

pick the Bluffers and the Cullinans out of the costumed revelers. Gauguin was there and Davy Crockett and Romeo and Juliet and a mixture of jesters, royal figures and walking still-lives. I saw some of my old gang and exchanged witticisms with such as Kathryn Swenson, who had Houston's first professional New York-connected gallery, and artist-dancer Gertrude Levy, who — as Gertrude Barnstone — would become a force in local progressive politics. A tall cardboard carrot went by and I thought for a moment that it was Nydia Dallas. I discovered the place was swarming with sheiks. At least a dozen, some with harem dancing girls. I kept bumping into them and spilling my drinks. Finally I stood beard to beard with one of them and we exchanged fierce glares. "I'm having a ball," he said wittily. "Sure nice party." I nodded my hooded head and watched Picasso and Marie Antoinette go by and wondered what the connection was. Two Jacks of Hearts were hand-in-hand, and a knight in clanking armor downed a drink through his visor. "Wasn't like this in the old days," said my sheik friend. "Used to be, this was a hick town, but now — all this art and stuff and the money behind it. What's New York got that we haven't got?" I told him that we'd really set the ball a-rolling and with an "Allah be praised" I turned to the East where the nearest bar was.

JOHN MILSAPS'S HOUSTON: 1910

BY CHARLES ORSON COOK

John Ephraim Thomas Milsaps, in a rare moment of self-doubt, once questioned whether he deserved "credit or censure for writing the voluminous series of books" known as his diary.¹ But even a casual reading of the Milsaps Diaries demonstrates that it is credit he deserves, and not censure. Houston has inspired a number of reminiscences — *Gustav Dresel's Houston Journal* and Francis Lubbock's *Six Decades in Texas* are two that come readily to mind — but none matches the length or the variety of John Milsaps's seventy-three volume work.²

Milsaps was born in the "village of Houston" (as he called it) in 1852 and spent the next twenty-five years either in the city or very close to it. The Houston of Milsaps's youth was a dusty, dirty little place that competed fiercely, though unsuccessfully, with Galveston for commercial supremacy on the Texas Gulf Coast. It was in that setting that young John, the eldest surviving child of the family of Ephraim and Elizabeth Hilger Milsaps assumed partial responsibility for the support of his family. As a young worker in downtown Houston, he was in a position to observe such commonplace events as slave auctions, secessionist rallies, and the commerce that passed daily through the doors of "the old iron front John Morris Building on Main Street."³

As Milsaps wrote in 1894, however, "great changes have taken place since then, and Houston of those bygone days would hardly recognize itself in the present days."⁴ Like his native Houston, John Milsaps changed, too. The young man of twenty-five who left Houston in 1877 to seek his fortune in the Black Hills Gold Rush bore little resemblance to the man he would be by the turn of the century. For by that time Major Milsaps had given up gold for the gospel and had become an officer in the Salvation Army and an editor of its official publication, *The War Cry*. As a journalist, Milsaps traveled the United States and abroad, recording in his diary his observation of events, both

¹ Gustav Dresel, *Gustav Dresel's Houston Journal: Adventures in North America and Texas, 1837-1841*, ed. Max Freund (Austin, 1954), Francis R. Lubbock, *Six Decades in Texas*, trans. and ed. C. W. Raines (Austin, 1900).

² John Milsaps Diary, 73 vols., John E. T. Milsaps Collection, Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library. Hereafter cited as Milsaps Diary.

³ Milsaps Diary, vol. 1, 1852-1877 (Old Series).

⁴ *Ibid.*

dramatic and pedestrian. He was in the Philippines during the native insurrection in 1899 and in San Francisco when the famous earthquake and fire of 1906 occurred. Equally interesting is his day-to-day record of Salvation Army activities which not only details the nature of the Army's work but also provides an occasional glimpse into local history.

Although he was usually away from Texas, for example, Milsaps's impressions of Houston are often historically significant. In an entry recorded in San Francisco shortly after the Galveston Storm of 1900, Milsaps wrote with amazing foresight: "I fear Galveston will never recover from the backset. Even if the city is rebuilt," he continued, "it will never be more than a port of entry for Houston and a seaside resort for pleasure seekers during the bathing season."⁵ As if to prove his prescience, Milsaps added: "Galveston's prospects of becoming a great city will be blasted and Houston will doubtless become the commercial emporium of that part of the country."⁶

In the course of his travels for the Salvation Army, Milsaps often stopped over in Houston to observe first hand changes that had transpired. During a brief visit to Houston in November, 1910, he penned the entries reprinted below. These impressions are particularly useful because they combine the credibility of a disinterested witness with the intimate knowledge of a longtime resident. This is the kind of perspective that lends weight to Major Milsaps's wondering what it is "about Houston that makes the impression of rush-business-wide-openess. I am accustomed to the activity of Chicago and other great cities," he concluded, "and yet Houston, a little city, likewise impresses me."⁷ Equally believable is his low opinion of the residential development, Magnolia Park: "I would not want a home here. Sailor boarding houses and grog shops are not good company for a home."⁸ On another level, these entries afford a rare picture of Houston in 1910, a city that only a few years before had discarded the provincial patina of a Texas town for the more sophisticated image of a southern city. Certainly Houston in the first decade of our century was not the Houston we see today — all Milsaps's talk about a city auditorium and a new crematory appear very provincial from the perspective of the late twentieth century — though viewed against the backdrop of the village Milsaps knew as a child, it was a very modern place.

[Editor's Note: The following excerpt is re-printed exactly as it appears in the Milsaps Diaries.]

⁵ *Ibid.*, Milsaps's Diary, vol. 12, September 15, 1900 (New Series).

⁶ *Ibid.*, September 11, 1900.

⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 38, November 5, 1910.

⁸ *Ibid.*, November 8, 1910.

Saturday, November 5th.

Up 4 o'clock a.m. Prayed to the Lord my God. Walked down through the unlighted streets to the Gulf Coast Line depot, and having my return ticket signed and stamped by the R.R. agent left Brownsville on the 4.50 north bound train for an all day run to Houston. This was interesting to me. Observed the country, the thriving new towns and the people closely. This region is forging to the front. Train stopped 15 minutes at Marianna, where I got a fine 50 cent dinner. The trip from Brownsville to Houston shows gradations of climate and flora. Mesquite and cacti are conspicuous in the semi desert regions. In the St. Bernard and Brazos country dense forests and moss drapery are conspicuous, likewise evidences of a wet climate. Bay City and the rice country took my eye, also the negroes in the Brazos bottom. Several "homeseekers" were on the train. I observed their methods of seeing the country. Concluded that very little will some of them know about Texas after they return home. Was reminded of a bird flying overhead and taking small note of things below. Engaged one in conversation. Arriving at Houston (7.30 p.m.) a man ("Rock. The Farm Land Man") or some one representing him distributed "Progressive Houston" among the passengers.¹ I took 2 copies. He endeavored to have one of the homeseekers accept 3, but the seeker said he was already overloaded with that character of literature.

When crossing the great prairies beyond the Colorado river, dark storm clouds bore down upon us from the North bringing a norther, which quickly changed the temperature. Steam heat was turned on to warm our car. Was taken in a bus from the Terminal to the Houston & Texas Central R.R. depot, on our R.R. tickets.² Engaged a room (No.23) at the Grand Central hotel on Washington street; then struck out for the business part of town to see the sights. Visited the Market and got supper there. Paid a visit to the new Auditorium.³ Could hardly do more than see its great outlines in the semi-darkness, and near by heard the Spanish tongue coming from a Mexican saloon — making me think of Matamoras. Mexicans are numerous in Houston. Stopped at a religious open-air service at the Market, going down one of the side streets was impressed by pool rooms crowded (one) with Mexicans playing pool and another with negroes doing

¹ "Rock" was John T. Rock who was a local real estate promoter and "immigration agent" especially interested in attracting new residents to Houston. His offices were in the Kiam Building, 1911 Rusk Street in Houston. *Progressive Houston* was the official booster magazine of the city of Houston which began publication in May, 1909.

² See the accompanying photographic essay.

³ *Ibid.*

the same. Saw the new Carter 16 story sky scraper on Main st. ⁴ There was lots of light and life on Main street, plenty of business and crowds thronging the streets of the loop district, although this was a cold night and nothing unusual was doing to bring out the crowds. I wondered in my mind what it is about Houston that makes the impression of rush-business-wide-openess. I am accustomed to the activity of Chicago and other great cities, and yet Houston, a little city, likewise impresses me. Returning home, prayed to my God and retired 10.25.

Sunday, November 6th.

After prayer and praise to my God got up 6.30. Went over to the Houston & Texas Central R.R. depot. In the waiting room warmed myself at the steam radiator as the weather was chilly. A pale emaciated Georgian youth a victim of tuberculosis, asked me for money to help pay his car fare to Arizona for the benefit of his health. Advised him to stay in Texas where the chances for help is better. Gave him 25 cents, Lord's tenth, to buy food. Passed the whole day wandering. Looked into the Auditorium where men were hard at work putting finishing touches on the structure to get it ready for the Baptist convention to be held inside its walls. Possibly the Baptists unwittingly caused this Sunday rush work.

At a restaurant ordered an oyster loaf, paying 30 cents for it as an experiment. Liked it, but had more than I could get away with. Kept an eye on the lookout all day until past 8 p.m. for a Salvation Army open air service, but no S.A. service did I see. Met 2 other bands of earnest Christian workers preaching Salvation in the name of Jesus to street crowds, but felt disappointed to see no Salvationists. Street preaching is supposedly their peculiar work. Wondered uneasily in my mind if this is a fulfillment of the prophecy made by some critics, that the S.A. work will gradually turn away from soul saving to business and money getting. The gathering of junk etc. largely supercede spiritual effort. During my rounds, saw the new Beth Israel synagogue, the new First Methodist church (outside) and peeped into the 1st Presbyterian church prior to the evening service. Swarms of people were out enjoying themselves on the well lighted streets. Pool rooms were busy. Passing a cheap negro theatre stopped to witness a stirring scene. So eager were the darkies to get up the stairs into the play house, that there was a jam of negroes — male and female — struggling at the risk of life and limb to enter. Would that people were as eager to enter the house of God!

⁴ Ibid.

Monday, November 7th.

Following prayer to my God and praise to his dear name last night went to bed in room 23, Grand Central hotel, 8.20 quite weary in body. Up this morning after prayer and praise, 7.14. Shaved.

Dropped into the Central Railroad station to see if anything unusual was going on. Then continuing on as exploration trip went among the breweries (passing them) to the Katy R. R. depot, thence 5th ward, thence round to the crematory (City.) where I watched the operation of trash disposal. The same is burnt. A high chimney creates a heavy draft. Burnable stuff goes into the furnace and bottles metal etc. into a pile outside of the furnace. Near by stands a circular brick structure partly resembling a coal kiln. This excited my curiosity and assailed my nose. Into this bricked-in circular vault through a door are brought barrels of night soil (human excrement) which a white man empties into a small indenture sunk into the floor. The bottom of this is provided with a hole. A stream of water from a pipe above pours onto the filthy mass. The man in attendance with rake in hand mixes the water with the substance thus causing the water to carry it away to the filtering beds. The thought that any human being could be persuaded to accept a job like this surprised me, and yet the work is absolutely necessary. This is the most loathsome, honorable work that I ever saw.⁵

Leaving the crematory crossed Buffalo Bayou over the San Jacinto street bridge. A barge with roof overhead lay below in the black oil-covered bayou. Noticing women and men picking their way down steep uncertain trails and go aboard I did the same, paying 25 cents for the priviledge. The boat contains the remains of a whale (sperm) caught in the mud down at Sabine Pass, Texas. The animal got stranded. The skin has been mounted and the skeleton cleaned. The proprietor showed me and another man the monster explaining its history. It is 75 feet long. The head is like an immense sawed-off hogs head. The eyes are remarkably small for such a huge body. The mouth or lower jaw is like the companion way of a ship and under the head. 7 months a taxidermist has worked on the animal to prepare it for exhibition at a cost of \$5,000 including the boat. We entered the whale through a door in the side. Stood upright. I have shared Jonah's honors by being inside a whale, — he entered through the mouth and I by way of the side. The owner said he came to Texas to buy land and bought a whale. Intends to visit Texas and Louisiana coast towns, thence up the Mississ-

⁵ The city purchased the crematory in September, 1910. According to *Progressive Houston*, it was a "wonderfully ingenious application of scientific principles . . . which would save [the city] thousands of dollars a year."

ippi, Ohio river etc. with his curiosity. Stated that he would not take \$20,000 for it.

Noon visited the new Harris County Courthouse.⁶ Is a fine structure, creditable to the county. Witnessed the street parade (part of it.) of Gentry Brother's show. Afternoon did much walking in search of a room. After making several calls at different places, found one to suit me — Mrs. O. Cooper's, no. 610 Walker Avenue. Paid her \$2 for one week's rent - for no. 7 room on the third floor. This will be a saving of expense. Two nights at the Grand Central hotel for room rent alone cost me \$1.50.

Paid out for meals at restaurants, 50 cents.

Went inside the Auditorium to see how things are progressing. Preparations are well advanced for public gatherings. The great building is impressive.

After supper went around to the vicinity of the S.A. hall but only saw at a distance a solitary Salvationist.

Discussed the Houston Museum & Scientific Society with the taxidermist who mounted the whale now on exhibition down at the San Jacinto bridge. Asked him if he thought Prof. Atwater would donate his big collection to the public. Replied that the Professor was "not built that way" — would donate it for a consideration in cash. Many in this world who think others should have the spirit of liberality lack that spirit themselves. The man whose parsimonious little soul will not permit him to make a small gift to the public, would not make a great gift even if able. A poor mean man is as mean as a rich mean man. The principle is the same in both cases.⁷ While room hunting saw the concrete skeleton of the new Baptist Sanitarium. The small sanitarium now used, shows the Baptists to have begun that work small. It is now getting great.⁸

Tuesday, November 8.

To bed last night 9.15 after prayer in my newly hired bedroom. Up this morning 7.20. Morning devotions and then I walked down to Wood's hotel lunch room for breakfast. Immediately thereafter took trolley car to the Magnolia Park side of Brays Bayou, where the end is, and walked to Harrisburg like everybody else must do who patronizes this trolley service these

⁶ See the accompanying photographic essay.

⁷ The Houston Museum and Scientific Society was incorporated in 1909 and was the precursor to the present Museum of Natural History. In fact, the city did purchase Professor Atwater's collection in 1915. Milsaps's judgment of Atwater is doubtless made against the backdrop of his own gifts to the Houston Public Library.

⁸ The Baptist Sanitarium was located at 602 Lamar. Milsaps's concern for the Baptists here and elsewhere in this selection stems from his affiliation with that denomination as a youth in Houston.

days. This is my first visit to Harrisburg. Back in the far away Civil War years, my father, at that time a private doing duty in the Confederate Army, allowed me to visit him and spend a night with the soldiers who (a small detachment,) who (sic) were encamped somewhere in the vicinity of Harrisburg on the banks of Buffalo Bayou. Now here I am again in old age sitting on the bank of the sluggish stream opposite the point made by cutting through a bend the Houston Ship channel to the turning bason above. No ocean steamships are troubling the still waters, but Houston has hopes. These hopes will materialize if strenuous effort can avail. The people of that city deserve success for they have worked hard for it. On my way, asked a man in Harrisburg, why his town (so much better situated than Houston,) was not the great city. Replied because the oldtimers asked too much for their land. Greed only tells half the story however. Lack of energy will explain the other half. It makes all the difference between success and failure as to the character of people making up a community. Well Harrisburg is a quiet town. I felt it soothing to my nerves. The gentleman referred to above said he has been absent 18 months. During his absence changes have occurred. New people have moved in who he doesn't know. Suggested to him that Harrisburg will be swallowed up by Houston some day. He assented.⁹

After lying on the grass awhile down on the bayou bank walked back to Harrisburg and rested again up the hill in the cemetery from whence I had an excellent view of the old bayou and the new cut off, which has made an island.* Should this be dredged away Harrisburg will have a fine turning basin. The original bayou is now lined — the West bank — with craft belonging to members of the Houston Launch club. Near where I rested in the old cemetery were graves of the Harris family. From the weather stained marble heads of one grave I deciphered the following epitaph: "Fare thee well my noble husband, There's no shadow on the portals Leading to thy heavenly home; Christ has promised life immortal, And 'tis He that bids thee go." This was graved on the stone marking the site of John R. Harris who was born in Harris County, Texas, in 1831 and fell asleep in 1869. The sanctity of the years rests upon this grave. The old brick residence of the Milby family carried my thoughts back (am writing of the town now) to ante-bellum times.¹⁰

Leaving Harrisburg about noon made a long hot walk to

⁹ Harrisburg was a separately incorporated municipality until 1926 when it was annexed to Houston.

¹⁰ The Harris family — descendants of John R. Harris. Texas colonist and founder of Harrisburg — lent its name to the county. For a brief sketch of the Harris family, see Adele B. Looscan, "The Pioneer Harrises of Harris County, Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 31 (April, 1928), pp. 365-373.

Magnolia Park, passing on the way a big cotton press — Magnolia Park is being boomed for a town-site; the land lies outside the corporation limits of Houston. The splendid magnolia trees and stately pines that abound here make it a beautiful site for homes, but unfortunately the shadow of a commercial city with its smell of tarred ropes, dust and noise and junk, never-failing concomitants of busy warves and shipping — looms just above the horizon's verge. I would not want a home here. Sailor boarding houses and grog shops are not good company for a home.¹¹

The turning basin was a scene of inaction and deadness. The 2 great slips cut into the east bank by the City of Houston, show what intentions are, but at present no gallant ship lies at the wharf discharging cargo. This is a thing of the future. Not a solitary human being was in sight. I heard some one firing a gun in the distance, probably hunting. Walking along I stirred up a covey of partridges. Leaning against a lone magnolia tree near the turning basin, I picked coclebur and grass burs off my pants, collected while pushing through the weeds and grass. An alert little spider came out of his hiding place under the bank of the magnolia to watch operations, but evidently considering me a suspicious character he darted back again, perhaps under the impression that prudence was better than valor. Piles of rusting pipe lately used in dredging the channel slips lay on the West bank, waiting further orders. Until the people of Harris county vote the \$1,250,000 bond issue for the deepening of the ship channel to 25 feet, there is likely to be inaction at this point.¹² Walked back to the Harrisburg road and took trolley back to Houston. Went around to see how things were progressing at the Auditorium. Have swiftly taken on a finished appearance. Followed Texas avenue up to near the bayou. This has been filled in about 10 feet. So completely changed has the old hollow become, that I could hardly recognize it as the same place where I have often wandered as a barefooted boy in the long dead years that linger in memory. Houston puts me in a sentimental mood, because of so many tender memories of the long ago that come back again.

Wednesday, November 9.

On my return home last evening I was so weary that I lay down for a brief rest expecting to go out for supper later. Fell asleep and remained in bed till this morning minus the supper.

¹¹ Magnolia Park, one of the early subdivisions in Houston, was begun in 1909. Its promoters claimed that its location on the ship channel was ideal because "deep water will make you rich."

¹² Harris County voters did approve \$1,250,000 in local bonds to match a Federal grant. For a detailed history of this and other events relating to this important aspect of Houston's history, see Marilyn McAdams Sibley, *The Port of Houston: A History* (Austin, 1968).

Got up this morning 5.49. Prayed to the Lord my God. Walked down town for breakfast. This disposed of, explored part of the 5th Ward beyond White Oak Bayou. A dumb woman wanted assistance. Paid her 15 cents for a cake of toilet soap. A negro with a weak team to pull a load of cord wood was stalled in a mud hole. Another man and myself helped him out. The Fifth Ward is a slouchy city made up chiefly of cheap shacks with uneven sidewalks and no walks, lots of dust, a maze of railroad tracks running in all directions, intermixed with mills and warehouses planted here and there. It is ugly enough to be at home in the picturesque slums of New Orleans. There are many small shops showing no attempt at taste in the 5th Ward. However there is hope of better things. Some of the narrow crooked streets have been brick paved. Negroes are numerous. Walked out to Crosby Road where it connects with Odin street. A sign board read Three and three-fourths miles to East Houston. Was too tired to walk any more. Taking a Liberty st. car back to Travis street transferred to the Houston Heights car, going to the end of that line and then transferring again to the "Shuttle" trolley went to the end of that line. A sign board said 5 miles from Houston, but the entire distance is built up. Houston Heights possesses a mayor of its own, ditto water and electric light plant. The Heights is far superior to the 5th Ward. One's eyes are not hurt by looking at it.¹³ The Oriental Textile Mills and a large furniture factory are situated here, ditto cotton seed oil mill and a Kerocine oil refinery. The sun being hot, lay down in the shade of a tree to rest myself. Was quite weary. Taking trolley car back to the business district of Houston, transferred to a South End trolley making the round trip on the latter line, the whole trip including the return from The Heights costing only a nickel. The South End including the latter business blocks erected, left the impression upon my mind of a beautiful city. There are structures in Houston that would be a credit to any city. Flowers, shrubbery and streets lined with large shade trees add much to the beauty. There are many banana bushes. I saw orange trees loaded with oranges and persimmon trees bearing fruit. After seeing much of the city, returned home and took a nap; then again struck out after dark to see the town. The air was cool, the sky clear, and moon shining bright. Called at the Baptist Convention headquarters in the Mason building. Baptist delegates are beginning to appear on the streets wearing Auditorium badges.

While out this evening I took special pains again to look for

¹³ By the time of Milsaps's visit in 1910, the Heights had existed for seventeen years and would, in 1919, be annexed to the city.

a Salvation Army street service but failed to find one. Returning homeward I discovered a Salvationist (woman) dressed in uniform with tambourine in hand coming out of a business place. She had evidently been taking up an offering and was through for the evening. She continued up Main street without entering any more after that. — Prayed to my God and retired 10.06.

Thursday, November 10.

Up this morning 6.49 and prayed to my precious Lord. Shaved. Spent for food 60 cts at restaurants, 25 cents for postal cards about Houston, Harrisburg, Magnolia Park & c. Also 5 cents for a copy of the Daily Post. The Houston newspapers are filled with accounts of a great political defeat of the Republican party in the recent election. The Democratic rooster has a splendid opportunity for lusty crowing now.¹⁴

Following breakfast at the Wood's Hotel lunch stand went around to the new Auditorium where thousands of Baptists from all parts of Texas are holding their State Convention, i.e. the general convention. Some smaller ones have been held the past 2 or 3 days in the 1st Baptist Church. I attended the Baptist gathering this forenoon in the Auditorium. A great gathering it was in point of numbers, nevertheless a large part of the space remained unoccupied. This was the first public function in the splendid structure, and I am glad because God was glorified where so soon the devil will hold high carnival. A minister made a welcome address to the Convention on behalf of the Houston Baptist churches and other denominations of Houston. Mayor Rice, made a brief welcome address on behalf of the city to the Baptists who are for the time being his guests. The Chairman of the Convention by request, made the opening prayer. This was not a dedication prayer. Not until the building is completed will the formal dedication take place. An excellent annual sermon was preached, by one of the ministers selected for the purpose. During the latter part of the service I sat on an extreme back seat in the top gallery, and could hear quite plainly the speaker over the large intervening space. The acoustic properties of the hall are quite good. The service was dismissed 12 o'clock noon. In the evening I went again to see how the Auditorium appeared when lighted by electricity. Must say it looked grand.¹⁵

Visited several railroad ticket offices before returning home. The sun was hot. Spent the time till near 5 p.m. in my bedroom.

¹⁴ Milsaps's allusion to "the recent elections" is a reference to the national "off-year" election in which the Democrats did score impressive victories.

¹⁵ Mayor Rice was H. Baldwin Rice who served as Mayor of Houston from 1905 to 1913. For an informative account of the Baptist Convention, see the *Houston Post*, November 14 and 17, 1910.

Took a nap. About 5 o'clock getting on to a San Felipe streetcar went to the terminus at the old City Cemetery in the negro (one of them,) quarter, then striking out afoot over the dusty San Felipe road, walked to my old homestead, near Wm Hunter's old place. A wire fence encloses the 5 acres and more. A hog pen stands on or near where formerly stood the house that father, myself and my brother Willie built. We were the carpenters. Who took the house away is a question. The San Felipe road is ditched and thrown up high to shed water. I hired a negro to cut a right of way through my land over 30 years ago and donated the site, to encourage the building of this road. A great convenience it is. Crossing North and South is another road (now being shelled) just a short distance West of it. Houston reaches almost to my land and soon will have passed it. Old memories came flooding back upon me. The visit recalled them. The darlings of my heart — vanished forms that have long been cold in death once again seemed to come out of the distant past. Loved voices seemed to be calling me from the other shore. Here father and little Eva died and were buried. Here Eva (now Mrs. Hull of Oklahoma City) was born. Here my darling mother and poor Haslem (now dead) once lived, also my brother William (gone I know not where). The old house is no more and the family broken up.¹⁶

Darkness closed down just as I reached the spot. Walked back to the terminus of the San Felipe [sic] trolley line by the light of the harvest moon. Taking the street car went down town for supper, at Wood's hotel on Travis street. Just as I was about to enter the lunch room I met a Salvation Army woman dressed in uniform coming out of Charley Young's saloon. She went into the Wood's hotel saloon next. I saw her reach her tambourine over the bar counter to the man behind the bar. Taking up collections in saloons is frowned upon by the higher powers of the S.A. It is discreditable to the name and cause of Christ. Some of our officers evidently do it in spite of the wishes of those in command above them.

[Editor's Note: on the morning of Friday, November 11, 1910, Milsaps packed his "diary and autographed Bible" and departed Houston, complaining of a "dense fog," for a visit to Galveston.]

¹⁶ Milsaps is obviously referring to family members. "Little Eva" was his niece, the daughter of his brother, William J. Milsaps. "Haslem" was his younger brother who later changed his name to Haslem Marshall.

HOUSTON IN 1910: A PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY

Houston in 1910 was quickly becoming a southern regional center. If it was not yet the place we know today as the "City of Tomorrow," neither was it the "overgrown dirty village . . . [and] the most slovenly go as you please vagabond city" that one critic described in the 1890s.¹ Houston had come a long way in the first decade of the twentieth century. As late as 1890, the "Magnolia City" ranked a poor fourth in population among Texas cities; Dallas, San Antonio and Galveston were all larger. In the South, there was little to distinguish Houston from more than a score of towns the size of Shreveport, Louisiana or Little Rock, Arkansas.²

By 1910, however, Houston's population of 78,000 was almost twice that of the turn of the century.³ Much of this rapid growth is attributable to the destructive hurricane of 1900 and a plethora of oil strikes in the Houston area which allowed the city to surpass Galveston in commercial importance and even challenge San Antonio and Dallas for supremacy in Texas. The changing physical face of Houston also indicated the city's increasing sophistication. In 1910, the Carter Building, Houston's first skyscraper, symbolically announced that the town had come of age, setting the tone for a downtown building spree that eventually produced such landmarks as the Esperson and Gulf Buildings in the 1920s.⁴

The city was in a state of transition. Although her streets were becoming more crowded and her buildings taller, there were still enough horse-drawn carriages and mule teams on her thoroughfares to make Houston a peculiar blend of old and new. Similarly, the fact that such buildings as the County Court House and the City Hall Market were important centers of municipal activity, suggests that there was in 1910 a lot of the countryside on the streets of Houston. Also, because the city was barely more than four miles in diameter (Montrose was literally at the edge of the city and another sixteen years would pass before Harrisburg would be annexed), there was a sense of isolation between Houstonians and their counterparts in suburbs like the Houston Heights and Bellaire adding to the parochial flavor of the town.

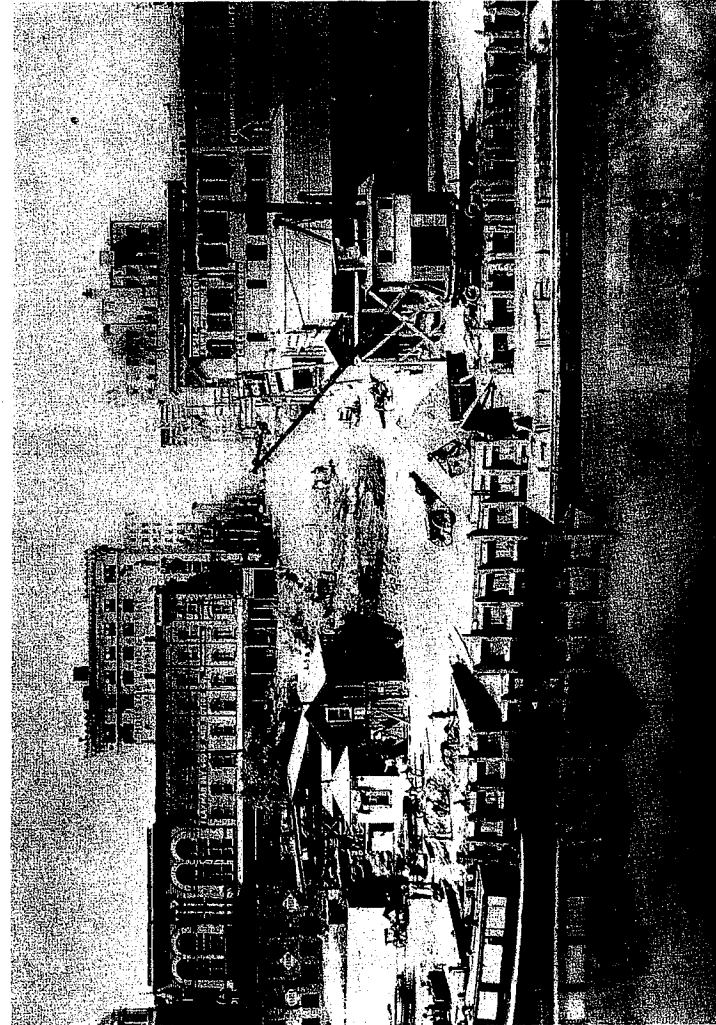
Alongside their provincialism, however, Houston's citizens were developing a growing spirit of civic consciousness that not only reminded them that they lived in a city, but to be proud of it. The completion in 1910 of the new and expensive City Auditorium signaled an awareness by Houstonians that their city could, perhaps even should, be the scene of important events, an idea more relevant to a modern city than a nineteenth century town. The following photographs from the collections of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center visually document the transition that was so much a part of Houston in the first decade of this century.

¹Houston *Daily Post*, January 14, 1932, quoted in David G. McComb, *Houston: The Bayou City* (Austin, 1969), p. 137.

²United States Department of Commerce and Labor, *Abstract of the Census, 1910* (Washington, 1913), p. 75.

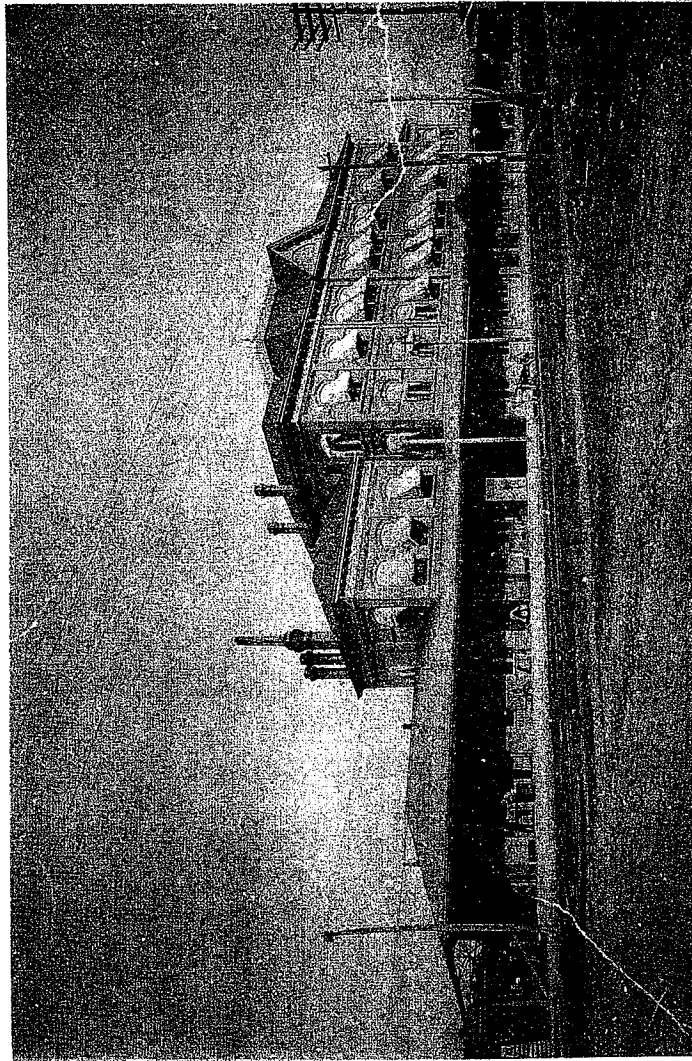
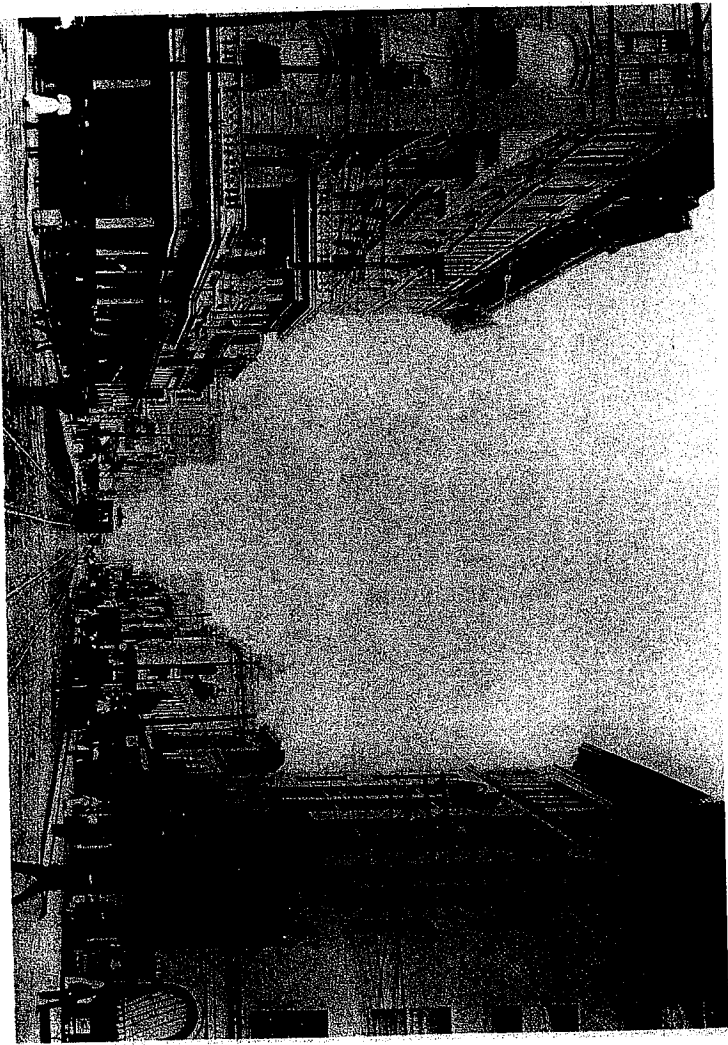
³*Ibid.*

⁴The only synthesis of this period in Houston is McComb, *Houston*, pp. 92-166.



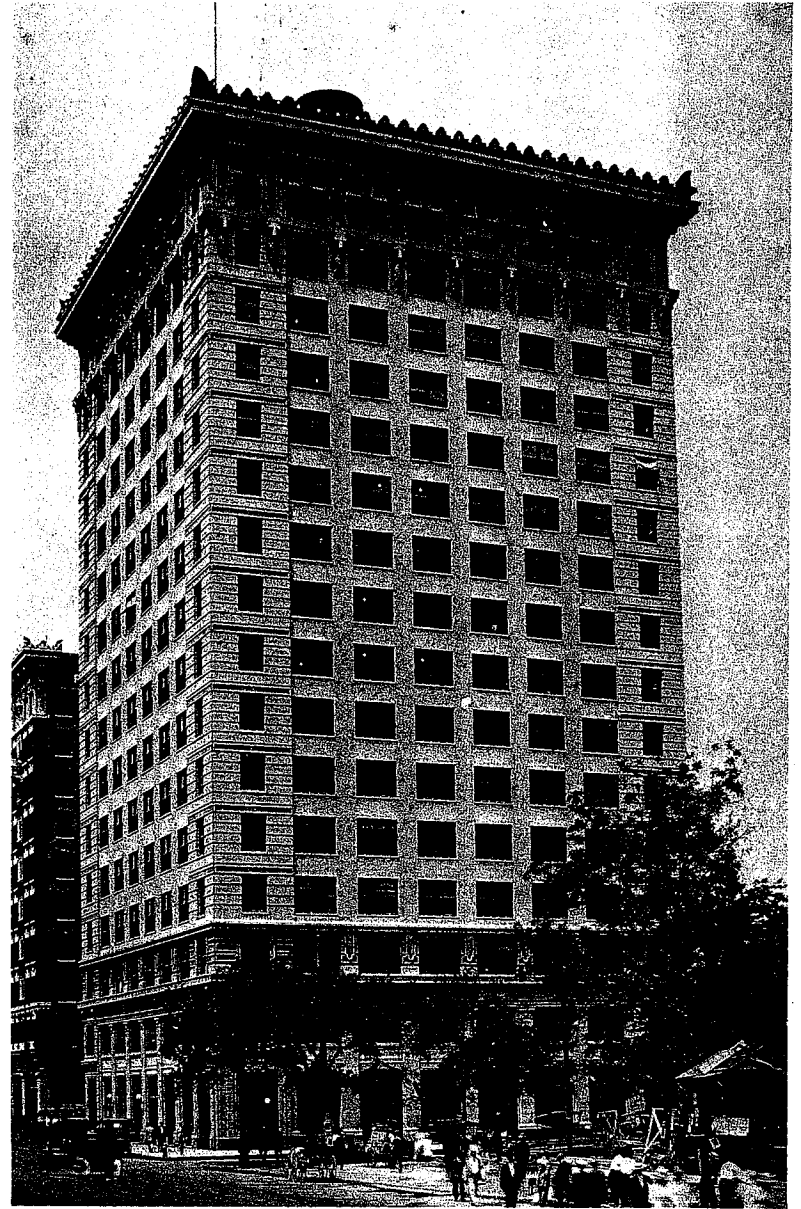
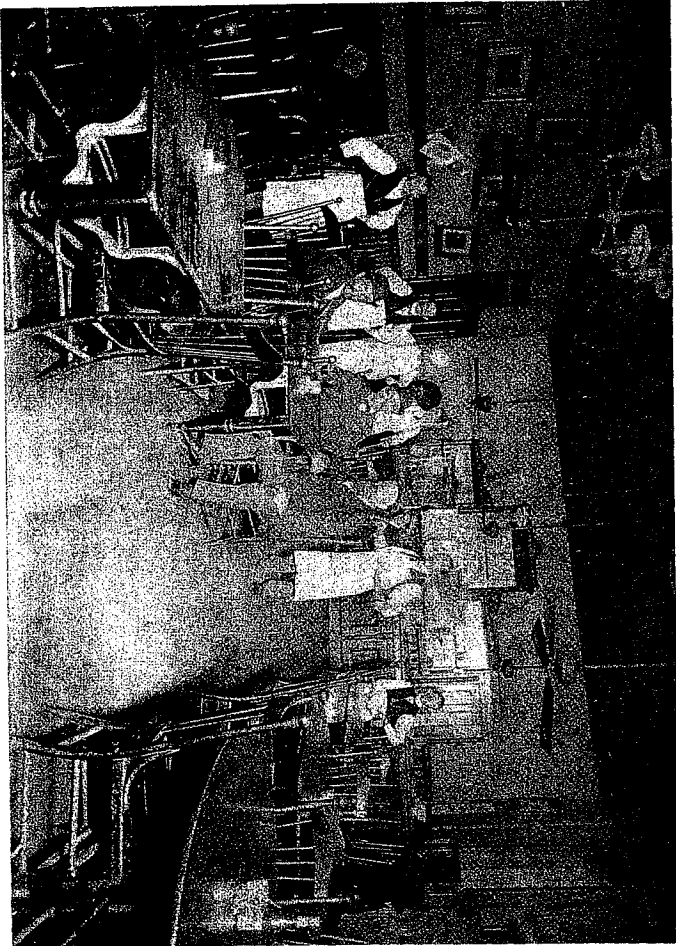
MAIN STREET, LOOKING SOUTH FROM BUFFALO BAYOU, 1910.

MAIN STREET, LOOKING NORTH FROM TEXAS AVENUE. 1910.
On the left is the "old" Rice Hotel (formerly the Capitol Hotel), and on the right is the Binz Building.
Note the Foley Bros. store in the next block on the right.



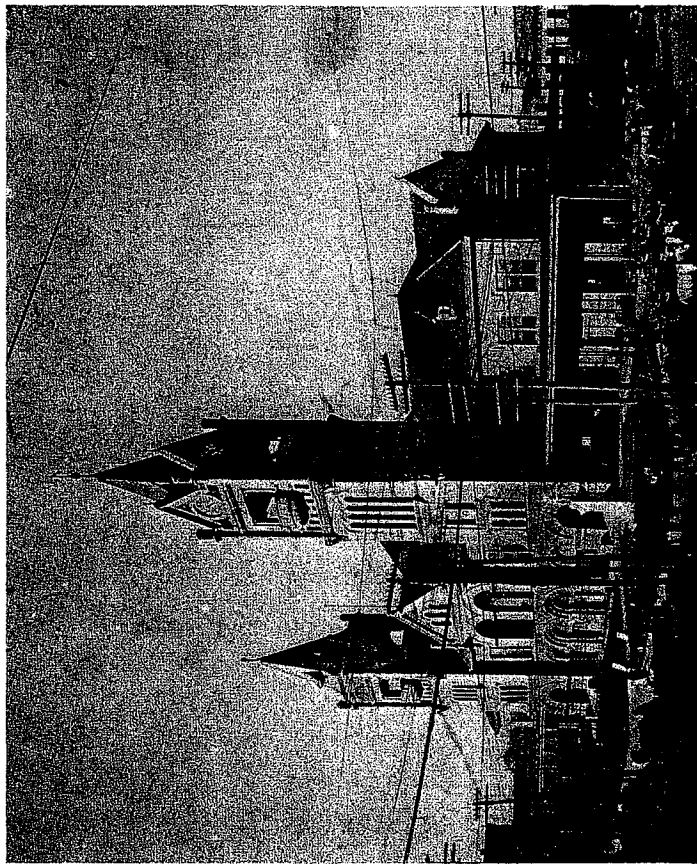
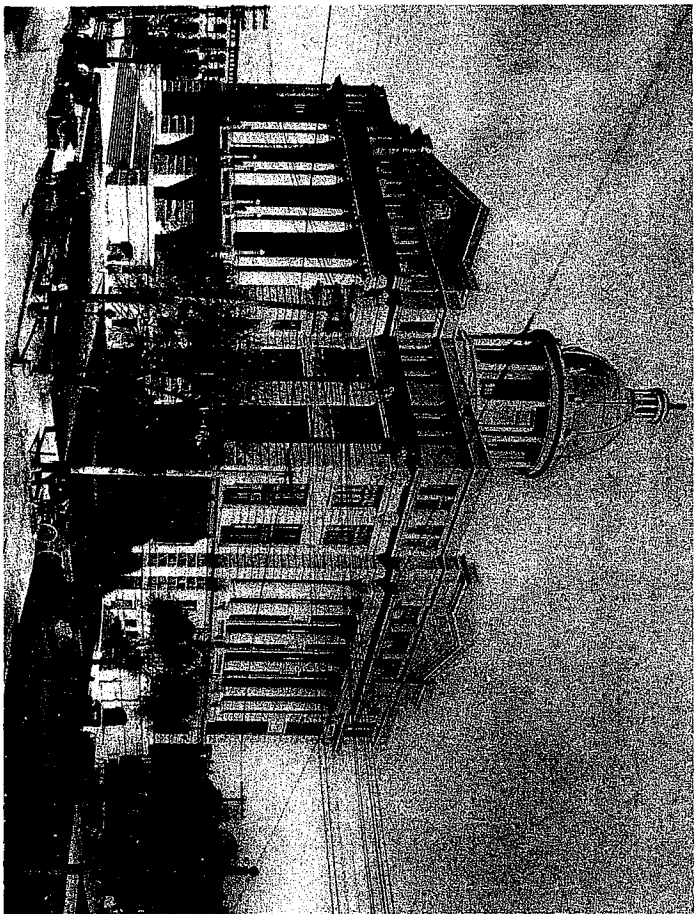
GRAND CENTRAL DEPOT, 704 WASHINGTON, AS IT APPEARED ABOUT 1904.
Completed in 1886, the Depot was replaced in 1934 by the Southern Pacific Station. The "Grand Central" was the center
of a complex of buildings on Washington that catered to travellers.

BIG CASINO SALOON AND RESTAURANT, EMIL CLEDE & HENRY KOENIG, PROPRIETORS, 908 CONGRESS STREET.
Located in the City Hall Market area, the Big Casino was a popular gathering place in downtown Houston. One of its advertisements read, "First-Class Dining Room for Gentlemen, Ladies and Families." This photograph, taken around 1910, is obviously of the downstairs. (Gift of Mrs. John Hoop)

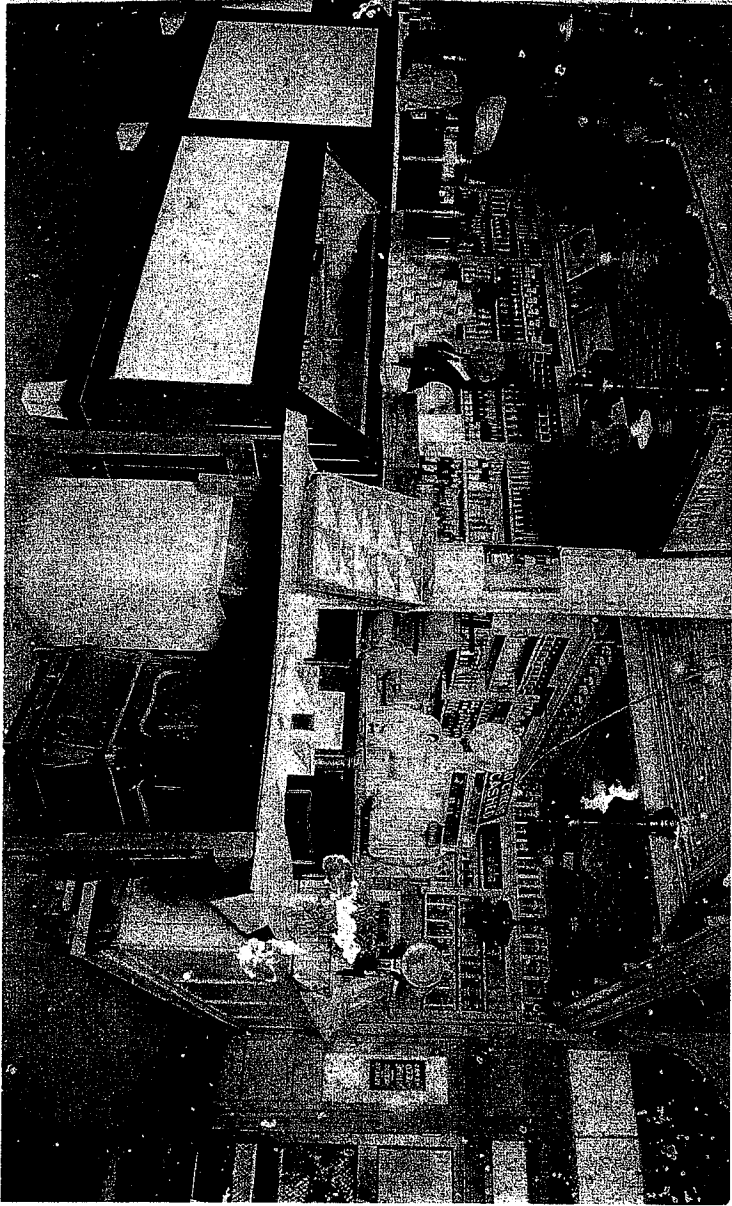


CARTER BUILDING, 806 MAIN STREET.
Completed in 1910, the Carter Building was named for banker S. F. Carter, and was the first "skyscraper" in Houston. Among its tenants in 1910 were Hugh Roy Cullen and Mike Hogg.

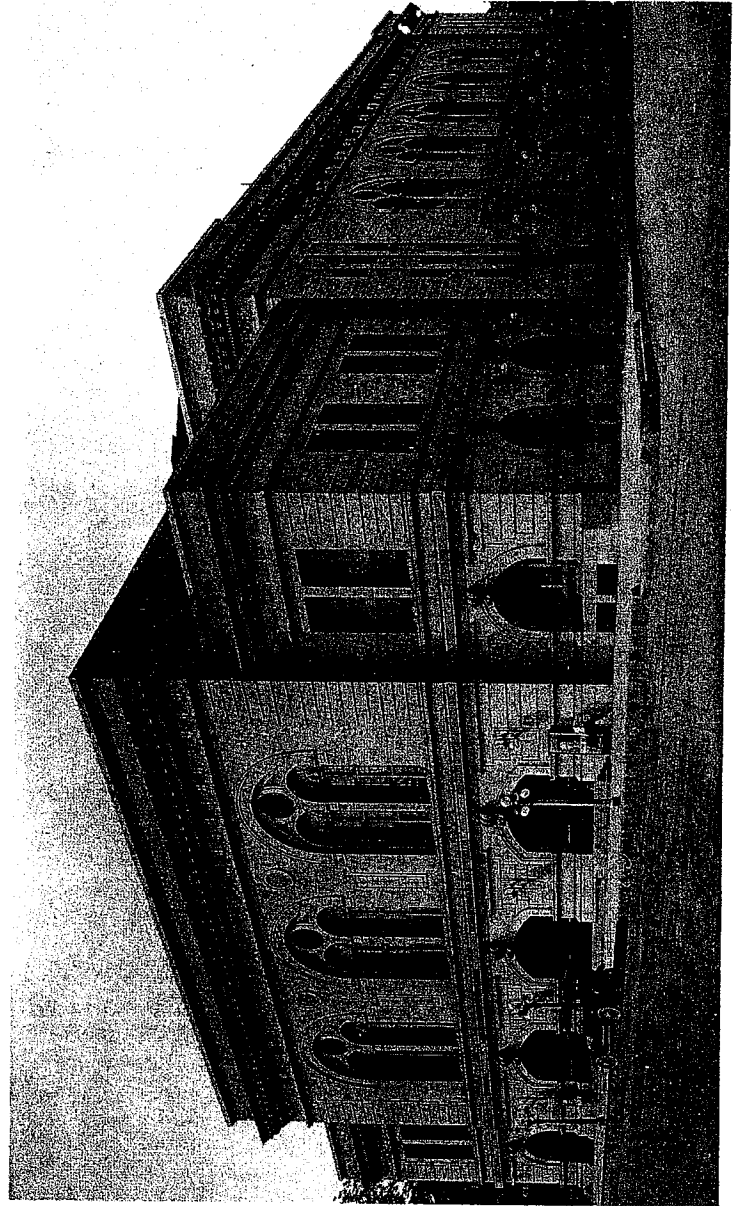
HARRIS COUNTY COURT HOUSE. 1115 PRESTON AVENUE.
This "new" courthouse was finished in 1910, though not dedicated until March, 1911. The \$450,000 cost was a source of local pride in Houston.



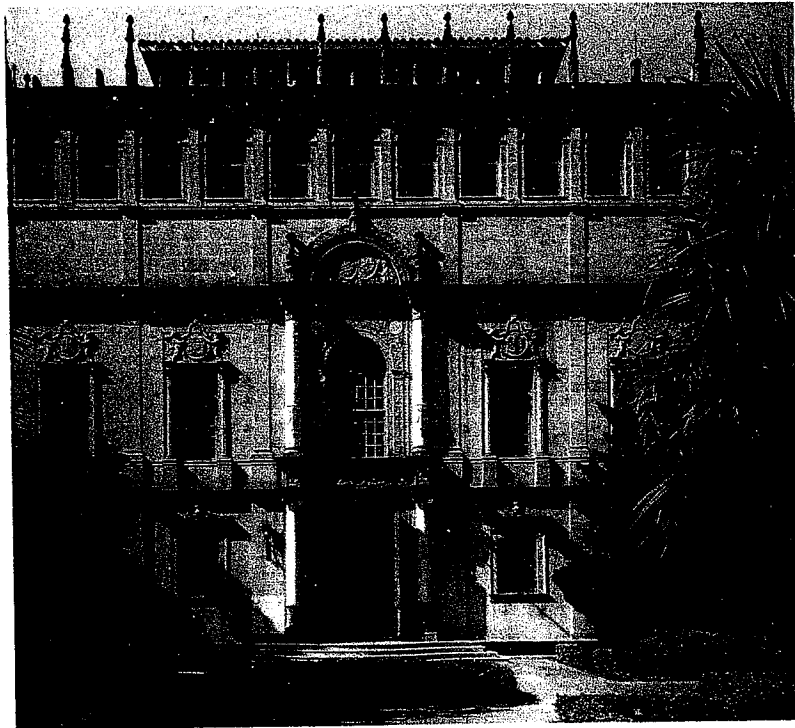
CITY HALL AND MARKET, 809 PRESTON STREET.
This building replaced a structure on the same site in 1901. The Market housed a number of individual retail booths like the one in the accompanying photograph. Two of the booths in 1910 were occupied by produce shops owned by George and John Jamail, forerunners of the Jamail stores today.



INTERIOR OF A POULTRY SHOP IN THE CITY MARKET, CIRCA 1910.
This particular shop was owned by William F. Puls who maintained a store in the market for over two decades.



CITY AUDITORIUM, 704 TEXAS AVENUE, CIRCA 1910.
Construction began on the Auditorium in March 1910, and although it was in use before the year was over, it was not dedicated until the spring of 1911.



THE HOUSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY'S JULIA IDESON BUILDING,
HOME OF THE HOUSTON METROPOLITAN RESEARCH CENTER.

NEWS AND NOTES OF THE HOUSTON METROPOLITAN RESEARCH CENTER

BY DON E. CARLETON

A "News and Notes" section containing information about current Research Center programs and projects and general news about local history developments in the Houston area will be a regular feature of this journal. In future issues, this section will regularly contain an annotated guide to HMRC's collections.

In 1974 the National Endowment for the Humanities awarded \$116,000 to fund a two-year cooperative project of the Southwest Center for Urban Research, Rice University, the University of Houston, Texas Southern University and the Houston Public Library. This project — the Houston Metropolitan Archives and Research Center (HMARC) — was conceived and directed by Harold M. Hyman, Professor of History at Rice University. The purpose of the project was to organize a program that would locate and preserve historical records relating to the development of the Houston area. Located at Rice University during its two-year grant phase, HMARC initiated an oral history project and acquired a core collection of archival and manuscript materials. At the end of its grant-funded phase in May, 1976, the products of the HMARC project were transferred to the Houston Public Library. In the summer of 1976, under the general supervision of its Director, David Henington, the Houston Public Library organized a new division within its system to incorporate and continue the work of HMARC. This division is the Houston Metropolitan Research Center (HMRC).

HMRC seeks to locate, collect, preserve and make usable for research the documentary, oral and visual evidence of Houston's past. In addition, HMRC attempts to raise public awareness about the history of the upper Texas Gulf Coast region through a variety of educational and informational programs. To accomplish these goals, the Research Center has three departments: The Texas and Local History Library, Archives and Manuscripts, and Special Collections.

The Texas and Local History Library, headed by Dorothy Glasser, is a comprehensive collection of published source materials relating to both local and state-wide subjects. The department has 17,000 volumes of books and includes