

Main Street Viaduct about 1912.

## John Milsaps's Diary

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Two earlier issues of *The Houston Review* featured an excerpted portion from the diary of John Ephraim Thomas Milsaps — Salvation Army major, world traveler, author, illustrator and early Houstonian. These segments from Volume 38 of the diary recorded a vacation in 1910 Milsaps took from Chicago back to his native town.<sup>1</sup> A year later, in 1911, Milsaps made a similar trip to Houston and down the Gulf Coast to Matamoros. On November 7, 1911 Milsaps left Chicago, where he was working at the Salvation Army headquarters, with an advanced salary of \$34.30 and a round trip ticket to Brownsville. Traveling through Memphis, Vicksburg and New Orleans, Milsaps reached Houston on November 11, 1911, where this sequence of entries begins. The 1910 and 1911 diary entries possess historical value as descriptions of Houston during an important period of its urban development. Over the course of just one year the two excerpts reflect the rapid change and growth that continue to characterize twentieth century Houston.

Besides its intrinsic historical merit, *John Milsaps's Diary* is worthy of study for its literary interest. From the diary's many volumes emerges a coherent view of life sensitive to the injustices of this world, a humanitarian philosophy which sought the betterment of humankind and held that service to God entailed service to one's fellow man. The diary is written in simplistic, journalistic style, characteristic of many 19th century diaries, travel logs and autobiographies. Yet, at times Milsaps employs a humorous, humble American prose akin to that of Mark Twain. Either manner of expression tends to oversimplify the complexity of John Milsaps's personality. As he lived the life of a loner, for the most part divorced from family and friends, there is throughout the diary a concern to protect some deeper sense of self from public discovery and inspection. The result of this fear of intrusion upon his inner life is the creation of a dispassionate, at times stodgy, persona in the diary, which obscures even as it reveals glimpses of John Milsaps the man.

One also senses a detached air in reading the diary, as if the author was attempting to remove himself somewhat from this human world of folly. Indeed, diary writing was a reverent act for John Milsaps. It became a way of

<sup>1</sup>See Charles Orson Cook, "John Milsaps's Houston: 1910," *The Houston Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 1979), pp. 33-43; and Cook, "John Milsaps's Houston: 1910" (Part II), *The Houston Review*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Fall 1979), pp. 113-124.

rendering account to God for each day's activities. A favorite biblical prophecy that Milsaps again and again referred to was that on the Day of Judgement each individual's life story will be seen in its entirety by God. Through his unrelenting devotion in keeping the diary year after year, Milsaps was attempting to achieve an approximation of God's divine vision of his life in all its infinitesimally small details:

No one's life is made up of a few chunks of action, but of an infinite aggregate of small details — many of them done over and over — which in the course of time fall into groups and take their proper place in the sum total of one's life history. My diary shows this to be so in my case. If a diary which is only approximately complete, can become such a formidable affair, what will the complete life story of each individual be as seen on the Day of Judgement!<sup>2</sup>

By the year 1911, Milsaps was fifty-nine years old. Although he devoutly believed in God, he had come to have doubts concerning the future of the Salvation Army and his position within its strife-ridden internal structure. For the first time, we see him taking precautions for his own personal future, buying two lots in Magnolia Park in anticipation of retirement to Houston. His love of Houston and interest in its history, development and future well-being also led to criticisms of his hometown. Through his experience as a Salvation Army officer, Milsaps sympathized with the poor and he saw it as an unfortunate fact that in the United States "the wealthy and great make common cause to keep them down."<sup>3</sup> He deplores the commercial atmosphere of Houston where rich men and women give their support to the money-engendering No-tsu-oh Carnival but are reluctant to endow a Museum of Natural History. Having once written of his education, "what I have, I had to get something like a work horse, who while pulling a load along the road manages to snatch a mouthful of grass here and there,"<sup>4</sup> Milsaps finds it imperative that other Texans have a better opportunity than he possessed. The irony that he can buy books on his meagre salary in Chicago to establish a library in Houston contributes to his intolerance of the commercial climate of his native town and the promotional, self-aggrandizing attitudes of its people. Overall, however, Milsaps takes pride in Houston's prosperity, its new construction everywhere underway, and is glad to be amid "her noise, bustle and hustle."<sup>5</sup>

Milsaps's attention to detail, his curiosity and constant concern in educating himself about his surroundings and his faithfulness in executing the many pages of the seventy-three volumes of the diary all make him a writer of note in

<sup>2</sup>John Milsaps's Diary, Vol. 40 (new series), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>John Milsaps's Diary, Vol. 2 (old series), p. 280.

<sup>4</sup>John Milsaps's Diary, Vol. 1 (old series), p. 50.

<sup>5</sup>John Milsaps's Diary, Vol. 40 (new series), p. 240.

any historical and literary overview of Houston. On another level, the diary itself all handwritten and illustrated — often with an eye to the humorous and anecdotal — together with the numerous photographs, maps and memorabilia contained therein constitute one of the most valuable artifacts of Houston history.

*The following excerpt is printed as it appears in Volume 40 of John Milsaps's Diary. Editorial additions are indicated by brackets and numbered footnotes. Ellipses indicate deleted passages.*

Houston, Harris County, Texas.

*Written in Room 1 (Bedroom) of No. 1501 Preston avenue.*

Saturday, November 11, 1911. Rolled out of New Orleans on the 7.15 p.m. Houston local, glad to get away from the hot town with its humid heat smacking of a tropical land of swamps. The temperature was so oppressive that the passengers opened the car windows to let in the cool air. Taking a chair coach to avoid the cost of sleeping car expenses, I passed the night as well as a chair car accomodation will admit. Managed to snatch some fitful sleep vacations for I was thoroughly sleepy and thoroughly tired. With the faint light of daybreak I discerned a small part of Orange on the Sabine river border of the great Lone Star State. Daylight was strong when my train reached Beaumont. Made good use of my eyes to note the character of the country traversed — pine forests, open oak country, marshes, and prairies given to rice culture. Noted some sugar cane growing in the vicinity of Liberty. Crossed the Sabine, Netches [*sic*], Trinity and San Jacinto rivers on this journey. The train arrived in Houston one and a half or two hours late. Was taken to the Union depot in a bus, free, from the Sunset R'y depot. Leaving my "telescope"<sup>6</sup> with the parcel man, next gave thought to breakfast about 10 o'clock. After that walked miles room hunting. Full up was the cry in many places. Rent was high. Wearied myself in the effort to secure a room. Finally paid \$3. for a room (furnished) No. 1 in a house numbered 1501 Preston avenue. The approaching carnival is causing a great demand for rooms. Passed several hours in spite of weariness looking at things. Viewed from both sides of the bayou the foundation holes for the Main street viaduct underway. This promises to be a great structure. A brewery has also recently started to cover a part of Buffalo bayou where Franklin st. bridge [stands]. Main and other streets after sunset were thronged with people and vehicles. Dropped into the hall just over No. 908 Preston avenue between Main and Travis sts. lately secured by the Salvation Army. I sat in the hall a little while prior to the open air meeting, but was not recognized by any one, being a stranger in the

<sup>6</sup>A "telescope" bag is a type of traveling bag.

gates dressed in citizen's attire. The Officer in charged walked to Main st. with 4 adults and several children, leading an open air service on Main street corner of Preston ave. A small crowd listened to him. On Main st. on the opposite corner stood another band holding a religious street service. Were in uniform. Could not identify them; they furnished better string band and vocal music than the Salvationists, thus securing a little more hearers; down towards the Bayou on Main st. a woman, boy and tiny girl (latter playing an organ) sang religious songs. The boy had a good voice. Seeing such a tiny child play the organ took the people's fancy and stepping to the organ they laid money thereon. Elsewhere on Main st. a man stood alone singing solos — whether religious or not cannot say. The delightful balmy weather drew people out by thousands. Got my grip from the Union Depot parcel man, paying 10 cts storage fee.

After praying to my God turned in to rest about 9 o'clock.

Sunday, Nov. 12, 1911. My bed stands between two windows. I went to bed with both of them open enjoying the cool breeze. Sometime during the night there came a roar and banging of shutters; curtains flapped wildly out of the windows. I became suddenly aware that a frigid wave had struck town, and Houston was in the grip of winter. Closed my windows hastily and took shelter under a blanket. Cold! Cold!! Cold!!! Houston of today was an empty town compared to the Houston of yesterday. The cold drove them indoors. Reports from the North state that this blizzard brought death and destruction in its path, especially in Wisconsin and Illinois, also carrying much suffering to the poor. Spent the larger part of the day in the Terminal Union depot and Sunset R'y depot, more to secure the benefit of warm sitting rooms than anything else. My bedroom was like an ice house; could not stay there. Unexpectedly saw at the Terminal depot the largest locomotive in the world standing on a siding, No. 3009 Sante Fe. R. R. line. This company (the Santa Fe) built the machine in their Topeka, Kansas shop; is of the Mallet type and is 120 feet and 7 inches in length. Back of the large locomotive stood a small one of the old fashioned style, showing a great contrast. The Santa Fe Co. put these on exhibition. Spent for meals at lunch stands 45 cents.

Nobody knows that I am in Houston the city of my birth; Unknown today where I might be well known. There are 3 families of relatives — very likely — living here — the Goldsmiths, Hilgers and widow of my deceased brother Haslem with her 2 sons Leroy and John, the latter named after me. Near Houston I was converted; here first joined the church (1st Baptist;) was baptized, having my first Christian experience as a servant of Jesus.

Following prayer in my bedroom, went to bed 9.30 p.m.

Monday, November 13, 1911. Slept very cold last night, and yet wondered why I should be cold because I occupied a good bed with sufficient cover. Kept both

windows closed. Felt the cold worse than in Minnesota or North Dakota. Prayed to the Lord my God and got up for the day 8.05. Temperature milder, yet withal decidedly chilly. The wind has gone down some and in sheltered spots the sun shines warm from a cloudless sky.

Went to the Sunset R'y depot this a.m. and saw the Cadets — several hundred in grey with guns — arrive from the Agricultural and Mechanical College near Bryan. A great crowd greeted them. Later up on Franklin street I saw the State University students come up the street — having arrived too late for the beginning of King Notoc's welcome procession — they joined before it finished. The Notsuoh Notoc carnival started today, with the prolonged blowing of steam whistles and firing of cannon. This is the Cotton Carnival for which Houston is noted. It is not like the New Orleans Mardi Gras carnival, an outgrowth of Roman Catholic church observances, but rather a commercial venture to draw big crowds that they might spend money here. Gov. Colquitt and staff — the last named in uniform, and influential citizens of Houston turned out to do reverence to the Carnival King. This to my thinking is undignified, but they are evidently all pulling together to make Houston's supreme annual function a success from their standpoint — not mine. If I had any say in the case Houston would have no carnival with its accompanying folly and forgetfulness of God. After dark went around to the Terminal Union Depot to secure the benefit of the well warmed waiting room.

Spent for meals at lunch stands 45 cents.

From the Union depot about 9 o'clock p.m. walked over to Main street which was filled with revellers. Such a surging crowd of trick playing youths and maidens filled the sidewalk that I took to the street, rather taking chances on automobiles than the wild crowd thronging the walk. Confetti throwing was the chief method of fun making. These colored bits of paper were dashed into people's faces filling mouths, eyes, and going down their backs. Rushing and jostling was indulged sometimes capsizing the stands of confetti sellers. The people were good natured over it. A woman dashed some of the stuff into my face — The U. of T. football team beat the A.M. today by a score of 6 to 0. This saved the faces of the varsity folks as they have been worsted the past two years or more by the farmers. The faculties of both schools were present to encourage their champions. Tired in body returned to my lodgings. Prayed and retired 10.08.

Bellair [*sic*], Westmoreland Farms, Harris County, Texas.  
Houston, Texas.

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 1911. After praying to the dear Lord and praising him this morning got up at 7.51. The night was quite chilly, yet not so severe as the night before. I notice today the tender leaves of banana bushes in the open wilted as if frost bitten. Slept better. . . .

After breakfasting at a shack of a lunch stand took the South Side trolley car

to where it turns the curve out of Fannin street, there alighted. A boy came up while I and other passengers awaited the Westmoreland Farms trolley car and gave each passenger gratis a round trip trip to Belleair [sic] and back. This was very kind of the real estate company who the boy represented. I went to Belleair a boom town built to order for well to do people. Observed closely the country and town. Can see but little difference between last year and this in the matter of growth. The outside public are evidently in no great hurry to go to Westmoreland Farms. Returning by trolley got off near the Rice Institute buildings. The Administration building, power house and a laboratory are slowly going up. The basement for a men's dormitory is being scraped out of the stiff clay by scraper teams — 4 mules to each scraper. A long underground tunnel — currents — 2000 feet long — is almost completed. I was told that next year school is expected to start. The Rice Institute will be a great affair if plans are carried out. To behold the chaos and confusion there now on that black, water soaked prairie, one would wonder to see the transformation wrought by money, labor and a wise directing head. Walked from the Institute to the end of the Fannin st. line about 3/4 of a mile taking car back to town where I dined at the Wood's hotel lunch room, then went down to the foot of Main street spending an hour or more watching the clam shell dredge at work digging the main foundation hole for the arch which is to span Buffalo Bayou. More machinery than men are doing the work at present. Probably later when men can be worked to advantage the crew will be increased. This viaduct is a great undertaking.

Down near the foot of Travis st. stands a small frame building where about a dozen oyster openers are plying their vocation. Suddenly dropping their oyster knives out they came and craning their necks looked aloft. I looked up too. Far above the city an aeroplane was soaring just below the clouds. It was surprising how quick people detected the machine; 2 were in sight; an aviation meet is in progress at present.

Took a couple of hours nap in the afternoon. Spent for meals at lunch stands 70 cents; also for street car fares 10 cts.

About 7.30 to 10 p.m. was abroad on the streets — a unit lost in a great throng of people. King Notoc XIII's illuminated procession was the evening's attraction. The procession took place as announced about — floats representing music, art, poetry, the black arts, ancient and modern science, botany, geology, astronomy etc., by floats treated allegorically. Was quite a spectacular street display. Confetti throwing was another feature indulged by the populace. I was showered with the paper several times. Main street was carpeted with the stuff. So great was the crowd that the street was flooded; sidewalks could not contain them; sky clear; ideal weather. Got to bed after prayer 10.42.

Harrisburg, Harris County, Texas.  
San Jacinto Battlefield, Harris Co., Texas.  
Wednesday, Nov. 15. The weather has again reasserted itself; that is the customary semi-tropical weather of Southern Texas; and Houston doubtless feels like herself again. Slept quite well last night. Prayed to the Lord my God and praised him. Got up for the day 7.45. Made my breakfast on a dozen fried oysters down at a San Jacinto st. oyster stand then taking a street car proceeded to Harrisburg six miles from Houston, down the Bayou. Harrisburg apparently is true to its past half century of history—slow, very slow. With more natural advantages than Houston she is hardly more than a sleepy village, slumbering calmly within earshot of Houston's business roar. On the North bank of Bray's bayou, the Weld-Neville Cotton company is erecting a huge cotton warehouse — 4 story — of concrete and brick, with a storage capacity of 20,000 bales of cotton. This structure will last for ages. Along Bray's Bayou about 400 feet, the company is constructing a very substantial reinforced concrete wharf. This is a busy scene. I watched operations for awhile, then discovering a boat, the "Mary Evelyn" pulling out I inquired where she was bound for. Learning that San Jacinto battleground and Lynchburg were the places, I decided immediately to go along. The boat was detained long enough to get me aboard, then plowed down stream. I have wanted to make this trip a whole year at least and behold the opportunity came like an accident. Paid the round trip fare — 75 cents. Distance to the battleground is 18 miles — 6 miles from Houston to Harrisburg, fare round trip 10 cts. making my travel expenses for the day 85 cents; total miles 48. Sitting on the deck of the gasoline boat I greatly enjoyed the sail down Houston's far famed Ship Channel, upon which she bases great hopes of commercial supremacy as a future world city. The bayou becomes a wide impressive body of water below Harrisburg, becoming larger as one nears San Jacinto bay. The shores are wooded on both banks with oak, pine and magnolias, likewise fringing the waters edge the solemn cypress, hung with pendant moss drapery. A picturesque stream is Buffalo Bayou. Arriving at San Jacinto battleground, I was put ashore to remain until the vessel returned from Lynchburg. Utilized the time wandering over the old battleground. Stone markers designate the camping place of Sam Houston's little army of Texans along the bayou shore, the location of the twin sisters, the 2 small cannon presented by citizens of Cincinnati to the struggling Americans is shown. Oak trees draped with moss occupy the site of the Texans and Mexicans of that memorable 21st of April 1836. The country has a park like appearance. The State of Texas has fenced the site, and made 2 concrete landings for boats on the shore connected by a long concrete walk following the crescent like curve of the shore. Grave stones mark the resting place of the dead on that part of the field occupied by Santa Ana's forces. The battle of San Jacinto lasted only 15 minutes, but during that brief period very



San Jacinto Battleground.

much occurred. Of the Mexicans 630 were killed and 208 wounded. The Texas loss was 8 killed and 25 wounded. \* Santa Ana the dictator was made a prisoner and as the outcome of the fight Texas became a republic. There was very little in Texas when the battle was fought, but now Texas is great with prospects ahead of an empire in population wealth and all that makes for greatness. Need one wonder that Texans make so much to do over this little battle? A small fight forsooth — but with a tremendous outcome. The “Mary Evelyn’s” 3 whistles sounded evidently to call me to the landing found me ready and waiting. Went aboard. On the return trip to Harrisburg had a talk with a rice farmer of the lower channel. Said they are making money now at raising rice, because they have formed an association controlling a mill at Houston and another at Galveston. An agent sells their rice for them. Prior to that millmen paid what they pleased. Profits went to them and nothing to the farmer. The millers are now acting differently — because they cannot help themselves, likely. Human selfishness is the same everywhere.

Arriving at Harrisburg went to Noble’s restaurant, a small shack which I discovered was run by negroes. They fixed me up a very good oyster and sweet potato dinner for 35 cents.

Returning to Houston by trolley car quite a number of ladies got on the already full car en route, one of them an “American Salvation Army” woman. Men got up giving seats to all but her. She was allowed to stand. Her mouth kept going as if chewing gum, on her breast she wore a bunch of Carnival ribbons and in her hand carried a tambourine probably to collect money. Southern men are very polite to ladies. I gathered that from the treatment accorded her, this American Salvation Army person did not have their respect.

Got back to Houston safely. Spent for meals today 70 cts. Car fares 10. After supper went around to the Auditorium to observe the aristocratic people (especially the ladies) arrayed in costly attire who arrived to attend the Coronation ball of King Notoc XIII and his queen. The street was crowded with vehicles coming and going reminding me of scenes in great cities. This coronation ball is one of the State’s great functions where the wealthy can display their jewels, see and be seen. Observed also the street scenes (“Park-O-Joy”) on the thoroughfare leading to the aggregation of shows. Did not attend the Park-O-Joy shows — stayed away. Outside the park the street is lined with booths for the sale of refreshments, lunches &c. — A fog settled down over the city. Main street was a scene of uproar and surging humanity engaged in confetti battles, chiefly young men and maidens. Remained there watching them till 10.20 — a veritable vanity fair of folly. Returning home prayed to the Lord my God and finally went to bed 11.02.

\*The Texans numbered 783 and Santa Ana’s army double that number. Additional to their other losses, 730 prisoners including Santa Ana, were captured.

Houston, Texas

November 16, 1911. Remained in Houston all day. Started after breakfast for the Carnegie Library but meeting a couple of persons was diverted from my purpose. One of the persons (Clarence L. Brock, Secretary of the Houston Museum & Scientific Society,) being one of the persons. Brock, recognized me and coming up introduced his brother who has come to Houston to engage in taxidermy. Myself and Brock had a long talk about the "Museum". He has had a discouraging time to get anybody interested. Has worked on this scheme 2 or more years. Hopes however to make it go ultimately. Encouraged Brock to never give up. Told him of the San Francisco Academy of Sciences — housed in a discarded old church building for years, spoke of the father of the South Kensington (London, Eng.) museum, and advised him to be a father to the Houston Museum. Replied that he will not quit.

Papers today announce that the King of the Cotton Carnival this year (Notoc XIII) turned out to be Dr. Edgar Odell Lovett, president of the Rice Institute, and his queen Miss Annie Vieve Carter. The difficulty about this Houston folly carnival is that men of great weight in the commercial and educational world lend the prestige of their names to it. Did considerable walking to see part of the city, taking in on my rounds of sight seeing the Beaconsfield flats,<sup>7</sup> new Christian Science building, new Catholic church (the last named) on Fannin st.

Gave a woman 10 cts for a bit of red ribbon bearing the word Federation. This is to be worn on the breast. The money is for striking shopmen of the Harrisman R.R. system, 2 p.m. or thereabout witnessed on Main street the procession of the Flower Festival; 4 p.m. the Mystic Shriners made a street display. A number of new recruits were to be initiated into the order. They wore long white night shirts. Several rode through the streets on a telephone pole, another on a camel, another lying prone in a hearse, several in the central compartment of a lion cage with lions in the other cages, several sitting on blocks of ice etc. This was Galveston Day of the Carnival. Many Island City people were in town wearing red ribbons on which was printed the name of their city. After dark a long procession of Galvestonians bearing banners, flags etc. with 2 bands paraded Main st. amid the hurley burley of confetti throwing a din of noises, the continuous passing of automobiles etc. They scattered handbills along the street advertising Galveston. Got one of them. Main st. resembled pandemonium. — Prayed and retired 10.40.

Friday, November 17, 1911. Following prayer got up this morning 7.06. Walked up to McKinney street and breakfasted at a small lunch stand, then going over to the Carnegie Library corner of McKinney and Travis streets

<sup>7</sup>The Beaconsfield, one of Houston's early skyscrapers and apartment buildings, located at 1700 Main Street, was completed in 1911.

passed several hours within its walls, talking over library affairs with Miss Martha Schnitzer assistant librarian. Miss Julia Ideson, the librarian is absent on a European tour. I gave close attention to many books in the (M) collection, examining them minutely. . . . While at the library noticed a card advertising the Golden Jubilee of the Women's Foreign Missions. Miss Schnitzer informed me that there is much interest among Houstonians respecting missions, and the books in my collection bearing on that subject are useful. Called at the "Post" building and asked the gentleman who looks after out of town subscribers, to put my copy in a wrapper. Said he will. A chilly drizzle accompanied at times by boisterous winds, put a damper on the lovely weather of the past few days. 3 p.m. there was a Confederate parade — old veterans — always a sad sight because of the decrepitude of age — and the daughters and sons of Confederates. Confederate flags were liberally displayed. I did not see a single U.S. flag in the procession. A couple or 3 brass bands were in the turnout and several floats. A large crowd observed the procession from the shelter of awnings, walls of buildings &c. My heart goes with the veterans of the Lost Cause. Although the fortunes of war went against them, nevertheless the Southern soldiers came out of the great struggle with the lion's share of the horrors of war. Visited again the bayou at the intersection of Louisiana and Milam streets, and watched negro laborers working in the water, preparing for the foundation. From there walked down to the Main Street Viaduct and marked progress there. There are some great works under way at present in Houston and vicinity — the Rice Institute buildings; great cotton warehouse and concrete wharf at Harrisburg, the covering of the bayou between Franklin and Milam st. bridges, and the erection of the new Rice hotel to cost \$2,500,000. A large sign on the spot bearing Jesse Jones' name states that the hotel will cost that sum and be 18 stories high. Work was commenced on the foundation Monday of this week. Before long work will also commence on the Ship Channel for 25 feet depth of water. Houston is booming wonderfully.

Spent for food today at lunch stands 55 cts.

Main st. after supper had a big crowd with some confetti throwing but the cold weather likely put a check on enthusiasm. Got to bed 9.22.

Houston Heights, Harris County, Texas.

Written in Gulf Coast Waiting Room (R.R. Depot) at Corpus Christi. Saturday, Nov. 18, 1911. After prayer and praise to the gracious Lord my God, got up 6.55. Shaved. Spent for meals during the day at lunch stands 50 cents. 11 o'clock a.m. or thereabouts another street procession the final one of the Carnival week was "pulled off." An immense bass drum hauled on a wagon explained in big letters on one head, the nature of the turn out. "We are drummers" said the sign, that is this was Commercial Travelers' day — the men who drum up business. Added to their street show were a number of floats



gotten up by Houston merchants and manufacturers to advertise their establishments. Some of the allegorical floats of the big carnival parade the other night did duty again, even as one or more did in the Confederate parade. The Tulane University of New Orleans and the Methodist College, Georgetown, Texas, were having a clash, through their respective football teams. Houston is evidently the center of interest for many things this week, not excluding the chicken show and air men who are doing stunts above the earth. The parade over I lunched at Wood's hotel, then taking an electric car went out to Houston Heights to see how things looked there. The Heights is practically a city, doing business on independent lines — on the northwestern edge of Houston. Progress is evident over there. Some industries give the people (some of them) work to do; not a few however do business in Houston — there they earn their living. Getting off the trolley car where it turns back (the line) towards the city, proceeded to the Heights annex — on the west side of the original toursite laid off by the real estate firm that originally promoted the enterprise. Took a careful note of the neighborhood. A few poor men's cottages have been erected in the forest. A forest of young pine trees, dense in places, intermixed with scattered oaks, cover the tract. Yellow cards giving the number and price of unsold lots, lining a street cut through the forest in the direction of Washington road, Bruner<sup>4</sup>[sic], instruct would be purchasers to tear the same off and present them to the land agent. Price of lots on this street \$200. to be paid for in instalments of 50 cts. a week. A lady (?) told me a street car line is to be constructed on this road to Bruner. Observed a negro settlement, separates the annex from the main Houston Heights boulevard. I was not favorably impressed with the location and price of lots. Walked a long distance on this tour of inspection, getting thoroughly weary in body. Had a clear, cool day for the walk. When one visits this outlying Northern suburb, he gets impressed with the size of Houston: The city is larger than it looks to be.

Returning to town observed for a considerable time the busy scene at the Franklin street bridge, where negro laborers were busy putting in the foundation for the cover over Buffalo Bayou. Also went around to the Auditorium taking a look at the main hall since it was completed. Has a much smarter appearance than when I first saw it, on the occasion of the State Baptist convention. Was pleased to observe on street cars and elsewhere announcements of the Women's Golden Missionary Jubilee. The ladies occupied the banquet room of the Auditorium this afternoon, they are to have

<sup>4</sup>Brunner Addition, the first subdivision in Houston, lay southwest of the Houston Heights and was intersected by Washington Avenue and Shepherd Drive, a portion of which was once known as Brunner Avenue. The trolley car down Washington Avenue made two major stops, one at the Houston Heights, the other at Brunner. Brunner was incorporated, along with the Heights, in 1896.

a three days demonstration. The Lord and his cause is not altogether forgotten in Houston. Thank God for true hearts.

With the advent of evening crowds of people thronged Main st. but there was less confetti throwing than during the earlier part of the Carnival. The streets were busy with moving vehicles. Went around to the site of the new Rice hotel. Foundation digging is being rushed. Are losing no time.

Returning to my lodgings, 1501 Preston avenue, prayed to the Lord my God, then notifying my landlady that the room will be vacated, I took my grip and walked over to the Terminal Union depot to await the departure of the 9.40 p.m. Brownsville train for the Southwest.

Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas.

Written at old Ft. Brown, Brownsville.

Sunday, Nov. 19, 1911. Did not go to bed last night. Kept my clothes on as a matter of course, getting such sleep as was possible in a car seat and traveling all night. Was very sleepy which made sleeping an easy matter under the most unfavorable circumstances. Daybreak this Sabbath morning showed me Sinton, a prosperous little town. About 7.30 a.m. the train reached Robstown where I changed trains, taking an accomodation to Corpus Christi, distant 16 miles over the "Tex-Mex" railroad. The conductor told me to secure tomorrow on my return trip to Robstown a ticket from the depot agent for him. On arriving at Corpus Christi, distant from Houston 246 miles, spent some time searching for the Salvation Army officers' quarters. Discovered the same after making inquiries. Ensign Chas Gale welcomed me into his domicile, a 2 story frame building where himself, wife, 2 sons, a daughter and an old man reside. The officers are without a hall on account of not caring to pay high rent. They get so few people in the hall that they do not feel justified paying landlord charges. Only street meetings are held. Before dinner Ensign showed me over a large part of town taking in part of the bay shore. Dined with the family, then we took another long walk in a different part of the town. Showed me the town mansion of Mrs. King, widow of the dead cattle baron. Told me stories of how he managed to get vast tracts of land. Kept a company (private) on his great ranch, because he was in terror of his life. A couple of attempts were made to kill him. Replied that I would not care to get great wealth by dishonest practices. Kennedy [sic] and some others with King, owned this country it is said to to the Rio Grande river.

Gave Ensign Gale \$1. donation, Lord's tenth. His quarters are No. 318 Chaparral street. Rented room No. 3 in the King hotel near the Gulf Coast R'y depot paying 50 cents for the same. Had supper with the Gale family saying grace at the table. Prayed also together in the parlor before going on the street for an open air service — 7.30 p.m. Ensign Gale took a cornet, Mrs. Gale a guitar, daughter a tambourine, little son a snare drum and the old gentleman who stays at his house, the bass drum — quite a band in themselves. The

Ensign led the service I prayed twice and made a salvation address to 22 persons, net 22, preaching the Lord Jesus as the only Savior from sin. Some of our hearers were Mexicans, male and female, evidently understanding English. Our service was held on Chaparral st. facing the Corpus Christi National Bank. It was not necessary for me to take part in this service in this remote lonely town away down on the Gulf of Mexico, but I would rather do it than not. We should sow the seed of the Kingdom as God gives opportunity beside all waters. Ensign Gale surprised me with the statement that quite a number of Salvationists own land in the vicinity of Corpus Christi. He owns a small place. Through a land agent he learned that some S.A. Colonel by the name of Scott bought land recently at a place called Magnolia in this region. According to Gale many Salvationists over the U.S. are providing in this manner for the time when they can no longer be officers. He said this is because no provision is made for officers when they break down from old age or other causes. I do not find it difficult to believe this statement.

Corpus Christi is taking on a new lease of life. Many handsome buildings are being erected. The foundation is now dug for a half million dollar hotel. Gale stated that San Antonio is becoming uneasy, because of Corpus Christi having the same kind of climate and being a seaport; perhaps foreseeing a dangerous rival for tourist patronage. A fine bay is here. The U.S. government I understand is improving it. Two railroad lines — "Tex-Mex" and Gulf Coast, enter the town. After the open air went to the officers quarters where hot water and bread refreshed me. Prayed. Bade the family adieu. Ensign Gale showed me over to the King hotel near the railroad depot. Prayed and retired 10.15 o'clock.

Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas.

Matamoros, State of Tamaulipas, Mexico.

*Written on Verandah of brick building, near side of town, old Ft. Brown.*

Monday, November 20, 1911. The sleep last night in the small rough shack of a building yclept the "King hotel" greatly refreshed me to face the requirements of another day. Prayed. Was roused early. Got up 6 a.m. Breakfasted — 25 cts — at the hotel taking the 6.30 train over the "Tex-Mex" 16 miles to Robstown. Showing my round trip ticket Chicago to Brownsville and back — to the ticket agent at Robstown, he issued me a round trip free ticket which I turned over to the train conductor as he requested yesterday. Pulling out of Robstown on the through train from Houston to Brownsville — the finishing lap of my trip was made by daylight. Observed closely the towns and country en route. Near Raymondville, Mr. Braymian, father of my stenographer, bought 50 acres, kept it a few weeks then selling it at a loss returned North again. Sugar cane was much in evidence, also some sugar mills, flourishing towns ditto. Country is booming. About 1. o'clock p.m. reached Brownsville, Tex., my final objective point. This little city away down near the mouth of the Rio

Grande is the most Southwesterly city in the United States. One feels himself far from the great centers here — even from Houston, the nearest noise maker. Weather today was delightful. A clear sky and sun inclined to be hot was tempered by a gulf breeze. Saw papayas — a tropical fruit growing in a Brownsville garden. Banana bushes are numerous. Am now \_\_\_\_\_ miles from Chicago and 372 miles from Houston. Accompanied by a man from the railroad depot to the Hotel Hoyt where I paid 75 cents for 1 room on the second floor. This done dropped next into the Acme restaurant for dinner, paying 20 cents for the same. Getting into one of the new motor cars after a tedious delay was taken across the Rio Grande over the new International Railway bridge, paying 10 cts fare. Americans were on one end of the bridge and Mexicans on the other end, for we in this short space entered a foreign land. Almost all the passengers in the car were Mexicans. Arriving in Matamoros, I did much walking along the silent tomb like streets of this dead city. Business has departed and the town is but a melancholy reminder of the past. The low flat fronted buildings here have a sameness verging on monotony. The Mexicans are still under the spell of Spain. Old Manila came back into memory as I threaded the silent streets, passing iron barred windows and getting peeps now and again of jealously shut in courtyards. Passed a guard house of soldiers. A Mexican mounted on horse with carbine slung to his saddle — perhaps a rurale, rode through the streets. These trifles attracted my attention seriously because since my visit to Matamoros last November great changes indeed have taken place. At that time the dictator, President Diaz was in power, and the troops represented his iron rule. At the time there were rumors of revolution in some of the remote districts of the North. How great the change in these twelve months! The Rebel Madero was somewhere creating trouble — now he is at the head of affairs in the City of Mexico and Diaz an exile in Spain. Of course it would not do to call Madero a rebel now — because successful. The success of his conspiracy however seems to be encouraging to other characters like himself. Rumor is again rife of conspiracy and revolution. Newspapers today say no more U.S. troops will be withdrawn from Texas, as another uprising is expected. Leg weary sat in the shade of a tree in the main plaza of Matamoros just in front of the Cathedral. After awhile climbing into the rickety old street car, pulled by a spike team of mules returned to the Rio Grande via the Santa Cruz ferry landing. A Mexican pulled us across the muddy river in a small row boat, which carried about 13 Mexicans and myself as near as I could judge. Paid 10 cts street car and ferry fare altogether. Bought nothing in Matamoros as I did not care to be robbed in broad daylight again by U.S. Custom house officers. On my return to Brownsville, passed several hours amid the deserted silent, military buildings of the abandoned military post, old Fort Brown, on the east bank of the Rio Grande, where I am now penning these lines on the verandah of a brick building near the town side of the reservation.



The sun went down in the West, in the shades of approaching night the Rio Grande gleamed faintly. Darkness closed in while I was at old Fort Brown. Went to the Acme restaurant calling for frijoles and chili, Mexican style, a hot dish. Saw more Mexicans and heard more Spanish than anything else in Brownsville. Left orders in hotel office to be called 4 o'clock a.m. tomorrow.

Brownsville, Texas.

Raymondville, Cameron County, Texas.

*Written in Room 5, Forest Rooming House, 119 Preston ave., Houston.*

Tuesday, Nov. 21, 1911. Went to bed last night in Hotel Hoyt room 1, 8.05 after praying to my God. My landlady favored (?) me with an alarm clock which the hotel people set (so they promised) to awaken me 4. a.m. in order to get away on the 4.50 a.m. Northbound train for Houston. The clock deceived me by going off 5.30 o'clock, which meant that I got left. Hung around Brownsville the larger part of the day. To pass time went over to the U.S. military reservation, sauntering about the spacious grounds along the slough & giving the muddy Rio Grande more attention than heretofore. The weather resembled a pleasant summer day. Big white clouds drifted across the sky, the sun shown bright, and the otherwise hot day was tempered by a strong gulf breeze. Lay on the shady verandah of an old brick barrack with arched supports. A very lonesome deserted place is old Fort Brown now. When negro troops were stationed here, they made matters too lively. They shot up the town, causing such an uproar over the country that the command was disbanded and the post closed. Because of this scandal Brownsville kept in the public eye for a long time. The town was a slouchy old place, lacking in enterprise for a long period. Since my visit one year ago great changes have taken place; new buildings have gone up and old ones have been renovated. Am of the opinion that the Matamoros merchants and many of the inhabitants have moved over to the American side of the Rio Grande, and are doing business under the protection of the American flag. Mexicans do pretty near all the work; there is small opportunity for anybody else. Was interested in an old tomb on front of the Catholic church — probably a monastery. Hic Jacet starts a list of about 25 padres who are buried therein. The Catholic church is always associated in my mind with gloom and the grave. At Hotel Hoyt read Creelman's article regarding the Panama canal — its history, fortifying of the same trouble with Great Britain & also read about the enormous wealth controlled by the Mormon church, political power etc., of that church in the "Cosmopolitan" magazine for May 1911. Was an eye opener to me.

Left Brownsville 4.20 p.m. Had daylight a considerable distance which gave me opportunity to note the character of the country and towns. San Benito, Harlingen, Kingville, indeed all the towns along the road show progress. They are new and well built. The chaparral is being cleared and new farms

opened, sugar mills dot the landscape, irrigation canals like silver ribbons bring precious water to the thirsty land, trains loaded with sugar cane are suggestive of future wealth for this region; cotton is receiving considerable attention, and here and there patches of corn. Was favorably impressed with the country. Although semi arid water from the Rio Grande makes the rich soil give up wealth to the farmer.

Arriving in Raymondville, fifteen minutes for lunch, caused the passengers including myself, to make a hurried dash for the supper table in the Hotel Crane. The spread of eatables was good. The bad feature was the hasty gulping down process, necessary under circumstances. Paid 50 cents for the meal.

Houston, Texas.

November 22, 1911. Leaving Brownsville on the lower Rio Grande 4.20 yesterday afternoon traveled steadily Northeast, reaching Houston 8.25 a.m. today. Spent a very uncomfortable night on the train coiled up in car seats, endeavoring to secure some needed sleep. Slumber was disturbed considerably. In consequence of loss of sleep, I had much difficulty to keep my eyes open today. Kept falling asleep. Daybreak crossed Chocolate Bayou, which is being boomed now for orange [sic] culture. After the fringe of pine and oak timber on this bayou vast prairies stretch to the horizon. Observed closely Alcoa and Alvin because of the present day orange culture boom. The Houston-Galveston district is now very much in the public eye, owing to land promoter's energy.

Was glad to get back to Houston with her noise, bustle and hustle. Showery. The wet weather [?] things in the late afternoon. Observed progress on the Rice hotel job, viaduct and Franklin street covering for Buffalo bayou. [?] energy is evident. Room hunting was in order again. Paid 50 cts for the hire of a room North Side of the bayou (room No. 5) in the Forest Rooming house, 119 Preston st. corner of 10th. Spent some time in the Sunset R'y depot, constantly falling asleep because of weariness. The drizzling rain made things disagreeable under foot and overhead. Prayed to the Lord my God and went to bed 8.46 in a musty room.

Magnolia Park, Harris County, Texas.

Thursday, November 23, 1911. Was dead tired last night when I went to bed from much travel, walking and loss of sleep. Slept well last night. Prayed to the Lord my God and then got up 8.36. Breakfasted at a lunch stand on fried oysters, then proceeded to the Carter building and sought out the Magnolia Park Land Co. on the 9th floor to talk about lots. Result: one of the Company people took me in an automobile out to the Park, a wooded tract close to the Turning Basin — beautiful in appearance and prospectively valuable in time to come. Personally I inspected several sites in the pine forest. Near the Ship Channel there are many magnolia trees. I selected 2 lots. viz., Nos. 7 and 8 in

Block M facing M avenue. The size of lots are 25 feet front running back towards the North 100 feet. The lots face the South on M avenue. There are a few pines on the lots. The soil is sandy and dry. Price of lots \$200. Paid Geo. H. Hedrick, agent \$5. cash to bind the sale, with the understanding that I shall have No. 8 for \$180. by paying cash, which I expect to remit on my return to Chicago. Lot 7 price is \$200. Paid \$5.00 on this lot with the understanding that the balance is to be paid in instalments of not less than \$5. per month. If cash is paid the price will be reduced. My lots are dry. They are 4 or 5 blocks from the Ship Channel lying near Central Parkland Co's property. This transaction commits me to becoming a property owner in Houston. My lots lie just inside the corporation line, which extends this far to include the Turning Basin site where the city owns (I think) 27 acres. There is much building in progress at present. Ward & Neville's great cotton plant is farther out. This section will doubtless witness a great boom in the near future. The agent showed me the turning basin, taking me there in the automobile, likewise the big cotton warehouse near Harrisburg, then hastened back to Houston, where in the company's office — Carter building, I paid him \$10. on the 2 lots to bind the purchase taking his receipts for the money. He informed me after consulting his book that Adjutant Sheridan, our T.H.Q. cashier (Chicago) bought lot 37, block 53 and Adj. Basted, lot 38 in the same block. The 2 lots adjoin. The agent knows that they are Salvationists.

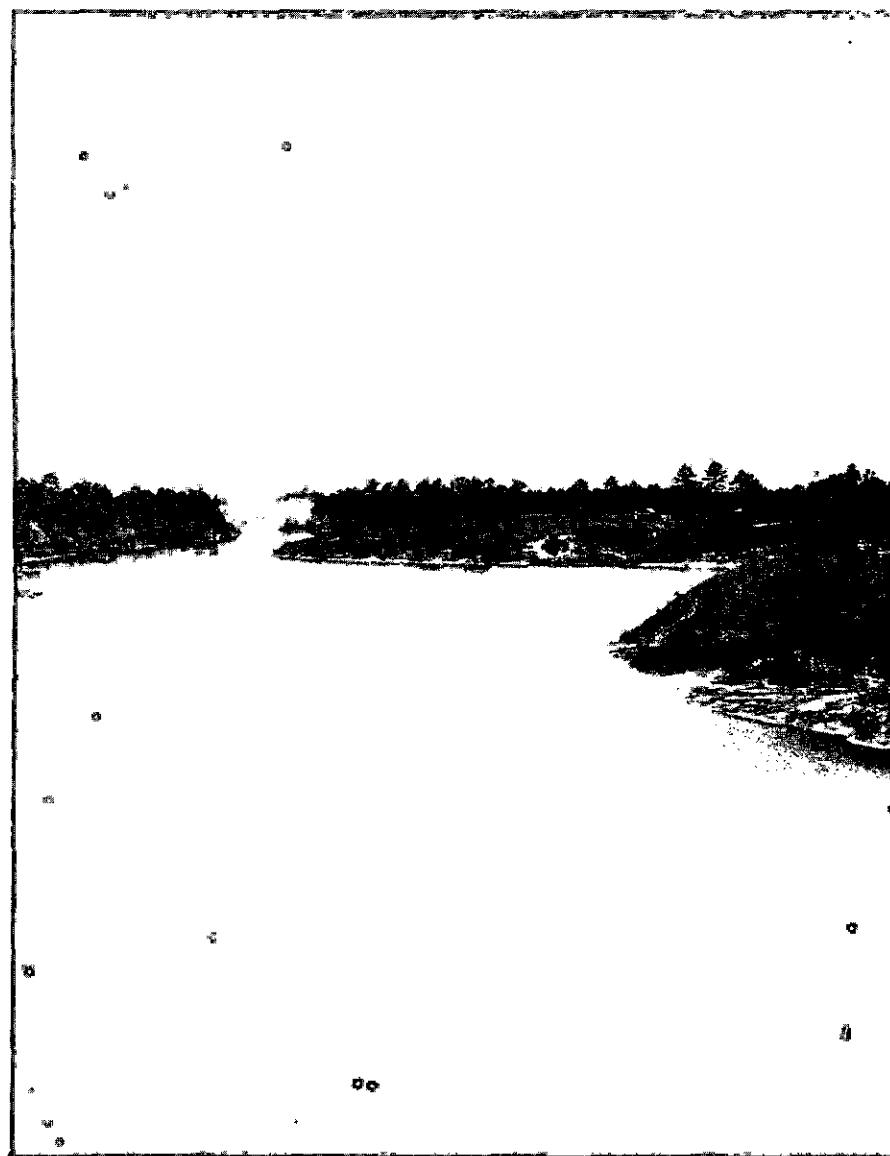
Returning to the North side of the bayou paid my landlady 50 cts for tonight's room rent. In the afternoon made a long walk to see the city crossing White Oak bayou bank of the Grand Central R.R. depot, to the M.K. & T. Ry yards, then over to the Bute warehouse, 5th ward, noticing that part of the town, then across Buffalo bayou via McKee st. bridge to Frost town,<sup>9</sup> thence to the gas works electric light plant (street R'y) Cleveland's store, Viaduct, where they are already pouring concrete, site of new rice hotel (working a night crew there,) then home, as a wet cold night set in.

#### Houston Turning Basin.

Houston, Texas.

Friday, November 24, 1911. With the rain came a blustering norther last night, which cleared the sky and gave us a chilly day, making overcoats comfortable. Saw a couple or more persons wearing cap flaps over their ears. The crescent moon is out tonight. Tomorrow evening by this time (7.37 p.m.) the Lord willing, I shall be en route to New Orleans, home bound. Am very tired in feet and legs from much walking. Spent for meals at lunch stands 40 cents. Gave my German landlady 50 cents rent for room No. 5, to use again tonight.




<sup>9</sup>Frost Town, established in 1822, was the earliest settlement in what is now the city of Houston.



Houston Turning Basin about 1913.

After breakfasting this forenoon took a Harrisburg trolley car to Magnolia Park, where alighting I spent several hours wandering over that forest land, where yesterday I invested in lots 7 and 8, block M, in M avenue. The center of the park at one period was a lake. Reeds are growing there now. Ship Channel dirt is to fill it in the near future. Visited the Houston Turning Basin, near where stands a sign advertising Port Houston land. I visited this spot one year ago this month. Everything remains now just as they were then; no work has been done; the place is silent and deserted; no stately steamers are yet plowing these waters, but Houstonians are still hoping. Failing to find purchasers at par for their ship channel bonds, they absorbed the issue themselves; it is expected that the U.S. government will start work January 1912 to make a 25 foot (deep) channel from the Turning Basin to the Gulf of Mexico. A large number of cheap frame buildings for residents have been erected in Magnolia Park and several are in course of construction at present; nevertheless the appearance of the Park is largely that of a virgin pine forest, with a scattering of magnolia trees. Today the North wind sighing through the pines, gave the Park a wilderness flavor. This whole region in a few years will doubtless be thickly populated. Houston is making marvelous progress even without deep water and steamships. From the Turning Basin walked along the shelled road called Mackie Dee avenue to Harrisburg road where I took car to Houston paying 5 cts.

As per understanding I reported at the Magnolia Park Land Co's office, 9th floor Carter Building, and received my contract agreement for lot No. 7 — Block M, whereby the same is to be mine at the rate of \$5. monthly payments until \$200. is covered — the purchase price; the Company also gave me an insurance policy on my life agreeing to turn the property over to my lawful heirs in case I should die, providing I keep the monthly payments up promptly. On disposing off [*sic*] this business I went to the roof of the Carter Building. The elevator man put me off at a landing marked 18th story a small house on top of the 16 story main structure. Obtained a splendid view of Houston — the best I ever obtained in my life of the Bayou City. From the lofty edifice people and vehicles appear small down below in the streets. Houston stretches away for miles in every direction, and is a larger city than a stranger is apt to think; it is certainly a forest city, as Woods are everywhere conspicuous among the houses and surrounding the municipality. Several people came on the roof while I was there. Certain hours are free to visitors with no price charged. In Chicago one is charged 25 cts at the Masonic Temple and Auditorium to view Chicago's cluster of housetops. Was impressed with Houston's size. Much building is underway. Did considerable walking going from one structure to another taking in particularly the new Rice Hotel, Beatty Building, Zimmer building, Settegast hotel, Cleveland grocery annex — Commerce st. — steel frame — the Viaduct — Main st. — where the first concrete was poured I think, yesterday; the Hamilton concrete covering for

<b>MAGNOLIA PARK</b> SUBDIVISION OF <b>HOUSTON, TEXAS</b>		MAIN STREET HOUSTON
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	SCENE MAGNOLIA PARK	

Buffalo Bayou at Franklin st. bridge. So much enterprise is inspiring. Houston is fast developing into a metropolis. Got no sleep till past midnight last night. Had supper at a restaurant (Chinese) conducted by Jim Wing & Co. on Congress Avenue facing the Market house.

Houston Heights, Texas.

*Written in Waiting Room Union R.R. depot at New Orleans.*

Saturday, Nov. 25, 1911. Following prayer to the Lord my God went to bed last night 9. Got up this morning 8.08 after praying. Shaved. Weather cold. Taking a trolley car went down to the end of the line at Harrisburg. The Weld, Neville Co. 4 story concrete warehouse and new wharf of the same material impressed me with their size and durability. Feel particularly interested because they bound the East or Harrisburg end of Magnolia Park. Walked down Harrisburg road past the old Milby residence — 6 miles from Houston.<sup>10</sup> Although the houses are scattered, there are more than I expected to discover. Wandered over the site where Mr. Couverse is now doing preliminary work on an amusement park. A railroad about 16 miles wide is being laid. A small locomotive and cars are to run on this track. Do not like the idea of an amusement park as visions of Sabbath breaking and sin loom up in the future. Observed closely building operations in Magnolia Park — material improvements because they promise to enhance the value of my 2 lots.

Paying 5 cents fare at the end of the Harrisburg trolley car transferred in Houston to a Houston Heights car making the trip to the town, about 10 miles, for 5 cents. Observed closely the appearance of the Heights. From the end of Harrisburg down Buffalo Bayou to the end of the "Shuttle" trolley track in Houston Heights the territory I regard as practically a part of Houston — 12 miles across. They are not in Houston's corporation limits but to all intents have a singleness of community interests. After making the tour of observation to Houston Heights and back to Houston, went up or rather down to McKinney st. to a milk depot run by an old man. Got a lunch of him and talked to him about the salvation of his soul. He is neglecting the great salvation offered him by the Lord Jesus. Made the tour afoot of the centers of building activity to note progress — viz. in covering Buffalo Bayou between Franklin and Milam street bridges, the Main street Viaduct, where the moulding frame of boards are being constructed for the first rise or entrance on Main at Commerce ave, North side. Noted Beatty's Building foundation diggers, with scraper teams at work, and the stirring scene, where a small army of men and teams are digging out the earth and old foundations to make room for a basement. Over on one side a group of idle negroes were warming

<sup>10</sup>The Milby House was built around 1869 in the town of Harrisburg. Located at 614 Broadway, the plantation style home became a point of interest in Houston for many years. It was demolished in 1959.

themselves at a fire; at the Viaduct another group was hugging a small blaze. . . .

In the evening went to the Forest Rooming House, secured my grip and took it to the Grand Central R.R. depot. Spent for meals 60 cts — fares 10 cts. Now as my vacation period draws near its close must turn homeward. Left Houston about 8 p.m. by the overland San Francisco-New Orleans Sunset train.