

From Pastures to South Park to MLK



Pasture photo courtesy of the Library of Congress; South Park and MLK photos courtesy of Katharine Shilcutt and the *Houston Press*.

In the 1970s some Houstonians greeted integration's promise of greater access to educational equality with enthusiasm. This reaction was in part because integration also meant improved employment and housing opportunities for African Americans, Latinos, and women. As better-equipped schools, higher paying jobs, and housing became available, Third Ward's boundaries expanded east, west, and south. Some call this larger area Southeast Houston, others claim it as the Greater Third Ward, and still others declare the Third Ward's boundaries to be wherever you see colored people. Today this ever-growing land base has over 22,000 ethnically diverse residents, nine active civic clubs, and multiple community names like Old Spanish Trail / South Union, Palm Center, Super Neighborhood 68, South Park, Scott Terrace, Foster Place, MacGregor Trails, and Riverside Terrace.

Some say this area stretches south from Wheeler Street bordering Texas Southern University and the University of Houston, east to Spur 5, west to Highway 288, and south to Loop 610. The borders overlap, spreading south into Sunnyside, a semi-rural African American community; west to the ever-expanding Medical Center; and east into Wayside. Today, Latino families, the newest arrivals, are displacing the now aging African Americans who settled into the area's modest homes with spacious yards left behind by whites fleeing integration.

The University of Houston's Center for Public History, which includes the Welcome Wilson Houston History Collaborative, has a long-term commitment to local studies. For almost thirty-five years, *Houston History* and its predecessor the *Houston Review of History and Culture of the Gulf Coast* have published articles that reveal the impact of urbanization, with its constant shifting of living patterns over time.

The articles in this issue illustrate the process of change over 175 years from the 1840s to the present. The revealing stories about Palm Center, the Kuhlmann Family, Kuhlman Gully, MacGregor Park and its Homer T. Ford Tennis Center, prominent minister Overseer R. L. Braziel,

“Home: A place that provides access to every opportunity America has to offer.”

—Anita Hill,
Reimagining Equality: Stories of Gender, Race, and Finding Home, epigram.

and METRO's Purple Line opening reflect the ethnic footprints left to us by the area's residents. These articles also illustrate the many ways that the different ethnic groups have searched for home, place, and community.

These stories enable us to understand on a personal level how race, income, and geography have shaped neighborhoods. We have also posted additional articles on the website that deepen our understanding of what is happening in Houston's underserved communities today. The mix of personal and local histories within the con-

text of academic research and community activism help us comprehend how gentrification and demographic inversion have happened in the past and are still happening in Houston through massive residential and commercial construction and community displacement.

Houston History now publishes two printed issues and one digital issue each year. The digital format provides expanded content through online articles, videos, photographs, and streamed and transcribed interviews. Please visit www.houstonhistorymagazine.org and enter the subscriber password to take advantage of this additional material.

As guest editor of this issue, I gained much knowledge from *Houston History*'s back issues, which provided valuable insights into how we can use our changing views of home, community, and place to help facilitate Houston's ongoing metamorphosis into a twenty-first-century global city. The Welcome Wilson Houston History Collaborative is a storehouse of knowledge about our region and its past. Through the articles in *Houston History* and the oral histories and archives from which these articles were written,

I have gained a better appreciation of public history's role within history's academic traditions and hope to share these findings with you, our readers.

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