

and where with the focus upon Magruder's battle. As such, it is an excellent, readable, well-researched presentation.

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Foresight Built the Rosenberg Library's Archives

Casey Greene

The Rosenberg Library in Galveston has long been recognized for its significant historical collections. In 1923, the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* called them "a veritable treasure, undoubtedly the most important in the State except those at Austin."¹ Today, they constitute the core of the Galveston and Texas History Center, one of the Library's most prestigious departments.

The genesis of this collection predates the opening of the Rosenberg Library's building to the public in 1904. On August 3, 1871, some twelve men founded the Galveston Historical Society, adopting the constitution and by-laws of the New York Historical Society. They sought to acquire and preserve papers, maps, and artifacts "that may serve to illustrate the general history of Texas, and of localities and events therein."² The founders had the foresight to recognize the value of documentary materials that would likely have been lost or destroyed in later years.

By 1875, they had collected a variety of papers, including those of Lorenzo de Zavala, the first vice president of the Republic of Texas; those of merchant and land agent James Morgan; as well as a narrative of the Mier Expedition by Joseph D. McCutchan.³ The Galveston Historical Society engaged in periods of activity followed by inactivity. In 1895, it reorganized as the Texas Historical Society, which aimed to acquire and preserve archival materials and artifacts relating to Texas history. The Society also sought the "promotion of the love of civil and religious freedom by keeping its living memory through discussion and the contribution of papers the glorious deeds of the fathers of the Republic."⁴

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In 1894, the Texas Historical Society deposited its archives at Ball High School's library and, three years later, in the tower room of the local Masonic Temple.⁵ Many materials were lost or damaged there during the devastating Storm of September 8, 1900. Fireproof quarters for the archives became available once the Rosenberg Library's building opened on June 22, 1904. (The Library had been established from a bequest by Henry Rosenberg, a Galveston merchant and banker who died in 1893. Seven years later, the Rosenberg Library Association was chartered to carry out the provisions of his will.) In November 1905, the Texas Historical Society held its first meeting in the Rosenberg Library. Its secretary announced that the Library had provided a room for storing the archives, which had been kept on site since September 1904.⁶

In 1920, Dr. Charles W. Ramsdell, a history professor at the University of Texas at Austin, asked that these materials be transferred to the University. His justification was the Society's lack of activity and difficulty accessing its materials. However, the Texas Historical Society declined his request.⁷ In May 1921, it requested the Rosenberg Library to serve as "the official Custodian" of its holdings, with the Society retaining ownership.⁸ Ten years later, the Library's Board of Directors enthusiastically accepted the Society's gift of its archives, to be incorporated with other historical materials the Library had collected.⁹

Under Frank Chauncy Patton, who served as Librarian from 1903 until his death in 1934, the Rosenberg Library acquired Texas and local history materials of its own.¹⁰ By the early 1920s, holdings included papers of attorney Peter W. Grayson, Henry M. and Charles W. Trueheart, and entrepreneur and banker Samuel May Williams.¹¹ Staff members recorded archival materials in an accessions list on cards, bundled the materials together, and filed them. In 1929, they prepared a typed chronological list of manuscripts donated and loaned to the Rosenberg Library. Another list was prepared from 1929 to 1934, but after that date materials were only listed on accessions cards. In January 1942, the Library opened the Winterbotham Room, which featured a microfilm reader, for the storage of its Texas collection.¹²

During the 1950s, the historical collection was organized as follows: Books, bound pamphlets, and bound magazines were kept in the Texas Room on the main floor. Newspapers were in the Winterbotham Room and the attic, whereas manuscripts were filed in the Winterbotham Room. The Rosenberg Library still awaited adequate space and staff for a fully functioning archives. According to Ruth G. Nichols,

The ideal development would be to have a full time person in charge of the Archives in the Winterbotham Room, the

Room there being open to serve the public at stated hours . . . and all use of the Room and the Archives limited to these hours and done under the supervision of the Archivist and not merely an adjunct of the Reference Department.¹³

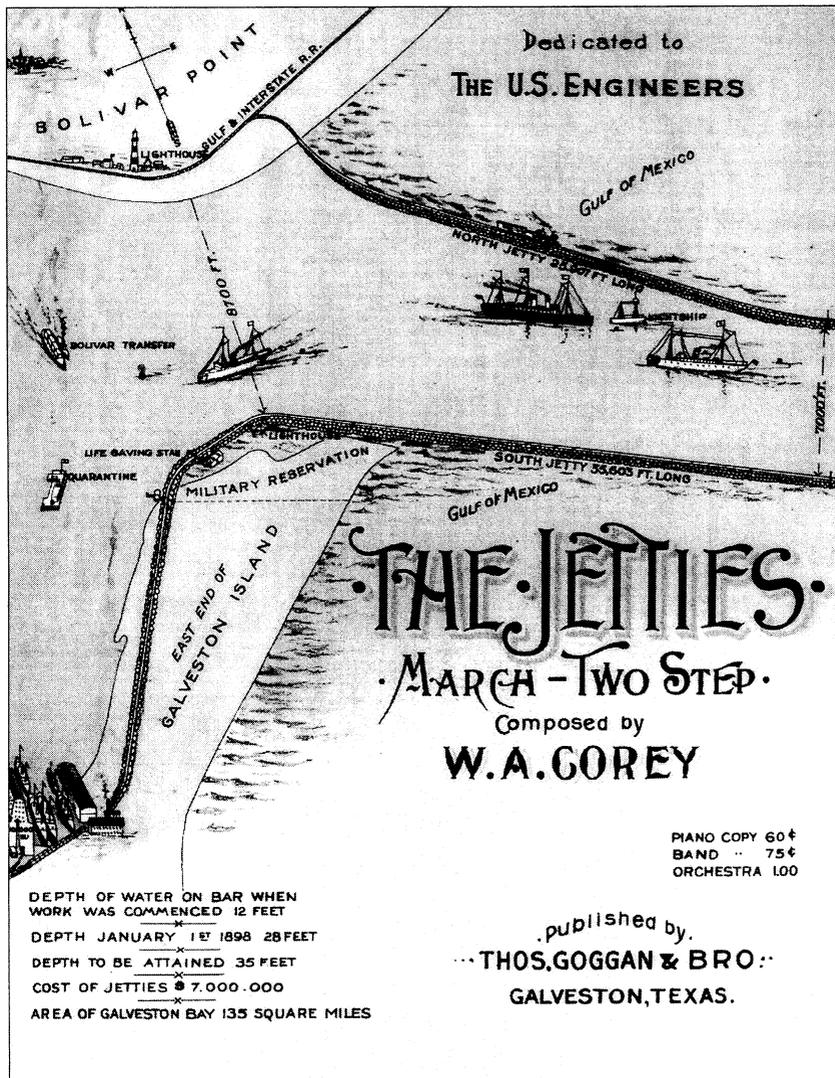
The Rosenberg Library outgrew its original building in the 1960s. Between 1968 and 1971, it spent \$1.8 million on construction of the Moody Wing, which more than doubled the Library's space. Its completion finally meant space for the archives, including a reading room and a fireproof and climate-controlled vault.¹⁴ Much of the archives collection, however, remained in storage in the attic of the original building. In 1976, the Library received confirmation of a grant for \$12,580 from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, with the goal of providing access to the archives.¹⁵

The Archives Department assumed its current identity in 1983 when the Board of Directors approved archivist Jane Kenamore's request to change its name to the Galveston and Texas History Center.¹⁶ In 1985, the History Center merged with the Fox Rare Book Room and the Museum to form Special Collections. This organization continued until 1994, when the Museum returned to being a separate department.

Today, the Galveston and Texas History Center serves a multifaceted mission. Professionally trained archivists collect, preserve, organize, and service materials which document the history of Galveston and Texas. They also conduct oral history, public programming relating to the history of Galveston, and professional development. Approximately 3,800 researchers, such as scholars, school students, historic preservationists, genealogists, local residents, and tourists, annually visit the History Center. Over the years, authors have produced numerous books from its holdings. Some of these works survey Galveston's history, or examine specific periods of its development, while others focus on particular holdings.¹⁷

The History Center collects materials pertaining to all aspects of Galveston from its incorporation in 1839 through the present, although Texas history holdings are limited to the Spanish period through the end of the Civil War. A formal Collection Development Policy, which the Library's Board of Directors approved in 1994, guides acquisitions. Materials reflect the diverse manner in which people and organizations record their thoughts, perceptions, experiences, and activities on paper and film, and in electronic form. These materials are organized by type, and detailed inventories and indexes provide access to them.

The book component numbers approximately 14,000 volumes. The History Center has Galveston city directories, 1859-current, and local telephone directories from 1904 to present. Also available are a number of popular



Courtesy of The Rosenberg Library

Figure 1 - "The Jetties," composed by W.A. Corey, 1898
(Sheet Music Collection, #103)

accounts of the 1900 Storm published shortly after its occurrence, souvenir booklets with drawings and photographs of Galveston, circa 1890-1910, and several copies of *Art Work of Galveston*, a photograph album of various local buildings and sites published in 1894. The book collection also includes transcriptions of original manuscripts owned by the Rosenberg Library, such as *Record of Interments of the City of Galveston, 1859-1872*, and *Record of Interments of Galveston, Texas, Volume II, May 1878-Nov. 1882*. Also available is a selection of fiction about Galveston and by Galveston authors. The History Center's holdings of annuals of Ball High School are especially popular with researchers.

Manuscripts occupy approximately 2,500 linear feet of shelf space. The History Center is well known for its collections documenting early Galvestonians and figures prominent in early Texas. Holdings include papers of Gail Borden, Jr., 1818-1897 (with his patent for the meat biscuit, one of his inventions) and James Morgan, 1809-1881 (which document his role as Commandant of Galveston Island during the Texas Revolution). They also include papers of Samuel May Williams, businessman and the father of Texas banking, 1819-1864, and James A. Sylvester, one of the captors of General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, 1836-1883.

Milestones in Galveston's past are also well represented. Civil War manuscript holdings include numerous muster rolls of Confederate units from Texas, accounts of the Battle of Galveston, January 1, 1863 (which ended in a Union defeat), and the logbook of the J.O.L.O., a group of observers who kept watch for Union vessels, 1861. A collection of invitations and programs, many of them colorful, document Mardi Gras, a local tradition since 1867.

Modern holdings include papers of Aaron R. "Babe" Schwartz, an attorney who served in the Texas House of Representatives, 1954-1960, and in the Texas Senate, 1960-1980. His papers include general correspondence, legislative files, and campaign materials (1954-1990). Also available are papers of Sherman B. Wetmore, who chaired the Galveston Chamber of Commerce's Merchant Marine Academy Committee, which led to the creation of the Texas Maritime Academy in Galveston.

The History Center holds records of local businesses, including ledgers and correspondence of Kauffman and Runge, a mercantile firm (1848-1956); correspondence, ledgers and letterpress volumes of H. M. Trueheart & Company, a real estate company (1859-1909); and records, including minutes and journals, of the Galveston Wharves (1854-1943). By far the largest manuscript collection consists of the business records

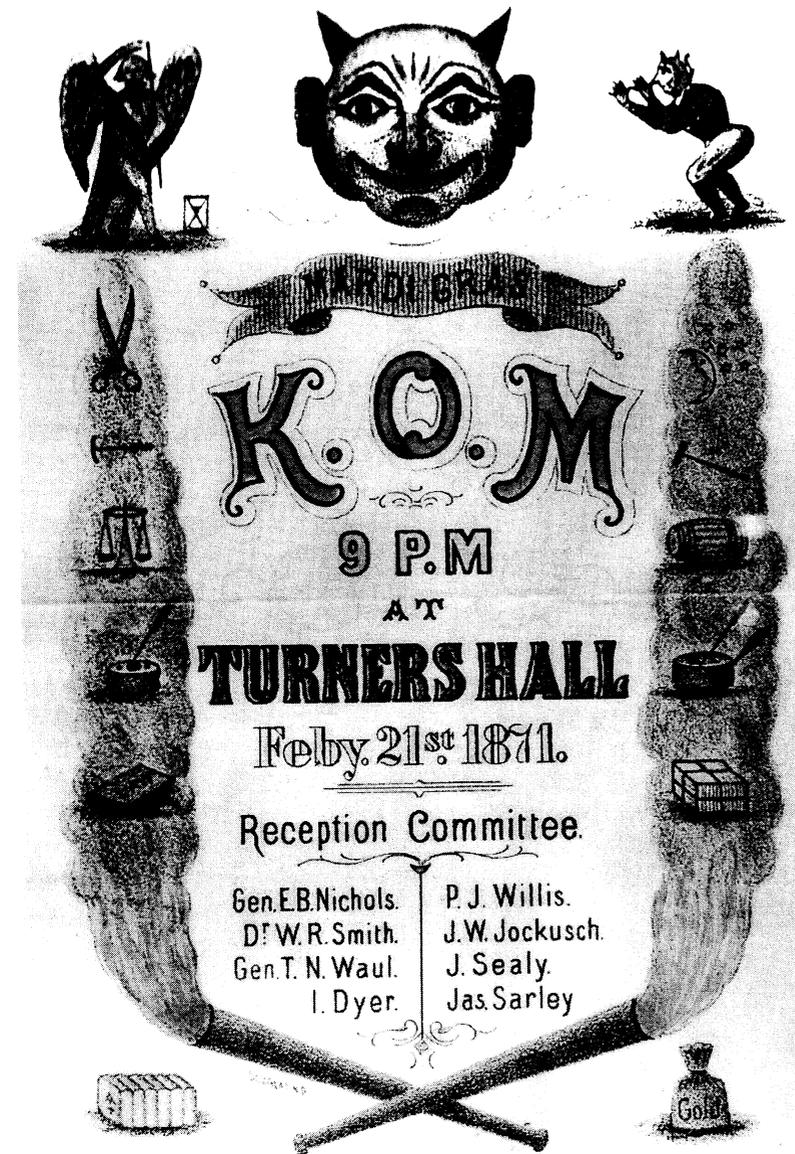
of H. Kempner, Unincorporated (1883-1986), with coverage of banking, cotton, real estate, and sugar refining. Helping round out the historical view of Galveston are the records of local social, civic, and cultural organizations, churches, and the Rosenberg Library.

Architectural drawings include a significant collection of original and duplicate drawings produced by Nicholas J. Clayton (1840-1916), Texas's greatest nineteenth-century architect. His drawings depict many of his Galveston projects, such as the Ashbel Smith Building ("Old Red") at the Medical School for the University of Texas, 1889; Ball High School, 1890; and St. Patrick's Church, 1901. The History Center holds other drawings including: blueprint working drawings of the Rosenberg Library's original building, by Eames & Young, St. Louis, Missouri, 1902; drawings of the Library's Moody Memorial Wing; drawings of the Galveston causeway, 1909; and drawings of selected local properties created for the Historical American Building Survey, 1936 and 1967.

Maps, numbering several thousand, chart Galveston; Galveston Island; Galveston County, Texas; the Gulf of Mexico; and the world. They include a 1721 survey of Galveston Bay by Bernard de La Harpe, commandant of St. Bernard Bay (the earliest map showing Galveston Bay), and *Carta Esferica*, 1799, the first printed map to show Galveston Bay. Other items include William H. Sandusky's official plat of Galveston, 1845; bird's-eye maps of Galveston by Camille N. Drie (1871) and Augustus Koch (1885); a bird's-eye map showing the region lost in the great fire of November 13, 1885; several maps showing the extent of the city's devastation following the 1900 Storm; and plot maps of various local cemeteries. There is a guide to these maps for patron use.

The History Center has approximately 40,000 photographs, primarily of Galveston, subdivided into logical categories. The Name File provides access to portraits of identified individuals and families, filed alphabetically, including aviator Douglas "Wrong Way" Corrigan, former state senator A. R. "Babe" Schwartz, Galveston's Badgett quadruplets, and early Galvestonians, such as Michel B. Menard, who helped found the Galveston City Company. The Street File contains street scenes and images of local buildings. Coverage is heaviest east of 25th Street and north of Broadway. This file includes images of some of Galveston's grandest extant structures including the Walter Gresham residence, now today as the Bishop's Palace (built 1887-1893), and the James Moreau Brown residence (built 1859), currently operated by the Galveston Historical Foundation as the Ashton Villa Museum.

Photo Albums and Special Collections, a separate part of the



Courtesy of The Rosenberg Library

Figure 2 - Program, Knights of Momus (MSS #66-0042, Mardi Gras Collection, Box 1, Folder 2)

photograph component, consist of subject collections, family and topical albums, and the archives of selected photographers. Included are the approximately 3,000 images in the Joseph M. Maurer Collection of Galvestonians and various sporting events (1936-46); the Adrian F. Levy Collection containing photographs of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's visit to Galveston in May 1937 when Levy was mayor; and the Suzanne King Collection, a local documentary project (1979-80). Of special interest are albums concerning the 1900 and 1915 hurricanes; the Hotel Galvez, 1911; City Hall and Auditorium, circa 1920; and Imperial Sugar Company, circa 1930.

Over 150 taped interviews in cassette form comprise the oral history component. These are being transcribed and indexed. Significant narrators include Truman G. Blocker, Jr., M.D. (1909-1984), president emeritus of the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston; businessman and civic leader Harris L. Kempner (1903-1987); and attorney Adrian F. Levy (1895-1991). Major topics include the adoption of the council/manager form of local government (approved by voters in 1960); African Americans, desegregation and civil rights; and gambling.

The History Center has an extensive collection of Galveston newspapers, (1838-present). These include bound issues of the *Galveston Daily News* (established in 1842, it is the state's oldest surviving newspaper) and the *Galveston Tribune*, 1885-1965. A card index to the *News* dating back to circa 1900 is available, as is a comprehensive on-line index, 1880-1900. The latter index accesses Galveston personal and corporate names, locations, and subjects. Specialized newspaper titles include various local African-American newspapers, such as the *City Times* (1900-1927), and local labor newspapers, (1906-1950). The History Center also has a collection of 1900 Storm newspapers which were published in cities around the country.

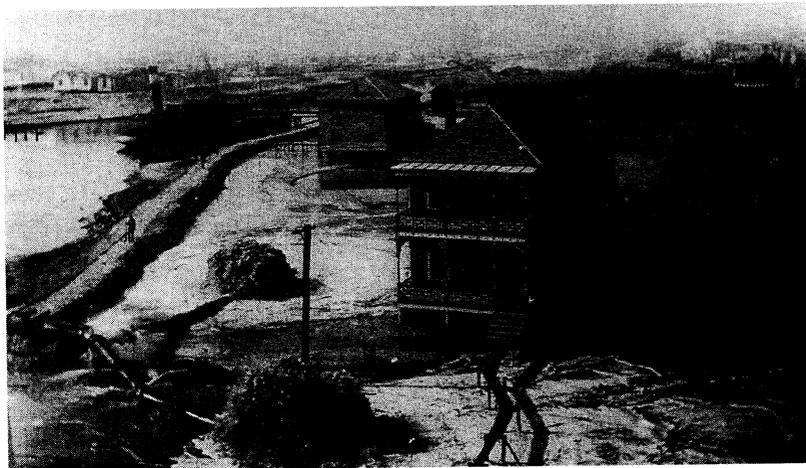
The vertical file, known as the Subject File, runs ninety linear feet. It has miscellaneous printed matter, such as announcements, brochures, fliers, and newspaper clippings. It covers local businesses, churches, and social organizations and specialized subjects, including Galveston's "firsts" and Juneteenth, which originated in Galveston. The Subject File also has biographical and genealogical information on Galveston families and early Texans.

One of the most unusual holdings, the Sheet Music Collection, embraces works on Galveston subjects, compositions by or about Galvestonians, patriotic scores, and compositions related to Texas and the South. Scores concerning Galveston include "The Galveston Fire of 85 [1885]," "The Galveston Catastrophe: A Descriptive Piece," 1900, and "My Galveston Gal," 1933.



8039. THE MURDOCH BATH HOUSE
GALVESTON, TEXAS.

Courtesy of The Rosenberg Library



The "raising" of Galveston in 1905 made the city less vulnerable to hurricanes such as the one which virtually destroyed the Island City in 1900.

Photo Courtesy of The Rosenberg Library

This brief overview gives only a rough idea of the breadth and depth of the Galveston and Texas History Center's holdings. The foresight of the founders of the Galveston and Texas historical societies, as well as Librarian Frank Patten and staff members who have served at the Rosenberg Library over the decades, made it possible for the History Center to evolve into a fine archives. Yet more challenges await with the advent of the new millenium. The Internet, for example, offers exciting new possibilities for making historical materials instantaneously accessible to a huge audience. The Rosenberg Library, in fact, is serving as a charter member of the Texas History Internet Consortium, with the intent of placing the majority of its archives on the worldwide web. Vision and foresight will once again be necessary to make this goal a reality.

NOTES

¹"Notes and Fragments," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* (October 1923) 169.

²Galveston Historical Society Papers, 78-0003, Box 1, Folder 1, Historical Society Series, No. 1, *Reminiscences of the Texas Republic*, "Preliminary Notice of the Historical Society of Galveston," 1875 [hereafter cited as "Preliminary Notice"], viii; Box 1, Folder 10, clipping, *Galveston Daily News*, [November 23, 1886]. Among the materials the Society collected were letters, journals, diaries, narratives, minutes, books, and pamphlets.

³"Preliminary Notice," ix-xi.

⁴Galveston Historical Society Papers, 78-0003, Box 1, Folder 2, Articles of Incorporation of the Texas Historical Society; incorporated October 29, 1894.

⁵Galveston Historical Society Papers, 78-0003, Box 1, Folder 10, Texas Historical Society minutes, November 10, 1894, 7-8; Feb. 8, 1897, 53; and April 12, 1897, 54.

⁶Rosenberg Library *Bulletin*, March 1914, Annual Report for 1913; Rosenberg Library Records, 79-0005, Board of Directors minutes, April 29, 1931, Exhibit B, Resolution, 83; Galveston Historical Society Papers, 78-0003, Box 1, Folder 8, minutes, 67.

⁷Galveston Historical Society Papers, 78-0003, Box 1, Folder 10, Texas Historical Society minutes, January 6, 1920, 71. Ramsdell (1877-1942) authored *Reconstruction in Texas* (1910) and other works.

⁸Rosenberg Library Records, 79-0005, Board of Directors minutes, May 18, 1921, 277.

⁹Rosenberg Library Records, 79-0005, Board of Directors minutes, April 29, 1931, Exhibit B, Resolution, 83-5.

¹⁰Patten, a native of Rochester, New York, previously served as Librarian of the Helena, Montana, public library. He had also been Assistant Librarian of the New York Public Library, in charge of Genealogy and Local History at the Lenox Library. He belonged to the American Historical Association, Texas State Historical Association, Mississippi Valley Historical Association, and Texas Historical Society. Mel Jordan, "Frank Patten and the Rosenberg Library," *East Texas Historical Journal* (Fall 1976) 12. Frank C. Patten Papers, 78-0019, Autobiographical Statements, Box 1, Folder 3.

¹¹*Mississippi Valley Historical Review* (December 1923) 341-4, in Rosenberg Library Records, 79-0005, Box 18, Folder 7.

¹²*Galveston Daily News*, January 18, 1942.

¹³Rosenberg Library Records, 79-0005, Box 18, Folder 9, "Development of the Archives Department," by Ruth G. Nichols, February 1956, 5-6, 26.

¹⁴Rosenberg Library begins New Era of Service to Galveston," *Texas Libraries*, Spring 1972, pp. 50, 56. The Moody Foundation provided a grant of \$500,000 in 1968 for construction of the wing, followed by another grant of \$250,000 in 1971.

¹⁵Rosenberg Library Records, 79-0005, Board of Directors minutes, October 20, 1976, [1]. The grant was for one year and provided for an archivist and an assistant. A copy of the proposal is included as an addendum to the Board minutes of April 6, 1976.

¹⁶Rosenberg Library Records, 79-0005, Board of Directors minutes, July 20, 1983, 2.

¹⁷Surveys include Early Wesley Fornell, *The Galveston Era: The Texas Crescent on the Eve of Secession* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961) and David G. McComb, *Galveston: A History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986). Works based on particular holdings include Edward B. Williams, *Rebel Brothers: The Civil War Letters of the Truehearts*, Harold Hyman, *Oleander Odyssey: The Kempners of Galveston, Texas, 1854-1980s* (College Station: University of Texas Press, 1990), and Margaret Swett Henson, *Samuel May Williams, Early Texas Entrepreneur* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1976). Current works by authors who used the History Center extensively include Edward T. Cotham, Jr., *Battle on the Bay: The Civil War Struggle for Galveston* (Austin: University of Texas Press, c1998), Richard V. Francaviglia, *From Sail to Steam: Four Centuries of Texas Maritime History, 1500-1900* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), and Earle Young, *Galveston and the Great West* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, c1998).

¹⁸See Henry G. Taliaferro, comp.; Jane A. Kenamore and Uli Haller, eds., *Cartographic Sources in the Rosenberg Library* (College Station: Published for the Rosenberg Library by Texas A&M University Press, c1988).