitted with special elevators and handrails to accommodate the president's disability.*

Courtesy Special Collections, Archives Division, Nimitz Library, U.S. Naval Academy

Fresh paint and polished brightwork greeted FDR when he boarded *Houston* at Annapolis, Maryland on July 1, 1934. Covering almost 12,000 miles, FDR's first voyage in the cruiser *Houston* steamed down the east coast, meandered through the Caribbean, made the transit through the Panama Canal, sped through the open Pacific to Honolulu, and ended in Portland, Oregon. FDR gloried in the Navy traditions and the careful attention to his needs.

One of FDR's well-known eccentricities was his habit of reading mystery novels until all hours of the night. As a rule, he would consume two or three paperbacks each night. So, *Houston* was well stocked with mystery novels. Every time she made port, a sailor was assigned to seek out a bookseller and buy a fresh stock.

FDR cruised on *Houston* whenever the opportunity arose. In 1935, 1938, and 1939 he commandeered *Houston* for lengthy cruises. From this high-profile exposure, the cruiser became the "poster child" for the Navy. She was featured in newsreels, newspapers, and magazines when she was hosting the president, the secretary of the Navy, the Chief of Naval Operations, and other important persons. She was a very impressive symbol of the Navy when she participated in the celebration marking the opening of the Golden Gate Bridge on May 28, 1937.

On April 7, 1939, the cruiser returned to her namesake city for a brief visit. War clouds were hanging over all of the world, but the people of Texas and the people of the United States felt secure, protected by two great oceans and a Navy with mighty warships such as *Houston*.

FLAGSHIP OF THE ASIATIC FLEET

Back through the Panama Canal, *Houston* steamed to a west coast shipyard for overhaul and was then posted to Southeast Asia. Arriving in Manila on November 19, 1940, *Houston* became the flagship of Admiral Thomas C. Hart. Captain Jesse B. Oldendorf was the skipper of the *Houston* at this time.

Captain Albert H. Rooks commanded the USS Houston *during the Battle of Sunda Strait. He was awarded several medals posthumously, including the Congressional Medal of Honor and the Netherlands' Cross of the Bronze Lion.*

Gift of USS Houston Survivors Association

Ensign W. G. Winslow was transferred to the cruiser on August 25, 1941. He was one of five officers who flew the scout/observation seaplanes carried on the cruiser. In later years, Winslow attained the rank of

Continued on page 53

Leon Egula, after landing in occupied Germany in May 1945. He was there until November of 1945. As part of the 13th Airborne Division, they were surprised when they arrived in Berlin and could not find anybody. With his $20 allowance he would buy packs of cigarettes and trade them for cognac. He paid for this picture with a pack of cigarettes.

Reinventing Houston: Mexican Americans of the World War II Generation

By Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez

For Mexican Americans of the World War II generation, Houston held a particular allure as a city where men and women with few marketable skills could still find a job and could still make it. It was a generation that in many ways straddled two worlds in Texas. In their private world, their culture, language, and traditions were cherished and respected—Houston's Bonita Gardens Dance Hall, Mexico Bello (Beautiful Mexico), and Club Recreativo Tenochitlan held dances and other events to reinforce culture. Some movie theaters showed Mexican movies after 10 p.m.: it was 15¢ to get in and popcorn cost a nickel.[1] They also listened to KLVL and KATL. They loved Spanish-language love songs, but they also listened to Tommy Dorsey and Glenn Miller—and knew all of those tunes as well. But in the other world, the public one, their language was denigrated and few opportunities for advancement were available. The war experience afforded this generation of Mexican Americans the tools and, perhaps, the confidence, to mount the many struggles that would bring better options for them and the generations that have followed. Often, the word "Mexican" had been so disrespected that it seemed more advantageous to use "Latin American" or "Spanish" to describe their ethnicity.

It was hardly, however, a dormant community, as has been suggested or assumed by some.[2] The sources that mainstream historians may be drawn to as they document the history of this Gulf city during WWII, may include few, if any, references to Mexican Americans. So, in attempting to document the lives of Houston's Mexican American population during the WWII period, we are fortunate to have available oral histories with those men and women who lived in Houston during the war.

The U.S. Latino & Latina WWII Oral History Project has interviewed over 500 people nationwide, 35 in Houston. Those archives will be available to the public, as they are processed, at the Nettie Lee Bensen Latin American Collection and at the Center for American History on The University of Texas at Austin campus.[3]

The lives of those who have been interviewed by our project, were, in many ways, similar. Most were born to working class parents. Medical care was expensive and out of the reach of many families; it was common for children born in this generation—roughly between 1916 and 1927—to lose one or both parents during their childhoods. Many worked, even as children, helping their parents with their own work in the agricultural fields, or striking out on their own, shining shoes, or delivering newspapers. Several attended segregated schools; some of those who attended mixed schools were punished if they were caught speaking Spanish. Often, they dropped out of school in junior high to work alongside their parents and supplement the family income.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez is Associate Professor of Journalism at The University of Texas at Austin and the director of the U.S. Latino & Latina WWII Oral History Project. The project has interviewed 35 WWII-era Latinos in Houston since 1999. She wishes to thank UT students Rajesh Reddy, Valentino Mauricio, and Julio Ovando, for their assistance in assembling material for this article. Special thanks also to volunteer interviewers Paul Zepeda and Ernest Eguía who have donated not only their time and considerable talent, but have also paid costs related to taping and photographing their subjects.

Parents of this WWII generation of Mexican Americans usually had to scramble to find any type of work that could put food on the table and pay the rent. It was largely a "low blue-collar" population, according to historian Arnoldo De Leon: "Mexican workers were in positions which offered paltry wages and similar hopes for economic improvement, at best."[4] In a community of 5,000 Mexicans and Mexican Americans in 1930, more than 60% of the Mexican Americans held "low-blue collar jobs," such as servants, waiters or waitresses, porters, truck drivers, barbers, deliverymen, housekeepers, launderers, and other types of laborers. Nearly 14% of the men and 31% of the Hispanic females held "high blue collar" jobs. Those jobs included carpenters, tailors, bakers, machinists, shoemakers, and building painters.[5]

For Mexican Americans who would be young adults at the outset of WWII, in Houston and elsewhere, poverty was the norm. There were few opportunities for advancement, and there was a social system that relegated both Hispanics and African Americans to an inferior status. Many interviewed say that, in retrospect, they were poor growing up. But, because all the families in the "barrio" were also poor, they accepted it as a natural course.

Robert Zepeda's family was among them.[6] Father, Guadalupe, and mother, Lina Rodriguez Zepeda, arrived in Baytown from Mexico and raised eleven children, including four sons who served in the military during WWII: Roberto, Daniel, Elías, and Isaac. The elder Zepeda worked as a laborer for the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific Railways before and during the war, and afterwards became a gang foreman for the Missouri Pacific. During the war, he was a section block leader for the Civil Defense, alerting neighbors to keep shades drawn—as a precaution against nighttime air attacks from Axis forces.

Education was a luxury for many Mexican Americans of this generation. Some people, like Saragosa Garcia, were fortunate to have parents who valued schooling. Garcia was born in Rosenberg, 35 miles southwest of Houston. His parents became increasingly disenchanted with the schools there. (Young Saragosa spent three years in third grade in Rosenberg.) The final straw came when his parents learned Mexican

Saragosa Garcia in Luxembourg

children were being sent to dig holes outside in the schoolyard, while Anglo children were being taught inside. His father moved his family to Houston, where young Saragosa attended Robert E. Lee Elementary School. Saragosa was finally promoted to the fourth grade, at the age of thirteen. A very special teacher named Mrs. Smith gave him a Bible. He would later carry that Bible with him at Normandy during WWII. "I still have that Bible today," he said.[7]

The War Years

In the fall of 1940—before the outbreak of war—Congress authorized a peacetime draft and ordered 77,177 young men in Harris County to register.[8] In the next few years, Mexican American men from Houston would either be drafted or enlist. Their approach to military service varied. For some, it was a patriotic statement to demonstrate a civic obligation; to others, it was an adventure so that they might see a world they were barely aware of; and to some, it was, perhaps not surprisingly, a chance for a steady paycheck. For the most part, they served in all branches, not in segregated units, as did African Americans. Many of the men were somewhat prepared for military life because they had served in the Civilian Conservation Corps before—so the regimentation of the military was familiar. The battlefield, however, was a new experience and Mexican Americans fought in every theater.

Mexican American women served in a new Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, or WAACs, headed by Oveta Culp Hobby. The development of a branch of the military for women served several functions, not the least of which was providing a workforce for the non-combat duties necessary to the war effort.[9] Felicitas Cerda, later Flores, joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Corps and stayed stateside, working as a clerk typist in Maryland. She lived in barracks with other girls from other backgrounds and learned to appreciate other cultures. She was selected to be among four girls who traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet with congressmen. Years later, she would treasure the memories of visiting museums and landmarks in the nation's capital.[10]

The military experience for Mexican Americans provided them a new vantage point from which to view themselves and society. And beyond that, after the war, there were new opportunities: the GI Bill was available for those returning men who were eager to pick up a trade or learn a profession. The exact numbers of Mexican Americans, in particular, or Hispanics in general, who served in the military during WWII is difficult to pin down. Estimates vary widely, from 250,000 to 750,000. One difficulty is that the military had no consistent method to tally Hispanics. Discharge papers for Mexican Americans, for instance, note that they are "white" in some cases, "Mexican" in others, and "NA," presumably "not applicable" in others.[11]

Several families had more than one son away fighting. Homes hung small banners in their windows with a star for each son in war. When a son had been killed in war, there was a distinctive gold star on the banner. Mexican American women were among the thousands of American women who earned the title of "Gold Star Mothers."

Postwar

Within the military organization, it was not uncommon for the Mexican American men who have been interviewed to have been the only Latino in their outfit and many have said they were treated like any other

American. This made the transition back to civilian life with its old prejudices all the more difficult. Ambitious young men like A.D. Azios, who grew up in Laredo, but later moved to Houston, were eager to return back home to Texas and "reinvent life," as he would later put it.[12]

But in Houston, and elsewhere in Texas, integrating that newfound sense of equality would prove difficult—so much so that men like Alfred Hernandez would later contemplate leaving his hometown of Houston for a city in another state where he and his young family would be more welcome. Hernandez, born on August 23, 1917, in Mexico City, was raised in Houston where his parents moved when he was a small child. During the war, he was sworn in as a U.S. citizen. After the war, he would vote for the first time and later become the first Hispanic judge in Harris County since 1845.

But life in Houston after the war did not seem promising. After he returned, Hernandez realized the obstacles facing Mexican Americans in Texas. He wanted to move, either "up North" or back to Mexico, where he felt there would be greater acceptance. "After discussing the way I felt with my wife, she soon convinced me we should stay in Houston and get involved and make an effort to fix the problems here," he said.[13]

He was not the only one who encountered old prejudices. Many would not be satisfied with the life that was left for them. They sought to improve life for Mexican Americans in Houston, a theme that runs through many of the interviews, by joining organizations like the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) or the American GI Forum.

One example is that of Ernest Eguía, who dropped out of the 10th grade at Sam Houston High School and worked as a salesman at Buck's Dry Goods. He was drafted in 1941 and eventually rose to the rank of staff sergeant, as part of the 144th Field Artillery Battalion of the II Corp, 1st Army. He would arrive at Normandy, on June 11, 1944, a few days after D-Day. He was part of the Allied forces that drove Germany through France and, after V-E Day, remained in occupied Germany, assigned to restructuring the fallen country.

"I thought coming back to Texas, things would have changed," Eguía recalled. But it was soon apparent that Mexican Americans faced problems. "A friend came up to me one day and he invited me to join LULAC...I turned him down..."[14] Eguía's friend told him of the case of Macario García, Medal of Honor recipient, who had been denied a cup of coffee in a restaurant near Houston.[15] A fight ensued and García and his friends tore up the restaurant. The café owners then sued García and his friends for damages. In response, LULAC Council #60 organized a defense committee and Ernest Eguía was among those who responded. "That... changed my mind," Eguía said. "I did join LULAC and we did help Macario raise $6,000 for his fight against the suit. But the people at the restaurant, because they got such bad publicity, not only locally, but nationally, because of what happened, dropped the suit."[16]

Robert Ramon, writing a letter home.

As far as civil service, there were few, if any Hispanic police officers or firefighters. The year was 1953 and Leon Eguía, Ernest's little brother, was LULAC Council #60 president. Leon Eguía had risen to tech sargeant in the Army as a paratrooper with the 13th Airborne Division, attached to the 82nd noted for both parachuting and gliding over the Rhine River in Dusseldorf. Leon Eguía was accustomed to fighting against the odds, which would serve him well. "We were instrumental in getting the city to come together and we forced them," Leon Eguía recalled, "to accept Mexican American applicants in the fire and police departments."[17]

In one meeting that same year with municipal officials and LULAC members, city officials stipulated that police officers had to be 5'10" tall, weigh 165 pounds, and have a high school education. One Hispanic leader turned to the LULAC members and asked how many could qualify. "About 50 stood up," Leon Eguía recalled.[18]

Two years later, Leon Eguía would become the eighth Hispanic hired by Houston's Fire Department, and worked there for twenty years. His only regret was that the siren on his fire truck left him slightly deaf.[19]

Conclusion

The WWII generation of Mexican Americans changed the face of Houston. Where there were few opportunities before, they not only climbed up, but also opened doors for others who followed. They used organizations such as LULAC and the American GI Forum and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund to ensure greater participation of Mexican Americans.

The style of this generation would be understated, compared to the political activists who would come later in the 1960s and 1970s. But the messages delivered were no less poignant and effective. One example centers around San Jacinto Day, a day that is commemorated within the context of Texas' independence from Mexico, itself a sore point for Mexican Americans, who sometimes feel that war is carried on to this day. In 1944, LULAC began a new tradition of placing a wreath at San Jacinto Memorial Park on April 21. LULAC member John J. Herrera remarked:

"From San Jacinto and the Alamo to Pearl Harbor, Bataan, and Corregidor, the Latin Americans have fought side by side to their brother Anglo Americans, and the armed forces of our country, the Army, the Navy and the Marines are loaded with determined young Latin Americans whose only thought and attitude is to 'Set the Rising Sun' and to 'Beat the Axis.'"[20]

What Herrera did not say, but was clear to his audience, was that Texas Mexican Americans were patriotic Americans, and had been since the state's war for independence. WWII afforded yet another battlefield for Mexican Americans to demonstrate their loyalty to a state and a nation that still had to be convinced. ★

FACING HISTORY

CREW: The Men of the U.S.S. *TEXAS*

By Marisa C. Sánchez
Photographs by Will Michels
Interviews by Ephraim Dickson

Unknown Photographer
Band IX Aboard USS Texas–1940
Vintage gelatin silver photograph, 1940
Collection of Will Michels

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Marisa C. Sánchez is Curatorial Assistant for Photography at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. This article is reprinted from the Spring 2005 issue of *SPOT* Magazine.

During his last semester as an architecture student at Pratt Institute in New York, Will Michels made a life-changing decision to pursue photography seriously. For fifteen years now, he has been fully engaged in the medium and has found an eye for portraiture. In 1994, he began his first personal body of work, in which he sought to examine and record on film his own image through self-portraits. Every Friday morning for six months, he woke up and shot three rolls of film, documenting himself in his apartment. For Michels, this regimen served to better teach him photographic techniques and the mechanisms of the camera, but it also revealed his tremendous self-discipline and understanding of the human body in relation to the camera's lens. During these private hours, Michels developed a lasting knowledge of photography and his own practice; it was at this time that Michels discovered the square format, which dominates his work today. As a result of these experiences, his training as an architect and his work as a photographer merge with full force in his ongoing project, *CREW: The Men of the U.S.S. TEXAS*. The exhibition includes nearly fifty black-and-white photographs taken by Michels between 1996 and 2003; approximately fifty oral histories conducted by Ephraim Dickson between 1998 and 2002; 28 historic photographs as well as scrapbooks and souvenir photologs made by the crew; and an intranet website available at the show. The result of eight years in the making, Michels' photographs of the veterans is one part of a larger, ambitious attempt to document as many active veterans who served on the ship as possible. These photographs reveal Michels' deep respect for

History of the U.S.S. *TEXAS*

By Leigh Cutler

When the battleship USS *TEXAS* was commissioned on March 12, 1914, her 14-inch guns were the world's largest and she was the most powerful weapon on earth. This technological marvel of her time served with the British Grand Fleet in World War I and was the flagship of the entire United States Navy between the two World Wars. During World War II, an aging USS *TEXAS* supported amphibious invasions in North Africa, Normandy (D-Day), Southern France, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. She and her crew were preparing for the invasion of Japan when the war ended and the Battleship *TEXAS* came home.[1]

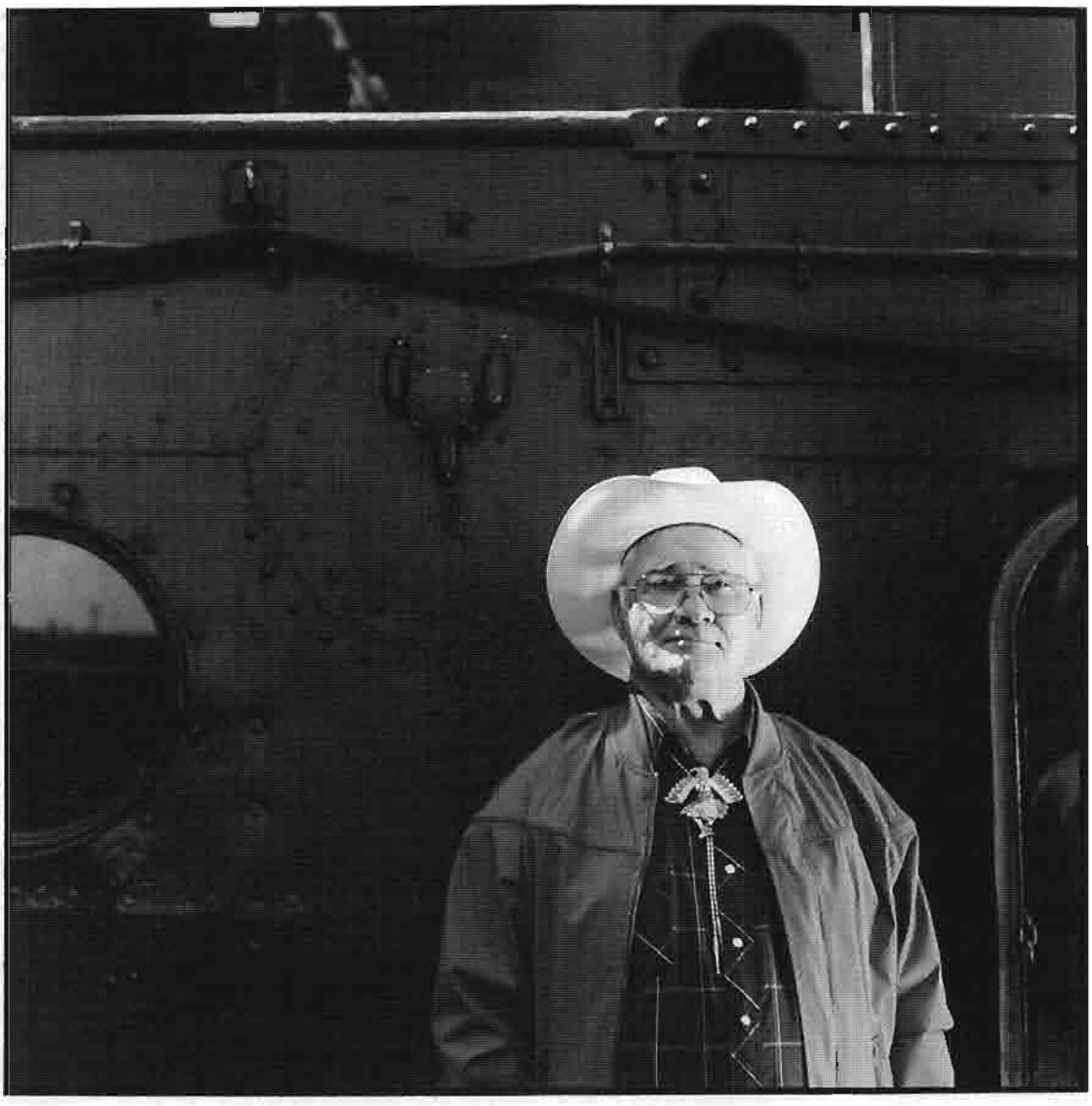
A Rooting Party, USS Texas *vs. USS* New York *Football Game*
Vintage gelatin silver photograph, c.1918. Unknown Photographer. Collection of Will Michels

No longer needed to defend her country, on April 21, 1948 the decommissioned USS *TEXAS* became the first historic ship museum in the United States. That same year, on the anniversary of Texas Independence, the Battleship *TEXAS* was presented to the State of Texas and commissioned as the flagship of the Texas Navy. In 1983, the *TEXAS* was placed under the stewardship of the Texas Parks and Wildlife; the department's 1,200-acre San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site consists of the Battleground, Monument, and the Battleship TEXAS.[2]

In 1988, through the private donations and efforts of the people and businesses of the State of Texas, in addition to State funds and a generous gift from the Department of the Navy, dry dock overhaul and systematic restoration of the ship began. Instead of peacetime gray, the *TEXAS* was painted Measure 21 blue camouflage, which she wore during service in the Pacific in 1945.[3]

Permanently anchored on Buffalo Bayou and the busy Houston Ship Channel, the ship officially reopened to the public on September 8, 1990. Even so, her restoration is not complete. Throughout the 1990s, many compartments and work areas on the ship were carefully refurnished to portray life on a warship in 1945. Plans are in the works for the next renovation of the *TEXAS* for the fall of this year.[4] While the search goes on for a suitable dry dock facility that will handle the weight and configuration of the battleship, the Texas legislature has already budgeted $12.5 million in funding for this renovation.

The *TEXAS* is the only battleship remaining in the world today that served in both World Wars.[5] Although she is permanently docked, the Battleship *TEXAS* is still serving her country—teaching history to visitors, instead of fighting.



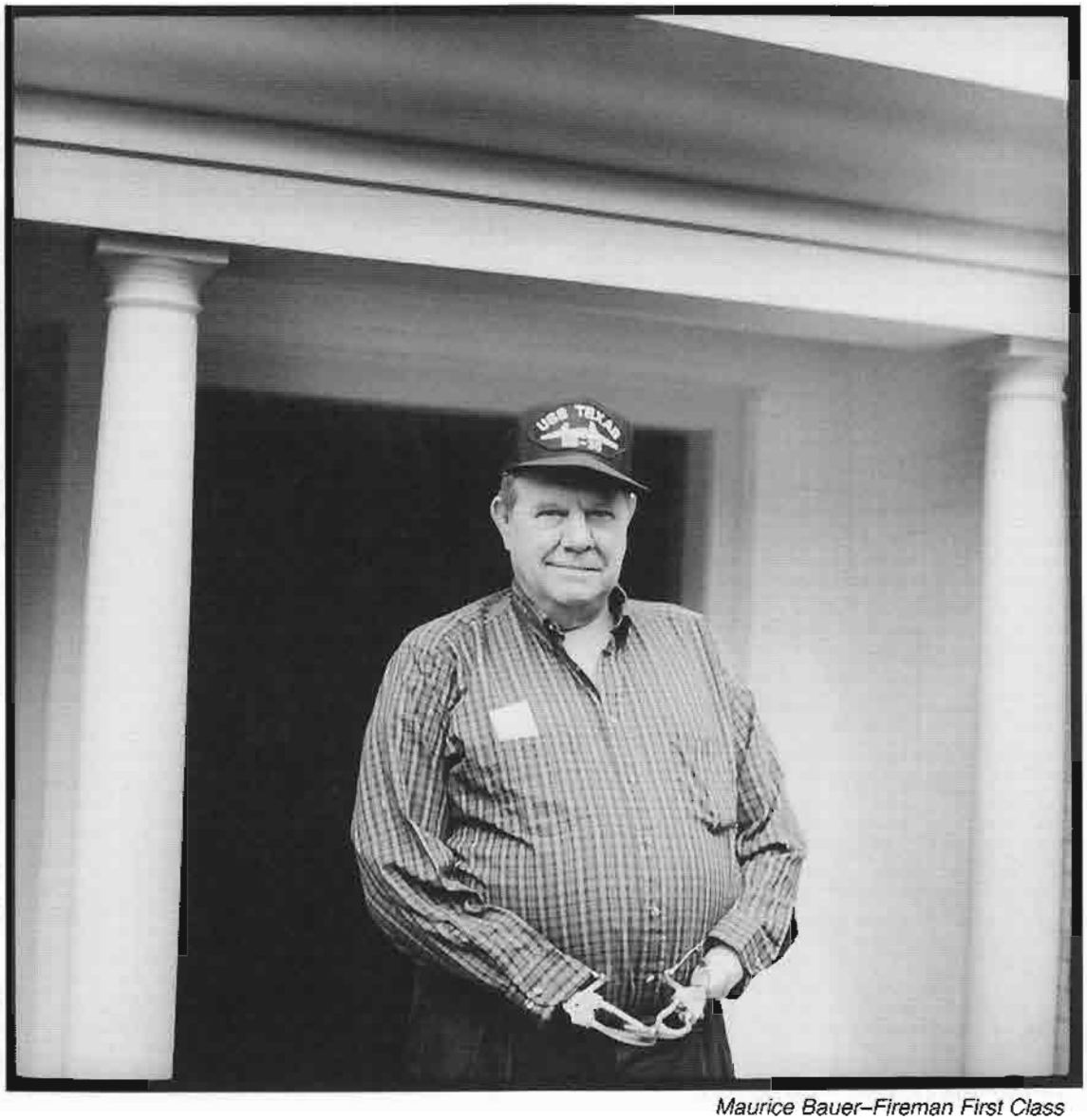
Charlie Griggs–Third Class Petty Officer
U.S.S. TEXAS Veteran: 1941–1943
Gelatin silver photograph, 2003
Photograph by Will Michels

his subjects and their experiences.

Michels' investment in this project began while working on the battleship as the project architect responsible for its restoration from 1995 to 2000. While restoring the ship, he began to encounter remnants of the lives that once inhabited the spaces, such as a discarded fork discovered behind a locker. These materials haunted the photographer because of his fascination with their origins. Who had used that fork? Who had slept in that bed? Who had walked through that doorway? As each day offered something remarkable, he found the 34-year history of the ship reflected in the lingering artifacts. Realizing that the history of the USS *TEXAS* was inextricably tied to the individuals who served onboard, he thought about pursuing a photographic project to document the men of the battleship. Plans were under way when he met Ephraim Dickson.

Dickson was a volunteer on the battleship and was organizing a new foundation dedicated to the Battleship *Texas*. He met Michels, and after several conversations, which revealed Dickson's interest in collecting oral histories, the two joined forces. They started looking for funding. Michels had initially received a generous grant from the Cultural Arts Council of Houston Harris County through the Lawndale Art and Performance Center in 1997. Later he received a fellowship from the Houston Center for Photography (HCP) in 1999 and that same year exhibited sixteen of these photographs at HCP. Since then, the project developed substantially, but the biggest challenge lay ahead—locating over a thousand living veterans scattered throughout the U.S.

Michels began his search with a generic letter mailed to the men that included a simple proposition: "I am writing to ask if I can take your portrait..." As is evident in the ephemera on view in the exhibition, some of

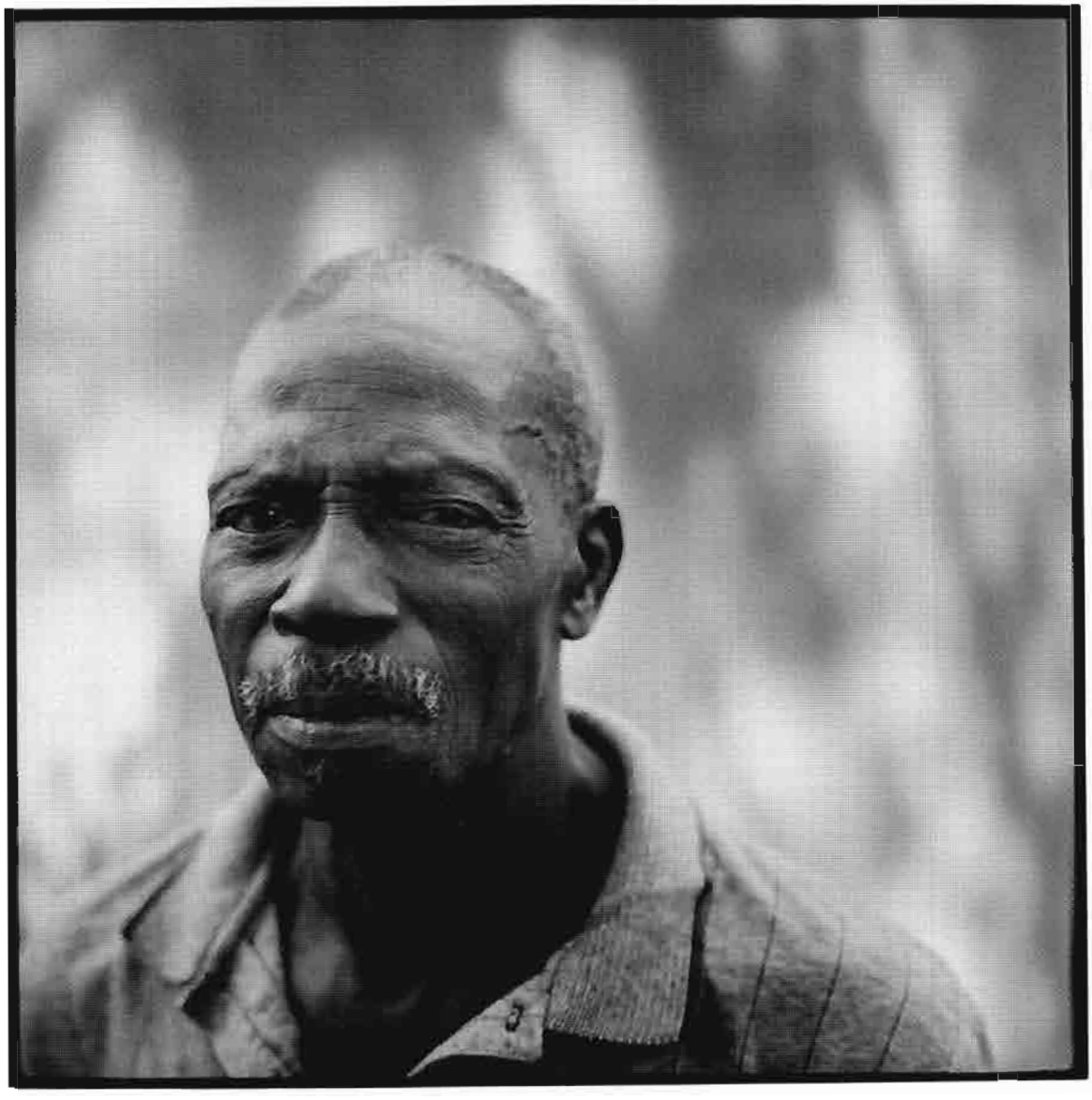


Maurice Bauer–Fireman First Class U.S.S. TEXAS Veteran: 1945–1946.
Gelatin silver photograph, 1997
Photograph by Will Michels

the replies were sent by widows notifying Michels that their husbands would have been eager to share their stories, but had since passed away. These replies underscored the urgency with which Michels had to proceed in order to ensure that these personal histories were recorded before the last of the men are gone.

A vintage panoramic photograph loaned to the exhibition by veteran Charles Denbo illustrates one of the first waves of men to hit the beaches on D-Day in 1944. Michels had originally discovered a copy of this photograph when he interviewed veteran Bob Lang; to Michels' surprise and good-fortune, Lang had handwritten on the border of the print the names of all 69 men pictured. This photograph was unlike several hundred images Michels uncovered in the battleship archives. He wanted to know *all* of the names of the men pictured from lieutenant, mess cook, storekeeper, war correspondent, to civilian; a hierarchy of service on board the ship that Michels deliberately obliterates in his portraits. Although the labels indicate the veterans' position, Michels' photographs focus on the individual. He presents each veteran singularly and with dignity. In turn, the photographs reward the viewer in the clarity and simplicity of the compositions. Primarily centered in the foreground of the photograph and looking directly into the lens of the camera, some men appear more expressive while others look reluctant.

Michels' photo shoots typically consisted of two hours with each veteran on site in their homes all over the country, from California, Florida, New York, and Illinois. He preferred to photograph the men in their home environments (from dated but comfortable living rooms to well-worn front porches) since his portraits were about "who these individuals are today," not who they were sixty years ago. Despite the comforting



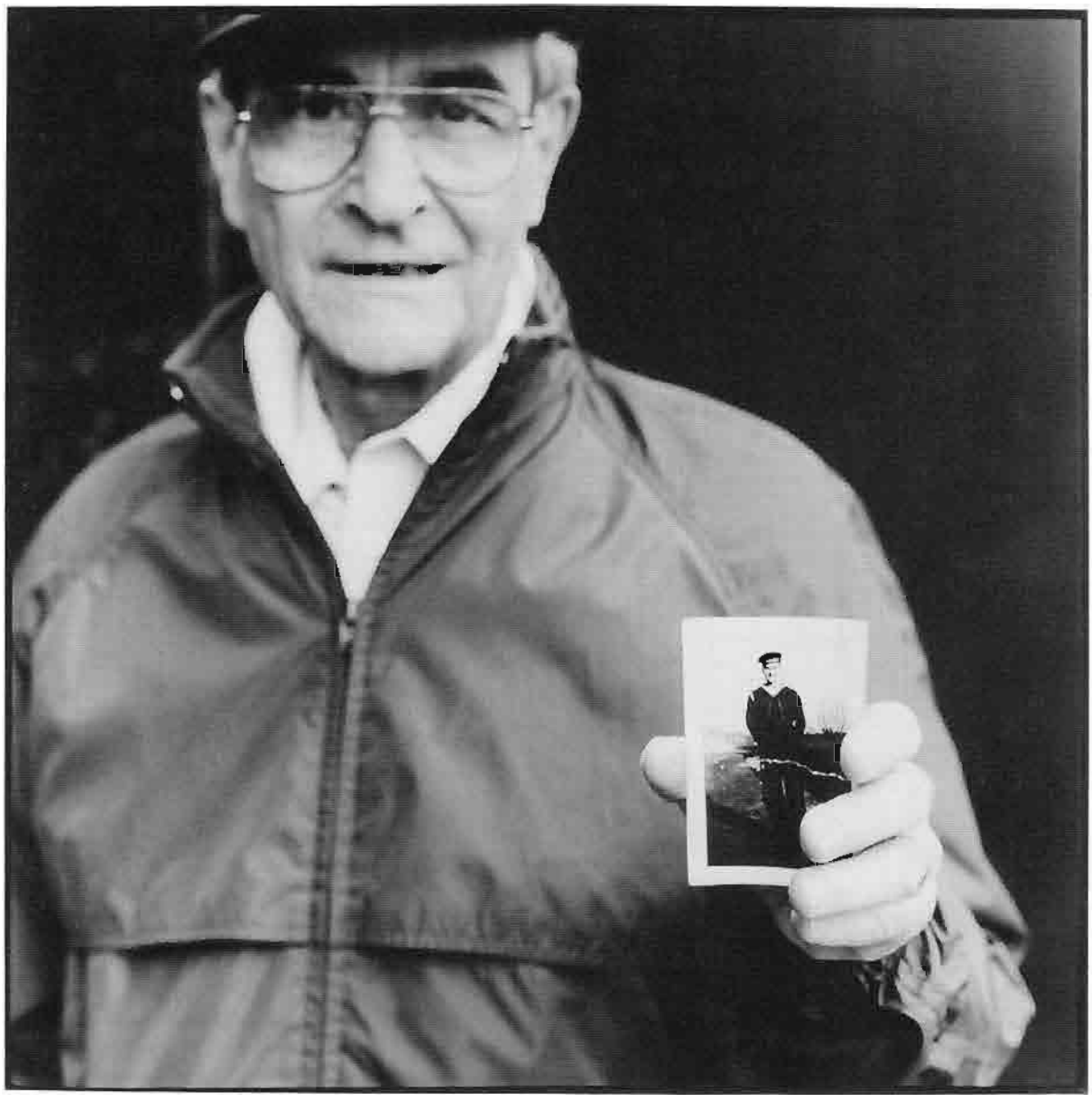
Sam Bellamy—Steward's Mate Second Class U.S.S. TEXAS Veteran: 1945–1946
Gelatin silver photograph, 1996
Photograph by Will Michels

backgrounds, some portraits, like that of *Ed Reichert, First Lieutenant (1941-1945)*, reveal a past that can never be forgotten. His face, his stance, and lieutenant's cap speak of the weight of responsibilities he bore on the ship during World War II. Unlike any other photograph on view, Reichert's exposes a psychological intensity that reveals the harsher side of the memory of war. His facial expression signals a profound sense of mental anguish and uncertainty.

One of the most successful portraits on view is *Julio Zaccagni–Fire Controlman Second Class (1940-1942)*, a shot taken almost by chance. Michels spent several hours with Zaccagni, talking with him about his job and experience on the battleship. After they had finished talking, Michels packed up his Hasselblad and turned to say goodbye when suddenly Zaccagni reached into his pocket and pulled out a dog-eared snapshot of him as a young man in boot camp. Michels grabbed his camera and captured the proud Zaccagni holding a picture of himself from years ago.

In a few cases, Michels photographed veterans on board the ship, as seen in *Wilmott Ragsdale, War Correspondent Time/Life (June 1944)*. Michels' portrait of the former correspondent places him on the exact spot where as a young man he narrowly escaped death after leaving the area seconds before a German shell exploded.

Respectful of the long history of photojournalists, Michels included two photographs taken by Ragsdale in the exhibition. One is of an injured shipmate, *Anthony Peppe Being Lowered from the Navigation Bridge, 1944*. Michels successfully contacted Peppe whose portrait shows him standing behind a screen door inside the foyer of his home. Peppe wears a bold USS *TEXAS* sweat-shirt while a decal of the American flag mounted to the door waves its stars and stripes. Michels' reflec-



Julio Zaccagni–Fire Controlman Second Class
U.S.S. TEXAS Veteran: 1940–1942
Gelatin silver photograph, 1996
Photograph by Will Michels

tion is visible in the door behind the patriotic veteran. One is reminded of Robert Frank's photography series *The Americans* (particularly *Barbershop through Screendoor–McClellanville, South Carolina)* and of the self-portraits by Lee Friedlander who photographed his shadow as a way of recording his interaction with American urban landscapes.

For this viewer, these photographs are not only about the veterans but they are also about the photographer—his personal experience on board the battleship and his desire to insert a human element back into the sterility of a ship that had been put to rest. Each one of these men pictured are part of a pivotal period in American history, yet in their collective efforts the individual becomes absorbed into that history and, over time, memory fades and faces no longer have names. It is through Michels' pursuit of facing that history that he focuses on the individual. What inspires the viewer about his work is not so much how the photographs function independently of each other, but how they function as a whole portrait of a generation of American men who served their country. For Michels, who is donating a set of prints and materials to the Battleship *Texas* archives, it is clear that this project is more about giving something back to history than challenging contemporary issues or presenting cutting-edge work. The portraits are quiet, thoughtful, and serene. Michels remarked: "In the beginning, I took these portraits for myself... I now see the bigger picture and am eager to share these faces." ✶

For more information about Will Michels and his photography, visit www.madebywill.com

Beuron Boyd–Yeoman Second Class
U.S.S. TEXAS Veteran: 1943–1945
(born 6 October 1913–died 23 November 2002)
Gelatin silver photograph, 1996
Photograph by Will Michels

A Jewish GI Returns Home to Nazi Germany

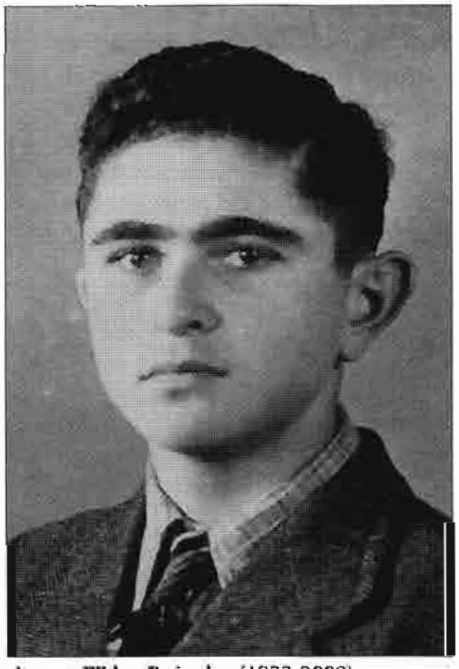
By Carla Curtis

During an interview with Sandra Breisacher Lessig on November 10, 2004, she related the fascinating story of her father's escape from Germany. This was no ordinary story, but one with sadness, hope, and justice. This is a story about a man thwarting the Nazis and their anti-Semitism by escaping from Germany. He is, nevertheless, a survivor of the persecution doled out to so many under Hitler's regime. This man lost his childhood to tormentors and persecutors but returned as the victor.

Walter Breisacher, Sandra's father, was born on May 14, 1922, in Breisach, Germany. Breisach is a small town nestled along the Rhine River and situated on the edge of the Black Forest. A town where both Christians and Jews lived in harmony for centuries, Breisach's population was approximately 3,500 just prior to World War II and the beginning of the Nazi persecution.

The Breisacher family can trace ancestry in this town back to the 1600s. They were an old, well-known and respected family. Walter's father, Bertold, was a decorated World War I veteran. He fought bravely for the Kaiser and the fatherland. Bertold and Hedwig Breisacher were members of the Social Democrat Party under the Weimar Republic and they owned a lucrative wholesale textile business. Both Christians and Jews frequented their shop. The Breisachers were Germans, albeit, German Jews. They kept kosher and attended synagogue and, for all purposes, they were upstanding German citizens of Breisach, Germany. Anti-Semitism had not been a factor in their everyday lives. Walter had happy memories of his childhood in Breisach, Germany, but the rise in anti-Semitism shattered his adolescent years.

In the early 1930s, the peace and harmony with which they lived began to disintegrate. Walter's friends began to abandon him. He was, after all, a Jew. At school he was harassed, tormented, and called vicious



A young Walter Breisacher (1922-2000).
Courtesy Breisacher Family

names. Nobody would sit with him. He repeatedly heard, "I can't sit by you. You are a Jew and Jews stink." They told him he would contaminate them, as he was a Jew. Walter was devastated. Just a year or so prior, these same people came to his bar mitzvah party and considered him a good friend. Walter soon became afraid to attend classes. The anti-Semitic hatred came gradually but the pain Walter felt was intense. His best friend, Paul Braun, would now have to sneak over in the middle of the night to see his friend Walter.

When all Walter's old classmates and friends joined the Hitler Youth, he became even more isolated. The persecution among his peers increased. He was consistently called "dirty Jew boy." It was difficult to explain to a young boy why he was suddenly ostracized and not able to wear all these nice new uniforms, go off to camps, and sing and march in the streets. He was "different."

By 1933, Hitler had become Chancellor of Germany and anti-Semitism was rampant. Although the Nuremberg Laws had been enacted, many restrictions already applied to Jews. German citizens were discouraged from shopping at Jewish stores. Jews could no longer play in parks or eat in restaurants. Jews were unable to employ any female less than 35 years of age. The Breisachers' *Kindermädchen* (governess) had to leave because she was a gentile under 35 years old. Walter and his sister considered her part of their family. This was a great loss.

Schools had become more segregated. Those few Jews who still attempted an education were beaten, tormented, and harassed by classmates. *Der Stürmer* newspaper began to display caricatures of Jews. Captions under these horrid pictures labeled Jews as perverts, sexual deviants, and killers. These drawings scared Walter and his younger sister. For a young boy, it felt like his world was coming apart. How would he survive these horrors?

Walter's parents noticed the increase in anti-Semitic activities. Even though everyone kept saying "This will blow over. It has happened before. Be patient," Walter's mother, Hedwig, was not convinced. She was becoming very concerned with her children's torment, beatings, harassment, and fear. She insisted they leave Germany. Her husband, Bertold, was in his fifties and this would be a major change for him. He would have to sell his business, leave family and friends, travel to strange lands, and learn a new language. He, too, had his own fears. Nonetheless, Hedwig Breisacher was adamant about leaving Germany before the persecution and terror increased. They made plans to leave Germany and immi-

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Carla Curtis is a second year graduate student in the Center for Public History at the University of Houston. Her research focuses on the Holocaust and anti-Semitism.

grate to the United States.

Bertold, Hedwig, and their two children, Walter and Helga, left Germany in October 1938 with $12 (U.S.) in their pockets. Walter was sixteen years old. They were unable to bring the grandparents. They were too old and would not pass the physicals required by the United States government. The Breisachers settled in Indianapolis, Indiana. Helga attended school while Walter obtained employment. Bertold did odd jobs while looking for full time employment and Hedwig took in boarders. Letters received from Germany made them realize how lucky they were to escape the wrath of the Nazis. Other family members were not so lucky. A young cousin with Down's Syndrome was euthanized. Many of Walter's aunts, uncles, and their families perished in the gas chambers.

When the United States became involved in World War II, Walter Breisacher, not yet a U.S. citizen, joined the Army. He was assigned to a tank division and sent to Europe. Walter fought hard, saw many horrors, and slowly gained promotions. By the time they reached Germany, he was a sergeant. They fought through France and into Germany. Approximately three miles outside of Breisach, their intelligence informed them there were German soldiers holed up in Walter's hometown. Three days of artillery exchanges ensued, and finally they were cleared to go in. The tanks rolled into Breisach. Walter was finally "free!" He would never be tormented and persecuted again. Walter went into Breisach as the liberator, carrying a gun, and wearing a United States military uniform. No longer could he be considered a "dirty Jew boy." Now he was the hero. He was the liberator. As they rolled into the town, Walter saw his old friend, Peter Braun. Braun was walking down the road in a German military uniform. He had just returned from the East.

Walter's commanding officer asked him to interpret for him. As this was the town from which Walter fled persecution, he was given authority to make any request of the *Burgemeister* (mayor). Walter asked for the cemetery to be repaired. He noticed that headstones had been broken and used as stepping-stones. Graves had been desecrated. This was Walter's heritage and its disarray disturbed him. The cemetery was repaired forthright and Walter could finally mourn the devastation caused by the Nazis. He and his family had lost everything. They had been persecuted, tormented, and lived horrors beyond belief. Now he was back. He was their liberator. He had beaten Hitler and the Nazis. Justice prevailed.

A few years later, Walter became a U.S. citizen. He lived a long, fruitful life and passed away in 2000 at the age of 78. Walter's eldest child, Sandra Breisacher Lessig, lives in Houston with her husband, Van, and their two children. They are very active in the community. Sandra works long hours for the Jewish Federation and Holocaust Museum Houston. The Lessig family firmly believes that we must never forget man's inhumanity to man and continue to strive for peace. ✶

The Breisacher family decided to leave the home in Germany behind and flee to America. They were among the lucky ones. Six million other Jews, unable to escape the Nazi war machine, perished during the war.

Courtesy Breisacher Family

Filming the Fight: An Interview with L. Bennett Fenberg

By Steven Fenberg

Steven Fenberg interviewing Elby Fenberg

L. Bennett (Elby) Fenberg is one of many unknown World War II heroes living among us in Houston, Texas. He captured on film one of the most iconic and enduring images of World War II and with other members of the Signal Corps recorded and preserved visual images of a momentous and pivotal period in history. Immediately after the war, Mr. Fenberg moved from Detroit and joined the great migration to Houston. Steven Fenberg sat down with his Uncle Elby in November 2004 to listen to more stories about the war and his family's move to Houston.

Steven Fenberg: To begin, tell me a little about your life in Detroit.

Elby Fenberg: I was born in Detroit in 1919. My father was one of the original owners of the Colonial Department Store in downtown Detroit. He died in 1933 while I was still in high school. My mother died in 1928, and my Aunt Eleanor and Uncle Ben essentially adopted me, my brother Morton, and my sister Shirley after my dad died. Uncle Ben, who was my father's brother, also took over management of the department store.

SF: You grew up in Detroit, attended Wayne University (now Wayne State University) and established a camera club there. Were you hoping to use your camera skills when you enlisted?

EF: One week after Pearl Harbor, Morton—your father—and I went at the same time to enlist. I had had surgery on my ankle for a tumor and the Army turned me down. They took Morton, who was in one year before I was. I rode with him when he went out west, and he dropped me off in Los Angeles. I had seen an article in *Popular Photography* magazine asking for Army photographers. So I went to Paramount Studios where they were doing the interviews and they were amazed that I would come all the way from Detroit just to try to get in. I was accepted by the studio, but when they sent me to the Army for a physical, I got turned down again. But the people at the studio who had interviewed me gave me a letter stating that I should be put into a photographic unit. I took the letter back with me to Detroit and it was shortly after that that I was drafted and accepted.

I was put in the Signal Corps of the Army and was sent first to California for basic training, then to the old Paramount Studios in New York City where I took my motion picture training. From there our company, the 163rd Signal Corps, was sent overseas. We went first to Africa where we stayed one month and then to Italy, which is where I started my actual photo work. I was considered a combat motion picture cameraman. We worked in teams of three: a motion picture photographer, a still photographer, and a driver of a jeep. Everything was left up to the photographers as to what we photographed.

You have to remember that they did not know what a photographer should do or how he should work, because this had never been done before on such a scale. For instance, we were issued tripods that stood about 5½ feet high. We couldn't carry those ourselves. So, we put them in the jeep and they stayed there. We were issued rifles. We couldn't carry a 15-pound motion picture camera, 7 or 8 100-foot rolls of film, and a rifle. We also had to carry a gas mask and a canteen. So we put the rifles in the jeep and they stayed there with the tripods. I picked up a pistol finally but I never shot it. They didn't tell us what to photograph because they themselves did not know what would work. In fact, the hotter the area was—I mean in activity—the less there was to see and photograph because people don't stand

Elby Fenberg in France during World War II

ABOUT THE INTERVIEWER: Steven Fenberg wrote and was executive producer of the Emmy award-winning PBS documentary *Brother, Can You Spare a Billion? The Story of Jesse H. Jones*. He currently is community affairs officer at Houston Endowment Inc.

As an official war photographer, Fenberg (left) and forty other photographers from the 163rd Signal Corps traveled across Europe documenting the war.

up when they are being shot at. They lay down or they're in foxholes. And we couldn't stand up and take pictures because we'd attract enemy fire. Even so, we lost 8 fellows in our outfit and many more were wounded.

SF: How many people served in your outfit?
EF: There were about 40 photographers but about 200 people all together in the 163rd. There were lab men, clerks, mechanics, drivers, cooks. The lab mainly did nothing but process film. Other men made enlargements. Others wired the photos back to the United States, and they often appeared in the papers the next day. We had no facility for developing motion pictures, and the film had to be sent by air to the United States, where it was processed and released for newsreels. I didn't see any of my motion pictures for almost 1½ years. We'd get critiques that said if our exposures were good or if we shook the camera. We couldn't use exposure meters because we didn't have time. We were trained not to use them, so we were always relieved when we found out our exposures were OK.

SF: How were the films used back in the United States?
EF: The motion picture photography had three purposes. The main purpose was newsreels, which were produced by Fox Movietone News, Paramount News, and so on and shown in movie theaters. Second was for training. Say I photographed bombing by mortars—those films would be shown to troops back in the States who were learning how to use and protect themselves from mortar fire. The third purpose was propaganda. For instance, I photographed a convoy of jeeps that had just been bombed by airplanes. Tires on the jeeps and parts of the jeeps were still burning when I filmed them. These films were shown back in the States at the factories where tires were produced, where jeeps were produced, and they helped increase production and employee morale. We were told in our critiques how the films were used.

SF: You made your first films in Italy. How long were you there?
EF: I was in Italy for about two years. I photographed all the big battles there: San Vittorio, San Pietro, and the Battle of Casino, which was the biggest one. The Germans held a monastery at the top of the mountain and the Allies were at the bottom. That was on the road to Rome. I also photographed the liberation of Rome.

Incidentally, John Huston, the famous director, also filmed the battle of San Pietro. But it was partially what we would call fake. He would go up and poke the back of the cameraman and shake him while he was shooting pictures so it would look like an explosion had just occurred. Well, this was fake photography. It was Hollywood stuff. That is not what we did.

SF: Where did you go after Italy?
EF: To France and then Austria, where I photographed the taking of Berchtesgaden and the Eagle's Nest, Hitler's house. I went up with the infantry—they were fighting to win Hitler's house—and when I photographed it, it was burning. From there, I went to Germany.

SF: That's where you made the film that is seen today in movies and documentaries.
EF: Yes. Audie Murphy—the most decorated soldier in the war—and two other men were going to receive medals of honor at a ceremony in the Nuremberg Stadium, where Hitler had held all of his big rallies. It was a huge stadium with an enormous swastika above the podium. I was asked to photograph the ceremony. I heard an engineer say that after the ceremony, they were going to blow up the swastika. I said, "Don't do it until I am ready. I want to photograph it." He said, "Okay, you let me know when you are ready."

The swastika was about fifty feet across, stood way up high, and was made of metal. I laid down on the floor of the stadium and had my camera fixed on a tripod that I had the engineers make for me out of a machine gun stand. I pointed my camera up at the swastika, waved to the engineer to tell him I was ready, and they blew it up. I kept my finger pressed on the trigger of the going camera and I had my eyes closed the whole time. The explosion was so huge, a piece of metal about 10 feet long dropped right in front of me. If it had hit me, it would have cut me in half. About a dozen fellows got injured from flying metal. The complete film of the explosion shows metal dropping right in front of my camera, but that's usually edited out when it's shown on films or on TV. When I got back to headquarters, they knew I had been in the area and they wanted to know if anybody had taken pictures. I said, "Yes, I took pictures." Well, they were amazed because they hadn't assigned anyone to photograph it. They did not even know it was going to happen.

"V-Mail." This Christmas card was sent home in 1943 from Elby Fenberg to his brother Morton.

I never saw that film until the 163rd had its first reunion in 1951 in Chicago. Remember, we didn't get to see our film after we took it because it was processed back in the U.S. Now I see it frequently. *Judgment at Nuremberg*, starring Spencer Tracy, was just on television. The movie begins and ends with the blowing up of the swastika. I've seen quite a few times in different World War II documentaries the film I took of the bombing of Casino.

Nolen Jewelry Company, at Travis and Capitol in the two-story Wells Fargo Building, now the site of JP Morgan Chase Tower, Houston's tallest building.
Courtesy Houston Endowment Inc.

Elby Fenberg's brother Morton and new bride Lenore try to put the war in the back of their minds while celebrating their wedding in 1943.

SF: Are there any other memorable films you'd like to mention?
EF: While waiting for the road to Rome to open up, I snapped a picture of General Mark Clark with my Roloflex still camera. He had his own photographer who traveled with him all the time. He only allowed photographs of one side of his face. If anybody tried to take a picture of the other side, he'd have a fit. I also photographed the pope coming out on his balcony for the first time after the liberation of Rome.

Mr. Fenberg also filmed the fall of Nuremberg, for which he received a Bronze Star Medal. The award citation read in part, "Technician Third Grade Fenberg voluntarily accompanied an advance patrol of infantry as they attacked the bitterly defended city. In the face of heavy enemy sniper, mortar, and artillery fire, he photographed the complete action of the patrol without regard for personal safety. Upon completion of his mission, Technician Third Grade Fenberg returned alone through areas not yet cleared of the enemy and delivered his film to higher headquarters thereby furnishing the War Department with timely and accurate information of events leading to the fall of the city."

SF: You received the Bronze Star on April 18, 1945, shortly before the end of the war. Once the war ended, you were discharged. What happened next?
EF: I received orders that I was supposed to fly back to the States and at the last minute, there was a big storm and they canceled all flights. I was sent to Marseilles and got on a boat that landed in Boston. I got discharged there and was given travel papers to go to Detroit. In 1944, Uncle Ben had resigned from the Colonial and moved to Houston with his wife, Eleanor, his daughter, Rhoda, and my sister, Shirley. A business colleague of his who had already moved to Houston saw how the city was growing, learned that Felix Nolen was trying to sell his store—Nolen Jewelry—and convinced Uncle Ben to buy it. When your father and I got out of the army everyone had already moved to Houston, so we came here too. Uncle Ben also bought a house that sat on two acres on Post Oak Road, which is now part of the 610 Loop. Their house was near what is now the Evergreen exit.

In 1949 the Colonial Department Store went on the market and Uncle Ben decided to return to Detroit and buy it. He put Morton in charge of the store here and I started a camera department. While I was on a buying trip to Rochester, New York, and Chicago, I went back to Detroit and married my girlfriend, Marilyn. We've been in Houston ever since.

Like so many who arrived in the area during and immediately after World War II, the three Fenberg siblings—Elby, Morton, and Shirley—prospered in Houston. Morton Fenberg turned Nolen Jewelry Co. into a statewide chain and established subsidiary wholesale operations. His wife Lenore, who he married during World War II before going overseas, worked with him in the business and became an active community volunteer. Shirley Fenberg, who earned national renown as a Jewish educator, married Marvin Barish in Eleanor and Bennett's Post Oak Road home. Marvin, who worked in the family business for a period of time, went on to develop Chair King from one small store into a successful chain of furniture stores. Elby Fenberg, who continues to enjoy photography, remained with Nolens until it was sold in 1992. For quite some time, Elby and Marilyn worked together at Nolens on University Boulevard, where the store was known for its personal service and its wide selection of charms when the bracelets were popular in the 1950s and 60s. Between them, the three couples raised eight children, who all grew up in Bellaire not far from their original family home.

Until a few years ago, the 163rd held well-attended and greatly anticipated reunions every two years. When asked why they no longer meet, Mr. Fenberg said, "There just aren't enough of us anymore." When asked about his contributions during World War II, he quietly and justifiably said, "I feel I made my mark in history." ★

Rhoda Fenberg (Krauss) and Shirley Fenberg (Barish) at the Fenberg family home on Post Oak Road, which is now 610 Loop near Evergreen.

Driving on the Edge of Death: Arthur Joseph Jr. and the Red Ball Express

Interview by Isaac Hampton II

Arthur Joseph Jr. was born in Tyler, Louisiana, on December 6, 1918. As a small boy he moved with his family to Galveston, where he grew up and attended Central High School. In October 1941, he volunteered for the United States Army. During the war, he served in the 3384 Truck Company, which helped keep American troops supplied as they drove into Germany after D-Day. His memories are taken from an interview on February 8, 2005, with Isaac Hampton, as well as from *Driving on the Edge of Death: Supplying the Armies of the Unites States (1st, 3rd, and 7th Armies)*, his published account of his experiences in World War II.[1]

The Red Ball Express was part of the Army Transportation Corps that supplied American forces in Europe after the D-Day invasion of June 6, 1944. The term "Red Ball" was a common railway phrase in the 1940s that meant express mail. The Red Ball Express was officially established thirty-six hours after the D-Day invasion to alleviate supply problems. Its drivers hauled over 412,000 tons of supplies to American combat zones facing German air attacks, snipers, and land mines. Their legendary around-the-clock operations supported the rapid movement of U.S. ground forces. Perhaps the best example of this is when the Red Ball supplied Patton's Third Army and the First Army as they raced across France.[2]

The Red Ball Express is cemented in American military folklore because its soldiers were predominately African American. Of the 23,000 soldiers who served in the Red Ball Express, approximately seventy-five percent were African American. According to a *Time* magazine article from 1944, the Red Ball symbolized Americans "as a nation of builders and movers."[3]

African American soldiers during World War II fought on two fronts, one against America's foreign enemies and another to secure civil rights and desegregation at home. Despite discrimination against them in a segregated army, African American soldiers still displayed patriotism and allegiance to a nation that considered them second-class citizens. Their courage under fire and sacrifice helped win World War II while also preparing the way for the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S. after the war. Their service and their stories must not be forgotten.

"I volunteered back in 1941. I was only making $8 a week and it was hard to make a living on that kind of money. So, I decided to go into the military. They were paying me $21 a month and $50 a month to my wife. I had no clothes to buy. Everything was taken care of as far as I was concerned. We were all going to be soldiers because soldiers looked so good and I always wanted to be one of those guards. We were all glad to go because it was a place of safe haven. We had a place to eat and a place to sleep and our wives were taken care of. So I went.

Elder Arthur Joseph's home is filled with memorabilia from the war.

My basic training started off at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas. We had an infiltration course. That is where they fire live ammunition over your head. After we completed that, they sent us to Cheyenne, Wyoming, where they organized a truck company. Most of us could not drive a truck. I could not drive one too well myself but I learned pretty quick to drive.

We only had three rifles in the whole company. They were for the company commander, his lieutenant, and the first sergeant. The rest of us had wooden guns like we played with in grade school. That is all we had. Every morning, they would get us up around three or four o'clock in the morning with our wooden rifles. I don't know why they were doing this. I don't know if the white soldiers had guns or not, but we had no guns. We had no ammunition.

All the sergeants were black. We had a white company commander. Our first sergeant was black. We got excellent training. If we had not received excellent training, we all would have been dead. We had 114 in my unit, my company: northern boys, southern boys, mid-west, everybody.

After we left Cheyenne, Wyoming, we went to Fort Ord, California. I found out in California that it was not what it was supposed to be. They had many places that we could not go into and if we would go,

ABOUT THE INTERVIEWER: Isaac Hampton II is originally from Ohio and completed his master's degree at Texas Southern University in 2004. He was in the U.S. Army from 1988-91 and served during the first Gulf War. Currently, he is working on his PhD at UH, focusing on military history regarding the black experience in the armed forces, racial tension, and the politics that surrounded it.

they would not serve us. We would take a seat and the waitress would bring a glass of water and silverware, and we would sit there a couple of hours while they waited for us to get up and leave. This happened many times. I do not like California to this day because of that. They said one thing and were doing just the opposite. I came back south after the war because I understood. I knew what I could do and could not do, so I wouldn't get embarrassed. In the South, we had to go to the back door or side window. I knew that. In the end that was bad and I didn't like it. But we had to do it. But they told you in California that everybody could do what they wanted and that you were free. Not true.

We received our first black officer in California. We had a second lieutenant and that's all we had. Black officers were soldiers. They were not Uncle Toms. These men were men and we admired them. There is nothing I can say that was wrong about those men. We did not have any complaints. I couldn't say the white man was doing this and doing that. The only thing was that the problems were outside in the general public. They were the ones that gave us a hard time with their prejudice. And there was nothing the officers could do about that.

They tried to fight that type of thing, but they could not. That was just the way of California when I got there. There was a whole lot of segregation because a lot of those people came from the Deep South, learned the business and still carried rules they had back south!

I knew we were going to war, but I wanted to go to Japan. I wanted to fight the Japanese because they bombed Pearl Harbor. They tried to mislead us by issuing clothes for the South Pacific. So we thought we were going there. But it came to the point where we were going to Europe and not to the South Pacific and ended up going to Rochelle, New York to ship out.

We went to Europe on a liberty ship called, the Henry. *We landed in England at Southampton. The English people were okay. But our biggest problem was that American soldiers had put out all kinds of things about men of color. They said that when the moon rises at night, our tails would come out and we would bark at the moon. And every night, there would be tons of people coming down to*

our campsite and standing on our side of the barbwire and just waiting for the show.

The English told us that the white Americans said we had tails and barked at the moon! I could not believe this type of talk. They always called us all kinds of names. I mean, that did not bother me one bit.

In preparing for D-Day, we loaded up and unloaded. Then we went back and loaded up again. They were trying to confuse the Germans to make them believe that we were going to land some place else. So, now before we got to the harbor one morning, they gave us what they called our last supper.

They had arranged to give us white sheets, breakfast, eggs, everything. All the white officers ate together. And we said to ourselves, this must be it. This must be our last supper. And sure enough, that was our last supper. They were trying to make you feel as if we were men and not animals. I had made up my mind I was going to get killed and I was ready to die. So was everybody else. And during the invasion, there was no crying or complaining, no nothing because you knew we were going to die.

We landed on Omaha Beach two days after D-Day, on June 8, 1944. There was still heavy fighting. The 3384 Truck Co. ASCZ was in the L.S.T. (landing ship tank). The driver was at the wheel and ready to transport us. The trucks rolled off into deep water, floating. The trucks had wax over the wires to protect the motor and insure that the trucks did not stop. There was water in our two and a half ton trucks up to our necks. Everybody made it. We were well trained.[4]

We drove trucks only; we did not load them. Our greatest fear was fighter planes. Fighter planes would eat you up. They could come up from out of nowhere. We were strafed many times, always by a single plane. When the plane came, you didn't get off the highway. As long as you stayed on the highway, you were all right.

Now, the next problem we had was going through this rural town where the roads are so narrow that German sympathizers might throw something inside of the truck. Going through a small town, they would sometimes stop the lead truck or they might hit the back truck. But if they hit the front truck, that caused the trucks to stop and they could have a field day. There were also snipers.

Every truck had a fifty-caliber machine gun. We made our runs both night and day. Night was all right, but you had to drive with no lights on. No lights. You really had to know where the road was. So, night driving was a terrible job, but it was also safe because of the "cat eyes" (military driving lights). But once you used the taillight, you could be in big trouble.

We hauled everything: C-rations, ammunition, fuel. We got those guys everything that they needed. There was no slack. There was no slow up until the very last day. You worked as long as you could stand. We had some Caucasian drivers with different units. They would not drive with us. They would pick up

the supplies and bring them to us. We would then take it to the combat zone. This was not because we were more expendable. I think we had more experience. I didn't see any unnecessary prejudice at that time.

We truck drivers caught hell keeping up with every order and trying to deliver supplies as fast as a road could be cleared.... Some of the towns along the way were a living hell. We were shot at from ruins that were alongside the roads. We were shot at from fields. DEATH was everywhere. As far as you could look you saw burned out tanks and men lying dead on top of their tanks. Towns we passed through, like Dinant, Belgium, were totally destroyed and the dead were all over the place. Those narrow streets through town were frightful.[5]

We received some awards for our work, but there was no official ceremony. A guy came down here one night, one early morning, called us out and gave every man in my unit a Silver Star, 2 inch badge, and 5 battle stars. I did not know what these things were. To me it had no meaning whatsoever. No one said anything about it. They gave us a little bag. I didn't realize it was something until years later.

After fighting in the war, we anticipated things being better in America. This was wishful thinking on our part however. We quickly saw that things had not changed. When we landed in Rochester, New York, the American Red Cross was giving out donuts and coffee to some....The coffee was passed behind us or when we passed through, those serving would look the other way. Yes! We were home in America. I wondered, what did we fight this fierce war for? Did they think that I killed a German who was white like them?

The U.S. Army trained us all to do a job. Some were cooks, truck drivers, and others were killers. I still loved my country in war, and I damn sure loved her in peace. We drove at the edge of death constantly. We expected to kill or be killed. I remained proud of our accomplishments despite the injustices I encountered when I arrived home.[6]

During the war, I met a German officer who spoke good English, and he said to me, "What are you fighting for? Are you fighting to keep your separate place?" So, what I did, I said to him, "I am fighting because my country asked me to fight. You are fighting because your country made you fight." There was nothing I could do with it. It was not the right answer. Many years later, I would have answered it another way, but that was all I was thinking back then.

And then, during that same period of time, we met what they called Senegalese black soldiers who would not associate with us because at one time our ancestors were slaves. They asked me, "Why are you here fighting to free people when you are oppressed in your own land? Why are you fighting to free your oppressors?" Well, what am I going to tell him? I know no other land. I was born here and I was raised in the United States. That is all the land I know. I do not know anything about Africa or other places. I refused to allow my mind to go in a traitor's way. My family is a military family. My father served in World War I.

Although many in our unit were not highly educated, we didn't have mess makers. They accepted their job as a soldier. They never complained about anything. And we had no racial problems at all. The only thing they had in California was that they would not serve you in those cafés like they should. But other than that, you were just ordinary men, soldier to soldier. Although they claimed they had fights with each other, there was no racism. We proved to them that all the little petty things they were saying about us were not true. Without the military, we would have not advanced as far as we have now because we proved to them that all of those things that they said about us were not true. In every major war, we had blacks there. We might not have been wanted, but we were there.

One of the crowning events of my life was when I was a young man and a truck driver in the Red Ball Express. Driving in the Red Ball Express was a great honor. It put pride in me that we were able to go into a foreign land and deliver everything on time to men who needed supplies. We did that with no complaints whatsoever. It taught me how to protect myself and how to deal with other people. It taught me how I would act under fire. Yes, I found out that I was no coward, that I was not afraid to face death. I did not see any black men die crying or running away. These men were men."

Arthur Joseph Jr. had no desire to drive trucks after returning to the Houston area after the war. He worked briefly at a chemical plant in Texas City, and then later worked for the Post Office before taking a job in Customs from which he retired after thirty years. He then went back to college and earned a bachelor's degree at age 75. ★

Arthur Joseph and Charlene

A Glimpse of Houston during World War II

by Joel Draut

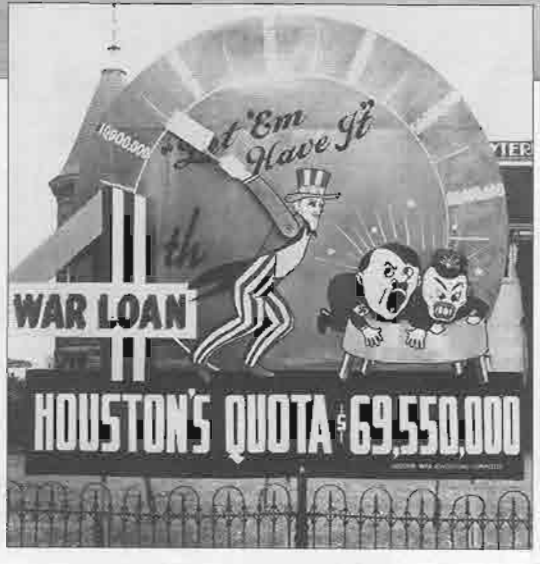
All citizens were expected to contribute to the war effort. None gave more than war mothers.

All photographs courtesy Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Joel Draut is a former photojournalist who spent eighteen years in the photo department of the *Houston Post* before joining the Houston Metropolitan Research Center in 1998 to care for the photographic collections housed there.

Supporting the war effort

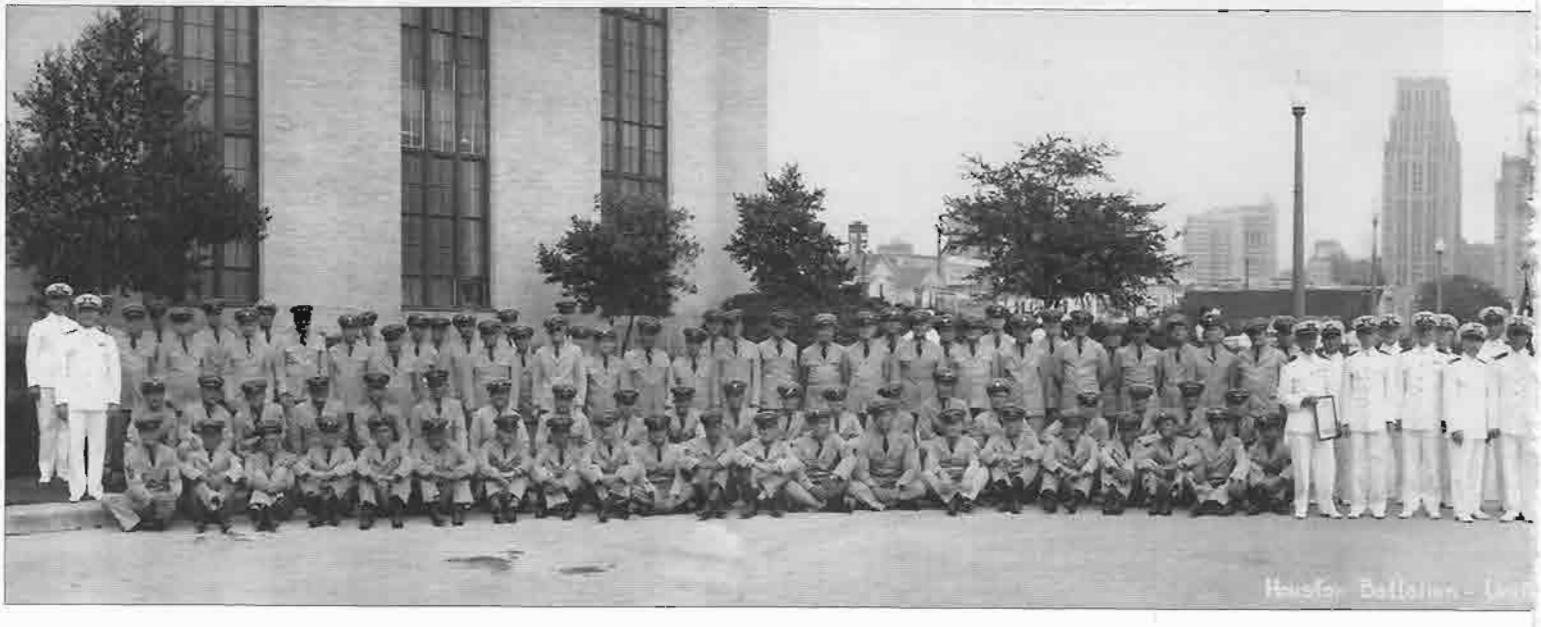
The Girls Service Organization was a component of the USO. These volunteer organizations worked hard to provide wholesome activities for servicemen away from home.



Houston's patriotism rang high throughout the multiple war loan drives held during the war years. Millions of dollars were raised through the efforts of the city's war advertising committee.

Instead of beating swords into plow shares, this 1943 scrap metal drive recycled them into more modern weapons.

Houston Battalion, United States Coast Guard

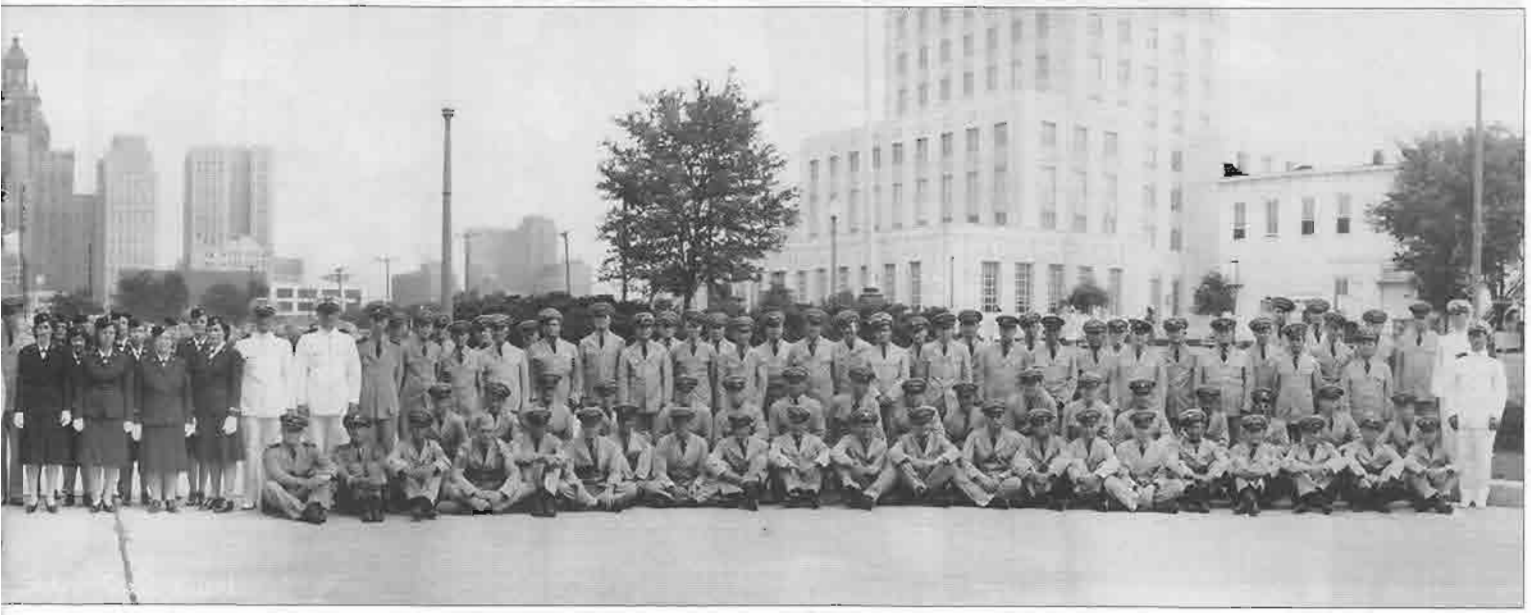


Supplying the weapons

Nine liberty ships in various stages of construction at the Houston Shipbuilding Corporation yard demonstrate the production line approach America adopted for supplying war materials. This yard launched 208 cargo vessels and fourteen tankers.

To assist workers with their commute to and from the ship yard, the Houston Shipbuilding Corporation (the name was changed to Todd/Houston in 1944) arranged for a steam powered train to carry workers from downtown to the yard at Irish Bend three times a day.

Hughes Tool added gun barrels, artillery shells, and aircraft landing gear components to its line of products. To fill their contracts, they recruited both women and men.



Everyone wants to be in uniform

Dr. and Mrs. Burr

Wharton family, November 1943

Reickhardt family, February 1943

Even those too young to serve could get into uniform. Almost half of these kindergarten aged boys are wearing soldier or sailor outfits at their consecration service.

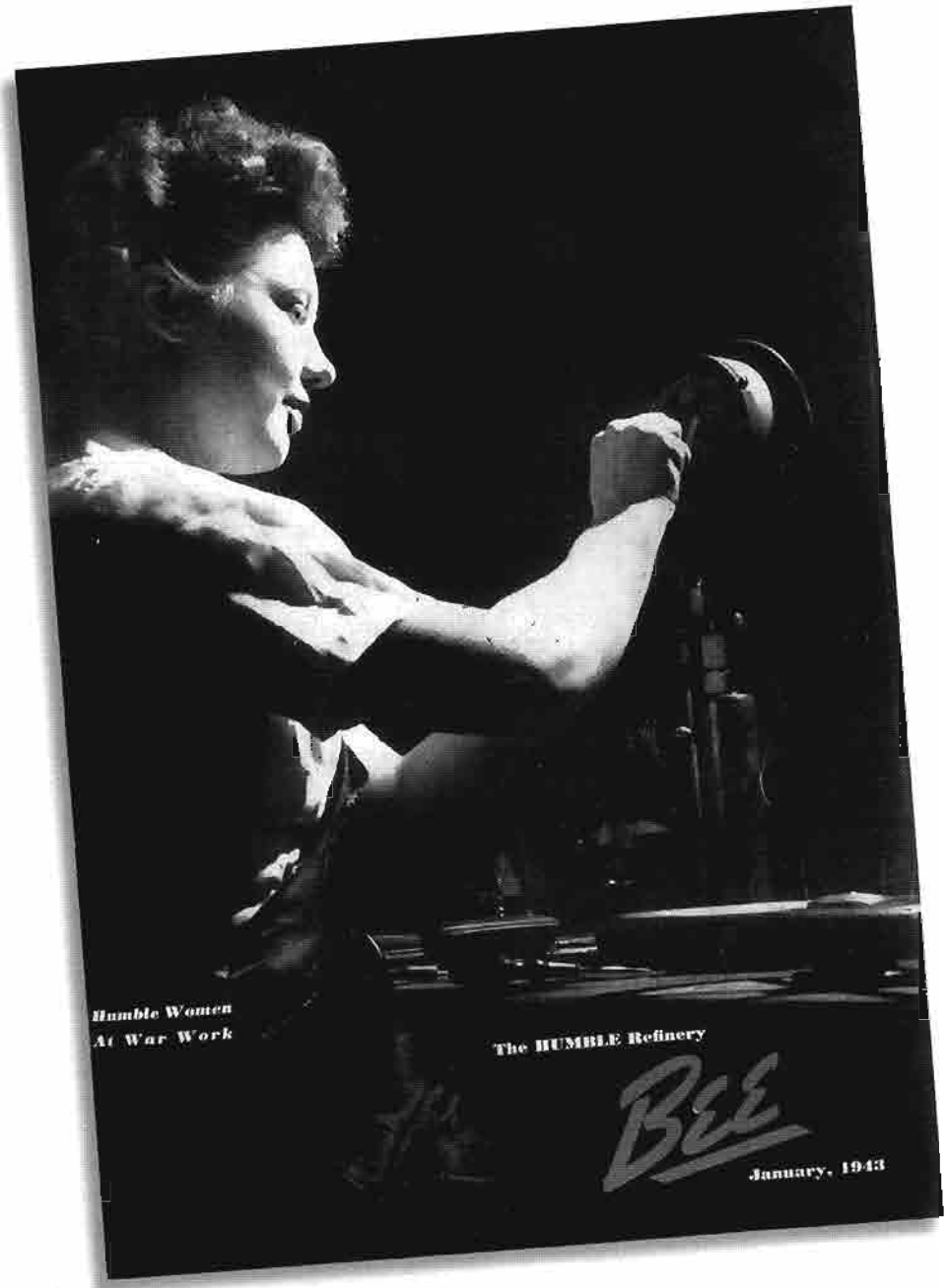
Humble Women at War: The Case of Humble's Baytown Refinery, 1942–1945

By Gary J. Rabalais

The growth of war-related manufacturing fed an economic boom in the Houston area during World War II. Tens of thousands of workers flooded the region in search of opportunities opened by the expansion of existing factories and the construction of new ones. The giant new shipbuilding facilities on the ship channel were the largest new employers, but the region's oil and petrochemical plants also grew faster than at any time in their histories. The war effort needed 100-octane aviation fuel and many other products from the massive complex of refineries from New Orleans to Corpus Christi, and plant owners all along the Houston Ship Channel from Houston to Texas City had to search far and wide for the workforce needed to operate their plants. As in other industries around the country, the search for workers led to the hiring of women on a scale never before seen.

In the giant Humble Oil & Refining Company's (Humble) Baytown refinery, women war workers shared similar experiences of other women war workers in other parts of the United States. The experiences of Baytown's women war workers, however, were also unique because of the refinery's southern region location. Their story is a reminder of the great contributions made by women workers on the home front—and of the tensions that they encountered as they ventured into jobs traditionally closed to women.

The entry of more and more men into the military during the war resulted in a manpower crisis that one group attributed to "poor distribution, rather than an actual shortage of workers," with "many war plants still [refusing] to hire Negroes, women, aged, or physically-handicapped workers, despite the fact that serious labor shortages exist in the same localities." On October 19, 1942, the War Manpower Commission issued its first statement of policy about women workers, urging the "removal of all barriers against women workers, that they be hired and trained 'on a basis of equality with men' and that they be given 'free access to foremen's supervisory, and technical jobs.'"[1] The Commission's



The January 1943 issue of The Humble Bee *highlighted Humble's female workforce, with woman war worker Mrs. Gene Edwards on the cover. The original caption read: "Humble women at war... a strange—at the moment—but pleasant scene in certain shops at Baytown refinery where women are taking up duties as assistants in limited types of mechanical work."* Courtesy Baytown Museum

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Gary J. Rabalais has a M.Ed. in Guidance & Counseling and plans to graduate from the University of Houston-Clear Lake in Fall 2005 with a master's degree in History. He retired from Exxon Mobil Corporation in 2003 and presently owns a manufacturing and wholesale business.

chairman, Paul McNutt, later testified about the need for women workers before the Senate Military Affairs Committee, which was investigating all phases of the manpower situation. He predicted "womanpower will be required to solve the manpower problem . . . because 5,000,000 workers must enter the labor force by the end of 1943."[2]

Before the war, Humble's Baytown refinery, which had begun operations in 1921, employed very few women, with most assigned to clerical positions.[3] This giant refining complex "was one of the largest and most advanced in the country, and in its equipment for manufacturing high-quality products for war ranked above . . . large refineries abroad."[4] The operation of such a huge refinery was traditionally regarded as a "man's job." This perception began to change by early 1942 as more women entered the refinery workforce. While many women employed at the refinery continued to work in conventional clerical positions, women also began to work in mechanical shops and in area plants as laborers.[5]

As the United States mobilized to supply the war needs of its allies prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Baytown refinery by 1941 produced 100-octane aviation fuel and synthetic toluene, one of the ingredients in the explosive trinitrotoluene (TNT). Toluene was produced at the Baytown Ordinance Works (B.O.W.), which was owned by the United States government, leased to Humble, and operated by Baytown refinery personnel.[6] After the U.S. entered the war, a combination of investments by business and government expanded these facilities at Baytown, as well as at most other refining centers on the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast. In addition, the demands of war encouraged the construction of new plants to produce synthetic rubber and other products, and in September 1944 the Butyl rubber plant at Baytown made its first satisfactory production of Butyl rubber.[7]

With plant expansion and growth, increased production, and loss of men to the armed forces, Baytown was confronted with the need for additional labor. The inclusion of women in the plant's labor force outside of clerical positions, however, occurred only gradually as women replaced some of the men called into the armed forces in Humble's refinery. The number of women employees grew more rapidly as the war progressed and women were recruited to fill many of the jobs in the newly constructed synthetic rubber plants.[8]

During the year 1942, *The Humble Refinery Bee*, a monthly magazine written for employees of Humble's Baytown works, presented a variety of messages concerning the identity and the role of women workers on and off the job. Early in 1942

Baytown Humble Employees Buy Bombers
Framed in the propeller blades' V-for-Victory, is Miss Margaret Johnson of the Baytown Refinery laboratory, who is shown atop a motor of a Liberator bomber. Courtesy Exxon Baytown

the *Humble Bee* depicted a woman's role as caregiver, housewife and a mother, and bridge player.[9] At the same time, it put forward the perception of women workers at Baytown as simply "refinery girls."[10] The announcement of the first class in Home Defense training for Baytown refinery women employees reinforced the image of women as caregivers: "The introductory course, [is] devoted principally to first aid . . . All women employes [sic] at the Baytown refinery who have not taken the first aid training are urged to register."[11]

In January, the *Humble Bee* announced that the storehouse had its first woman employee. On September 28, 1942, "the first girls began to work as testers in the Baytown Laboratory."[12] Also in September, the paper took note of "the first feminine members to serve" on the board of directors for the Baytown Humble Club and announced that the Club would sponsor monthly USO dances for servicemen.[13] The ones who actually gave the dances were the Baytown refinery women employees and the wives and daughters of refinery personnel.[14]

A significant change in the role of Baytown refinery women workers occurred in November 1942, when Humble announced "[g]irls and women will be employed at once in the instrument department at the Baytown Refinery." The announcement was made "following a conference between officials of the company and members of the executive committee of the Employees' Federation, the bargaining agency for the Baytown plant." The hiring plan, however, was not to the women's full advantage. The plan included giving women the lower regular labor rate in effect at the time instead of the higher regular apprentice instrument rate. The lower regular labor rate was equal to the rate advertised by the refinery for laborers in the *Goose Creek Daily Sun* on July 15, 1943.

The use of the lower rate by the refinery was consistent with the new categories of "women's work" supported by trade unions in the United States to ensure that women workers did not receive equal pay to men.[15] The lower labor rate would continue at the company's option for a three to six month period during which the women had to demonstrate "sufficient capability in the work" in order to be placed on the higher regular apprentice instrument rate.

Even as women were lured into a better paying jobs, some men doubted their ability to handle the work. According to Clifford M. Bond, the public relations director for the Employees' Federation, "When a woman is hired for this type of work, the company has no assurance that she will prove capable or adapt herself readily to the duties."[16] Women who entered the refinery workforce clearly faced a significant challenge in convincing both their employers and their co-workers that they should be accorded equal treatment.

For Baytown refinery women workers, 1943 was a watershed year for improved job opportunities and better pay. The engineering department had its first draftswoman.[17] Two women started work in the carpenter shop.[18] Eight women were brought into the machinist department.[19]

In the language of *The Humble Bee*, one woman "invaded" the foamite department.[20] Nine women were among the new testers at the Butyl laboratory.[21]

Even with these new opportunities, however, mixed messages about the woman worker's identity and role continued. *The Humble Bee* continued to depict women as needing to be cared for and protected: "To you guys in the service, your wives are getting the best care the Humble Company can offer, so keep fighting, you sons of freedom."[22] Women were praised for doing good work while being reminded of their submissive roles, "A word of praise . . . for those women whose husbands are in the service . . . [and who] are carrying on their part here on the production front . . . [and] doing a swell job."[23]

The refinery magazine continued to treat women workers as novelties and not capable of performing the same work as men. The January 1943 issue showed on its front cover the picture of a woman repairing a gauge in the refinery's instrument shop. The first page described the front cover: "Humble women at war . . . a strange—at the moment—but pleasant scene in certain shops at Baytown refinery where women are taking up duties as assistants in limited types of mechanical work." The lead article, "Humble Women At War Work," reinforced the concept that operating a giant refinery was a man's job, with women as temporary helpers for the duration of the war. The article included pictures of women at various jobs, including tool room attendant, surface grinder operator, packing cutter, radial drill operator, saw sharpener, engineering, photostat machine operator, clock repairing, regulating and testing, instrument and gauge repair, blueprint machine operator, and draftswoman. The article focused not on the work the women in the pictures performed, but on what "milady" should wear and how she should not waste company time putting on makeup. It pointed out the need for practical clothing that would allow a woman to do a man's job, but cautioned that the clothing needed to be stylish as well as practical, because if you "give a woman an unattractive costume . . . down goes her morale." The women workers were also informed that "the girl who has to leave the machine or whatever job she may have, every half hour or so to put on a new face is not accomplishing much . . . [and] it is high time to apply moderation."[24]

Winifred Brown worked in the Humble machine shop during WWII.
Courtesy Exxon Baytown

At the Galveston airport, Humble Baytown refinery employees fuel one of the two Liberator-type bombers purchased by the funds raised from the refinery's successful "Back the Attack" war loan drive in 1943.
Courtesy Exxon Baytown

Alez Arnold Steed rode her bicycle to work each day at the Baytown Humble Refinery.
Courtesy Mrs. Steed

In April 1944, Humble for the first time launched a campaign to recruit new workers. The refinery plant manager, Gordon L. Farned, issued a special letter to every employee at the Baytown refinery. Acknowledging a manpower shortage at the Baytown refinery, Farned announced the need to "obtain the services of a thousand men or women by July 1 [1944].... Almost any man under 45 years of age or any woman under 35 years of age who can meet our physical requirements will be accepted."[25] The company also placed ads for workers in daily newspapers in Houston and in the *Goose Creek Daily Sun*. As part of the special campaign, Humble established the policy that "employees hired after September 15, 1940, were designated as temporary."[26]

Even with the manpower shortage, the presence of women workers in Baytown was not always appealing or acceptable to everyone. Of concern to the boilermakers in the refinery was the possibility that they might have a "Rosie the Riveter" at Baytown because of the manpower shortage.[27] Some women workers responded with self-deprecating humor that described "how hard it is on men to put up with a bunch of gals." Others joked about male workers being forced to face the problem of "trying to please [so] many women." *The Humble Bee* reflected the prevailing tone when it referred to women working in the same group as a "sewing circle."[28] The lack of women in

positions of authority reinforced the sense that they were not completely accepted or seen as equal to men. During the war, "no matter how qualified the women were, they could not become supervisors; only the men were allowed the privilege."[29]

The conditions for women in the newly opened synthetic rubber facilities were somewhat different than those in the oil refinery proper.[30] These new plants had to be staffed in 1942 and 1943, as wartime demands for labor intensified. One response for Humble was to aggressively recruit a generation of women laboratory workers from colleges in the region. Unlike many of the women in the refinery, these women came with the expectation that they might become permanent employees. Attracted by the relatively high pay offered by Humble, they took up temporary residence in family homes in Baytown and set to work pursuing their careers while also contributing to the war effort.

After a brief, two-week training course in the company's main lab, they moved over to the Butyl lab for a one-month training period before beginning their work. There they joined a work force of as many as 125 young women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one years old. The work was demanding, but these young women brought a wave of enthusiasm and professionalism to their new jobs. They met the attitudes of many of the male employees about women in the workplace with a combination of good humor and commitment to doing their jobs well. When, for example, men in the plant began to call them the "Butyl beauties," they accepted this as a compliment of sorts and went forward with their demanding jobs.

Good humor could not provide a protective shield against the real and ever-present dangers of work in a rapidly expanding facility that used heat, pressure, and complex chemical processes to turn crude oil and natural gas into products needed for the war. Humble's Baytown works experienced nine fatalities from three explosions during the war years. One contributing factor may have been the inexperience and lack of training for the thousands of new employees pressed into service to staff these rapidly growing plants.[31]

On May 4, 1945, a flash fire in the Butyl lab severely burned two first class laboratory testers and one first class laboratory assistant. It was believed that the fire occurred when vapors from a leaking pressure container used in collecting isobutylene samples escaped in one of the laboratory rooms and were ignited.[32] The laboratory assistant, Norris Holloway, died on the day of the fire.[33] One of the laboratory testers, Margaret Jean Martin, died on May 8; the other, Lena Belle Fore, died on May 13.[34] The two testers were the first women killed in a plant accident at Humble in Baytown. Both were twenty-two year old college graduates who had moved to Baytown in 1943 from outside the region to take promising jobs in the new Butyl facilities. Along with other workers who died in the fast-growing defense-related plants in Houston and around the nation, they were casualties of war.

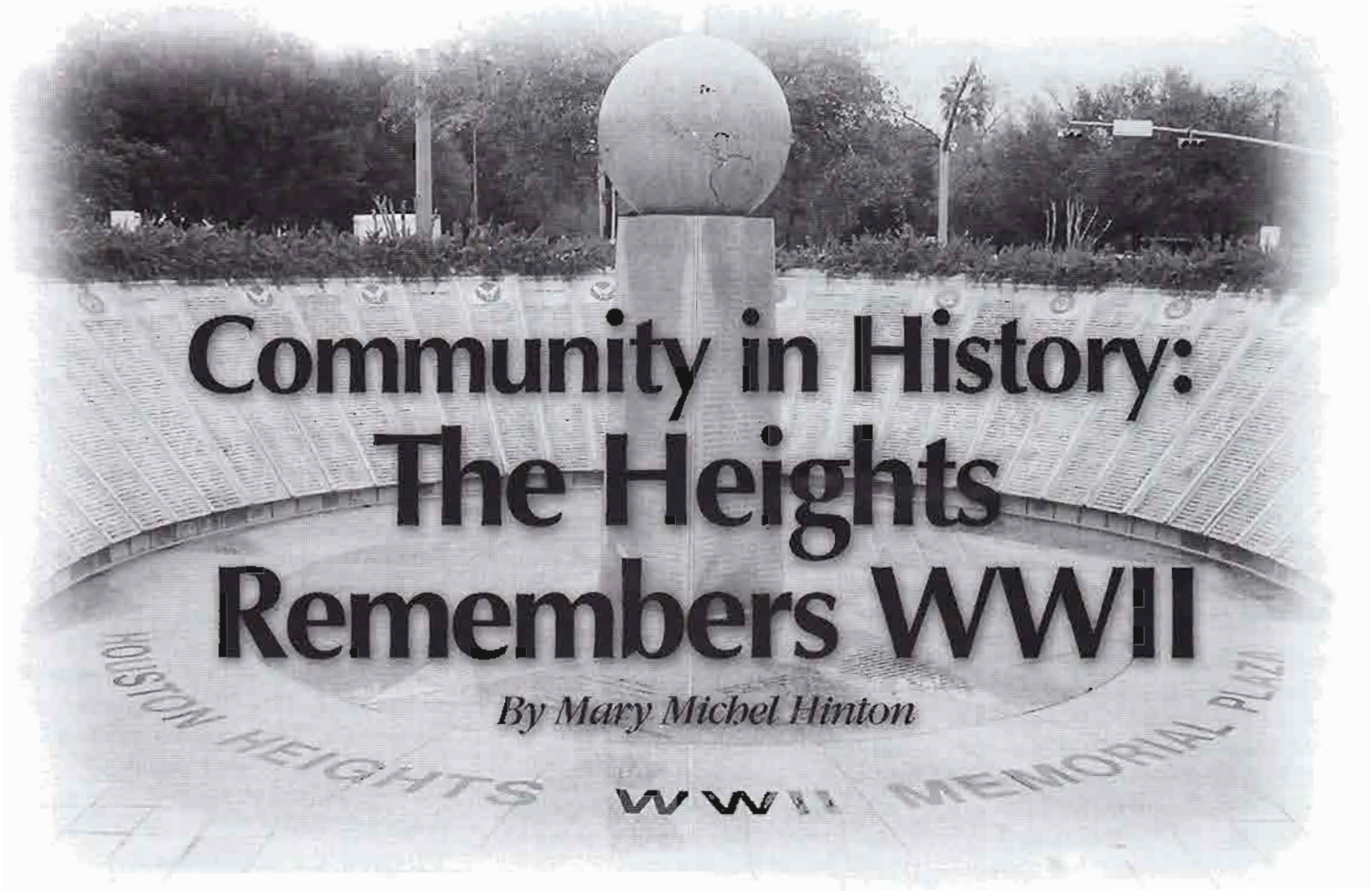
> "I put my application for employment in late 1942. My husband was in the army and was to leave promptly for overseas. The story was going around that if a girl could, in a dark room, tell the difference between a sewing machine and a typewriter, she was hired. I worked in the machine shop office, attached to the machine shop with all its noisy machines running constantly. Other girls my age went to work on the machines and many worked in other nearby offices and in laboratories. I worked until the fall of 1946 when my husband returned from overseas and I was anxious to start a family."
>
> —*Francis Janelle Beaugh Milner*

As the war drew to a close in 1945, men discharged from the military became available for work. Humble's policy was to reemploy those former workers who had one or more years of continuous service prior to entering the military and who were physically qualified for their old jobs.[35] Men who returned to work in the refinery often displaced women workers, in particular those who were hired after September 15, 1940. Women workers who were wives of veterans returning to jobs in the refinery were generally characterized in the *Humble Bee* as resigning their jobs "to resume domestic duties"[36] or to "do a better job of keeping the home fires burning."[37] In addition, veterans who were not former employees also took jobs at the refinery, displacing women.[38] "[I]t was understood that women would gladly relinquish their high-paying wartime jobs; those who must work would return to clerical positions to make room for the veterans."[39]

In "Baytown's 'Rosie the Riveter,'" Donna Lura Bonin included comments from interviews with three women—Marjorie Walker Eastwood, Mary Carlson Easley, and Mary Barron Bonds—who worked in the Butyl laboratory beginning during World War II. These women felt that the national image of "Rosie the Riveter" did not apply to the women workers at the Baytown refinery. After the release in February 1943 of the song "Rosie the Riveter," the title became the catchphrase to represent all women war workers. On May 29, 1943, a painting by Norman Rockwell on the cover of the *Saturday Evening Post* showed a woman worker with a rivet gun resting across her lap and the name Rosie painted on her lunchbox. In 1944, the movie *Rosie the Riveter* glorified the efforts of women war workers.[40] The media tended to portray Rosie as a young, white, middle-class woman with a boyfriend or husband fighting overseas. She did not have a job until she entered the labor force, which was motivated by her patriotism. When the vets returned home, Rosie willingly left the labor force to start a family and be a full-time homemaker.[41]

From the accounts of the three women interviewed by Bonin, women workers at Baytown did not meet all the qualifications of the mythical Rosie. The youth of the women workers in the Butyl laboratory was consistent with Rosie's youthful persona, as was the fact that the lab workers were white women from predominantly middle class families. Contrary to the myth, few of the women lab workers were married. Some had

Continued on page 58



Community in History: The Heights Remembers WWII

By Mary Michel Hinton

In May 2000, a new community history project brought together middle school students and World War II veterans to document and commemorate the Heights' involvement in the war. It truly was a collaborative effort between Leslie Miller and Janette Moreno from Rice University's Center for Technology in Teaching and Learning, Doug Barnett from the Texas State Historical Association, Shelly Hulbirt from Hogg Middle School, and myself. The project, funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, proposed a new community-based approach to teaching history to middle school students. We had several specific goals in mind. We sought to develop a relationship between students and community members, provide opportunities for teachers to explore the concept of community, create teacher-friendly, student-centered lessons, uncover hidden histories, and use the internet to demonstrate the results. We also wanted to create a product, our booklet, which best illustrated student learning and the community's history.

THE BEGINNING

The idea to interview WWII veterans came from the John H. Reagan WWII Memorial Association. Two representatives, Mr. Clayton Lee and Mr. R. G. Musgrove, visited Hogg Middle School in 1998 to begin a fulfillment of one of the Association's charter goals: using the WWII memorial as an educational tool for students. They brought a model of the proposed Heights WWII Memorial and met with social studies teachers to share their ideas on bringing students to the memorial to learn about the sacrifices made by the veterans. The memorial, located near Hogg at Heights Boulevard and 11th Street, was dedicated in 1999 and early in 2000, when word came that we had received the NEH grant, it seemed like a perfect fit to interview local WWII veterans for our Community in History Project.

The first step was to teach our students how to conduct oral history interviews. We invited Louis Marchiafava, a professional historian and oral history expert, to teach our students the methods of oral history. Marchiafava's oral history workshop included tips on getting to know the topic, asking questions, points to remember, and essential tools for the oral historian. A selected group of students took notes on Marchiafava's presentation and related that information to their classmates, with a little help from the teachers. After discussing the tips on collecting an oral history, students practiced interviewing themselves and their classmates using the tape recorders and had a lot of fun doing it as well!

Before the interviews, students explored

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:
Mary Michel Hinton is a graduate of University of Houston and a former HISD middle school social studies teacher. She is currently a stay-at-home mom who works part time as a consultant on various educational projects in social studies.

The John H. Reagan WWII Memorial Association installed twenty-three cast stone bollards encircling the Heights WWII Memorial Plaza. Each describes a different event that took place during the war. Their goal was to share information about WWII with the community and all who visit the "freedom walk" at the Heights WWII Memorial.

various web sites on World War II. One of our favorite web sites was "What Did You Do in the War Grandma?"[1] This was another oral history project conducted and written by high school students in Rhode Island. Another interesting web site we used was "We Witnessed the Attack on Pearl Harbor."[2] Allowing students to conduct guided research on the Internet gave students more ownership in the process of preparing for the interviews and learning about WWII. After finding something of interest, students would often come to me excited about an interesting fact they had discovered on WWII.

Next, we had to find people to interview. We started with ads in the *Houston Chronicle* and *The Leader,* the local paper in the Heights and surrounding area. We also contacted the John H. Reagan WWII Memorial Association. Many veterans from the Association agreed to participate in the interviews. Prior to the interview, we contacted the veteran or community member to get some basic background information and to set up a time for the interview.

Most of the interviewees were able to come to Hogg for the interview. They stopped by the classroom before the interview and the class was genuinely curious about the visitor. One veteran, Arvil Steele shared how he dodged bullets, except for the one that grazed his head. Another community member, Mr. Robert Browning, shared photographs of "The Priscilla Test Shot," photos he had taken during his service in the Army at the Nevada Test Site from 1956-1958. Many interviewees brought memorabilia from WWII, including books, ration coupons, flags, photographs, and medal patches from their units.

On two occasions, students went to the home of the interviewee. With parent permission slips, I packed up a video camera, tape recorder, and students and then headed off to the interview. At a home interview, Billy Lindley, a Hogg and Reagan graduate, eagerly shared his memories and collection of photographs during his time as a pilot of a B-24 bomber. Off camera, he told how many pilots used the silk maps from previous missions as gifts to friends.

EDITING PROCESS

Melinda Wolfrum, a Rice University undergraduate History major at the time, was also the narrative author and research assistant for the oral history project. Wolfrum videotaped and recorded several of the interviews.

When we first began discussing the "Heights Remembers World War II" project, I was skeptical that it could impart meaningful knowledge about World War II to students; but, while watching the first interview, my doubts quickly faded away. I learned that not only can this history project teach historical fact and oral history technique, it can also ignite a hunger for knowledge in its participants and help them see the connection between global and local history.[3]

Throughout the summer of 2000, Wolfrum organized materials, interviewed students, and edited hours of tapes to create the narrative for "The Heights Remembers World War II." Donna Smith, a staff member of the Center for Technology in Teaching and Learning at Rice University, designed the booklet and web site.

PROJECT CHALLENGES

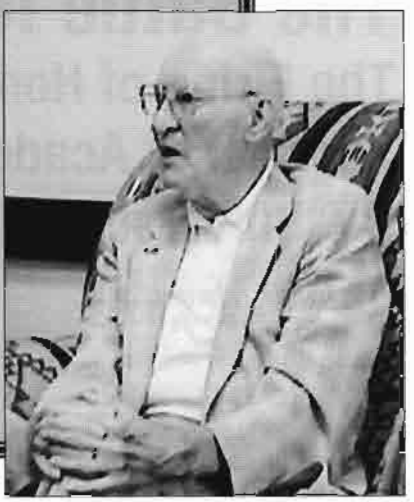
The biggest challenge was time and curriculum fit. The Texas history curriculum covers World War II and its impact on Texas, but not much time is spent on the topic. We waited until after the TAAS test to begin the project with our students, which left us the month of May to prepare students to research and interview the community

"Working on the Heights Remembers World War II project was very exciting for me as well as for my students. I thoroughly enjoyed watching them realize that history happens to local people and that they themselves are creating history. While conducting these interviews, Hogg students met veterans from their neighborhood, many of whom had attended Hogg Middle School years ago. The students recognized that the halls they walk daily are the same halls that these veterans walked in decades past. They undoubtedly enjoyed this learning experience, and I think that it will continue to impact their future experiences and attitudes toward learning."

Ms. Shelly Hulbirt
Project Teacher, Hogg Middle School

Student Perspective: Working in Ship's Service. An oral history of Fred Huebner.
Interviewers: *Maritza, Ebonea, and Joe.*
From their interview with Mr. Huebner, Maritza, Ebonea, and Joe learned what one sacrifices when serving in the military. "He was not there by choice," Maritza explains. "Mr. Huebner had to leave his wife and ...belongings," continues Ebonea. When Joe asked if he would serve again given the chance, Mr. Huebner said, "Only if they needed me." "He was a great man [who made] a great sacrifice," Ebonea reflects. Joe adds, "He really inspired me."

Student Perspective: A Story from the European Front. An oral history of Julian Philips.
Interviewers: *Nelly and Celestino.*
The students found Mr. Philip's reflections on the duty of a soldier particularly striking. They were fascinated by his struggle to cope with the realities of war. Celestino noted, "He told me that he hated killing people, but he dealt with it." "His commanders said he was a good soldier," added Nelly.



"During the course of the interviews, it became apparent that the students participating in the project were hungry for more knowledge about the involvement of the United States Armed Forces in WWII," remembers Art Bleimeyer, former Hogg student and U.S. Army WWII Veteran.
Courtesy Hogg Middle School Oral History Project and Rice University

members. We also did not have adequate time to work with our students during the post-interview process. The "Focus on Your Community Resource" web site contains the lesson plans we created from our experience with the project.[4] It also places research, the interview, and writing process in student hands.

Another challenge to the project was finding enough interviewees for all of the students. In my classes, students were assigned in groups of two or three and as the interviews became available, students were chosen to participate. In Ms. Hulbirt's class, several students volunteered to participate in the interviews. In hindsight, more students could have participated if the interviewees spoke to a class, versus just a few students conducting an interview.

We experienced one minor technical problem that every oral historian fears: the sound on our tape of the Jenke interview did not work. We contacted Mr. and Mrs. Jenke, and luckily, they were able to come back for a second interview.

IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

After the veterans shared their stories with Hogg students, there was a growing realization that students wanted more information about World War II. Just around the same time, a new "freedom walk" installation was being added to the area surrounding the John H. Reagan WWII Memorial. This new area included 23 cast stone bollards, each highlighting significant events of World War II. Each bollard contains a plaque with a short summary and a photograph of a significant event, starting with Pearl Harbor and ending with victory in Japan. This is when the veterans from the John H. Reagan WWII Memorial Association developed the idea of creating an educational guide for teachers to use in the classroom. The veterans raised enough funds from local donors to cover the cost of development, publishing, and distribution of *Twenty-five Events Students Should Know About America's Involvement in WWII*. The guide contains summaries, photographs, maps, geography, technical specifications, learning activities, links to the "Handbook of Texas Online," TAKS, TEKS, and links to helpful Internet sites. A copy of this resource is in the process of being distributed to local schools in Region IV.

Within one of the bollards, a time capsule was included, which will not be opened until November 11, 2050. The plaque clearly describes the goal of this memorial. "It serves as a testament to the lives of the brave Heights men and women who served in World War II and the sacrifices made to preserve freedom both here and abroad."

In October 2000, months after the project ended, several 7th graders from Hogg Middle School gathered in a small room to meet and greet with WWII veterans and other community members to celebrate the publishing of our oral history project, "The Heights Remembers WWII, Our Community in History." Veterans and students began to sign each other's books and shared stories of days gone by, including memories of walking down the same hallways as many of the current 7th graders. Some of the veterans had fought in battles students only read about in textbooks or on the Internet or saw in a movie. The experiences gained while working on this oral history project helped the students to grasp the enormity of WWII and its impact on their small Heights community. They gained a greater appreciation for the sacrifices made over fifty years ago and for the importance of learning about their history. As the students listened, they began to realize that history now has a recognizable face. ★

The Battle for the Texas Mind:

The Firing of Homer Price Rainey and the Fight for the Survival of Academic Freedom and New Deal Liberalism at the University of Texas, 1939-1945

By John Moretta

On November 1, 1944, Homer Price Rainey, one of the nation's most enlightened and progressive educators, was fired as president of the University of Texas. Rainey was the victim of a conservative, anti-New Deal backlash that had emerged in the Lone Star state. Beginning in 1937 and continuing through the war years, a powerful coalition of conservative oilmen, bankers, and businessmen unleashed upon Texas an aggressive and unscrupulous campaign to drive from positions of power those whom they believed threatened the status quo by publicly championing New Deal liberalism. They perceived Rainey to be potentially the most dangerous of all Texas liberals because of his status as president of the state's most important public institution: the University of Texas. From the moment Rainey took office in 1939 until he was finally discharged in November of 1944, the conservatives did all they could to discredit Rainey and his vision for the University of Texas.

Rainey's firing represented a direct assault on both liberalism and academic freedom, which in the conservative mind were symbiotic and therefore had to be simultaneously suppressed. When the smoke cleared after months of vicious accusations, name-calling, student protests, and faculty dissension, all thoroughly covered by both state and national media, the university's president was fired, "subversive" professors purged, and the school formally censured by the AAUP (the Association of American University Professors). The Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, the school's most significant accrediting agency, placed the university on probation.

The power of the UT Board of Regents in 1939 represented the culmination of a national process that began at the turn of the twentieth century. In the 1920s, historians Charles and Mary Beard observed that, "the roster of American trustees of higher learning reads like a corporation directory." By the late 1930s and early 1940s, 84 percent of the individuals sitting on the boards

HOME EDITION
Price 5 Cents

THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE

VOL. 44 NO. 20 HOUSTON, TEXAS, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1944 THIRTY-EIGHT PAGES

THE WEATHER
Houston: Cloudy with occasional light rains tonight and Friday; cooler Friday night or early Saturday.
East Texas: Mostly cloudy tonight and Friday; not much temperature change.
More data on Page 11.

GOVERNOR STUDIES RAINEY-REGENTS ROW

Yanks Open New Push

ATTACKS MADE IN FORESTS IN AACHEN AREA

Allies Advance Rapidly in Drive to Hurl Nazis From Approaches to Belgian Port of Antwerp.

Antwerp Waterway Being Cleared

NETHERLANDS
BELGIUM
ANTWERP

NAZI DEFENSES NEAR HUNGARY CAPITAL CUT

Resistance Before Budapest Weakening as Russians Advance Steadily on Rolling Plain.

ROOSEVELT TO TOP CAMPAIGN TALKS TONIGHT

Many Speakers to Take to Air as Vote Drive Nears End; Ten Broadcasts Are Slated.

Fired President Plans for Fight

RESIGNATIONS FROM THREE ARE RECEIVED

Issues Involve Academic Freedom and Cannot Be Compromised, Says Statement by President.

Explosive Climax Is Reached

Dispute Began Shortly After Election of Dr. Rainey in 1938.

STEVENSON TO MEET "EXES" AND FACULTY

Students Return to Campus From March on Capitol After Promise to Aid in Settling Dispute.

Homer Price Rainey (1896-1985).
Courtesy Prints and Photographs Collection, CN10158, Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin

of trustees at the nation's top twenty public and private universities were a combination of businessmen, bankers, and lawyers.[1]

Without question, money was the most important factor contributing to the increased presence of businessmen on university governing boards. As universities expanded their curriculums and athletic programs, hired more faculty, staff, and administrators, placed greater emphasis on research, and built new buildings, they increasingly solicited funding from wealthy donors. Much to the initial delight of university officials, many corporate chieftains were willing to donate hundreds of thousands of dollars to local universities, especially if it meant a way for them to be appointed to the board of trustees.

As universities became more dependent on outside donations for growth, the size of gifts changed the relationship between donor and recipient. As one educator observed, "in the case of 90 percent of the money given to a large institution the initiative is taken by the donor, and not by the university concerned."[2] Increasingly, university presidents found it difficult to control the use of large bequests. This inevitably led to confrontations between donors and faculty and administrators over a variety of issues. None was more important than academic freedom, which the business elite at times believed threatened directly their personal and collective interests.

Antagonisms became especially manifest during the 1930s and the years of World War II, when New Deal liberalism energized and emboldened many academics to challenge the domination of the wealthy of both their university and state. Liberal educators maintained that the morality of rugged individualism that fed the growth of corporations in the late nineteenth century had produced an amoral and undisciplined "plutocracy" that endangered democratic institutions, callously exploited workers, and increased poverty, creating the potential for class war and despair in the land of opportunity. For many academics, the tragedy of the social and economic hardships of the Depression was compounded by the fact that the very men responsible for the collapse were now dictating policy at their universities.

By the late 1930s, the University of Texas Board of Regents was firmly controlled by this "business element." In Texas, as in most states, the governor appointed public university trustees or regents. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, regents appointed by governors "Pappy" O'Daniel and Coke Stevenson plunged UT into a deep crisis. The ultraconservatives, or "ultras," cowed both politicians into appointing individuals known to be rabid anti-New Dealers. At UT, as elsewhere, the regents' policies reflected not only their conservative ethos but also their determination to repress any ideas or reforms that threatened their control of the university and their perception of what should be taught. They were determined to ensure that UT remained a bastion of "traditional thinking" on a variety of subjects and that the individuals in charge of instructing and administering higher education in Texas were "sound" in their adherence to the conservative ethos.

The driving force behind the regents' hostility toward Rainey was their fear that Rainey and his faculty supporters were conspiring to transform the university into the center of Texas liberalism, whose graduates would become the vanguard of change in the Lone Star State. Such a "revolution" could end the regents' control of the university and even challenge their hegemony over the state. Consequently, the regents' war on Rainey, the faculty, and liberalism, had the fervor and fanaticism of a holy crusade against any idea or individual they considered even remotely associated with progressive thinking.

Unfortunately for Homer Rainey, his appointment as president of UT came as the New Deal was in retreat both nationally and in Texas. Had Rainey been appointed in

From L-R: Governor W. Lee O'Daniel; Homer P. Rainey, Chester H. Rowell, columnist and former editor, the San Francisco Chronicle; *Major J.R. Parten, Chairman of the Board of Regents, Houston; Dr. George W. Truett, world-known Baptist leader from Dallas; Thomas Stone Clyce, of Sherman, president emeritus of Austin College at Sherman, Dr. Rainey's alma mater.*
Courtesy Prints and Photographs Collection, CN05741, Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: John Moretta received his PhD from Rice University in History and is currently chair of the Social Sciences Dept. at Central College, HCCS. He has written several articles on Texas history as well as a biography of Texas lawyer William Pitt Ballinger.

1934-1936, when New Deal liberalism was at its zenith, he might have survived the conservative backlash and remained as UT's president. He would have had more time to implement his reform agenda, winning popular and political support for his initiatives, before Texans swung back to the right. FDR's popularity in Texas and by extension Texans' acceptance of most New Deal legislation, might have given Rainey enough momentum to defeat any conservative coup of the Board of Regents.

By the late 1930s, a Southern-led opposition in the national Congress made it difficult, if not impossible, for FDR to enact any major new programs. Moreover, the threat of world crisis shifted attention from domestic reform to preparations for war, opening the way for Texas conservatives to mount an all-out attack on New Deal liberalism. Such was the environment in which Homer Price Rainey became president of the University of Texas in December 1939, just after the declaration of war in Europe. [3]

Born in 1896 in Clarksville in Red River County, East Texas, Homer Price Rainey was every bit a renaissance man. He was a renowned innovator in higher education; an ex-professional baseball player who pitched for the Galveston Wave of the Texas League after graduating from Austin College in 1919 and was offered a contract by the St. Louis Cardinals that same year; an ordained Baptist minister at nineteen; and a trained tenor singer. Rainey earned both his master's and doctorate degrees in education from the University of Chicago, specializing in college administration. Rainey attended the University of Chicago in the 1920s, when the school was in the vanguard of the educational reform impulse then sweeping parts of the nation. The university had been home to an impressive host of education modernizers, who instilled in their protégés a passion to reform the nation's colleges and universities.

In 1927, the thirty-one-year-old Rainey became the nation's youngest college president when he took charge of Franklin College in Indiana. There, in 1929, he published his first book on college administration, *Public School Finance*. He became president of Bucknell University in Pennsylvania in 1931, and is still regarded as one of that school's most innovative, creative, and popular presidents.[4]

In 1935, Rainey left Bucknell to become director of the Rockefeller Foundation's American Youth Commission in Washington D.C., where he had frequent contact with a host of New Dealers, ranging from Harry Hopkins and Eleanor Roosevelt, to fellow Texans Wright Patman, Maury Maverick, and J.R. Parten, who was then chairman of the University of Texas Board of Regents.

Parten, a wealthy oilman, was a rarity among the Texas business elite: he was a New Deal liberal. Parten had been charged by Governor Jimmy Allred (also a New Dealer) to find a new president for the university. He selected Homer Price Rainey. Interestingly, Parten met little opposition from other board members in securing Rainey's appointment. For the most part, the regents during Parten's tenure as chair were, according to historian Joe B. Frantz, "fairly enlightened, decent individuals who had a positive view of the university."[5] Moreover, Rainey's profile appeared perfect for the university. He had all the credentials of that local ideal, "a good ol' boy"—a Mason and Rotarian "to boot"—who was coming home to help his state and university.

Indeed, as Hart Stilwell of *Collier's* observed, at the time of his appointment, "No Texan would have associated the word 'radical' with Doctor Rainey, and many Texas liberals wondered if they dared use even the word 'liberal' in connection with him."[6] However, few knew that Rainey's "years abroad" had transformed him into a very sophisticated, cosmopolitan, liberal reformer. The only remaining vestige of his rural East Texas heritage was his Baptist-inspired evangelism to bring to the University of Texas the progressive ideas that had informed his life during his years of "exile" away from the Lone Star State.

As a Texan, Rainey saw a great opportunity to make his state's premier school of higher learning "a university of the first class," a goal originally stated in the 1876 state constitution. In its first half-century, the university had grown steadily but unspectacularly. Most disturbing to Rainey and to many faculty, was the university's poor reputation for academic freedom and shamefully low faculty salaries. Indeed, UT had become a "feeder" school for the better universities, yearly providing them with the best UT professors who left Austin for better pay, greater respect, and prestige.

One of Rainey's priorities was to reverse this trend by bringing to UT the best professors or young scholars from the more prestigious schools to help transform UT into one of the nation's top public universities. Motivating Rainey toward this end was a faculty report that greeted him his first day on the job, declaring that the faculty accepted as fair judgment the statement that there was no first-class university in the country south of the Ohio River and east of California.[7]

UT's faculty was not entirely devoid of outstanding, nationally-recognized scholars. There were the historians Walter Prescott Webb and Eugene C. Barker; the naturalist Roy Bedichek; and J. Frank Dobie, Henry Nash Smith, Mody Boatright, Wilson Hudson, and John Henry Faulk in literature. The Economics Department was also recognized as "up and coming," for it contained such promising younger professors as Clarence Ayres, Robert Montgomery, Wendell Gordon, and J. Fagg Foster.

Most important for the Rainey controversy was the fact that all of these individuals, except Barker, were staunch pro-FDR, New Deal liberals, who welcomed fellow progressive Rainey with open arms and pledged to support his reform agenda no matter how difficult its implementation might be. By the time of Rainey's appointment, all these men were considered by conservatives to be subversive traitors to Texas traditions and values. With Rainey leading the charge, the university's faculty was about to engage in a battle for Texas against, as J. Frank Dobie declared, "reactionary millionaires and corporation lawyers."[8] In short, as Rainey and his supporters saw it, Texas history had reached a point where a fight had to be made to guarantee intellectual freedom and the life of the mind as inalienable human rights.

Rainey knew that the Board of Regents during his tenure would reflect the conservative revolt against FDR underway in Texas as he took on the presidency. He remained confident, however, that no matter how conservative these individuals might be in their politics, they would respect the integrity and importance of academic freedom, and as Texans, would want to see their university become one of the best. He was wrong on both counts. Rainey underestimated just how strongly the board was devoted to the conservative ethos. The principal of academic freedom had no rele-

vancy in their lives; indeed to them the idea was code for the propagation of such dangerous—and un-American and un-Texan—ideas as labor unionism, civil rights for blacks, federal fair labor standards and antitrust laws, and corporate and personal income taxes. They had no intention of allowing the state's dominant institution of higher learning to be run by people who threatened their interests and power.

The board's shift in composition and mentality began in earnest during the governorship of W. Lee "Pappy" O'Daniel, who was elected to his first term in 1938. Within months of taking office, O'Daniel began surrounding himself with right-wingers. Many of these men were far more politically savvy, educated, and sophisticated than the governor. Although most disliked him personally and dismissed him as a huckster, they nonetheless saw his administration as their entrée back into power. With their help and advice, O'Daniel ran again and won easily in 1940.[9]

During O'Daniel's second term, many Texans felt that these ultra conservative advisors, not the governor, were running the state. Those individuals included Orville Bullington of Wichita Falls, who made his millions in railroads, banks, and flour mills; Dallas insurance magnate Carr Collins; oilman Jim West of Fort Worth; D.K. Martin, chairman and president of the Alamo National Bank of San Antonio; Dr. E. W. Bertner of Houston, former president of the Texas State Medical Association; oil and cattle millionaire Dan Harrison; and University of Texas regent, millionaire banker and oilman H.H. Weinert of Seguin. These staunch, anti-New Deal conservatives encouraged the governor to support their assault on liberalism at the University of Texas.

There could be no doubt of the feelings of Bullington and Harrison, the two regents appointed by O'Daniel in January of 1941. In 1934, Bullington had publicly declared that the New Deal was "run by gutter reds and parlor pinks." Before his appointment, Harrison had told his friend D.K. Martin, that there was "a far-reaching evil" in Texas colleges, claiming that "unscrupulous, designing, subversive professors have been 'diggin in' in our schools more than we dare admit."[10]

Prior to making these two appointments, O'Daniel met secretly in 1940 with a group of conservative war-horses at what became known as the "Houston Gag Conference." The group discussed how to restrict academic freedom in Texas colleges, how to forbid the teaching of certain subjects, and how to get rid of certain professors. According to J.R. Parten, "a certain political activity was started about the year 1940 to eliminate from our institutions of higher learning the so-called radical teachers." A prominent Texas lawyer, who refused to let Parten reveal his name, confirmed the oilman's premonitions by confiding that he had attended a meeting "of several business executives and attorneys whose declared purpose was to influence educational board appointments of men who could be counted upon to eliminate from the teaching staffs in higher education of Texas all radical elements in the faculties."

Even more ominous for UT was the attorney's message that "this group was particularly after Dr. Rainey." John H. McCurdy, secretary of the University of Texas Ex-Students Association, reinforced the alarm that the Right was on the march: "As early as 1940 we [the association] began to get warnings that worried us from ex-students who had been supporting Dr. Rainey's vision for the university and his support of New Deal ideas. They said 'Stay out of politics, and if you have any views in favor of the New Deal keep them to yourself.'"[11]

As Joe Frantz noted, the Houston gathering decided, "to suspend old rules, to make new rules of convenience, and in general, to reorder life in the university so as to stifle outspoken liberalism and broad questioning." According to Robert Lee Bobbitt, former Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, state attorney general, and member of the state highway commission, UT was the principal target of their planned purge, but the state's other main universities—Texas A&M, Texas Tech, and Texas A&I (currently Texas A&M University at Kingsville)— were also on the agenda. At all of these schools, "the scheme was to limit and restrict the teaching of certain subjects and get rid of certain professors and administrators" who represented threats to "the economic ideas of certain monopolists, corporation executives, and rich industrialists in the State of Texas, or of those beyond our borders who own and control large industries and properties in this state." These "wise men of big industries" claimed they only wanted to rid the schools of radicalism and communism, but their broader purpose

Orville Bullington urged Pappy O'Daniel to appoint him to the UT Board of Regents in 1941. Once on the board, Bullington had the power needed to "clean up" UT's educational system.
Courtesy Prints and Photographs Collection, CN09632, Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin

was to "control and supervise what the youth of Texas may be taught in the public schools of the state."[12]

After O'Daniel went off to Washington as "Senator O'Daniel," the conservatives secured the ear and favor of his successor, Coke Stevenson. The new governor helped the Houston Gag Conference plan by appointing conservative rancher Scott Shreiner of Kerrville to UT's Board of Regents to replace Fred Branson, who died of a stroke in June 1942. When regent E.J. Blackert resigned unexpectedly after Branson's death, Stevenson replaced him with Judge D. F. Strickland of Mission, a wealthy corporate attorney and lobbyist for the state's largest movie theater chain. With the appointment of Schreiner and Strickland, the conservatives had effective control of the Board of Regents. They stood ready to do battle with the university and its president.

Schreiner and Strickland immediately bonded with Bullington and Harrison to form an anti-Rainey bloc. Two other longtime regents, Hilmer Weinert and Lutcher Stark, could be counted on to support the other four. Thus, out of the nine total regents, six were hardcore conservatives determined to implement the Gag Conference agenda. The other three board

members, J.R. Parten, Ida Fairchild, and Ely Thornton, were pro-Rainey liberals. However, unfortunately for Rainey and the university, Parten, the most powerful of the liberal contingent, had just resigned as chairman of the Board of Regents, leaving Rainey no aegis against the conservatives' onslaught.[13]

At the first meeting of the newly constituted board, D.F. Strickland passed a small card across the table to Rainey. Written on the card were the names of four full professors of economics, Robert Montgomery, Clarence Ayres, E. E. Hale, and Clarence Wiley, each of whom had taught at the university for at least fifteen years. "We want you to fire these men," Strickland announced to Rainey. The president, shocked, asked why. "We don't like what they are teaching," the regent replied. Rainey told him he could not fire these men because they all had tenure; the best he could do would be to call a hearing in which Strickland and others could present their charges.[14]

The professor that most alarmed the regents was "Doctor Bob," Robert H. Montgomery, a bushy-haired, Texas-born, Hill-country, Scotch Presbyterian, whose specialty was public utilities. Montgomery had persuaded fellow liberal, Governor Jimmy Allred, that Texas needed a commission to control the price people paid for their lights, water, and phone. Montgomery believed in free enterprise competition, but when it came to such necessary services as utilities, he advocated public ownership. Rainey charged Parten to review "Doctor Bob's" work. After scouring everything Montgomery had written and said in lectures, Parten told Rainey, as well as the senate investigative committee that was called into session after Rainey's firing in 1944, that Montgomery was "just simply a New Deal economist."[15]

At a subsequent board meeting, Strickland tried again to purge the Economics Department by introducing a motion to have all university employees take a written loyalty exam, which he believed would reveal Communists among the faculty. The test asked such questions as "Do you believe in communism? Would you fight for your country if asked? And do you support the US government?" When Rainey asked for proof of alleged Communists among his faculty, Strickland presented only transcripts of economics

Continued on page 59

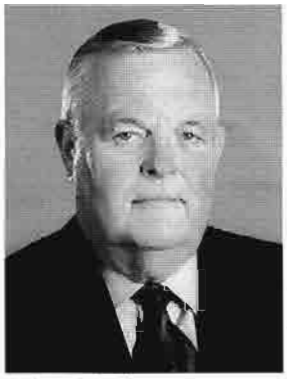
The struggle between their president Homer Price Rainey and the Board of Regents captivated UT students. The Daily Texan *ran headline articles and printed editorials throughout the controversy.*

Photograph by Neal Douglass, Courtesy Prints and Photographs Collection, Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin

REMINISCENCES:
An Interview with Robert L. Waltrip

Interview by William H. Kellar

On October 13, 2004, William Kellar, PhD, sat down with Robert Waltrip to discuss his memories of growing up in Houston during World War II. His father owned the Heights Funeral Home, a family run funeral business. Waltrip is the founder and CEO of Service Corporation International, the largest death care company in the world. He also has helped create the Lone Star Flight Museum in Galveston.



Courtesy Service Corporation International

Robert L. Waltrip

RLW: I really do not remember a heck of a lot about the Depression except I can remember the older folks talking about how tough it was and jobs were hard to come by. But I was a small child and that really had no meaning to me. Although we were not wealthy, I never missed a meal so the Depression as such really did not mean anything to me as a small child.

I think the era of the 1940s was a good time. The Depression was really over and there was a lot of activity and a lot of business growth. I think that times were really good before Pearl Harbor. And there was a lot of news. News was not as immediate as it is today, but there was a lot of talk about the war in Europe and all of the things that we all know now as history of how all that developed.

I remember vividly the day of December 7, 1941. We always went to my grandmother's to eat Sunday dinner. We had come back from there and about three blocks from our house, there was a vacant lot and we would go down there and play sandlot football. I could not wait to get home and get down to the lot where we could play football. We were in the midst of a football game and my mother pulled up in the car, motioned for me to come over. I went over and she was crying. I thought someone had died. She said, "The Japanese have just bombed Pearl Harbor. We are at war." Well, I did not even know where Pearl Harbor was, had no feeling one way or another about the Japanese. I mean, they were just people, as far as I was concerned at that time, that made little gadgets and trinkets that said "Made in Japan" on them. But I think everybody's life changed that day. The hustle and bustle that was created almost immediately, the tremendous enlistment in the Armed Forces, it was something that was unheard of and probably has never been duplicated since that time. There were long lines of young men enlisting in various branches of the service. And, as that momentum picked up and all of the gearing up for contingent manufacturers of war materials, this area, with the refineries, the ship building that they created down in the Galveston area, the air and training bases around here, really became a bustling area. A lot of activity was taking place.

All of the patriotic posters and all of the patriotic songs and things started. I still remember many of the songs that were written during the war about the war itself. It was a time when the camaraderie of all of the people came together in a crescendo that I do not believe will ever be duplicated again anywhere else in the world. Everyone was pulling in the same direction on the same road. There was not all of this political bickering and carrying on back and forth.

I also remember, soon after the war started and all the men started going off to training at the various bases, the first groups started being sent overseas and the draft started. My wife's father was the first number called in the draft.

Even from a young age, Bob Waltrip was interested in airplanes. This enthusiasm led him to be a founder of the Lone Star Flight Museum. Courtesy Waltrip Family

ABOUT THE INTERVIEWER:
William H. Kellar is the executive director of the University of Houston's Scholars' Community program. He is also affiliated with the Center for Public History at UH and has written several books on Houston institutions.

On the home front, Houstonians contributed to the war effort by cooperating with the rationing of various products. One item that was ration-free, however, was V-8 vegetable juice.

Courtesy Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library

I did not even know her then. They lived in Oklahoma, I think, at the time. But his was the first number that they drew.

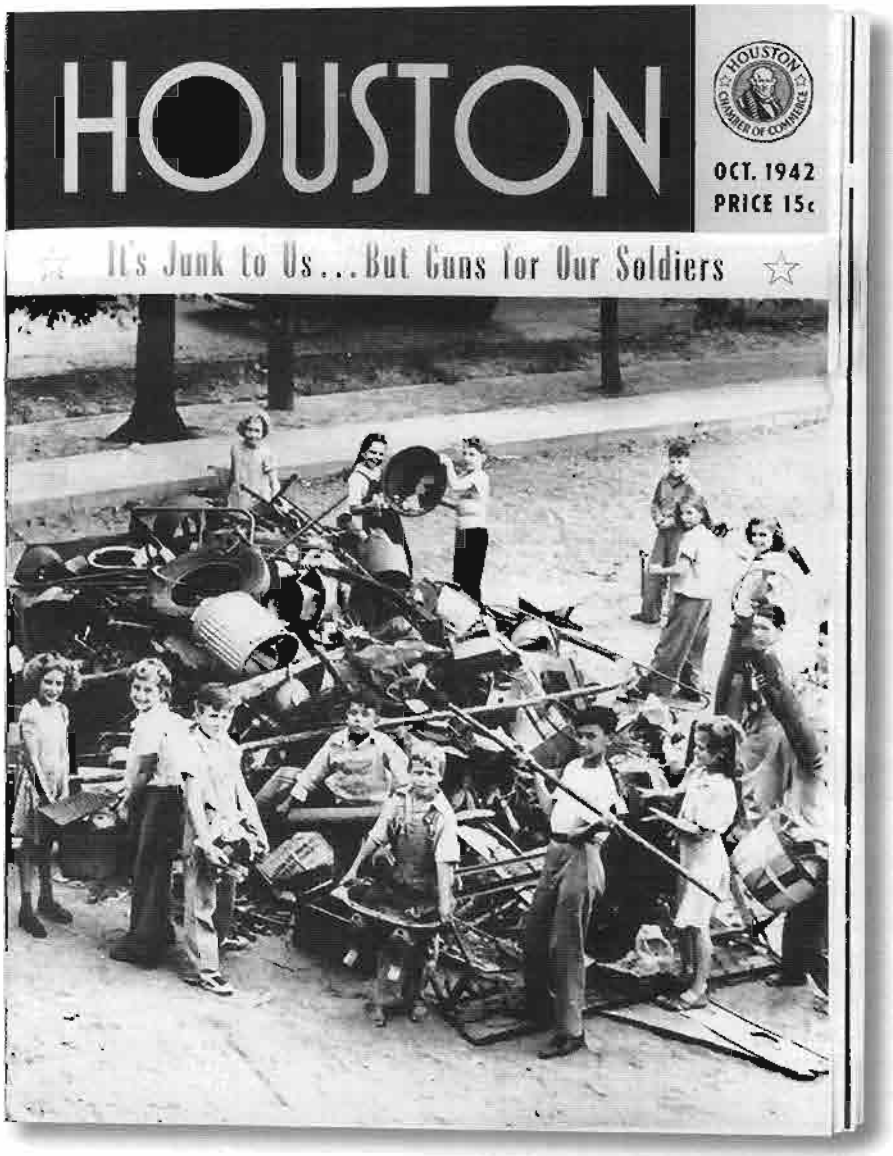
WHK: Talk about luck!

RLW: Yes. He did not have to go because of a health condition but he was the first name that came up.

People do not think about that today but almost everything was rationed. You had ration books that would entitle you to so many of this item and so much of that item over whatever period of time that they issued the various books for. And gasoline was probably the most noticed because you did not really get enough gasoline allotment to do very much. People had to be very, very conservative in how their driving was done and only for the most important things. As a result, a lot of people walked and rode bicycles. When I was a kid, I rode a bicycle everywhere that I went. I mean, long distances, too; or I walked. There would be only certain days that the food markets would have meat. They would advertise that they had meat on Friday or Tuesday or whatever day it was, and there would be long lines of people to just buy meat. And they had to use their ration tickets to purchase whatever meat that they were allocating. So, a lot of other things were rationed, too, but meat was something that you really noticed, and gasoline was something that you really noticed. Tires were almost nonexistent.

They did not have all the synthetic rubber that they use today. All of the rubber came from the islands over there. So, all tires were recapped, very poor quality recapped. They quit making automobiles. 1941 was the last model that came out until 1946. So, for a person in the used car business, it was almost a license to steal because there were not any more cars and the car values just shot straight up. If you had a 1941 vehicle, that was brand new all the way through the war because there was not anything else.

I remember my dad, being that he was in charge of the civil defense, ran an emergency ambulance service at the funeral home back then. They had a C-card, gasoline ration card. There was an A, B, and a C. An A was what most everyone had. You had a little sticker at the corner of the window like an inspection sticker, and it had an A, B, or C, and they were all different colors. I think the A was black and white, the B was blue and white, and the C was kind of a rose color and white. If you had a C-card, gasoline was not totally unlimited, but you could get enough to do just about whatever you wanted to do. Specialty workers, government workers, doctors, emergency personnel, people that worked in defense plants and the shipyards, they had C-cards so they would not be restricted in driving back and forth to work. The B-card was less fuel, but it was more than the A and that was another category. Most people had an A category that entitled you to so many gallons a week, and



"It's Junk to Us...But Guns for Our Soldiers." Even children joined in on the act of gathering scrap metal to help the armed forces.

Courtesy Greater Houston Partnership and Houston Metropolitan Research Center

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I remember I got to go with my dad to... he was head of the Civil Defense and chief of the Auxiliary Police. So, he had the authority to go just about anywhere he wanted to go. I got to go a lot of places with him and see a lot of things that were off limits or restricted areas to just about anyone else. I got to go on a lot of the air bases and that was very exciting to me. Literally, I can remember going out to Ellington Field and just seeing airplanes as far as you could see and several different rows, all with the engines running. There were air bases all around Houston, a little bitty training base at Bryan College Station, at San Antonio, and other places. It was not unusual to hear the roar of airplane engines in the sky all the time because they were training so many pilots. And then these big formations of bombers and fighters would come over, and it was kind of thrilling to see all of that.

WHK: How old were you about that time?

RLW: Well, I was ten years old in 1941. I remember getting to go on a submarine that was in the ship channel here for repairs or maintenance or whatever and it was here for several weeks. We went there and had dinner one evening in the captain's quarters in the submarine. That was really exciting to me, too. I got to go on an aircraft carrier and things like that . . .

WHK: For a young man, that was really a fascinating thing.

RLW: Right. I wanted to be a fighter pilot so bad, you know, like most kids would want to do and I felt that when the war was over, I was deprived of my destiny. But also, I can remember very well the night that the war was over. This friend that I went to high school with, his daddy had a Model A Ford pickup truck. Of course, the Model A was fifteen years old, I guess, at that time, but his father had really fixed it up and it was transportation. It had a little four-cylinder engine in it and it was very economical, so he got to drive it some. Well, five or six of us loaded into that car and drove downtown and it was bedlam. I mean, all the streets were closed and people were partying and there was festivity and music. It was quite a celebration. I know there has never been another time in the history of our country that was like World War II during the war. All of the news was very bleak at the beginning. We were losing everything. The war in Europe was going very badly and the Japanese were moving all the way across the Pacific with no one to stop them. So, it went from a bleak period to things kind of leveling off and then back on the offensive.

Houstonians were encouraged to raise their own "Victory Gardens" to show their patriotism and alleviate the food shortages. At-home vegetable dehydrators were displayed in the windows of department stores like Foley's and information booklets were available throughout the city.

Courtesy Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library

Another thing—there was not any television. And so, everybody listened to the radio every evening, and they had some of these old programs that you hear a lot about—*The Bob Hope Show*, *Fibber McGee & Molly*, and *Your Hit Parade*. These were regular programs that everyone listened to and you looked forward to that. We had one of those Philco radios that sat about this high. It was a piece of furniture but the radio in it was not very big. My dad's chair was there next to it. Everyone would gather around where they could sit and hear the radio. I would lay down beside his chair and listen to the radio. It was quite an interesting time.

When the war was over and all of the... well, let me say one other thing: I can remember when they started sending the bodies of the boys that had been killed in action and how that first started. Being in the funeral business, that was quite an event at that time. It just started off kind of slow and then it accelerated, reached its peak and then leveled back off again. But that went on way after the war was over. And with all of the military funerals that were held, that was quite impressive to everyone.

During the war, everywhere, they had a Victory Garden. I remember planting my first Victory Garden. I got it all ready and I took the seeds . . . I did not know any better but I took the seeds and I put them in the hole and then I packed it down so tight on top, patted it down with my hand, that I made it so hard, the seeds could not come up! So, I did not have anything to grow the first time. And the amount of food that you raised was very small. But I think it was just the significance of people trying to pull together to make things happen. The Victory Garden was just a significant thing that people were willing to pull together.

Down at Sugar Land . . . the sugar companies had these huge pieces of land that they had used for sugar cane production. And they converted a lot of those to producing vegetables, and particularly, black eyed peas, purple hull peas, squash, and okra. They set up a canning unit and you could go down and you had to go out and pick your own vegetables. And then, you would bring them back in and process them yourself. And then, you could use the canning facility there that they had to go and blanche the vegetables in the hot boiling water and then put it in the cans and run it through the machine. So, families would take all the kids down there and we got to shell those peas. I remember shelling peas until my fingers would just get numb and bleed and everything else. And that was something I really did not like to do. I did

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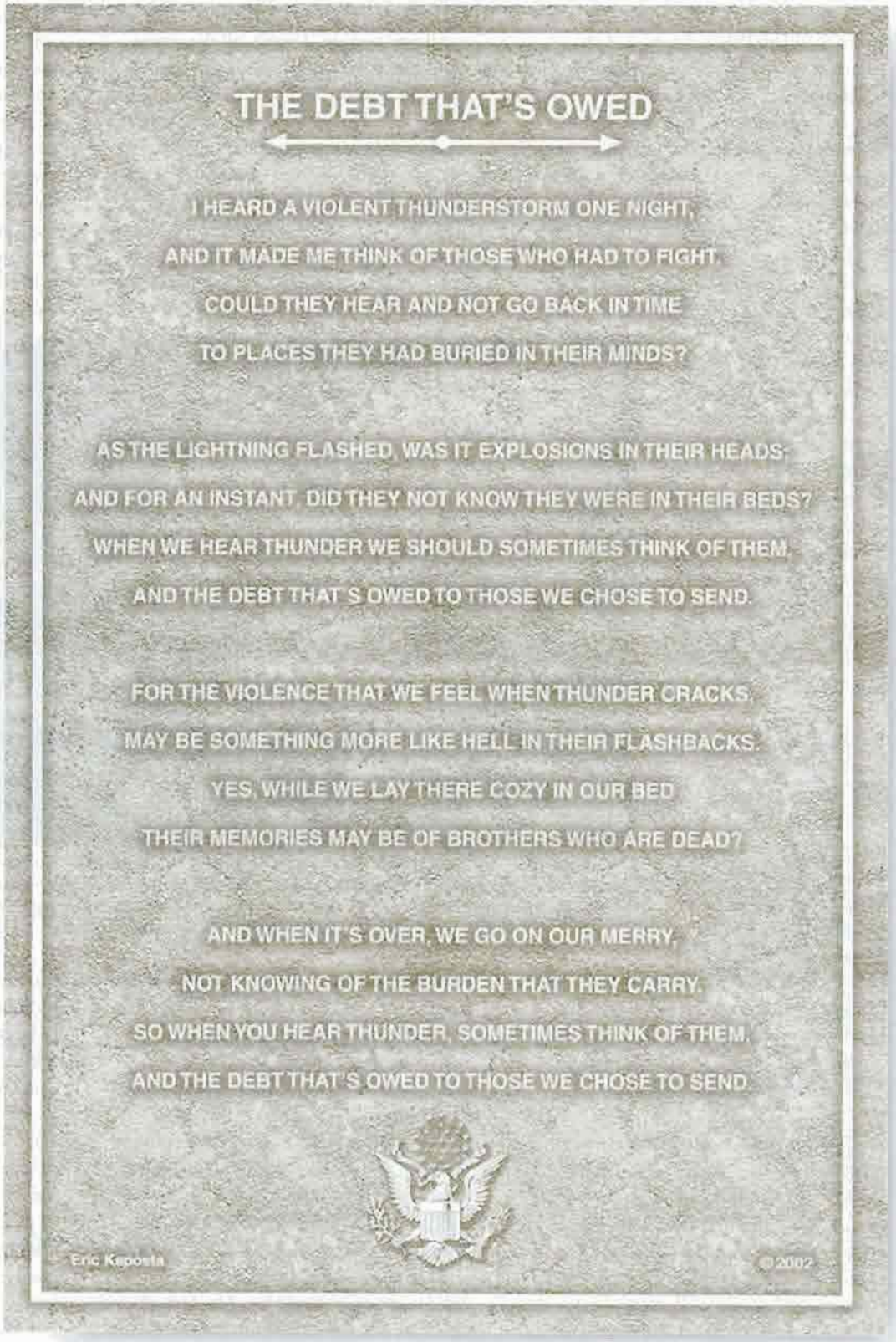
ERIC KAPOSTA, the author of the poem "The Debt That's Owed," is a Houstonian whose artistic journey has led him through many disciplines of art. He is known chiefly for his sculptural work, which include the Harris County War Memorial Eagle at Bear Creek Park, the Blacksmith sculpture at Minute Maid Field, and the Cowboy Cook in the collection of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo at Reliant Park. Eric is also a painter, designer, singer, musician, and is now adding poetry to his interests. "The Debt That's Owed" came about as a result of a storm that came through Houston in his neighborhood of tall trees. The intensity of the thunder and lightning, which could have sent a tree cutting a deadly swath through his house, made him focus on the terror one must feel in combat.

"At any time a round could find a fox hole or an aircraft or a ship and you would not be able to do anything about it, except pray your number will not be up. In the middle of the night during the storm, I wrote the key phrase and the next morning the rest of the poem flowed out as if it had a life of its own. I feel compelled to get this message out and I don't think it could be any timelier. With the country unified in acknowledging the sacrifice of our military, maybe this poem will strike a chord and remind people that for many, the war is never completely over."



Memorials and Memories

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I had to ride the bus to San Antonio. Luckily, when I got there, I found a room in a private home with Mr. and Mrs. K.M. Bass. She was a nurse. She was not working. He was retired. I got a room for $18 a month. She got me a job in a local cleaners measuring clothes, so I could make a little bit of money. We got married in her house in San Antonio, with a reception and everything. It was the people in her house and friends of hers, next-door neighbors or whatever. She was real nice, just one of those special people.

We went from there to Houston, where he got his wings at Ellington Field. I lived on a porch in Houston because places were hard to get. I have forgotten the address but it was in Houston, not at Ellington Field. The owner rented out this whole house and I rented out that porch. It was cold, cold, cold! [This was in January, February, and March of 1943.] I mean, it was a screened porch. And I only had one outfit. I had to wear that outfit every day and wash it at night because I had no washing machine.

I got me a job at Ellington Field working in a plant that built primary training planes [PT-19s] for girls. They had a crash there while I was there, too. One of the girls got killed. I guess they were in the WAACs [Women's Army Auxiliary Corps]. I had to get up at five o'clock in the morning and go to the boarding house across the street to eat, in a boarding house with about eighteen men. Then, take a bus and go to the airport, do my job. I was a parts girl, where we had a little board and there were twelve lights. And when those bulbs flashed, I would go to that department and ask them what they wanted. So, I would save them time and stuff. And I worked there for about one month or more, I guess.

Bob [who lived on the base] did come and visit me while I was there. He would just come when he could. We did not do much of anything. Had enough trouble just trying to get to see each other.

We stayed at the Rice Hotel the night he got his wings. It was real nice.

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From there we went to Columbia, South Carolina, where he completed his training. All I know is I got pregnant there. He used to come home every day there.

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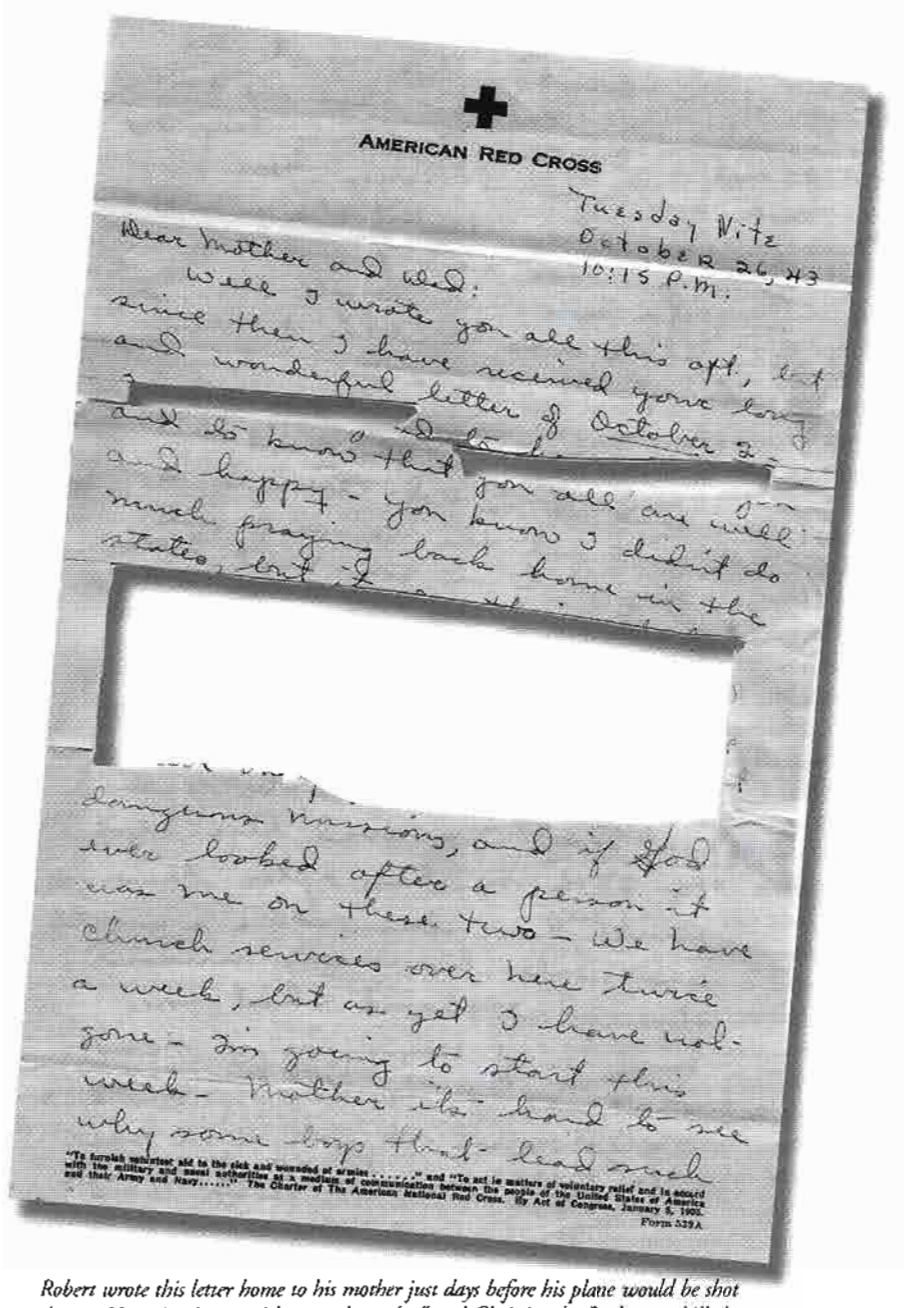

AMERICAN RED CROSS

Tuesday Nite
October 26, '43
10:15 P.M.

Dear Mother and Dad:

Well I wrote you all this afternoon, but since then I have received your long and wonderful letter of October 2- and do know that you all are well and happy. You know I didn't do much praying back home in the States, but I [illegible] dangerous missions, and if God ever looked after a person it was me on these two. We have church services over here twice a week, but as yet I have not gone. I'm going to start this week. Mother also had to see why some boy that had such

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Form 529A

Robert wrote this letter home to his mother just days before his plane would be shot down. He writes in astonishment about the "good Christian boy" who was killed on his previous mission. On his next mission, he would be among those who would not come home.

I do not remember the details of when and how he left for his overseas duty. I stayed behind. I went to DeLand and stayed with my mother. I had two smaller sisters. My two brothers had already gone into the service. We met in June 1942. We were married in December, and he left for overseas duty in August 1943."

From this point, the letters and articles in a scrapbook put together by Muddie, Robert's mother, take up her son's story.[6] A letter home from a troop train passing through Texarkana, Texas, fills in the story of Robert's last days with his wife. "We had a wonderful time together the last few days in Columbia. We stayed at the Columbia Hotel and had our meals in our room, and they were really good." In Columbia, Robert boarded "the dirtiest troop train ever" on August 21, 1943, and traveled across country. After a brief visit to Los Angeles and a pleasant short stay at Fort Hamilton, California, he sailed to Australia, "the oddest place you could possibly imagine." He finally arrived on September 26 at an air force base near Buna in New Guinea, where he began service with the Third Bomber Group, Eighth Attack Squadron, Fifth Army Air Corps.

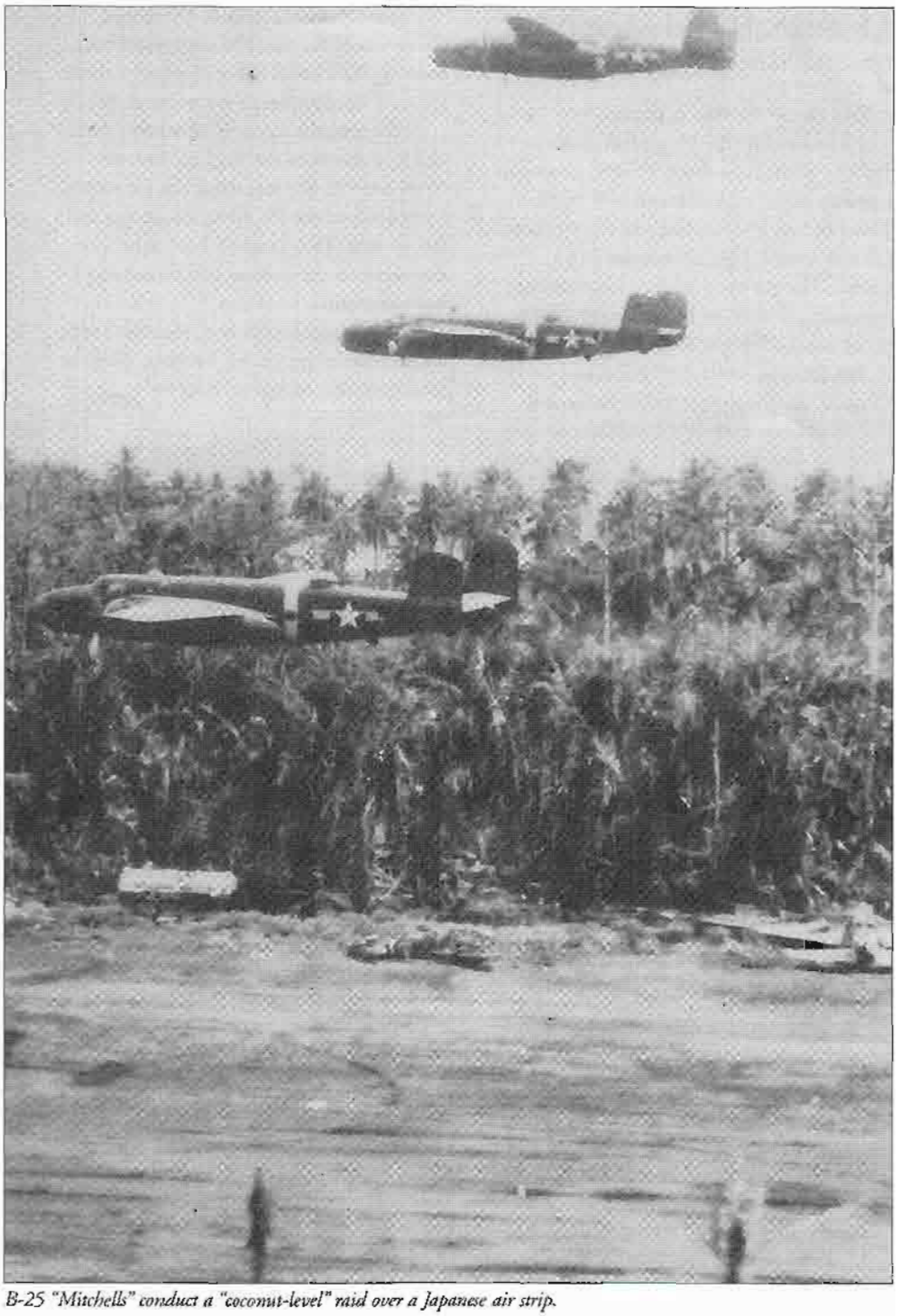
He described his living quarters as follows: "I live [with another officer] in a hut. The hut is made of small trees cut in half and nailed together. It is built on stilts about four feet off of the ground." From there he wrote home regularly, sending v-mails that arrived in Orlando via New York City two to three weeks after they were written or airmail letters that came through San Francisco and arrived in about ten days.

The food was not good. Robert reported to his mom that he had lost fifteen pounds during his first three weeks at the base, and encouraged her to send packages of food. He also complained, "the bugs here eat me up." It was difficult to write letters and "slap them" at the same time. Already by October 11, he had flown two missions that "were not bad at all." In a buoyant spirit, he observed that at that pace he would quickly accumulate the fifty missions needed to return home.

His last three letters home are heart wrenching. He wrote these airmail letters in the last week of October, and they reached Orlando after he had been killed in action. The first, dated October 23, is almost cheerful. He now has three combat missions, leaving "only 47 to go." He writes with excitement about a seven-day leave in Sydney that he will receive after three months of service.

His tone changed in a letter written during the afternoon of October 26. He now has five combat missions, and reveals that the sixth will be "very, very soon. You all have read about all that we have done, and by the time you get this will have heard of a lot more. Things are really buzzing here now and it looks like I might get home sooner than expected." He admits that the last two missions have been "action itself," and reports that he is "dead tired as I've been up since 4:30 and flying all morning."

Yet despite his weariness, he wrote one final letter home later that night. This last



B-25 "Mitchells" conduct a "coconut-level" raid over a Japanese air strip.

Memorials and Memories

continued from page 7

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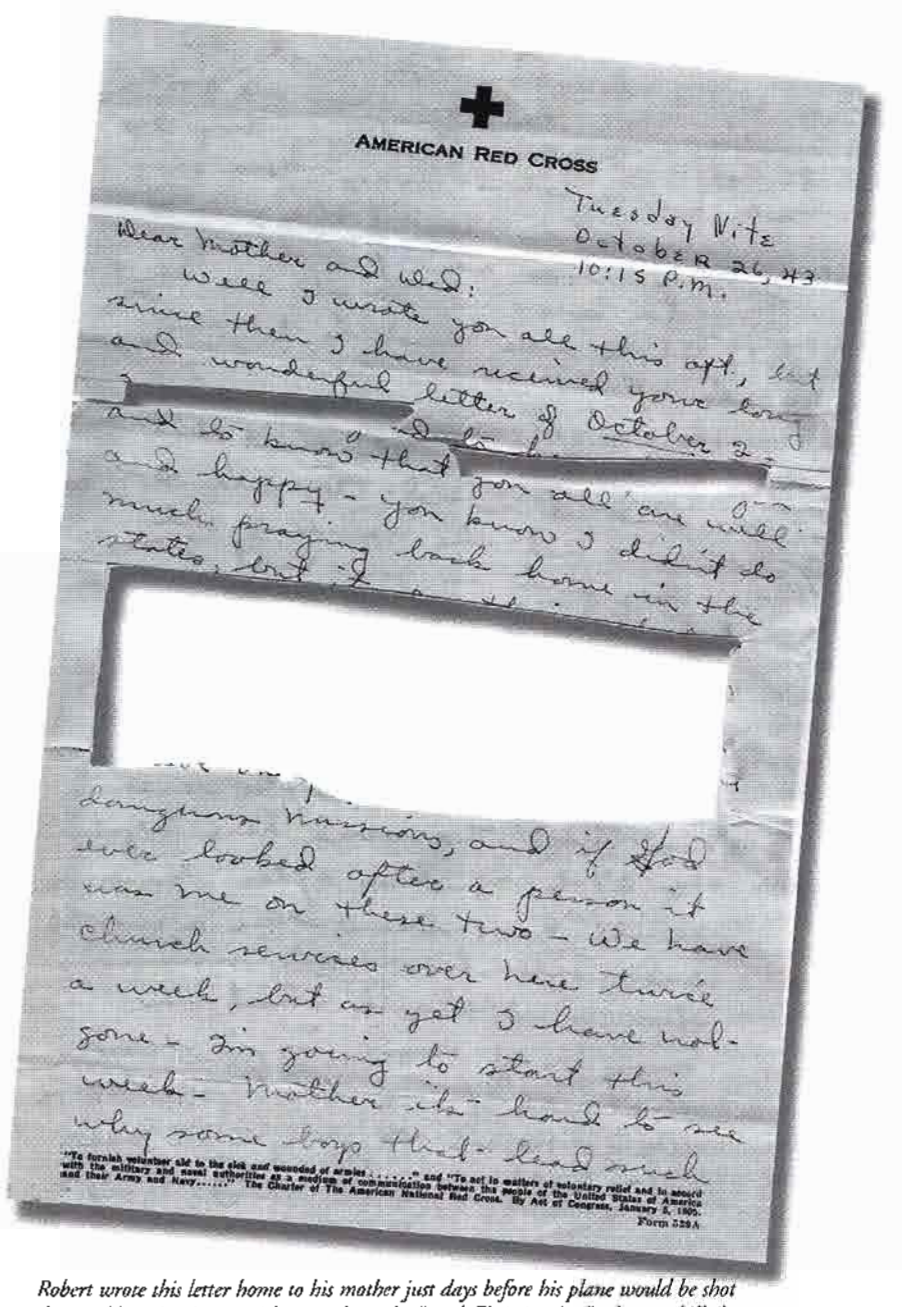

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communication with his parents arrived in Orlando the week after his death. He obviously is on edge after his most recent combat missions. Parts of the letter are literally cut out, presumably by a censor, but the passages that remain are haunting. After thanking his parents for their "wonderful letter of October 2," he reveals a troubled mind: "You know I didn't do much praying back home [and then a segment is excised with only the words "dangerous mission" remaining], "and if God ever looked after a person it was me on these two [missions]. We have church services over here twice a week, but as yet I have not gone—I'm going to start this week. Mother, it's hard to see why some boys that lead such a clean Christian life must die in this war, but I've seen one of the finest and cleanest living boys I've ever known shot down. His ship blew up when it hit the ground. And yet God saw fit to save me."

Clippings in his mother's scrapbook tell the story of his sixth and final mission. As part of the American push back toward the Philippines, the Fifth Air Force mounted a massive raid on Simpson Harbor at Rabaul, New Britain, a major supply base for Japanese forces throughout the region. In what one article described as "a second Pearl Harbor," more than 300 aircraft—including B-25 ["Mitchells"] and B-24 bombers and P-38 fighters—swept over Rabaul, inflicting massive losses on Japanese shipping and aircrafts. The raid helped turn the tide of war in this region, since the Japanese never again could make full use of this excellent natural harbor.

A pamphlet later published by the Fifth Air Force summarized the results of the attack. In twelve minutes of fighting, the Fifth Air Force destroyed a reported 85 enemy aircraft and over 100,000 tons of enemy shipping. "This was accomplished with the loss of nine American bombers and ten American fighters." The impact of the raid on American morale was "incalculable: the aggressor was once again given a taste of barbed American steel, was once again shown how our determination, courage, and singleness of purpose have made us the great nation that we are." The account concludes, "Never in the long history of warfare has so much destruction been wrought upon the forces of a belligerent nation so swiftly and at such little cost to the victor." The back page lists the human cost in a "roll of honor" that includes the names of seven flyers known to have been killed in action; third on the list is "Second Lieutenant Robert E. Murphy."

The notification of his death came first to his parents, since their names and address were on his permanent record. His mother then called her daughter-in-law's home. Virgie's mom answered, and when Virgie saw the expression on her mom's face, she knew that bad news had come. Fearing the worse, she asked her mom, "Please, tell me the truth." The truth changed forever the life of the pregnant 19-year-old widow.

Muddie took the news very hard. She exhausted every means she could imagine to find someone who could give her hope that somehow her son had survived. Her scrapbook contains one article about three members of a downed American bomber crew who were rescued after living ten months in the jungles of the Japanese-occupied island of New Britain, where her son had been shot down. But in the scrapbook also are three letters with first-hand descriptions of the battle over Rabaul on November 2 that left little room for hope.

These accounts told her that her son had flown that day with Major Raymond Wilkins, "one of the aces of the southwest Pacific." Robert had replaced a co-pilot who was on leave in Australia [and who himself died in battle seven months later]. Leading a squadron of Mitchells in the dramatic "coconut tree-level" or "mast-level" assault developed to take advantage of the B-25s lightning speed, Robert's plane attacked and hit a destroyer and several other ships while under fire from anti-aircraft guns. The man who shared a hut with Robert reported, "Just as their plane came into the harbor, they made a left turn to go over a cruiser. As they did, their right wing was blown off and the plane burst into flames, crashing into the water." One other pilot who saw the crash said simply, "He died a real hero," a conclusion seconded by the award of a Medal of Honor for Major Wilkins and a Silver Star for Second Lieutenant Murphy.

One final response to Muddie's inquiries bluntly removed any doubt that her son had been killed in action over Rabaul: "Several of the pilots and the gunners in the Squadron saw the crash and there were no survivors due to the violence of the impact and the fact that the plane landed on its back, thus barring the use of escape hatches." The writer noted, "it may seem rather heartless of me to present the facts so baldly, but it is my sincere belief that the knowledge that he is dead is to be preferred over the suspense of wondering hopefully if Robert will ever come back." The concluding paragraph offered solace: "I wish there was something I could say or do to aid and comfort you and his wife. I can only hope that Robert's child will somehow fill the absent place in both of your hearts and will grow up to be proud of having a father who gave his life for his country."

Virgie recalls that she "held up pretty good. They were afraid that if they told me the truth, I would break down or something, but I knew I had to hold up. And so, I held up until Robert, Jr., was born and then I really let it out. I mean, kind of let go more."

Her son grew up surrounded by people who kept the memory of his father alive. Virgie believed that "you start when they are little. You do not hold anything back and you tell them the truth." She also tried to keep him in contact with his father's family. "I used to let him go on the train [to Orlando] by himself with the conductor when he was three and four years old, and Muddie would meet him over at the other end." This was partly for her son's sake, but also for her mother-in-law:

"I took him over there all the time because I had two brothers in the service and my mother, I could see what she was going through. I am so glad I did what I did. Muddie was very religious, very religious, and she depended on that religion. But I do not care—no one knows what it is to lose a child until you have lost one." She continued this after she remarried, three years after Robert's death, and even after her new family later moved to Texas.

Her son Robert [Bob] E. Murphy, Jr., now 61, lives in Beaumont, Texas, where he owns Industrial Power & Rubber, an industrial supply company. Throughout his life, he has carried the memory of a father he never knew.

"Well, I really do not know how my dad's death may have affected my life. I have often thought about what my life would have been like had he lived but, I mean, you just have to take the good with the bad and this was the bad.

From childhood, I was acquainted with his life by not only my mother but also his parents, who I visited with quite often. I

lived with my grandfather my senior year of high school, along with my aunt Catherine, my dad's sister. So, I got to know a whole lot more about him in conversations with them and also with my uncle, his brother Bill, who was also a pilot in World War II in the European theater. Everybody spoke highly of him, just as I had expected.

My grandmother died at 66 in 1956, I believe, when I was about 12 years old. So, I knew her as a child but really not as an adult. My grandfather, of course, I knew well. As a matter of fact, he passed away while I was in basic training. So, I did not even get to go to the funeral. I had become pretty close to him, but he did not talk much about my dad. Like I say, my aunt filled in some of the gaps, but she was not privy to everything that he did. And my uncle, I knew him pretty well, so it was not like I did not have people around me or anything to keep me filled in and offer tidbits of their memories and some of the times that they had together.

Most of the answers I got to some of the questions I had were from Aunt Catherine. She and I were very close and we talked all the time prior to her death in 1989. Things like the fact that my dad had his private pilot's license when he was 19. So, he was interested in flying at a pretty early age, and the Air Force was kind of a natural for him. And I did have some records where he was playing, the old 45 make-it-yourself type records. That, and these collections of scrapbooks and photographs. She let me know just how much fun they had together as a family. They all liked to sing; they liked music. And so, I guess that is how my dad got involved in jazz. But all in all, I had a pretty good feel of the lifestyle that he had prior to the military and was comforted by the fact that his family was pretty unified.

You had asked my mother a while ago what she thought he would have done had he come back from the war. My grandfather was a criminal courts judge. He had been that for I do not know how long, and was proud of that. They called him county solicitor there, which is the same as a DA here in Texas. He did that for about fifteen years and then ran for judge and was elected and had a civil practice on the side. And Uncle Bill later joined him after he got out of the service. He went back to school, got his law degree at University of Florida, and they formed a partnership. So, I assume that my dad probably would have, if he had wanted to pursue that profession, he would have joined the two of them. Or since he was a jazz player, he might have started his own band. You can only speculate at this point.

I think about him all the time. I mean, not every day maybe necessarily like mother does, but it is hard to envision what it would have been like growing up with him. I know it would have been different. I had a stepfather who brought me up probably as good as most kids under the same circumstances. Mother has always been as good a mother to me as she would have been whether she was with him, my real dad, or my stepdad. So, I mean, I have got nothing but love and appreciation for the way she raised me. Beyond that, like I say, I think about him periodically, but it is something that we just have to live with.

Some of the mementos I have of my dad I got after my aunt passed away and my grandfather passed away, from the Murphy family. And some of it, I got from mother. She has given me most of the stuff. And we have kind of a memorial at home for him. We have a picture of him and a picture and some articles and things of that nature, along with the Murphy family in general. So, he is well remembered at home. And I named my two sons Robert and William after my dad and his brother."

One of his keepsakes is the Silver Star posthumously awarded to his father. Virgie remembers the ceremony: "Yes, there was a ceremony [in January 1945] to award the Silver Star in Orlando. Muddie did not want to go, so I had to go with Robert [her son, Bob, who was then 13-months-old]. I had it pinned on Robert. A soldier carried a chair behind me all the way, because I was carrying Robert during the ceremony. So, if I wanted to sit down, I could sit down. It was a huge ceremony. It was a big one. There were a lot of people out there. I do not know how many people." She continues: "I think he would have been a wonderful father. Oh, he wanted that baby so badly."

The remainder of our interview follows:
Joe Pratt: Does the memory of your first husband still have the power to make you really sad, kind of like when you first heard about the death?
Virgie Rowland: Yes. Especially if I see anything violent on TV. I do not like to watch any kind of war.

JP: You said earlier that you had a chance to go to the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, the memorial to all American soldiers killed in Pacific wars that sits in the hills above Honolulu against the backdrop of a sweeping view of the ocean.
VR: Yes, I went in about 1979. I also went on the boat ride to the *Arizona*, and all of that down below. My brother went to Manila and saw a memorial there that had Robert's name on it.

JP: Did going to that beautiful cemetery and memorial above Honolulu make you feel any better about all this? Was that a pleasant thing to do or was it painful?
VR: It was more pleasure than pain, to think, you know, that they can remember him, that they are not all forgotten.

JP: Before we turned on the tape, you said that not a day goes by that you do not think of Bob, your husband? Has that been true ever since his death?
VR: Yes. Just memories of different places we had been and things we had done more than sixty years ago.

JP: What is your favorite memory of him, the one you like best to remember?
VR: [Her face brightens as she answers.] Us sitting at the bandstand at the Martinique. ✯

Virgie and Robert at the beach in Orlando. A fond memory that she recalls to this very day.

Cruiser *Houston*

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captain. He wrote an important book in 1984 about the cruiser.

Captain Albert H. Rooks arrived on August 30, 1941, to relieve Captain Oldendorf. In October, *Houston* went into the shipyard at Cavite for emergency repairs and installation of four new anti-aircraft guns. The ship took on a capacity load of fuel and ammunition. On November 28, Admiral Hart moved his flag ashore and ordered Captain Rooks to take *Houston* to sea as quickly as possible. Then the admiral dispersed his small fleet to makeshift ports in remote locations among the chain of Philippine Islands. *Houston* was dispatched to Iloilo on the south coast of Panay Island.[9]

DAY OF INFAMY– WAR STRIKES AMERICA

Sunday, December 7, 1941. The Japanese sneak attack on the U.S. Pacific fleet, peacefully anchored in the bosom of the great Pearl Harbor, crippled America's strength in the Pacific. Swiftly, the Empire of Japan moved to exploit its success. Guam fell. A tiny force of Marines on Wake Island held out until December 23. Hong Kong surrendered on December 25. Manila was captured after a few days on January 2, 1942. The invincible British fortress of Singapore surrendered on February 15.

The Allies were reduced to out-numbered, out-gunned rear guard tactics. General Douglas MacArthur retreated to Bataan and Corregidor. The overall strategy was to hold the line where possible, for as long as possible, buying time for the industrial might of arsenal America to train and arm a new fighting force to roll back the invaders.

This photo was taken through the sight of an Allied gun, just days before the Battle of Sunda Strait. It is the last known photo taken of the USS Houston *before its sinking on March 1, 1942.*

Gift of Betty Batchelor Miles

On the day after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, *Houston* was rushing preparations to get under way, out of the restricting harbor at Iloilo, when a message was received ordering the ship to await the arrival of Rear Admiral William A. Glassford, Jr., Commander of Task Force Five. Waiting was anxious. Lookouts scanned the sky for Japanese bombers. Finally, late in the afternoon, a PBY flying boat brought in the admiral and his staff. They were hastily transferred to the *Houston*, and she wasted no time in speeding out to the relative safety of the open sea.

Lookouts reported anti-aircraft bursts over Iloilo, then a ship on fire in the harbor. This Japanese air raid was directed at the *Houston*, but missed her by about an hour. Still, Radio Tokyo reported that night that the heavy cruiser *Houston* had been sunk in Iloilo Harbor.

During the remainder of December and most of January, *Houston* operated from Darwin, Australia, and Surabaja, on the northeast coast of Java. This duty consisted mainly of convoying tankers and troopships, offering protection from enemy submarines and aircraft.

BATTLE STATIONS! THE FLORES SEA

Since December 10, when Japanese aircraft sank the vaunted British battleship *Prince of Wales* and the battle cruiser HMS *Repulse*, Allied naval power in Southeast Asia was not a significant threat to Japan. Yet when most of the remaining vessels were combined into a strike force under the command of Rear Admiral Karel Doorman of the Dutch Navy, they represented a serious potential for disrupting Japanese invasion strategy.

Admiral Doorman was under orders to attack the enemy. On February 4, 1942, he gathered a strike force and set out to engage a Japanese invasion fleet. Steaming near Bali in the Flores Sea, the Allied ships were attacked by waves of Mitsubishi bombers. When the bombs began to fall, the ships maneuvered independently, sending up a wall of anti-aircraft fire. The light cruiser USS *Marblehead* was hit by two bombs and disabled. *Houston*, seeking to shield *Marblehead*, was hit on the after turret. The three-gun turret was blown apart and engulfed by fire. Forty-eight sailors were killed.

The strike force limped into Tjilatjap harbor in Java. Once again Tokyo Radio announced that the cruiser *Houston* had been sunk. So many reports told of the sinking of this ship that the *Houston* gained the nickname— "The Galloping Ghost of the Java Coast."[10]

Touring Houston's History
Visit the two USS *Houston* memorials in downtown...

Starting at Allen's Landing at the north end of downtown on Buffalo Bayou, tour participants will alternate between riding the Metro light rail and walking up the rejuvenated Main Street. They will see particular places of interest along Main Street and in the heart of downtown. Featured on the tour are stops at the two USS *Houston* memorials in downtown. The first is located outside the Reliant Energy building on Main Street, once the site of the Loews movie house, where in May 1942, 1,000 men volunteered to enlist as the crew for the replacement USS *Houston*, which had been sunk in March of that year. The second memorial, located on the grounds of Houston's Heritage Society, commemorates the sailors lost on the original USS *Houston*. Topping the monument is the original ship's bell, which was recovered from the wreckage after World War II.

For more information or to schedule a tour, call 713-864-3875, or email Andrew Groocock at anelgro@earthlink.net.

On Memorial Day 1942, nearly 150,000 Houstonians filled Main Street downtown to watch as 1,000 "Houston Volunteers" were sworn into duty in the U.S. Navy.
Courtesy Houston Photographic and Architectural Foundation Trust

THE BATTLE OF THE JAVA SEA

Beginning about February 15, *Houston* came under air attack almost daily. Tokyo reported again that she had been sunk. Damaged and battle-weary, "The Galloping Ghost of the Java Coast" continued to carry out her assigned missions.

Receiving information that a major Japanese invasion force was approaching Java, Admiral Doorman gathered his ships and steamed out of the Surabaja harbor, resolved to intercept and engage the enemy fleet. The Allied flotilla steamed in line with Admiral Doorman in his Dutch light cruiser *DeRuyter* in the lead, followed by the British heavy cruiser HMS *Exeter*, then *Houston*, the Australian light cruiser *Perth*, the Dutch light cruiser *Java*, and a screen of nine American, British, and Dutch destroyers.

The Battle of the Java Sea was opened when two Japanese heavy cruisers came over the horizon and began firing broadsides at *Exeter* and *Houston*. These fell short, and the Allied cruisers held their fire until the two fleets closed. Then the big guns of *Exeter* and *Houston* boomed a response of accurate salvos.

Two Japanese light cruisers and thirteen destroyers joined the battle. In a salvo-to-salvo slugfest, *Houston* damaged one of the enemy heavy cruisers, forcing it to retire from the battle. *Exeter* sustained severe damage and was ordered to return to port. Allied destroyers laid a smokescreen around *Exeter* to protect her. Japanese destroyers laid smokescreens to veil their movements as they maneuvered to launch torpedo attacks. Using their newly-developed "long lance" torpedoes, the Japanese gained the upper hand. The Dutch light cruisers *DeRuyter* and *Java* were blown out of the water by these torpedoes. Admiral Doorman went down with his ship. Before losing contact, the admiral ordered *Perth* and *Houston* to retire from the engagement.

Captain Hector M.L. Waller of the *Perth* was the senior officer present. He ordered *Perth* and *Houston* to steam north along the north coast of Java. Aerial reconnaissance reported that the Sunda Strait was clear of enemy vessels. This appeared to offer the two Allied ships an escape route to the Indian Ocean, and thence to Australia.[11]

THE BATTLE OF SUNDA STRAIT

About midnight on February 28, just as it seemed escape was in their hands, *Perth* and *Houston* ran right into a Japanese fleet staging a full-scale invasion of the Island of Java. Some sixty troop transports were screened by an aircraft carrier, seven cruisers, and twenty destroyers. Exchanging gunfire with ships on all sides and frantically dodging torpedoes, *Perth* and *Houston* surged at flank speed into the Sunda Strait. In the darkness and confusion of the melee, *Houston* lost sight of *Perth*. When she was sighted again, it was obvious that *Perth* was dead in the water and sinking.

Houston continued alone, surrounded by enemy destroyers, evading killer torpe-

does by using her speed and maneuverability to maximum advantage. Just after midnight, a torpedo struck the port beam, destroying the after engine room, cutting the cruiser's speed. Then a second torpedo hit the starboard side. Number 2 turret took a direct hit and blew up. Another torpedo exploded in the ship as she lost way and became a stationary target.

With enemy destroyers circling *Houston* and firing at point blank range, Captain Rooks ordered the bugler to sound "abandon ship." As he descended from the signal bridge, Captain Rooks was killed by a shell that exploded nearby. Shells and torpedoes pounded the valiant *Houston* until she sank beneath the sea. Even then, the destroyers and small vessels machine-gunned sailors in the sea.

Of the 1100-man crew of the *Houston*, only 368 survived the sinking. These men were captured by the Japanese and became prisoners of war until their liberation in September 1945. Their treatment was inhumane. They were subjected to torture, disease, and starvation. Seventy-nine died in captivity.

Many of the POWs from the *Houston* were forced to labor on the infamous Burma-Siam railroad. This was the railroad portrayed in the movie *Bridge on the River Kwai*.[12]

MEMORIAL DAY 1942

May of 1942 was a bleak time in America. Gasoline and other necessities were rationed. Nazi submarines lined our east coast, covering the beaches with debris and tar balls from tankers that dared to supply the industrial northeast. There were reports of German submarines in the Gulf. On April 9, American and Filipino forces on the Bataan Peninsula surrendered. Corregidor, "the Gibraltar of the East," fell to the Japanese on May 6. Australians were frantically fortifying a line across the interior for a last ditch stand.

Although the circumstances were unknown, the cruiser *Houston* was undoubtedly lost. City leaders launched a War Bond drive to raise money to pay for the building of another cruiser *Houston*. Under the leadership of oilman Claud B. Hamill and his wife Marie, this bond drive was unusually successful.

At the same time, a recruiting campaign began to replace the sailors lost when the *Houston* was sunk. All of this patriotic activity reached a climax on Memorial Day, 1942.

Main Street was closed to traffic for several blocks on either side of the Loew's State Theater. A speakers' stand and a large wooden replica of the *Houston* were erected in front of the Loew's and Metropolitan Theaters. Some 150,000 Houstonians filled the street and sidewalks and hung out of the windows of downtown buildings.

A Navy honor guard marched up, as ranks of young Texans formed for a mass swearing-in ceremony. One thousand young men left their homes and families to serve in the Navy. One of these youths was B. G. "Pappy" Bond, who later became Houston Chief of Police in 1976. Eddie Eichler, who worked for Conoco for 27 years, and Walter R. Stovall, who had a 42-year career with FMC Technologies were among the volunteers.

Admiral William Glassford, who had served in the Philippines when the cruiser *Houston* was flagship of the Asiatic Fleet, gave a brief speech. Then he administered the oath to the 1,000 "Houston Volunteers" and welcomed them into the Navy.

Mayor Neal Pickett spoke and read a stirring telegram from President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The President wrote, "...there will be another USS *Houston*, and yet another USS *Houston*, if that should become necessary, and still another USS *Houston*, as long as American ideals are in jeopardy."

Then the "Houston Volunteers," plus 600 additional volunteers who joined too late to be a part of the ceremony, were marched to Union Station where five special trains waited to carry the men to Naval bases.[13]

Main Street Monument to the 1,000 "Houston Volunteers"

MAIN STREET MONUMENT

A bronze plaque was set in the sidewalk to commemorate the "Houston Volunteers." It reads: "On this site on May 30, 1942, 1,000 Houston volunteers took the oath of service in the United States Navy and dedicated their lives to avenging the cruiser USS *Houston* and her valiant crew lost in the Battle of the Java Sea."

In 1974, this plaque was removed from the sidewalk and mounted on a pink granite pedestal. Its location, at 1000 Main Street, has been designated a Texas Historical Site. This is now adjacent to the Main Street entrance to the Reliant Energy Building, which was built on the block previously occupied by the Lamar Hotel and the Metropolitan and Loew's State Theaters.

Among the dignitaries present at the ceremony to dedicate the monument in 1974 were Gen. Maurice Hirsch, member of the original 1927 cruiser *Houston* committee; William A. Kirkland, Executive Officer of the second cruiser *Houston* (CL-81); William A. Bernrieder, member of the original committee; Neal Pickett, wartime mayor of Houston; and Mr. And Mrs. Claud Hamill, who led the campaign to raise funds for the second cruiser *Houston*.[14]

ANOTHER CRUISER *HOUSTON* (CL-81)

The special Houston War Bond campaign led by oilman Claud B. Hamill raised $85 million. This was enough to fund the building of a second cruiser *Houston*, plus an aircraft carrier, the *San Jacinto*. Built by Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Co., the new cruiser *Houston* (CL-81) was launched on June 19, 1943. A group of twenty Houstonians attended the launching,

including Mayor and Mrs. Otis Massey and Mr. and Mrs. Claud Hamill and son Garrett. Joining them were Secretary of Commerce Jesse Jones, Texas Senator Tom Connally, Texas Governor Coke Stevenson, and various Navy officials.

Mrs. C. B. Hamill, the official sponsor of the cruiser, christened the vessel "on behalf of the people of Houston who ensured the perpetuation of a beloved American name in a great fighting ship."[15]

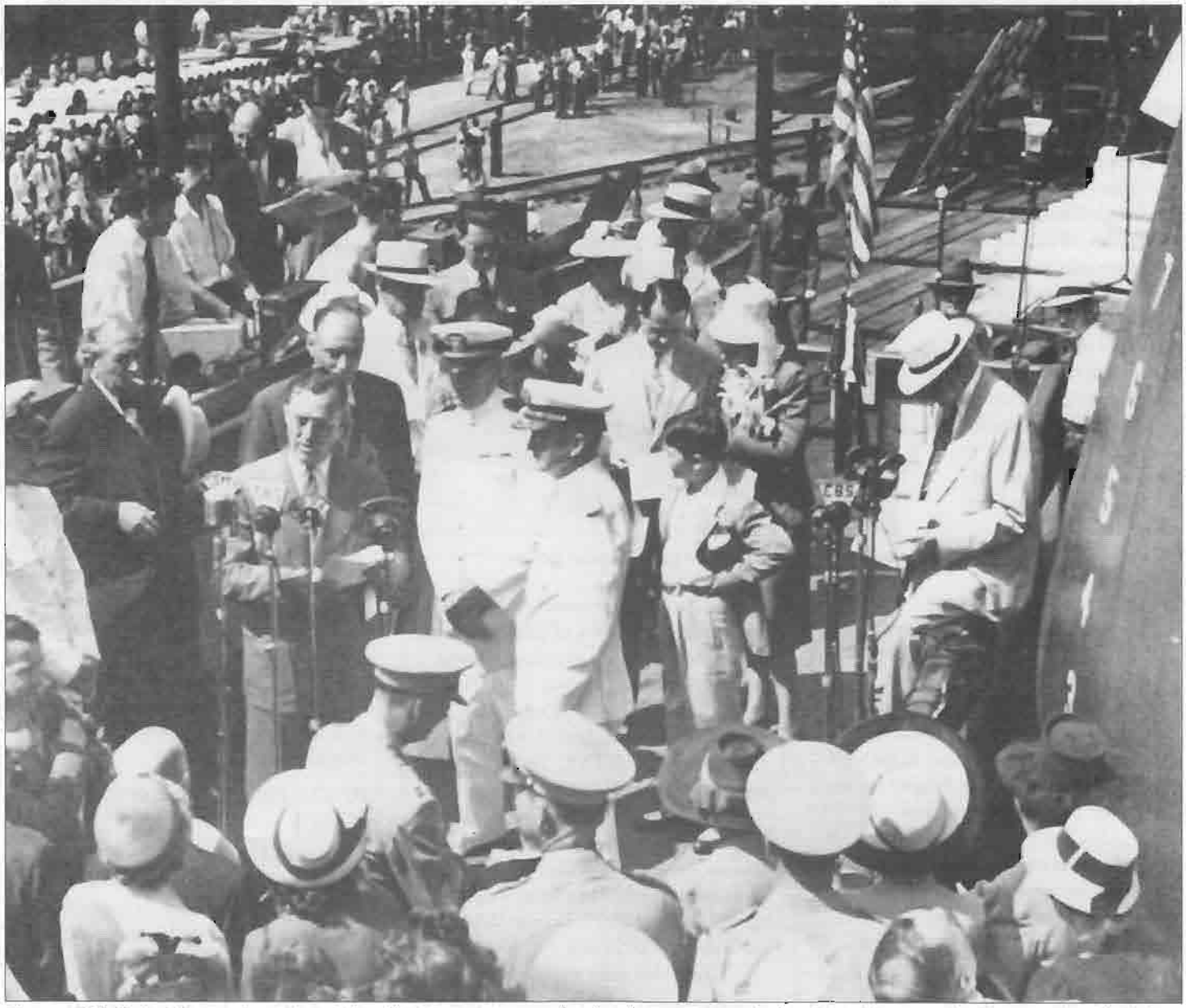
Houston was commissioned on December 20, 1943, with Captain W. W. Behrens commanding. After a shakedown cruise, she departed for duty in the Pacific on April 16, 1944. *Houston* (CL-81) joined Vice Admiral Mitscher's fast carrier task force on May 31. The task force participated in the amphibious assault of the Marianas and the decisive naval battle of the Philippine Sea.

In a subsequent battle off Formosa, *Houston* was struck by two powerful torpedoes. Temporary repairs enabled the ship to return to the U.S. for overhaul in a shipyard. World War II ended while the ship was undergoing extensive repairs. Leaving the yard, *Houston* made a series of "Goodwill Tours" in Europe and the Caribbean.[16]

The cruiser *Houston* (CL-81) was decommissioned December 15, 1947, and finally scrapped in March 1959. The next Navy vessel named "Houston" was the nuclear submarine *Houston* (SN-713). Launched on March 21, 1981, this submarine was christened by Barbara Bush, wife of then Vice President George Bush. A Navy pilot in World War II, Bush crashed in the Pacific and was rescued by a submarine.

USS *HOUSTON* (CA-30) MEMORIAL MONUMENT

A fifteen-foot obelisk of polished red granite stands in Sam Houston Park as a memorial to the cruiser *Houston* (CA-30) and to her



Texans at U.S. Cruiser Houston *Launching—Mayor Otis Massey is shown at the microphone speaking at the launching of the new cruiser,* Houston, *June 19, 1943, at Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, Newport News, Virginia. Behind him is Governor Coke Stevenson of Texas, and to the speaker's right is Senator Tom Connally of Texas. Seated on rail is Jesse Jones, Secretary of Commerce. To the left of Mr. Jones are Mr. and Mrs. Claud Hamill and in front of them, their son, Garrett.*

(Official U.S. Navy Photo) Courtesy Greater Houston Partnership

crew. The monument is capped with a shiny brass ship's bell. This bell was salvaged from the sunken cruiser by divers in the Sunda Strait between Sumatra and Java.

Captain Carl V. Ragsdale (USN, RET), Chairman of the USS *Houston* (CA-30) Foundation, led the ceremonies on November 11, 1995, when the memorial was dedicated. Captain Ragsdale introduced distinguished guests, who gave brief comments about the occasion. Houston Mayor Bob Lanier spoke, followed by Vice Admiral David B. Robinson, Commander Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet. Next, representatives of the Allies involved in the Battle of the Java Sea were introduced and spoke. They were Consul General Graham A. McHugh of Australia, Consul General Helmut N. Buisman of The Netherlands, and Consul General Peter J. Bacon of the United Kingdom.

Historian and television personality Ron Stone gave the principal address, recounting the heroic World War II service of the cruiser *Houston* in the Battle of the Java Sea and in the Battle of Sunda Strait. Chief Boatswain Mate Otto C. Schwarz, founder of the USS *Houston* Survivors Association, joined Mayor Lanier in unveiling the impressive monument. This monument was built under the sponsorship of the USS *Houston* (CA-30) Foundation, a project of the Naval Order of the United States, Texas Commandery.[17]

Each year the USS *Houston* Survivors Association and the Next Generation hold a ceremony at the monument in memory of the cruiser and her crew. The ceremony is held on or near the anniversary of the ship's sinking, and features speeches from representatives of the four Allied nations who fought together in the Battle of the Java Sea.

In addition to the ceremony at the obelisk held each March, there are a number of other special days throughout the year when it would be appropriate to visit the cruiser *Houston* monuments and perpetuate the memory of those young men who lost their life on this ship. Memorial Day is observed on the last Monday in May. D-Day is Monday, June 6, and Flag Day is on June 14. Independence Day, July 4, is always a good time to remember those who gave us our nation, and rallied when needed to preserve it.

Victory over Japan, V-J Day is August 15. On this day, one can do well to recall how grim our prospects appeared in the winter of 1941–42. On February 23, 1942, President Roosevelt gave a short Washington's Birthday address over national radio. He said, in part "...Speaking for the United States of America, let me say once and for all to the people of the world: We Americans have been compelled to yield ground, but we will regain it...We are daily increasing our strength. Soon, we and not our enemies, will have the offensive; we, not they, will win the final battles, and we, not they will make the final peace..."[18]

And so we did. The formal surrender was signed on September 2, 1945, appropriately on the deck of the battleship *Missouri*, because the war in the Pacific was in large part a "Navy-Marine Corps War."

If you are downtown for the parades on Veterans Day, November 11, pause a moment at the cruiser *Houston* pedestal monument on Main Street in front of the Reliant Energy Building. Remember the one thousand young men who volunteered on that spot in 1942 and the city that so strongly rallied behind them. ✯

USS Houston *Monument*

Humble Women at War

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been employed outside the home before working at the refinery. While all of the women interviewed took pride in contributing to the war effort, they stressed that they took their jobs at Baytown primarily because the pay and the working conditions were better than other jobs available to them at the time. Many of the lab workers came to Baytown not as temporary workers, but with the intention of staying on the job and making a career after the war. Many of them subsequently spent long, productive careers working for Humble.[42]

One of the problems experienced by women workers was their lack of adequate training. Given the fact that there was a need for them to be as productive as quickly as possible, the lack of training, especially in the area of safety, certainly placed them at a greater risk for failure. Women working at the Baytown refinery in May 1945 at the time of the fatal fire in the Butyl lab recalled that they "were not taught too much safety until after the fatal accident."[43]

The small number of black women workers at Humble's Baytown refinery faced conditions starkly different from those of the white women who worked in the labs. The first picture of a black woman in the *Humble Bee* during the war was in the January 8, 1942 issue, which contains a photo of an unnamed black woman identified only as a maid for the Humble Club's 1941 New Year's Eve program. The magazine included a "Colored Column" from January through March in 1942, but it contained no items about black women. Likewise, the feature article "Humble Women at War Work" in the January 1943 publication of the *Bee* made no mention of black women. The July 1944 issue had a photo of black men and women with a caption about amateur night: "The Baytown Humble Club presented all colored entertainers among employees and their families. This program featured folk music, spirituals, choral numbers and ballads by a talented group of entertainers." The third and last wartime photo of a black woman was in the July 1945 issue; it depicts the woman standing next to a stove and holding a pie. There is no article about her, but the caption of the picture described her as a recent annuitant who had worked as a maid from August 1927 to November 1933, when she became a cook at the refinery hospital until her retirement.

This limited number of photos of black women in the *Humble Bee* reminds the reader of the realities of life in the Jim Crow South, even in the midst of a major war.

Humble Refinery workers were a close-knit family. They often gathered together for picnics and other activities, a simple but important act that helped keep a sense of normalcy during the war. They still get together today.

Courtesy Mary Carlson Easley and Gary Rabalais

Black women workers at Baytown certainly did not hold jobs comparable to that of the much-heralded mythical Rosie the Riveter. Neither the participation of black women in higher paying, nontraditional jobs nor the opportunity for them to participate existed at the refinery.[44] In this era, black men in the refineries still worked almost exclusively in all-black labor gangs and black women worked primarily as cooks and cleaners. Even the imperative of a world war fought on two fronts did not bring a significant change in the status of black workers in Houston-area refineries.

This conclusion serves as a part of a broader observation about the women who worked at Humble's Baytown refinery during World War II. A look inside this giant facility suggests that the image and mythology of Rosie the Riveter has stood in the way of a more complex understanding of women in the workplace during the war. Some of the women who worked at Humble were temporary workers who chose to substitute for their husbands or for other male workers knowing that they would leave their jobs when the war ended. Others, such as those in the Butyl lab, seized opportunities created by the war boom to create careers for themselves where none had previously existed. The opportunities of others remained starkly limited by their skin color, as the historical realities of Jim Crow triumphed over the temporary realities of a world at war.

All of the women workers at Baytown confronted traditional biases against women in industrial jobs. All surmounted those biases and made important contributions to the war effort. And all had their lives changed by their experiences during the war, as did almost every one in the Houston region and the nation as a whole. ✶

Battle for the Texas Mind

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professor Clarence Ayres' lectures calling for federal government "pump priming." Rainey explained to the regent that Ayres' was presenting Keynesian, not Marxist theory. Strickland's motion died for lack of a second, not because Strickland or any other regents understood or accepted Rainey's explanation. They remained convinced that Rainey and his faculty did "not believe in our system of government" and that the president had to be removed as soon as possible before he could hire "more radicals of his stripe."[16]

Temporarily defeated by the tenure rule, the conservatives attacked three junior economics professors not protected by tenure. In March 1942, the three instructors—J. Fagg Foster, Wendell Gordon, and W. Nelson Peach— publicly criticized an anti-labor rally in Dallas, allegedly sponsored by mothers of servicemen. In reality, Karl Hoblitzelle, a Dallas millionaire movie theater magnate and client of Strickland's, was behind the whole affair. The mothers supposedly offered "every citizen an opportunity to express his statements," but the convocation focused on denouncing the forty-hour work week and the New Deal law that was encouraging it—the Fair Labor Standards Act. The professors asked Hoblitzelle for two minutes to explain and defend the law, but he refused their request. According to Hoblitzelle, the professors then became enraged and "subjected" him "to such insulting behavior, the likes of which I have never experienced."[17]

After the meeting, the professors stated to the press that the rally had been stacked with anti-labor speakers and "agitators," and thus a "fraud." Reporting that they had been denied their right of free speech and been verbally abused and "jostled" by the crowd, they argued that the purpose of the meeting was "to hinder our National war effort and that the protest [the meeting] was either

Ex-servicemen demonstrated as well, marching with "We Want Rainey" signs in 1944.
Photograph by Stanley Depwe, Courtesy Prints and Photographs Collection, Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin

malicious or came from ignorance [about the law's intent]." After the protest, Federal District Judge T. Whitfield Davidson complained to Bullington about the instructors. "It seems we have a branch of our University swinging away from true economics [laissez faire capitalism] and routing our children into the camp of state socialism." He demanded a purge of the Economics Department and Bullington was happy to help promote such an effort.[18]

Rainey rose to the defense of the fired instructors, whom the regents wanted to have sign a statement admitting that "they had done wrong" and that their remarks to the press had "embarrassed and brought discredit upon the University of Texas." The regents pressed Rainey to "encourage" the instructors to sign the prepared statement if they hoped to be "retained." Rainey refused to even consider such "coercion," because "the board wanted those men to sign an abject and humiliating apology." Led by J. Fagg Foster, the professors declared that they would not sign any statement, regardless of what it said, and if given the opportunity to speak out against such "censorship," "they would gladly do it all over again."

Such "impertinence" infuriated the regents, who believed Rainey was behind the professors' stand. After a token hearing and over Rainey's heated objections, the regents dismissed Peach, Gordon, and Foster. News of their firing created an "anger on the campus [that] broke out like a fire in a Kansas wheatfield."[19]

The firings also attracted the attention of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), which investigated the controversy and concluded that, "the action of the board of regents of the university in terminating their [the three professors'] services constituted a violation of the principles of good academic practice concerning academic freedom generally observed in accordance with their rights and privileges as teachers and as citizens." From this point on, the AAUP kept a watchful eye on the events unfolding on the UT campus.[20]

From the summer of 1942 until Rainey's firing in the fall of 1944, the president fought a running battle with the regents to protect the faculty and preserve his own job. The issues ranged from censorship and the banning of certain books, like John Dos Passos's acclaimed, Pulitzer-prize winning novel, *U.S.A.*, for being obscene and subversive; to refusing grants for a number of faculty research projects; to attacks on faculty tenure rules, which forced Rainey to revise them so the regents could dispense with giving an accused professor a hearing and fire him at will.

Personal vindictiveness also played a role, as Lutcher Stark, a board member since 1919, demanded that Rainey fire the famed naturalist, Roy Bedichek, and two others who were in charge of the university's high school interscholastic league. Stark did not like a rule Bedichek favored, which barred Stark's two sons from further high school competition. The rule forbade any student/athlete over the age of nineteen from playing sports. Bedichek later told the senate investigating committee as well as the press, that Stark had approached him in a sporting goods store and told him that "I'm going to clean you out; I gave you your chance and President Rainey too."[21]

"Academic Freedom is Dead" cried protestors as they marched through the streets of Austin.
Photograph by Neal Douglass, Courtesy Prints and Photographs Collection, Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin

On the key issue of tenure, Strickland told Rainey that the system allowed the faculty to operate "a self-perpetuating feudal state." Rainey countered that the removal of tenure would destroy the University of Texas by preventing the recruitment of good faculty members from other universities with sound tenure rules. Strickland responded that if that was the case, then he was in favor of abolishing tenure even more passionately because he would not want foreign, probably Yankee professors, coming to the university and spreading their communist doctrines. He was certain they could find good patriotic Texans (from smaller Texas schools that had no tenure) to teach at the university.[22]

Led by Bullington and Strickland, the ultras pushed hard to change the tenure rule, regardless of the irreparable damage it would do to the university's credibility and prestige. To that end, Bullington and his supporters argued that the present tenure rule was unconstitutional because the state constitution vested all power in the Board of Regents, including the right to hire and fire faculty, authority presently under faculty and administrative auspices. Bullington and Strickland persuaded the other board members to let state attorney general Gerald Mann determine the rule's legality. Much to their dismay, Mann declared the rule constitutional and further stipulated that no changes were needed. Despite Mann's official rendering, Bullington and Strickland persisted by convincing a committee of old guard faculty members to drastically revise and weaken tenure rules. As Hart Stilwell observed, tenure had been "kicked out" of all the rest of Texas' major universities by the same "cabal" of businessmen/regents and thus UT "was the last bulwark of academic freedom in Texas." However, thanks to some faculties' "betrayal," UT "has become the latest victim of what seems to be a nation-wide assault to undermine our universities and what professors are allowed to say and do and think!"[23]

J.R. Parten was certain that the emasculation of the tenure rule would "spell out

two results: first, the loss of some of our best teachers and; second, serve as a positive deterrent to recruitment." J. Frank Dobie was now completely convinced that there was a politically-driven conspiracy behind the attacks on Rainey and the faculty and that "a master plan has been operating in this state to expunge liberal thinkers not only from the University of Texas but from other institutions of learning as well. . . ."[24]

The conservatives' stranglehold of the board made Rainey's presidency untenable. His clashes with the regents over academic freedom continued and intensified throughout 1944. The board majority, now chaired by a Stevenson appointee, Judge John H. Bickett, chief counsel for Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, made it clear to Rainey that the regents believed that academic freedom and tenure were used to protect subversive professors who disseminated un-American ideas and other "filth" in the classroom.

The regents then struck at Rainey personally by removing the director of public relations for the university, Arthur L. Brandon, a close friend of Rainey's who had accompanied Rainey from Bucknell. After removing Brandon as director of public relations, the regents then named him an instructor at an insultingly low salary. Rainey recognized this move as a personal affront and a blatant usurpation of his authority as president to appoint and remove administrative personnel without board interference.[25]

The final straw for Rainey occurred in September 1944, when regent D. F. Strickland went behind Rainey's back to try to solicit the support of the university's vice-president, J. Alton Burdine. Strickland's animosity toward Rainey was so intense that at least one other regent feared the judge might physically assault Rainey at a board meeting. Most disturbing to Strickland and some of the other regents was Rainey's constant out-of-state travel and "the giving of too many speeches on topics he should not be discussing." Certain that the vice-president was on "the right side" in the conflict, Strickland wanted Burdine to help the regents censor Rainey, but the vice-president flatly rebuffed "such an overture of betrayal and subterfuge." After declaring his unequivocal support for the president, Burdine immediately informed Rainey of Strickland's "most egregious request." This so outraged Rainey that he called a press conference at which he and Burdine told the press of the regent's latest escapades "to get Rainey."[26]

Press coverage of the Strickland-Burdine conversation simultaneously created a public outcry against the regents and gave the regents grounds to fire Rainey. The overwhelming majority of Texas dailies supported Rainey with stinging criticisms of the regents' meddling in university affairs and harassment of its president. Many Texans feared that the regents' heavy-handedness would undermine all that Rainey had accomplished during his tenure.

The *Mission Evening Valley Monitor* declared, "The University of Texas has never enjoyed wider academic recognition than under the administration of Dr. Rainey, despite the handicap of a predominantly hostile Board of Regents." The *San Angelo Standard-Times* found it hard to believe the regents would want to silence Rainey, for "anything which builds good will for the south's largest educational institution is good business. We are at a loss to understand why speeches, even to religious groups, would be detrimental to the University." The *Tyler Telegraph*, lauded Rainey for his "broad-mindedness and tolerance," which had helped to make UT "the leading educational institution of the state and one of the best in the nation," before admonishing the regents to stop their opposition to the president's "vision" for the school and "render him hearty cooperation."[27]

Strickland's conversation with Burdine convinced Rainey that he had to go public with all the false accusations that had been leveled at him and his faculty, and the harm they had done to the university's image and morale. Parten and other close associates urged restraint, but Rainey believed that he could show Texans that the regents were out to destroy "their university." On October 12, 1944, before an assembly of four hundred of the university's faculty and staff, Rainey dramatically rendered sixteen grievances against the regents as evidence of their "long series of restrictive actions" that sought to destroy academic freedom. The real question, Rainey argued, was "whether or not our state universities can be operated in ways that will guarantee their essential freedom from undue political interference. . . ." Yet, he somehow remained sanguine that all the tension between him and the regents could be resolved and that a fresh start was possible on the basis of "long established and well-accepted principles of university administration." He hoped a solution could be found by the next board meeting. Rainey had drawn the line. The faculty gave him a prolonged ovation and a vote of confidence with not one dissenting voice.[28]

Once again the majority of the Texas press supported Rainey's position and criticism of the regents. Throughout the state Rainey's "plain statement" as well as his "clean, competent, and inspiring" leadership, which had helped the university to "grow in educational stature," was applauded. Scores of journals endorsed Rainey's "conception of the University without reservation. " Rainey had made UT "more than a diploma mill"; he had made it "the center of leadership in the cultural life of Texas and the southwest." Most impressive was Rainey's display "of courage of the highest order," in speaking out against the regents' "restrictive attitudes which endanger the freedom of thought and expression, and the freedom of research and investigation which are the sources of the university's greatness." It was obvious "that the regents have not caught the vision which actuates Dr. Rainey."[29]

The sympathy of the press did not, however, protect Rainey from the Board of Regents. At its next meeting in late October in Houston, its conservative members were determined to fire Rainey. Parten, J. Frank Dobie, Walter Prescott Webb, Roy Bedichek, as well as a host of other faculty members and powerful members from the Ex-Students Association like Federal Judge Joseph C. Hutcheson, powerful corporate lawyer W. H. "Bill" Francis, former Texas attorney general Robert Lee Bobbitt, and Humble Oil executive Hines Baker, all sought compromise. The board nevertheless fired Rainey by a vote of 6 to 1 on November 1, 1944. Regent John Bickett abstained from the process and regent Leslie Waggener did not attend. Only Ida Marguerite Fairchild of Lufkin voted against Rainey's dismissal, stating to her fellow regents and to the press that she "greatly regretted" their action and that she believed "a great wrong is being done a good man."

The issue that finally led to Rainey's dismissal was his refusal to retract his October 12 statements, which the regents demanded he do before any negotiations could begin. According to Rainey, Orville Bullington was so enraged by the statement

of grievances that he threatened to issue a "counter-statement" to the press that "would be the end of you personally. It will blast you from one end of the country to the other." D. F. Strickland echoed Bullington's threat by telling Rainey, "Brother, we will ruin you and see that you never hold another job in American education."[30]

The vote to fire Rainey took a toll on the board itself. As the regents left the Rice Hotel in Houston, Hilmer Weinert, John Bickett, and Dan Harrison, announced their resignations as regents. A board spokesman announced to reporters that Rainey had been dismissed because his October 12th speech impugned the regents' "motives and good faith." Interestingly, not one of the regents refuted Rainey's charges against them. Never one to shun the limelight, a teary-eyed Orville Bullington declared of Rainey's firing that he "never regretted anything in my life so much."[31]

In the same breath, however, Bullington intimated that if the public knew "the real reasons" behind Rainey's firing, they would wholeheartedly support the regents' decision. This created in the public mind the possibility that there were more ominous issues involved in Rainey's firing than simply disputes over who should run the university. Could it be true that Rainey was a communist? Could it be true he wanted to admit "Negroes" to the university? In the ensuing weeks, Bullington, Strickland, and their supporters unleashed a barrage of dark hints and innuendoes that did indeed make many Texans "wonder" about Homer Price Rainey.

The news of Rainey's firing made front-page headlines of every major newspaper in the state and received extensive coverage in many of the larger, national metropolitans such as the *Chicago Sun* and *Washington Post*. The *Sun* proclaimed Rainey's firing to be "the sordid triumph" of the "blind interests of special privilege over academic freedom" and "beyond shadow of doubt" the victory of conservatism over liberalism. One had only to read "a few details of the case" to readily see that the regents were "actuated by animus against the rights of labor and liberalism generally-interests bent on stifling free discussion concerning unions, public utilities, and other fundamentals of the people's business." To the *Washington Post*, Rainey's firing portended more ominous "tendencies," especially in higher education, "to make teaching conform to the prejudices and narrow purposes of the economically dominant elements in our society."[32]

Although the majority of Texas newspapers supported Rainey, some did not. Both the *Houston Post* and the *Houston Chronicle* unequivocally sustained the regents' position, accusing Rainey of using the issue of academic freedom to "disguise" his desire to have UT "completely autonomous, emancipated from all control by its authorized agents, the taxpayers who support it." The *Post* lauded the regents for being "patient to a fault in tolerating Rainey's open insubordination." If they had not finally fired him, and if he had been "given the free hand he so desired, the university would have become an autocracy." Finally, the *Chronicle* believed the crisis was "simply a case of an administrative officer publicly defying his superiors."[33]

The *Chronicle*'s and the *Post*'s anti-Rainey, pro-regent position surprised few liberal Texans. The majority of Houston's business elite had been staunch anti-New Dealers and thus rejoiced when he was ousted as UT's president. The fact that the "Houston Gag Conference" took place in the Bayou City speaks volumes about the city's generally inhospitable environment relative to New Deal liberalism. With notable exceptions such as Jesse Jones, who served in the Roosevelt administration, the majority of the city's business leaders remained steadfast in their commitment to the conservative ethos. Moreover, some of Rainey's proposals directly threatened the interests of many of Houston's elite.[34]

> *"They [certain regents] made mountains out of molehills. Ever since he came to the university, he was harassed by board members with many petty things. I was often ashamed at the way he was being treated. I felt sorry for him but he never wavered in his commitment to do what he thought best for the university and the faculty."*
>
> —Ida Marguerite Fairchild

Rainey's supporters connected the ideological struggle of World War II with the conflict between Rainey and the regents. One of the most outraged of Rainey's supporters was Dr. Blake Smith, pastor of the University Baptist Church and president of the Austin Ministerial Alliance and the University Religious Worker's Association. To Smith, Rainey's firing was "a body blow to Democracy by as bloody a bunch of Fascists that ever wore a swastika." As "thousands of exes" were "fighting and dying on German soil to crush the ugly thing [fascism]," a similar struggle was about to commence in Texas because "the Board of Regents left no doubt in anybody's mind that they are fighting Hitler's battle here at home." Smith called on fellow Texans to "hear the cries of the thousands of Texas youths fighting this ghastly thing," and honor them by declaring "here and now war up to the hilt" against the regents.[35]

The vociferous, well organized, and determined student response surprised those on both sides of the battle. The students' first and most dramatic display of support for Rainey occurred on November 2, when about six thousand marched in mute mourning from the campus to the capital and the governor's mansion where they demanded an audience with Coke Stevenson. They marched in step to the slow roll of drums and the low moan of trombones by the Longhorn band playing Chopin's "Funeral March." They carried a

coffin, draped in black with the label "ACADEMIC FREEDOM IS DEAD" displayed on it. Placards read "DO WE WANT A REGENT REICHSTAG?"; "I WOULD RATHER BE RIGHT THAN A REGENT"; and "RATS AND REGENTS LEAVE A SINKING SHIP."

Malcolm "Mac" Wallace, Student Body President and one of the key leaders of the protest, later recalled, "I had never believed that 6,000 people could be that quiet or that purposeful. A twelve block long parade of students, silent except for breathing, brought tears to the eyes and sobs to the throats of many of the onlookers from the sidewalks." Austin police listed the procession as a legitimate funeral and cleared traffic from the streets. The students then called for a strike until Rainey was reinstated.[36]

When the students finally reached the Capitol around noon, they proceeded to the governor's office and requested an "audience with the governor, Coke Stevenson." Stevenson declined to meet with the students, telling them through a secretary that as far as he was concerned, he was "out of it" and that the crisis was now a "public issue" because Rainey had made it so when he aired his grievances with the regents. It was now "for the people of Texas to decide on the matter." About four thousand students then went outside and gathered under Stevenson's office window where they sang "The Eyes of Texas Are Upon You," and chanted "We Want Rainey," "No classes until Rainey reinstated," "Hitlerism," and "No Compromise." Mac Wallace then called on Stevenson and the regents to meet with the students on campus on Saturday, November 5, and explain to them why Rainey was fired. Stevenson, once again through an intermediary, rejected the students' request to meet. The governor also said he was "speaking for the regents" as well.[37]

The Daily Texan, the student newspaper, declared that "the only way we have of combating a selfish clique of millionaires who are disgracing our university" was to boycott classes for several days. Another *Texan* editorial advocated, that if necessary, it would be better to close the university down completely and have all the students return home than "to permit it to endure in a shameful manner void of freedom and a disgrace in the eyes of intelligent people of the entire nation."[38]

On Saturday, November 5, another show of student and community support for Rainey took place at halftime of the Texas-SMU football game. While the Longhorn band played "The Eyes of Texas Are Upon You," the entire crowd of around 13,000 stood and sang in tribute to Rainey. After finishing the song, the crowd remained standing and went completely silent for over a minute, honoring the deposed president. According to reports, Rainey "wept openly and tears streamed down the faces of the majority of those in attendance."[39]

Over the next several weeks virtually every campus student organization, including the Navy ROTC-V12 unit and the Ex-Servicemen's Association, joined the campaign to reinstate Rainey. The active participation of ex-servicemen as well the endorsement of former university students currently in the armed services greatly bolstered the students' cause. As the *Daily Texan* announced on the third day of the crisis, it was "THE VOICE OF EX-SERVICEMEN" that the nation was "WAITING TO HEAR." By late 1944, the allied effort was closing in fast on both Germany and Japan, and college students were fully aware that the conflict represented a struggle to see whether democracy, best exemplified and fulfilled by the United States, would prevail over fascist totalitarianism. UT students believed they were involved in the same conflict on the university "home front" in their battle against the regents to preserve the "liberty" of academic freedom.[40]

> *In the long run it didn't matter whether I was president of the university but that the important thing was the manner in which the university was operated...*
>
> —Homer Price Rainey

Letters from fighting servicemen supporting Rainey poured into the school newspaper's office and were printed in full. As the *Daily Texan* predicted, "When the headlines of November 2nd get around the world, there are going to be a lot of mighty bewildered and discouraged ex-students in some mighty damp foxholes trying to understand what they are fighting for thousands of miles from home when the same enemy has invaded and taken over their beloved university." The paper then warned the regents that if they continued on their "reckless, arbitrary, and arrogant course," they would have to face "the wrath of hundreds of returning soldiers" who would come to campus "ready to do battle, driven by the same grim determination that allowed them to vanquish their enemies in Europe and in Asia." As they were doing in Europe, they would also bring to the university "a new dawn for the principles of American democracy."[41]

Most Texans, however, were probably more astonished than angry, for it had been twenty-seven years, almost a generation, since the last student "uprising" occurred-the university's battle with James "Pa" Ferguson in 1917. Since then, the Depression and the New Deal had politicized students across the country, making them more concerned with larger social, political, and economic issues. Students also had become more willing to speak out against such injustices and to directly participate in political action. As D.B. Hardeman, editor of the *Daily Texan* observed, "the rah-rah days of the twenties are gone."

Mac Wallace later assured the Senate Investigating Committee that the students' actions "were on their own initiative, spontaneous-no faculty or administrator made any official encouragement." To Wallace, the matter was simple: the regents were "reckless politicians of the old 'status quo type' who want us to think their way. President Rainey wants us to think for ourselves. He wants a liberal education that will teach us the principles of American democracy and justice. We're still young enough and hot-headed enough to live by what we believe in."[42]

J. Frank Dobie, just back from England during the blitz, was stunned and enraged by Rainey's firing. To Dobie, as to the students, Rainey's dismissal smacked of "a fascist coup." Dobie told the Texas press that the regents had built "a maginot line around the university to fortify it against the penetration of ideas not coinciding with their own. They don't seem to care anything about the liberation of human minds that education is supposed to stand for." Dobie was convinced that since the 1943 summer firing of the three economics professors, the regents had been "conspiring to suppress freedom of speech, to get rid of liberal minds, and to bring the University nearer to the status of fascist controlled institutions of learning and farther away from the democratic ideal of free and inquiring minds." He then called for the regents to reinstate Rainey immediately and for Stevenson "to get off the fence and act as if he cared about the nobility of human rights and civilizations."[44]

> *The differences [between Rainey and the regents] are a culmination of little things, trifles. A diplomat would have got along. Its just a little squabble caused by the fact that Doctor Rainey couldn't get along with solid, sound Texans."*[43]
>
> —Coke Stevenson

As reflected in Dobie's comments, Rainey's firing (as well as that of the economics professors) represented the clash between free disinterested inquiry and self-seeking vested interest. For several decades this conflict had been between science and theology; now it had become a war between all the academic disciplines that encouraged freedom of expression and exploration and wealth. As Dobie told his colleague Walter Prescott Webb, "the industrial monarchy knows that free investigation is all that is necessary to expose the rottenness by which they have obtained their wealth and the corruption by which they have kept it."[45]

As the controversy raged, the regents were forced out of hiding and pressed to give their reasons for the firing. Orville Bullington, speaking on behalf of fellow regents Strickland, Stark, and Schreiner, declared that Rainey's dismissal was "absolutely essential to the welfare and full progress of the university." Bullington contended that none of the regents opposed academic freedom, but they were determined to stop what he called "academic license." Bullington believed Rainey acted imperiously, "overstepping" his authority, for in the regent's view, "no educational institution supported by public funds secured by taxation should be made subject to the will of one man, whose acts are free from supervision or control by the representatives of the people who provide those funds." Finally, Bullington declared that Rainey's and his faculty supporters' "arrogance" as well as the students' "behavior" was the result of "powerful forces, in and outside of Texas, directing this attack upon the freedom and independence of the University."[46]

Rainey's supporters concluded that their best chance of his possible reinstatement would be to take the whole issue to the legislature. They felt that legislators would be so disturbed and ashamed of being so "duped" and "betrayed" by the "oil-i-garchy's" regents, that they would demand not only Rainey's immediate reinstatement, but a complete overhaul of the regent's selection process to ensure that all future appointees were individuals "who understand that they are the caretakers of this institution, not owners." Student body president Mac Wallace was certain that legislative hearings would vindicate Rainey while so vilifying the regents that they "will become so small you won't be able to see them."[47]

The Texas Senate Committee on Education called for an investigation over the protests of Lieutenant Governor John Lee Smith. During the hearings, Bullington added a new, sensational charge: Rainey had allowed and secretly supported "a nest of homosexuals" on the faculty. Homer Garrison, director of the Department of Public Safety refuted Bullington's charge, reporting to the Senate Committee that he had thoroughly investigated the situation and found no homosexuals on the faculty.

Undeterred, the ultras continued their unscrupulous campaign to smear Rainey. They made full use of illicit sex, race hatred, and red-baiting-issues certain to insure the rapid spread of vicious gossip. The *Austin American* reported that even before the hearings began, the capitol was full of "anonymous underhanded rumors" being spread by a "whispering campaign" that Rainey and his family were Communists and "race-mixers." One such "innuendo" claimed that Rainey's daughter Helen was having sex with a married black man who was a Communist! Meanwhile, regent Scott Schreiner busied himself "convincing the people of this town [Kerrville] that Rainey is a communist Negro lover, in league with all of the homosexuals at the University, and a very dangerous man in general. It is very depressing." After several days of hearing such scurrilous testimony, one senator asked Bullington coldly: "Any other dirty things about the university you want to volunteer?"[48]

Lutcher Stark's statement best summed up the regent's thinking on the whole affair: "The president of the University of Texas occupies the position to the Board of Regents as a general manager of a corporation does to its Board of Directors."[49] Starks' comment reflected the belief among the regents that Rainey was but a general manager in charge of operational details. His "underlings"—the faculty—were hired and paid by the board and were therefore its private employees. According to one anonymous regents' supporter, the president had to be reminded that, "he was only a servant; and a servant must do as his employers' wish, or quit their service."[50]

By the beginning of 1945, with the affair drawing much nationwide negative comment, all sides were beginning to grow

weary—even Rainey. If the crisis did not end soon, irreparable damage might be inflicted on the university as well as the state. Indeed, virtually every major national periodical had "exposed" the controversy to its readers. Most agreed with *Harper's* Bernard De Voto, that Rainey's firing was the handiwork of "vicious, dishonorable and dishonest" men who purposely "invoked mass prejudice and mass fear" by using the "right buzz words" to terrify Texans into believing Rainey was a "Negro-loving communist and homosexual sympathizer." De Voto agreed with Dobie that the regents were "native fascists" in "the service to entrenched wealth, privilege, and powerful corporations: they are agents of ruthless industry and finance." Unfortunately for Rainey and UT, many Texans believed the regents' claim that "they were saving Texas from outside domination and terrible evils."[51]

In a conciliatory gesture, Stevenson appointed six new regents after three resigned and the terms of three others expired. Although the six new appointees were all conservatives, they were more political than their predecessors. In further displays of reconciliation, the new board opened up social science funds and offered to hire back the fired economics instructors, two of whom returned. The regents, however, refused to reinstate Rainey, who by now, no longer wanted his old job. The regents adopted a statement in favor of academic freedom, then proclaimed that their actions had ushered in "an era of tranquility." They even asked the faculty to advise the board in selecting a new president, which they finally did in April 1946. They simply allowed the acting president, geneticist Theophilis S. Painter, to become the permanent president.[52]

Rainey's supporters were disappointed. J.R. Parten lamented that Rainey's ousting represented a major victory for "the enemies of intellectual freedom" that left Texas and the university firmly "in the control of corporation lawyers and corporation people." Roy Bedichek was as despondent as Parten telling his friend, J. Frank Dobie, that henceforth "Texas youth are going to be taught by intellectual geldings and won't be permitted contact with what [Walt] Whitman calls the great seminal ideas of our time." English professor Sing Stephenson eulogized, "Poor Rainey, really he was the regents' kind of man if they only had the sense to see it. A Christian, a former baseball player, a school-of-education and YMCA stalwart, a fellow without any vices or dangerous ideas, who never quoted from anything more subversive than Ortega y Gasset's *La rebelion de las masas,* he had only the trifling shortcoming of moral courage."[53]

As had been predicted by student leader Mac Wallace, the AAUP formally censured the university, blacklisting it because of "attempts by a politically dominant group to impose its social, and educational views on the University." In July 1945, the Southern Association of Colleges and Universities placed the school on probation. Although such sanctions had no legal standing, they undoubtedly hurt the university, especially student and faculty morale, for years to come. No one knows how many good teachers drifted away, how many did not come who might have. Yet, as J.R. Parten noted, "Rainey went down with guns blazing and it [the crisis] put the fear of God in some of the regents. It was a healthy thing, the fight we made. It had the effect, in the long run, of benefiting the university. I believe for several years after that it made the regents far more cautious about interfering in the day to day administrative affairs of the University."[54]

The firing of Homer Price Rainey demonstrated the growing power of the conservative business elite in Texas. The regents' efforts to silence both Rainey and professors, to abolish tenure, to defile academic freedom in general, all reflected their phobia that Rainey and his liberal professors were conspiring to bring about their overthrow as soon as they had sufficient popular support for their crusade.

As the firing of Homer Rainey confirmed, the Texas plutocracy was more entrenched and powerful than either Rainey or his liberal allies had reckoned. Yet, such hostile reception to liberalism in Texas would not last forever, nor could the plutocracy prevent the marriage of intellectuals to liberalism, which continued long after Rainey left UT and the New Deal ended.

Indeed, the association had become so nearly complete by the 1960s that it is hard to imagine that it was ever otherwise. Equally momentous was the alliance of intellectuals and the poor that seems so natural today only came about during the 1930s. FDR's New Deal programs convinced many young people that government should be active and compassionate, willing to help those who through no fault of their own could not help themselves. This was the source of the "liberal establishment," led by Homer Rainey, that so threatened the economic and political power of UT's Board of Regents. Whether or not Rainey was as determined to "liberalize" The University of Texas as the regents' believed, is moot; in their mind, he was and thus he had to go.

To Rainey, the regents defined liberalism as, "any teachings that were out of line with extreme conservatism." To the conservatives, "radicalism" meant being pro-labor, or displaying "any friendliness to Negroes," such as improving their educational opportunities. They also considered "heresy" basic civil liberties such as freedom of thought and expression and "any questioning of the operation of the economic system [laissez faire capitalism]." Largely as a result of the New Deal's overall positive effect, most Texans were not as fearful of these issues as they once were."[55]

Perhaps Homer Rainey summed up the essence of the whole affair best in his own words years later. Needless to say, he was in torment throughout the entire ordeal. He saw himself in "a conflict to maintain the ideals of the university against the efforts of a ruling political group to subvert it for their own purposes." To Rainey, it became a clash between the business culture and Judeo-Christian ethics, between reactionary new rich capitalism and the concepts of liberal democracy, the old South and the new, the frontier and modern industrialism, the old world and the modern world. In the end, he "reasoned" with himself and concluded "that in the long run it didn't matter whether I was president of the university but that the important thing was the manner in which the university was operated....I was able to set aside all personal considerations....one must attach himself to a cause much bigger than himself and lose himself in working for it."[56] ★

Interview with Waltrip

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not mind helping process the tomatoes and squash and those things but shelling those peas, I just really hated to do that.

WHK: I could see that!

RLW: I did not look forward to that when I had to do that.

There were a lot of troops . . . everybody had some kind of uniform on. It was amazing that almost everybody you ran into was in some branch of the service. A lot of service people were here because of all of the training, and this was a major area for assembly and shipping out because of the two train stations. One was right down there on Washington Avenue right back over here and the other was where the baseball field is today. That was the Union Station. And this one on Washington Avenue was the Southern Pacific Station.

WHK: Oh, that is where it was.

RLW: And so, with the two rail heads and the ship channel and all of the staging areas that we had set up around here for the various branches of the service, this area was really filled with service people. It was amazing how the civilian population would help and try to take some of these service people into their homes, provide meals for them, and provide help and assistance. They could have been from Minnesota but they were here and they were away from home. So, there was a lot of that going on—people bringing service men into their homes and trying to be helpful and compassionate. Of course, that is something you do not see anymore. But that was very, very common; real hospitality to people in uniform.

The Doolittle Raid to bomb Tokyo was a very significant event because if you think about it, the war started in December and the Doolittle Raid was in April 1942. If you look back on what they had to do to accomplish that, that was a tremendous accomplishment, to be able to respond that quickly to something and put together the training and several weeks of staging to get the aircraft carriers in position. That was quite a feat. But it really gave the country a boost morale wise. And, although it was not very significant, everybody was talking about it.

Another thing —there was no television, of course, but you could hear the news every day. Walter Winchell was a very famous correspondent/news person. Edward R. Murrow, those were two that everyone listened to. And when you would go to the movies, they would always have a news trailer. It was as up to date as they could keep it and they would have a new one every week. It was called Movietone News and it had all the current events that happened during that week. They would put this thing together and it was distributed around to all the theaters. So, you would be getting it one week late but that was about as current as you could get on something on film at that time.

I can remember President Roosevelt always had his fireside chat and everyone would flock to the radio so they could hear him speak. That was very inspiring and very morale boosting for the population. And when he talked about the Doolittle Raid and talked about the airplanes coming from Shangri-La, everyone was trying to find out where Shangri-La was. It was some time before people understood that that was just a mythical name, that there was not a Shangri-La. But, for a long time, they thought that was an island somewhere that no one had known about.

The death of Franklin Roosevelt was a bleak period for the country. I mean, people just went into total mourning and suffering because he had been . . . he was the only president I had ever known.

RLW: At the very beginning, because Roosevelt had been so popular, Truman was not accepted right away but as things went on, Truman gained the confidence of the American people and then he was accepted and things went right along. But that took quite a while for that evolution to take place. The war was just about over anyway. The B29s had bombed Japan and burned out everything in the country, in all the major areas, with those incendiaries. But we were going to have to invade Japan. I do not know how they got the information out, but on the Movietone News, they would show a lot of the things that were going on in Japan, how they were teaching children in Japan to fight with sharpened broomsticks. So really, the atomic bomb, although it was a crescendo, the war was over anyway. But it saved a lot of lives even though a lot of people were killed by the atomic bomb.

But the enthusiasm after the war had risen because of all the people coming back and all the young people returning and getting back into the swing of things. It was a very exciting time. From 1946 into all of the 1950s it was kind of like the 1990s were—just really boom times. Although, unlike the 1990s, people still felt very good about each other and you did not have all the chaos and the different factions and cliques that later developed that we are experiencing today. That was unheard of back then. So, I know there will never be another time like that.

Average Americans served as air raid wardens for their cities. Houston had a dedicated contingency as seen here posing in front of their Post 164 Air Raid Warden headquarters.

Courtesy Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library

I noticed when I went to Australia that it reminded me a lot of how the United States was back in the 1940s and 1950s. The friendliness of the people, no one locked their houses or their cars, and there was not all the crime. People felt good about one another. They trusted each other. And those things were very significant during World War II.

WHK: It was a different time and a different country.
RLW: Yes, it really was. I know it will never happen, but I wish there was some way you could return to that kind of an atmosphere without having a war to cause it.

WHK: When did you start getting interested in airplanes yourself?
RLW: Well, during that period, my dad got me to be a Civil Defense spotter. Radar was unheard of and so the only way you could find out what kind of airplanes were flying around, you would have to have people to look and identify them. They had spotters that would be stationed at certain areas that you would go in and you would just sit there and you would look. If you saw any airplanes that were German or Japanese or anything, you were supposed to report it. Of course, there were not any but as a result of that, you had to learn the silhouette and other characteristics of all of the other countries' airplanes so you could immediately look and identify, well, that is a Fockewolfe 190 or a Japanese A6M Zero.

As I went through that, it really boosted my interest in aviation and all of the war stories about the Aces and all of the propaganda being put forth, all the great heroes of the war. It would kindle your interest in whatever you felt closest to, particularly aviation—but the Navy or the Army as well. And usually, if you had family in the service, that was a branch that the kids kind of catered to because their father, brother, uncle, or somebody was in that particular branch.

WHK: Did Houston have any blackouts or air raid drills?
RLW: I can remember the first blackout we had here. As I said, my dad was head of the Civil Defense. The Gulf Building was the tallest building in Houston—there were only two tall buildings in Houston then, the Gulf Building and the Esperson Building. The Gulf Building was taller than the Esperson Building. On the top floor of the Gulf Building was Civil Defense headquarters for the blackout. From there you could see everything and all the communications were set up. And I can remember there was a network of air raid wardens and they each had a territory, and then they had block wardens. So, it was pretty well thought out as to what happened if you had an air raid.

So, this blackout was prepared for months and everyone was in place, sirens went off. I can remember the lights started going off all over the city. Some of them, it would take a while for this group to go off. It did not all just happen at once. That was a very exciting time to look out from up top of the Gulf Building there and totally black, just as far as you could see.

And then there was the Houston Coliseum that was right there downtown and was the only large gathering place in Houston at that time. They would have these huge demonstrations of how to fight various types of incendiary fires of the various kinds of incendiary bombs that could be dropped. Water would not affect some of them and some of them were very toxic and produced poisonous gas if you put water on them. They had these demonstrations of those kinds of fires, and trained people on what to do.

WHK: Did they do the blackout very often or was that just kind of a one-time drill?
RLW: I can remember it twice. In Galveston, it was a little more stringent there. They did not have total blackouts, but you had to have reflectors on the headlights; you could not drive along the sea wall past a certain time at night; and they tried to keep the city lights dimmed. And there were several sightings of submarines off of Galveston. They had the big gun emplacements down there with those huge guns and these big concrete bunkers. Of course, no one saw that during that period but after the war, they were still there and so you got a chance to see what was there. Scholes Field in Galveston was a very busy place.

And they had the Blimp base down at Hitchcock.

WHK: Oh, I did not know that.
RLW: They kept two of those huge blimps and they had buildings for them to go in. They kept two of them down there. One of them was out all the time on patrol of the coast. B-24s and PV4Y2s were at Scholes Field for long-range surveillance and patrol. So, again, with the refineries and the ship building and the air bases here, this was kind of a hub for protection. San Antonio had Randolph Field and there was Bergstrom in Austin and all those air force bases. Texas was the key state for pilot training. I cannot remember how many training bases they had in Texas but they were all over.

WHK: Did the war affect your routine in terms of going to school in those days?
RLW: No, we would have air raid drills at the school just like you have fire drills. But other than that, you really did not . . . the first thing you started to notice was that some of the people that you knew were killed. I remember the first person that I knew who was killed was . . . my mother was parliamentarian of the Texas House in 1939 and one of the pages that worked for her on the house floor was a young man named Johnny Heath. He was one of the, right in that age—19, 20 years old, right off to flight school. He was killed early in the war in a B-25. I can remember when that happened. That kind of started bringing things a little closer. And then, over the period of those few years, no one really was without some type of grief or without some type of suffering because one of their friends or family members had been killed. A lot of people were killed.

WHK: Did you ever have a sense that the public was turning against the war effort or was it always really supportive?
RLW: Oh, no. That was unheard of. There was not anything you could do. I mean, there was not anything to turn against. You could not quit. It was not like some of the wars now to where you could go in and then you decide you do not want to be there anymore and you could leave. It was winner take all. With England almost going under and there was quite a bit of fear in those early years that we're very vulnerable and that was a big chance that the war could go the other way.

WHK: Would you like to talk for a couple of minutes, Bob, about the Lone Star Flight Museum?
RLW: After the war, I started flying and got

my pilot's license. Because of World War II and my interest in airplanes, the old war planes were of tremendous interest to me. Those started being sold surplus—some of them—most of them were scrapped. There were a few that were sold as surplus or went to other nations, particularly in South America. Some of them were later brought back and survived. Those came on the market spotty at the beginning. The fellow that worked for me, our first pilot, was in World War II in the Air Force and flew everything that was made just about, a very accomplished aviator. He and I actually became the company pilots in the early days. So, I started buying an airplane every now and then just for the fun of being able to fly some of the World War II aircraft. And I would buy one and Glen and I would fly it for a while. And then, another would become available and I would sell that one and get another one just for the fun of it. Before long, I had one and I said, well I kind of like that and I am going to keep that and if I get another, now I'll have two. I had two or three of those stationed around and before you know it, I had four or five. And I said, well, there is not going to be any more of these ever and for future generations to be able to see, touch, and feel these kinds of airplanes, there should be a preservation movement to try to keep as many of them around as possible.

I had some of these airplanes stored in College Station in a hangar I rented up there. I had some of them stored out at Hobby. I had some of them stored down at Galveston. And then the thought came of building a museum for the public to see these airplanes, a flying museum, where they could also see them fly and hear them and all the things that went with it. We looked at proposals from a number of areas to do that. Galveston was very active in trying to encourage us to do that there and I am glad that we did. It turned out to be a perfect place—a big tourist attraction and a lot of people in and out all the time from all over the country. So, I just started putting these airplanes together and restoring World War II aircraft and you know how that goes. Before we knew it, we had eight or ten. Now we have got twenty-some odd that fly and another ten or fifteen that are just static displays. I have really gotten a lot of satisfaction out of building that museum. Have you ever been there?

WHK: Yes, sir.

RLW: It is a one of a kind place in that it still makes the public available to see and watch these airplanes fly. And as long as we can keep that activity going . . . it is expensive to do that because you have to have maintenance and maintenance crews on these aircraft all the time and crews to fly them that are competent and trained. It is not like flying the big airplanes of today. So, it has been a real fun experience, putting that together and creating a significant board of directors who really were influential in moving this thing forward, getting President Bush when he was governor to present to the legislature a proclamation that declared the Lone Star Flight Museum as the official home for the Texas Aviation Hall of Fame. And so, from that time forward, we built another building and then started inducting people who had had any Texas connection. They either were born here or did their aviation activities in Texas. They had to have a Texas connection for them to be inducted into the Hall of Fame. A committee was established and the names were screened and we would end up with a certain number of people each year. And that is still going on.

WHK: Well, thank you Bob. This has been really interesting. ✯

Bob Waltrip, seen here with his family, was central to the creation of the Lone Star Flight Museum in Galveston. The museum is dedicated to informing and educating the public about aviation heritage and history. More information about the museum is available on their website at http://www.lsfm.org.

Courtesy Waltrip Family

ENDNOTES

Memorials and Memories

1 My thanks to James Sabata, who helps organize the reunions of the 320th, for sending a photocopied section of the unit's short history. He also sent a copy of *Santa Fe: 35th Infantry Division*, published by the army in 1947.

2 These hedgerows, which included large mounds surrounding fields, were traditional parts of this region's topography, and the German troops made good use of them in preparing defenses to try to stop the Allied advance in Normandy.

3 The diary in its entirety will be published in Ben Love's autobiography, which is forthcoming from Texas A&M University Press.

4 J.H. Freeman, *Diary and Letters from World War II* (Sedona, Arizona: Memoryworks Publishing Co., 2002), Introduction. The letters were originally collected in 1977.

5 Virgie Rowland and Robert Murphy, Jr., interview by author, Crystal Beach, Texas, February 5, 2005. Robert Murphy, Jr., is one of my brothers-in-law who lost his father in the war and grew up never knowing his own dad.

6 This scrapbook contains the letters her son wrote home to her, clippings of articles she collected about him and his unit, and responses to her inquiries about the circumstances of his death.

The Cruiser *Houston*

1 *Houston Chronicle*, December 9, 1979, 46.

2 William A. Bernrieder to *Houston Chronicle*, March 27, 1962, Cruiser *Houston* Collection, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.

3 Garvin Berry, "Houston Heritage," *Houston Business Journal*, July 1, 1994. (Plus personal conversations with Berry.)

4 *Houston Chronicle*, December 9, 1979, 47.

5 William A. Bernrieder Correspondence on Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Co., August 1929, Cruiser *Houston* Collection, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.

6 "Houston Heritage," *Houston Business Journal*, July 1, 1994.

7 *Death Becomes the Ghost*, PBS television documentary (Sparta, N.J.: Grade A Productions, 1997).

8 *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, 374-75.

9 Walter G. Winslow, *The Ghost That Died at Sunda Strait* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 26-29.

10 Ibid., 84-96.

11 U.S. Navy Battle Summary—Battle of the Java Sea, compiled November 1944, Cruiser *Houston* Collection, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.

12 Winslow, *The Ghost That Died at Sunda Strait*, 128-80.

13 "Houston Heritage," *Houston Business Journal*, July 1, 1994.

14 *Bayou City Banner*, December 6, 1974.

15 "Another Cruiser Houston Launched," *Houston Magazine*, July 1943, 6-8.

16 *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, 375-76.

17 Capt. Carter B. Conlin (USN RET), Program Booklet for the Dedication of the USS *Houston* (CA-30) Memorial Monument, November 11, 1995.

18 Craig Nelson, *The First Heroes: The Extraordinary Story of the Doolittle Raid—America's First World War II Victory* (New York: Viking, 2002), 30.

•• A website, www.usshouston.org features news, photographs, and memories of the Houston and crew. The Cruiser *Houston* Collection held by Special Collections of the University of Houston Libraries contains a wealth of information about the cruiser, her crew, Houston civic leaders, and others who have played prominent parts in the story of this ship. The library hosts an online exhibit about the *Houston* and her crew at http://info.lib.uh.edu/sca/digital/cruiser/cruiserh.htm. In 2006, the library will unveil a permanent exhibit of photographs, artwork, documents, and memorabilia related to the ship and her crew.

Mexican Americans in WWII

1 Antonio "Tony" Rico, videotaped interview with Paul Zepeda, July 7, 2003.

2 For example, in his book, *Houston: A History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 171, David G. McComb asserts: "Although Hispanics are Houston's second-largest minority, they rarely figured in the city's history and were seldom mentioned in the sources. They infrequently clashed with the white majority, and as one Roman Catholic priest explained, 'the Negro's problem is the white man. But the Latin's problem is the Latin.'"

3 Other oral history interviews of this WWII generation of Mexican Americans, as well as additional documentary evidence, are available at the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

4 Arnoldo De Leon, *Ethnicity in the Sunbelt: Mexican Americans in Houston* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2001), 51.

5 De Leon adopted job classifications from Albert Camarillo's *Chicanos in a Changing Society: From Mexican Pueblos to American Barrios in Santa Barbara and Southern California, 1848-1930* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979).

6 Robert Zepeda, videotaped interview, with Paul Zepeda, March 12, 2000.

7 Saragosa García, videotaped interview with Ernest Egufa, November 18, 2002.

8 Marguerite Johnston, *Houston: the Unknown City, 1836-1946* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991), 336.

9 Johnston, *Houston: the Unknown City*, 336-41.

10 Felicitas Cerda Flores, videotaped interview with Paul Zepeda, March 2, 2002.

11 This is according to discharge papers of dozens of Hispanic WWII veterans interviewed for this project.

12 A.D. Azios, videotaped interview with Ernest Egufa and Paul Zepeda, December 13, 2002.

13 Alfred Hernandez, videotaped interview with Ernest Egufa, October 21, 2002.

14 Ernest Egufa, videotaped interview with Claudia Garcia, February 3, 2001.

15 Judith Leininger Pycior, *LBJ & Mexican Americans: The Paradox of Power* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), 55.

16 Ernest Egufa, videotaped interview.

17 Leon Egufa, videotaped interview with Liliana Velazquez, March 2, 2003.

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20 De Leon, *Ethnicity in the Sunbelt*.

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2 "Battleship TEXAS State Historic Site," Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/battlesh/ (accessed March 2005).

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Driving on the Edge of Death

1 Arthur Joseph, Jr., interview by author, Houston, Texas, February 8, 2005; Elder Arthur Joseph, Jr., *Driving at the Edge of Death: Supplying the Armies of the United States* (Fresno, Texas: Academic Learning Systems, 1992).

2 David P. Colley, *The Road to Victory: The Untold Story of World War II's Red Ball Express* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2000).

3 Colley, *The Road to Victory*, 207.

4 Arthur Joseph, Jr., *Driving at the Edge of Death*, 143.

5 Ibid., 148.

6 Ibid., 159.

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1 "Poor Distribution Is Blamed for Manpower Crisis," *Goose Creek (Texas) Daily Sun*, October 20, 1942, 5.

2 "Manpower Draft Bills Planned, Mobilization of Men, Women Is Proposed," *Goose Creek (Texas) Daily Sun*, October 21, 1942, 1.

3 Margaret Swett Henson, *The History of Baytown* (Baytown, TX: Bay Area Heritage Society, 1986), 123.

4 Ibid., p. 567.

5 Ralph Fusco, "World War II's Effects on Consolidation," in *From Humble Beginning: Exxon Baytown Seventy-Fifth Anniversary, 1920-1995* (Baytown, TX: Exxon, 1995), 58.

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9 "Of Interest to the Ladies," *Humble Refinery Bee*, January 8, 1942, 14-16. The *Humble Refinery Bee* began as a weekly publication in 1921 and was distributed free to all employees. After the Great Depression, the Bee changed to a magazine format published bi-monthly by Humble. Beginning in 1942, it became a monthly magazine.

10 "Femi-Nalities," *Humble Refinery Bee*, January 8, 1942, 23.

11 "Home Defense Training for Humble Women," *Humble Refinery Bee*, January 8, 1942, 6.

12 C. H. Stevenson, "Lab Gab," *Humble Refinery Bee*, October 1942, 15.

13 "Humble Club Announces Free Dance," *Humble Refinery Bee*, September 1942, 10.

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15 I. C. B. Dear, ed., *The Oxford Companion To World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 1281.

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20 Tommie Tomerlin, "Foamite Foam," *Humble Refinery Bee*, March 1943, 14.

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4 http://community.rice.edu

Battle for the Texas Mind

1 Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1927), Volume II, 470; William R. Harper, *The Trend in Higher Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945), 178-180.

2 Harper, *The Trend in Higher Education*, 188.

3 Compounding the controversy caused by FDR's court-packing scheme was the 1938 recession, which badly hurt Democrats in that year's mid-term elections. Republicans won a smashing victory, gaining 81 House seats and 8 in the Senate. The congress that assembled in January 1939 was the most conservative of the New Deal years. Since all the Democratic losses had taken place in the North and West, particularly in such key states as Ohio and Pennsylvania, southerners—Texas' representatives included—were now once again in a strong position, and they were in no mood to see any further extension of the welfare state, in any capacity. The House contained 169 non-southern Democrats, 93 southern Democrats, 169 Republicans, and 4 third-party representatives. For the first time, FDR could not form a majority without the help of southerners and Republicans. Most observers agreed that the president could at best hope to consolidate but certainly not extend the New Deal. FDR admitted as much when he delivered his annual message in January: "We have now passed the period of internal conflict in the launching of our program of social reform. Our full energies may now be released to invigorate the processes of recovery in order to preserve our reforms." See Samuel L. Rosenman, ed., *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 13 vols. (New York: Random House; Harper and Bros., 1938-1950), 8:7; also see James T. Patterson, *Congressional Conservatism and the New Deal: The Growth of the Conservative Coalition in Congress, 1933-1939* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1967), 87-92, 115, 160-62, 333.

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6 Hart Stillwell, "Civil War in Texas," *Collier's* 115 (January 6, 1945), 19.

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10 Orville Bullington to Carr Collins, November 14, 1938; Carr Collins to Bullington, November 18, 1938; Weaver Moor to W. Lee O'Daniel, January 29, 1940; H.H. Weinert to W. Lee O'Daniel, January 25, 1940, W. Lee O'Daniel Papers, *Governor's Records*, Texas State Library, Austin, Texas; Gray Twombly to Homer Rainey, July 11, 1944, Miscellany Concerning the University of Texas Controversy, 48th Legislature, Senate Investigating Committee, Legislative Reference Library, Austin, Texas. The *Dallas Morning News*, August 12, 1936, carried Bullington's remark about the New Deal.

11 *The University of Texas Controversy*, pamphlet from J.R. Parten's testimony before the Texas Senate Educational Committee, November 28, 1944, found in Margaret Carter Papers (CAH) and the Homer P. Rainey Papers, Department of Special Collections, University of Chicago Library, hereafter cited as Rainey Papers (SCUC). Also see Anonymous to J.R. Parten, May 7, 1941, J.R. Parten Papers (CAH); Charles I. Francis to J.R. Parten, December 14, 1944, Parten Papers (CAH); John A. Lomax to Eugene C. Barker, July 11, 1945, Lomax Papers (CAH); Dugger, *Our Invaded Universities*, 41; Homer Price Rainey, *The Tower and the Dome* (Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Publishing Company, 1971), 6-7; Cox, "The Rainey Affair," 15-17; J. Frank Dobie, "For Your Careful Consideration," brochure found in Carter Papers (CAH). McCurdy quote found in Stilwell, "Civil War in Texas," 19.

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13 Scott Schreiner to Coke Stevenson, August 5, 21, 27, September 9, 23, 1942; D. Frank Strickland to Coke Stevenson, September 15, 28, October 3, 16, 28, 1942, Coke Stevenson Papers, *Governor's Records*, Texas State Library, Austin, Texas; J.R. Parten to Rainey, July 12, 29, August 8, 25, September 13, 27, October 9, 19, 1942, Homer Price Rainey Papers (SCUC); *Dallas Morning News*, June 15, 1942; *Daily Texan*, June 20, 1942.

14 Rainey, *The Tower*, 6-7; Green, *The Establishment in Texas Politics*, 84; Dugger, *Our Invaded Universities*, 42-43; Cox, "The Rainey Affair," 41-52.

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17 Rainey, *Tower*, 42-43; *Summer Texan*, June 7, 11, 1942; Goodwyn, *Lone Star Land*, 292-95; *State Observer*, October 23, 30, 1944; *Dallas Morning News*, March 17, 27, 1942, contains Hoblitzelle's full-page ad. His comments about the way the economics professors allegedly "abused" him can be found in the *Dallas Morning News*, March 29, 1942.

18 *Dallas Morning News*, March 18, 1942; T. Whitfield Davidson to Orville Bullington, March 25, 1942; Bullington to Davidson, March 26, 1942, Haley Papers (HL); Cox, "The Rainey Affair," 46-47; Dugger, *Our Invaded Universities*, 43; J. Evetts Haley, *The University of Texas and the Issue* (Canyon, TX: Miller Publishing Company, 1945), 13-15; Kendall Cochran interview with W.N. Peach, June 24, 1966, North Texas University Oral History Collection, Denton, TX. For another opinion on the Fair Labor Standards Act, see Ruth Allen's assessment, "War and the Forty Hour Work Week," April 6, 1942, found in the James Allred Papers (CAH). Allen observed that 40 percent of workers in war-related industries already put in over sixty hours a week in defense plants, that longer work days did not mean greater productivity, and that restricting strikes would not stop labor protests.

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20 AAUP statement published in *Daily Texan*, June 21, 1942.

21 Lutcher Stark to Rainey, August 23, 31, 1942, Rainey Papers (SCUC); *Austin Statesman*, November 15, 1944; Senate Investigating Committee, *Hearings*, Vol. 2, 540, 566-68, 575-76.

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24 J. Frank Dobie to John A. Lomax, April 14, 1943, "Rainey Controversy" file, Lomax Papers (CAH); J.R. Parten to J. Frank Dobie, August 31, 1943, "Recipient File," The Papers of J. Frank Dobie (CAH); Dobie to Parten, September 4, 1943, Parten Papers (CAH).

25 Bickett replaced Leslie Waggener as regent. Roy Bedichek, *The Letters of Roy Bedichek* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), 248. Rainey to Parten, September 27, October 3, 1942, Parten Papers (CAH); *Houston Post*, October 14, 15, 1944; Dugger, *Our Invaded Universities*, 45; Rainey, *The Tower*, 46-47.

26 D.F. Strickland to J. Alton Burdine, September 10, 23, 1944, J. Alton Burdine Papers (CAH); Burdine to Rainey, September 27, 1944, Rainey Papers (SCUC); Orville Bullington to John A. Lomax, July 5, 21, 1943, Lomax Papers (CAH); Cox, "The Rainey Affair," 81-84; *Austin Statesman*, September 29, 1944; *Daily Texan*, September 30, 1944; *Houston Chronicle*, November 10, 12, 1944; Rainey, *The Tower*, 100-110; *Texas State Observer*, October 4, 1944.

27 *Mission Evening Valley Monitor*, October 10, 1944; *San Angelo Standard-Times*, October 10, 1944; *The Tyler Telegraph*, October 10, 1944. Also see *Beaumont Enterprise*, October 11, 1944 and the *Waco Times Herald*, October 10, 1944.

28 *Houston Post*, October 14, 15, 1944; "University Problems," *Alcalde*, November 1944, 30-33; Cox, "The Rainey Affair," 90-91; Rainey, *The Tower*, 39-54; *Austin American*, October 14, 15, 17, 1944; *Daily Texan*, October 14, 1944. J.R. Parten was, without hesitation, one of Rainey's staunchest supporters, praising Rainey at the time for his "forthright and courageous step. It is my opinion that you have chosen the only course in the circumstance." However, years later Parten regretted giving his approval for Rainey's action, for in retrospect Rainey's going public with his grievances "backed the Board into a corner;" yet Parten admitted, "Rainey had an intolerable situation. He knew he had to bring them to toe or else he was out." Parten to Rainey, October 20, 1944, Parten Papers (CAH); Parten, "The University of Texas Controversy," 7, Parten Papers (CAH).

29 *Temple Telegram*, October 14, 1944; *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, October 19, 1944; *Wichita Falls Daily Times*, October 20, 1944; *State Observer*, October 16, 1944.

30 "University Problems," *Alcalde*, November 1944, 29; J.R. Parten, "The University of Texas Controversy," 7, Parten Papers (CAH); Ida Fairchild to Parten, February 1, 1945, Parten Papers (CAH); Goodwyn, *Lone Star Land*, 299-300; Dugger, *Our Invaded Universities*, 46; Raymond Brooks and Margaret Mayer, column, *Austin American*, November 7, 18, 1944; *Houston Chronicle*, November 2, 1944; Cox, "Rainey Affair," 92-106; Senate Investigating Committee, *Hearings*, Vol. I, 31-32, 55; Vol. II, 571; Vol. III, 333-35; Vol. IV, 574; Rainey, *The Tower*, 14.

31 *Houston Chronicle*, November 2, 1944; Parten, "The University of Texas Controversy," 7; Cox, "The Rainey Affair," 96-100, 104, 106.

32 *Chicago Sun*, November 26, 1944; *Washington Post*, November 27, 1944; *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 27, 1944.

33 *Houston Chronicle*, November 6, 1944; *Houston Post*, November 5, 1944.

34 Green, *The Texas Establishment*, 37, 41, 50, 83-86.

35 *Daily Texan*, November 2, 1944.

36 *Daily Texan*, November 2, 3, 1944; *Houston Post*, November 2, 3, 4, 1944; *Austin American*, November 2, 3, 1944; *Dallas Morning News*, November 2, 5, 6, 1944.

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38 Ibid.

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40 *Daily Texan*, November 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 1944.

41 *Daily Texan*, November 3, 7, 8, 1944.

42 *Daily Texan*, October 22, 1938, November 19, 1944.

43 *Daily Texan*, November 8, 1944; *Austin American*, November 9, 1944.

44 Dobie's comments can be found in several of Texas' major newspapers. The most complete interviews were in the *Austin Statesman* and *Austin American*, November 4, 12, 17, 19, 1944. Also see the *Houston Post*, November 4, 1944.

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46 *The Houston Post*, November 12, 1944.

47 *Daily Texan*, November 15, 19, 21, 22, 1944; *Houston Chronicle*, November 19, 23, 1944; R.O. Zollinger column, *Austin Statesman*, November, 15, 1944.

48 Henry Nash Smith, *The Controversy at the University of Texas, 1939-1945: A Documented History* (Austin: Student's Association, 1946), 15; Raymond Brooks and Margaret Mayer column, *Austin American*, November 18, 1944; Brooks column, *Austin American*, November 21, 1944; *Austin American*, November, 10, 19, 22, 27, 1944; *Houston Post*, November 16, 18, 22, 26, 1944; Cox, "Rainey Affair," 106, 111-12, 117; Senator's rejoinder in *State Observer*, November 20, 1944.

49 "Anonymous" to the Editor, *Houston Post* and *Houston Chronicle*, November 19, 20, 1944.

50 Stark's quote in the Senate Investigating Committee, *Hearings*, Vol. II, 571.

51 Bernard De Voto, "New Style Attack on Academic Freedom at the University of Texas," *Harper's Magazine*, August 1945, 135-37. For similar assessments also see Bruce Bliven, "Texas is Boiling," *New Republic*, March 1945, 90-92, and Clarence Ayers, "The Trouble With Texas," *State Observer*, February 23, 1945, 30-32.

52 Marguerite Fairchild and Lutcher Stark were not reappointed. The appointees were Dudley K. Woodward, David Warren, Edward B. Tucker, E.E. Kirkpatrick, Dr. C. O. Terrell, and Dr. Walter Scherer, who was replacing the recently deceased Judson Taylor. The day after the new regents voted not to reinstate Rainey as president, vice-president Alton Burdine resigned and returned to the Political Science Dept. as a tenured professor. Bullington to Lomax, January 31, 1945, Lomax Papers (CAH); J.R. Parten to Ida Fairchild, December 20, 1944, Parten Papers (CAH); Bedichek, *Letters*, 249; Minnie Fisher Cunningham to the members of the Women's Committee on Educational Freedom, January 9, 1945, Carter Papers (CAH); Goodwyn, *Lone Star Land*, 301-2; *Texas Spectator*, May 31, 1946; *Houston Press*, January 20, 27, February 16, 1945. The ever-irreverent *Spectator* called the "era of tranquility" an "Aeon of soft soap." Cox, "The Rainey Affair," 123-126; Wallace statement, *Austin Statesman*, November 14, 1944.

53 Sing Stephenson's quote found in *Dugger, Our Invaded Universities*, 46; Smith, *The Controversy at the University of Texas*, 17-19; William C. Pool, *Eugene C. Barker, Historian* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1971), 187-211; Roy Bedichek to J. Frank Dobie, March 3, 1945, *J. Frank Dobie Papers* (CAH).

54 Quoted, Don Carleton, *A Breed So Rare: The Life of J.R. Parten, Liberal Oilman, 1896-1992* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association Press, 1998), 322; *Houston Post*, July 27, 29, 1945; *Houston Chronicle*, August 2, 5, 1945.

55 Rainey, *The Tower*, 84; Senate Investigating Committee, *Hearings*, Vol. III, 355-56.

56 Rainey, *The Tower*, 1, 11, 30.

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