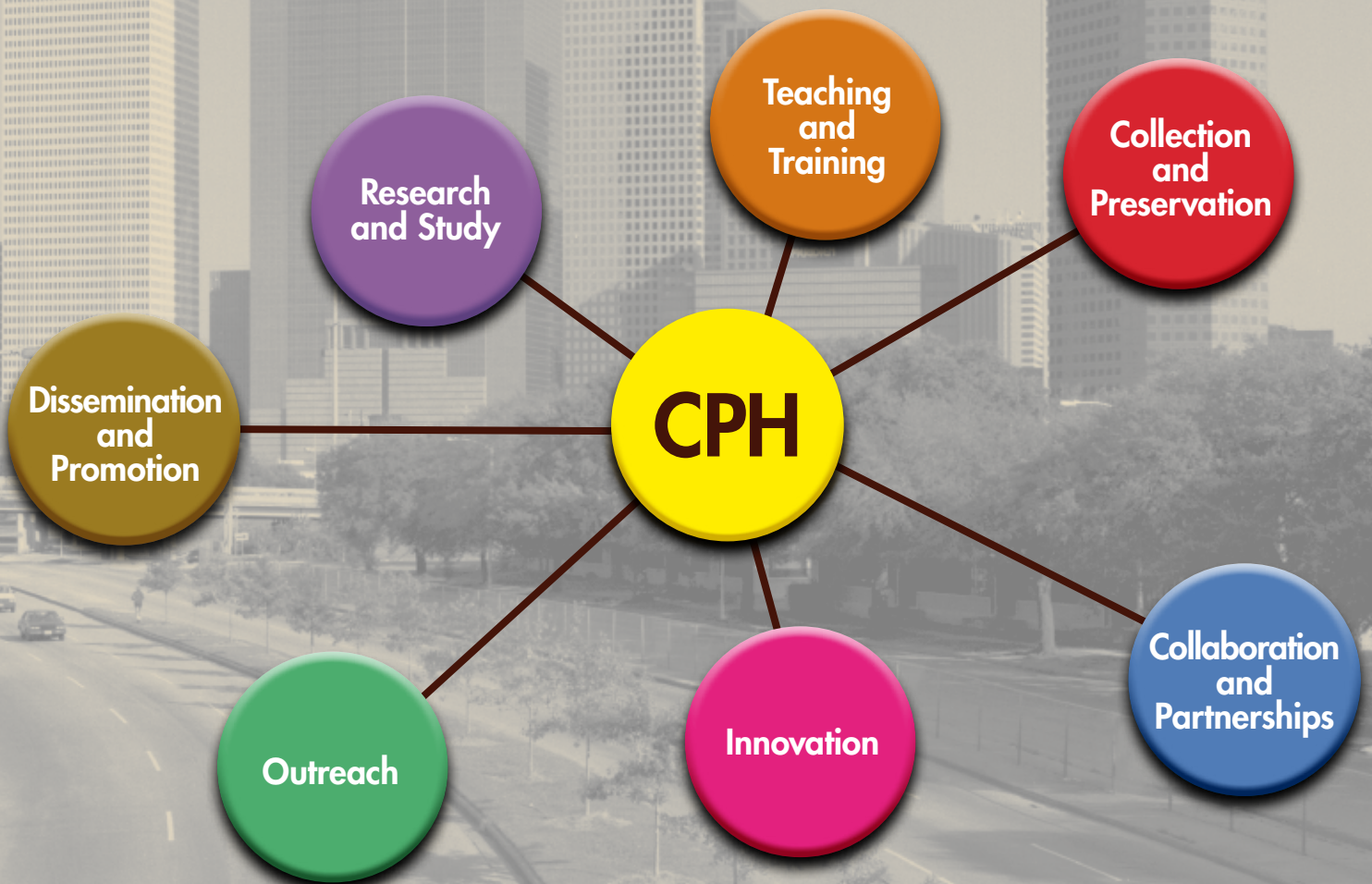


Houston HISTORY

VOLUME 12 • NUMBER 2 • SPRING 2015

HISTORY MATTERS 30th Anniversary of the Center for Public History



UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

PUBLISHED BY
WELCOME WILSON HOUSTON HISTORY COLLABORATIVE

28½ Years



Joseph A. Pratt

Marty Melosi was the Lone Ranger of public history in our region. Thirty years ago he came to the University of Houston to establish and build the Center for Public History (CPH). I have been his Tonto for 28½ of those years. Together with many others, we have built a sturdy outpost of history in a region long neglectful of its past.

“Public history” includes historical research and training for careers outside of writing and teaching academic history. In practice, I have defined it as historical projects that look interesting and fun.

In the early years of CPH, the Tenneco Distinguished Lecture Series was great fun. Tenneco’s endowment provided funds to bring to UH prominent historians such as David McCullough, Robert Caro, and Daniel Yergin. As the fees for such speakers began to outrun his budget, Marty refocused the series on less publicized, but equally valuable, events sponsored by departments on campus.

Tenneco also funded a library endowment that became the financial foundation of the UH Houston History Archives. Recently I had the chance to return the favor by helping a group of retired Tenneco executives write a fond remembrance of the history of what I still consider the best Houston-based company ever. Throughout its history, CPH has organized the funding and researchers to write similar histories of other prominent regional organizations and biographies of Houstonians.

We also have organized conferences on issues important to our region. Three of these—on our region’s environmental history, energy policy in the 1970s, and Houston and other cities as energy capitals—have produced published volumes of essays.

The Tenneco book project highlights a central function of CPH, the training of students to do historical research and writing. Tenneco’s history began when a group of outstanding Ph.D. students conducted research on existing sources for the project. One student then took the topic for his dissertation, and his completed thesis became a point of departure for writing the book.

Outstanding students have always been our ace in the hole. Two clusters of Ph.D.s stand out. In the 1980s and 1990s, an excellent cohort of African American history students arrived at our door. They produced extraordinary research on Jim Crow Houston. Better yet, they filled the seminar room with enthusiasm and shared progress, teaching me as much as I taught them. Another memorable cluster of graduate students came together in the recent past to study energy and environmental history. Again, their sense of common purpose and the importance of their research created an outstanding intellectual climate. CPH is proud to have helped UH establish a national reputation

for excellence in the fields of African American history and energy/environmental history—and to have generated new knowledge about these issues as they affected the Houston region, broadly defined.

Around the turn of the century, the Houston Public Library announced that it would stop publishing the *Houston Review of History and Culture* after twenty years. CPH decided to take on this journal rather than see it die. We created the Houston History Project (HHP) to house the magazine (now *Houston History*), the UH-Oral History of Houston, and the Houston History Archives. The HHP became the dam used to manage the torrent of regional history pouring out of CPH.

Establishing the HHP has been challenging work. We changed the format, focus, and tone of the magazine to reach a broader audience, which has been easier said than done. Applying for grants was no fun, but reading letters announcing substantial grants from the Houston Endowment and other foundations was pure joy. Finding good students to staff these endeavors while juggling the demands of their graduate programs proved difficult, but when the staff came together, we created a pleasant place where “work” often seemed like play.

For thirteen years HHP has provided useful training and funding for students. Standout teams of student editors include Jenna Berger and Leigh Cutler, Kim Youngblood and Katie Olivares, and Debbie Harwell, Aimee Bachari, and Natalie Garza. The late Ernesto Valdés is in the HHP Hall of Fame for his work on the oral history and his fun-loving spirit. Always ready to help have been long-term supporters and friends, led by Bill Kellar, Barbara Eaves, Steven Fenberg, Betty Chapman, and Jim Saye. They represent all those who have volunteered for our advisory board.

Our work has made the *Houston History* magazine the best regional history magazine in the nation. Of special note have been issues on San Jacinto, NASA, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, UH, and the Houston Ship Channel, along with many memorable articles by authors who loved history more than getting paid. (Visit our website to see back issues and subscribe.) Writing for the magazine has allowed me to rediscover my own voice after decades of writing academic histories. The archives is a testament to the hard work of Terry Tomkins-Walsh and to the array of important Houston history topics yet to be done. The oral history project has given me an excuse to interview Ben Love, George Mitchell, Mayor Bill White, Larry Dierker, and many other interesting Houstonians.

As my career winds down, the Center for Public History dominates my memories of 28½ years at UH. The Houston History Project, recently renamed the Welcome Wilson Houston History Collaborative in recognition of a generous grant by Welcome Wilson, remains central to my work as a historian of the region where I grew up and have spent most of my adulthood. CPH has created a vibrant, permanent focal point for research and teaching about the history of our region. Long may it run.

Houston History

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HISTORY MATTERS:

30th Anniversary of the Center for Public History

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Houston History is published three times a year by the Welcome Wilson Houston History Collaborative in the Center for Public History at the University of Houston. We welcome manuscripts, interviews, photographic essays, and ideas for topical issues on the history and culture of the Houston region, broadly defined. Please send correspondence to *Houston History*, University of Houston, Center for Public History, 320 McElhinney Hall, Houston, TX 77204-3007 (713-743-3123), or email HoustonHistory@uh.edu.

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COVER: *The CPH Mission Statement states, "As public historians we believe that history matters for understanding the past and to prepare for the future. Ranging from the local to the global, the Center for Public History at UH engages our diverse region as a classroom that offers hands-on experience to launch wide-ranging careers in public humanities, museums and archives, consulting firms, government, and policy analysis. For over 30 years the Center has served as a vital resource for collecting, preserving, and sharing the stories of our international city."*

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A Thirty Year Journey— But Not Over

By *Martin V. Melosi*,
Director, Center for Public History

No sooner had our family arrived in Houston from College Station, Texas, in August 1984 than the powers that be at UH whisked me off to Austin to testify before the Higher Education Coordinating Board. The leadership of the History Department had developed the framework for a public history program the year before, and we now needed State approval to get our new master's degree on the books. The UH Department of History was an entrepreneurial place, envisioning several ways to move beyond a traditional pedagogy and to place its graduate program on the map in a very competitive academic market. Also underway was a grant proposal for the National Endowment for the Humanities—the Humanities and the Professions project—which was meant to connect history, business, and law in both teaching and research by bridging the gap between the academic historical discipline and the professional schools. I could not have been more impressed with the energy of the department when I interviewed in February. Its ambitious goals stretched beyond the conventional activities of my old department and others I had observed. I wanted to be part of such innovation.

Now it was my turn to help advance our new initiative in public history. With a certain gift for gab and an unrealistic sense of confidence, I attempted to convince the board members that our program was ready to be unveiled. (Actually, I was told beforehand that I would not be doing the talking for the university, but at the last minute I was pushed forward to the microphone.) Our team successfully gained State approval, but then came the hard part. The basic blueprint for a degree in public history had been designed by the department chair, Jim Martin, and others. My predecessor, David Hammack, had taught a course or two the previous year. The dean's office and the department gave me a small program office and a few thousand dollars and instructed me to establish an Institute for Public History (IPH) to manage the new degree program. (To make this task more difficult, Houston was in the midst of an energy bust, which jarred its economy.)



Marty Melosi.

All photos courtesy of CPH unless otherwise noted.

The dean and chair intimated that I might also consider establishing some kind of research plan and community outreach activities. Armed with a vague notion of what constituted “public history” and the naïve belief that I actually could fulfill the aspirations of my new department, I introduced myself to colleagues throughout the city who had any resemblance to historians or who operated historically oriented institutions—museums, archives, et al. Ultimately I established the Public History Roundtable that brought together the Houston historical community twice a year to discuss

our mutual interests. Attendance was brisk in the early years, but the roundtable ultimately faded as a useful forum.

The dean also told me that if I wanted IPH to work I needed to raise some money. UH was good at giving its employees a pretty free hand in seeking outside funds—a so-called hunting license—but not great in providing internal resources. Ironically, the university wanted me to run a graduate program residing in the History Department with

no supporting funds. Again, my naiveté was my greatest ally, and I worked diligently to scrape together money wherever I could find it (legally, that is).

Things lumbered along for a year or two until the university hired Joe Pratt as the holder of the first NEH-Cullen Chair in History and Business. Joe and I had been colleagues for many years at Texas

A&M University, and he possessed a deep knowledge of community and corporate history that served our new public history program well. Joe also poured money from his chair into IPH, which helped us turn the corner on several pressing needs. After thirty years he continues to be our most important financial angel—and tireless CPH participant. If the renamed Center for Public History (CPH) can claim any successes during its long life, it is because of collaborations like the one Joe and I forged.



Joe Pratt



Daniel Yergin, author of The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power, Christine Womack, Ken Lipartito, and Joe Pratt at the event sponsored by the Center for Public History to mark the debut of the documentary film based on the book.

No one person made CPH work. I can list scads of people responsible for sustaining the center, and they all deserve recognition. Our current group of Joe Pratt, Debbie Harwell, Lindsay Scovil Dove, Monica Perales, Todd Romero, Terry Tomkins-Walsh, Julie Cohn, Maria Corsi, and several others are typical of how commitment and collaboration work. Among the several deans that we served under, Lois Zamora, John Antel, and John Roberts especially understood what we were trying to do and gave us moral and financial support. Department chairs, such as John Ettling, Tom O'Brien, Joe Glatthaar, Sue Kellogg, and Nancy Young, have been good partners and allies. The spine of our organization always has been our program coordinators starting with Julie Kavitsky, through the long and excellent tenure of Christine Womack, the brief but valuable time of Stephanie Fuglaar Statz, the extraordinary work of Kristin Deville and Wyndham Bailey, and now Maria Corsi.

The years have been filled with many highs and a few unfortunate lows. At times I wondered if we could keep CPH afloat, especially when resources were scarce (which always seems to be the case—ask any director). As weird as it may seem in these modern, technologically sophisticated times, in our first years being able to acquire working and affordable computers was a pipedream. Our first DEC desktops were little more than paperweights. And space always was the final frontier. Beg, borrow, and steal should have been etched above our door.

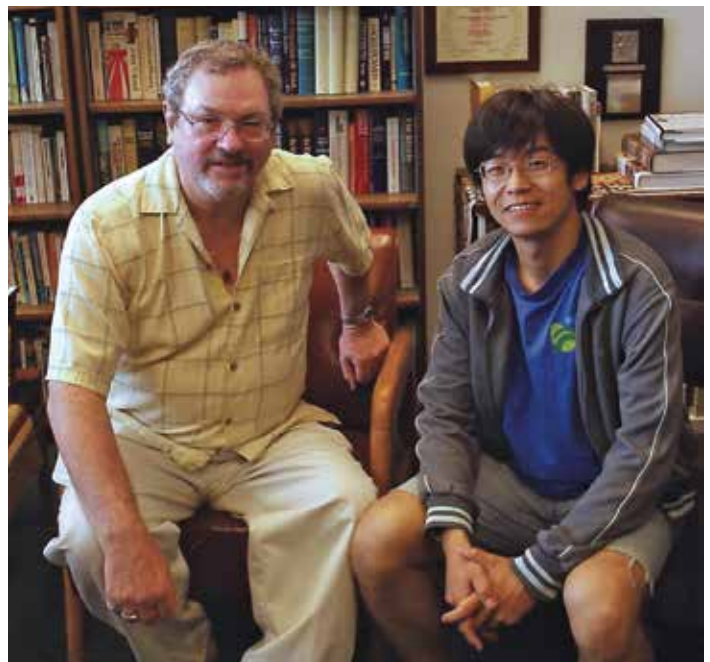
Neither time nor inclination leads me to recount all that went on in our first thirty years, but I do want to identify a few turning points. At the core of what we do is training young historians. Over the years we have ranged from twenty to twenty-five majors and minors per year to as few as five or six. Each student was important, and many went on to fine careers. Our first class had four students—Chris Castaneda, Debbie Griggs Carter, Mark Clark, and Ed Harris. Chris was our first graduate, and among his ac-



Monica Perales.

complishments was becoming a published expert in natural gas history and serving as department chair and director of the public history program at Cal State, Sacramento. Debbie developed an excellent career as an archivist at such depositories as the George H. W. Bush Presidential Library. Mark has been professor of history at Oregon Tech since 1996. And Ed built an outstanding career in institutional development and now has his own consulting firm. We could not be prouder of our students, and we hope to hear from all of them on a regular basis to catch up on their work and families. After many years of operating under the same curriculum, our associate director, Monica Perales, and her committee have given our degree program a fresh look and have recommended changes that will provide us with a better hands-on approach. Students to come will benefit from these changes.

Another key turning point was the transition from the Institute for Public History to the Center for Public History in 2004. The creation of CPH ultimately resulted in a stand-alone entity now operating under the dean in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, rather than as a component of the Department of History. The change also broadened our scope immeasurably. Under CPH's auspices are the Public History Program, the Welcome Wilson Houston History Collaborative, the UH Center for Public History Lecture Series, a training program in energy and environmental history, an active post-doctoral program (including scholars most recently from the U.S., Belgium, China, and Brazil), and a UH faculty affiliate program. Most of these activities resulted from a merger of IPH with major components of the Humanities and Professions Program. CPH also conducts an array of research projects and incubates new programs, such as the Gulf Coast Food Project. Ever since the reorganization, we have viewed ourselves as a campus-



Mao Da, a Ph.D. student in environmental history, came to the University of Houston in August 2008 to study with Marty Melosi as part of a Joint Education Program with the School of History at Beijing Normal University. Marty Melosi coordinated Mao's studies with Professor Mei Xequin at Beijing Normal.



Kathy Brosnan.

wide, multidisciplinary program with an ever-expanding mission. The arrival of Kathy Brosnan to the History Department in 2003 added another important planning voice to CPH. As associate director, among other things, Kathy led the effort to develop a strategic plan for the program that effectively linked all of our activities together. Her uncompromising energy elevated our work to new

levels. Nancy Beck Young became our first public history coordinator from 2008-2012, which indicated how much we needed to broaden CPH's leadership responsibilities.

In December 2012, CPH fulfilled an important and persistent dream of acquiring sufficient space. For several years, we had a few offices in Agnes Arnold Hall, but they were really insufficient to serve all of our functions. Located in McElhinney Hall (with a small annex in Agnes Arnold Hall), CPH now boasts offices for the CPH administration, the Welcome Wilson Houston History Collaborative, post-doctoral offices, storage, a Gulf Coast Food Project office, and shared classroom and meeting space. The Houston History Association (HHA) soon will join CPH as an affiliated organization. The mutual benefit of the affiliation is to provide an institutional base and office space for HHA and to broaden CPH's reach into the Houston community. The talk about space may seem terribly mundane, but aside from the obvious need to house programs and people, the new offices proclaim our identity as an important component of the university. To receive space is to achieve a level of recognition that we have been striving for over many years.

Another turning point occurred in 2014 when former chair of the UH Board of Regents, UH alum, and promi-



Post-doc students and visiting faculty: Thomas Zhang, Yongping Wang, Matt Tribbe, Rick Mizelle, and Isabelle Parmentier.

nent Houston businessman, Welcome Wilson, Sr., gifted \$200,000 for naming rights to what became the Welcome Wilson Houston History Collaborative. The collaborative is responsible for *Houston History* magazine, the UH-Oral History of Houston Project, the Houston History Archives, and the UH Memories Project. Through the good offices of former student and local financial advisor, Chris Cookson, a connection was made between CPH and Welcome Wilson that led to the gift, which provides operating funds and a new endowment for the center. More importantly, the gift from Wilson, who is passionate about Houston history, is a first major step in expanding efforts to broaden and deepen our fundraising activities to preserve the stories of Houston's past.

There are more good days to come for CPH. I know I have left out many important events, activities, and people but also have buried some not-so-happy memories. The staying power of CPH, however, is the collaboration and cooperation of the people associated with it. We have had extraordinary staff members, despite the fact that we pay them too



CPH assistant director Monica Perales interviews Chef Hugo Ortega for the Gulf Coast Food Project, a part of the Center for Public History. The Gulf Coast Food Project promotes the study of food and encourages cross-disciplinary dialogue and interdisciplinary collaboration through the examination of the food that sustains the cultural, economic, and physical lives of our diverse communities.

Photo courtesy of Temple Northrup.



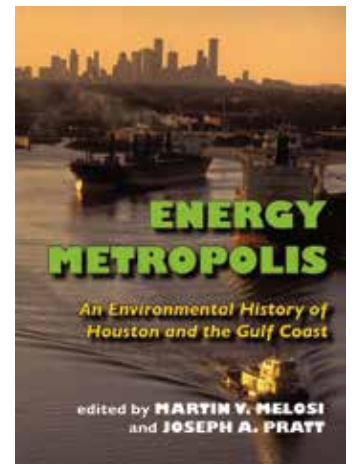
Mayor Annise Parker declared December 11, 2012, Houston History Day and congratulated the Houston History magazine on its tenth year of publication. The Mayoral Proclamation was sponsored by Council Member Melissa Noriega and presented by Council Member Ed Gonzalez. Shown left to right: Council Member Ed Gonzalez, UHAA president Mike Pede, Mayor Annise Parker, and magazine staff members Debbie Harwell, Aimee Bachari, Wyndham Bailey, Ann Lynd, and Natalie Garza. Photo courtesy of UHAA and Jeff Sutton.

little and well below what they deserve in dedication alone. Student aides have buoyed up overworked staffers, and for this we are grateful. We have been able to involve a number of our junior faculty in CPH activities, and I believe that their experiences have led to reciprocal benefits through numerous conferences and colloquia, through research activities such as the food project, the African American Houston Physicians project, and more. We have had valuable associations with several other units on campus, including various departments and centers in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, the Honors College, the Law Center, the

Hilton College, the C. T. Bauer College of Business, the Hines College of Architecture, and especially the Hobby Center for Public Policy.

We have seen myriad publications and research papers on Houston history produced by faculty and students alike that never would have been written without the common bond of the Public History Program and CPH. *Energy Metropolis: An Environmental History of Houston and the Gulf Coast* (2007), which Joe Pratt and I edited, contained chapters from five of our former students—some the very best pieces in the book. We could not have been prouder. The hundreds of events that the lecture series sponsored, the dozens of colloquia and seminars we organized, the national conferences we hosted, and the enumerable lecturers we entertained have added to the university's role as a center of learning. No less important has been community outreach of all kinds. We have much to be proud of on that score as well.

On a personal note, let me observe that I had few expectations coming to UH in 1984 other than accepting what appeared to be an excellent opportunity for a relatively young full professor to build on his career and gain some valuable new experiences.



Released in 2007, *Energy Metropolis* grew out of a conference on the environmental history of Houston and the Gulf Coast held at the University of Houston in 2003. Graduate students in CPH contributed chapters.



University of Houston alumnus and proud Houstonian Welcome Wilson, Sr., stands outside the newly named Welcome Wilson Houston History Collaborative offices that house Houston History and UH-Oral History of Houston, February 2014. The third component, the Houston History Archives, is housed at the UH M.D. Anderson Library.



American Urban History class, Spring 2007, clockwise from bottom right: Marty Melosi, Jason Theriot, Jamie Quiroga, Hunter Lundquist, Jordan Bauer, Matt Christensen, Mao Da, Vicki Myers, and Natalie Schuster. Not pictured: Stephanie Fuglaar.

CANCERPHOBIA
in American History

A lecture by
James T. Patterson
Professor of History
Brown University

Wednesday, August 31, 1988, 7 p.m.

University of Houston

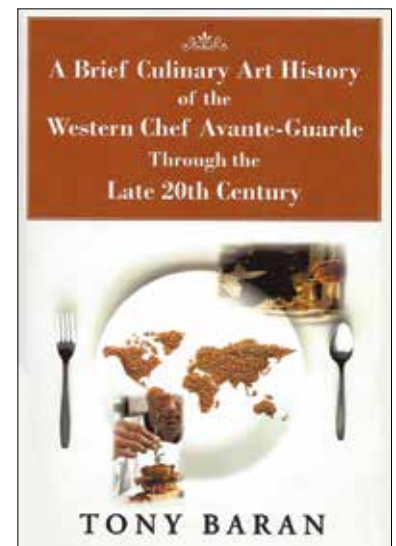
Tenneco Lectures
in Ethics and the
Professions

I had the good fortune—and serendipity—of attending the NEH Summer Seminar in Public History in Tempe, Arizona, in July 1984. What I knew about public history before arriving in Houston I was exposed to there, and I was able to apply much of what I learned in my new job. Yet I came to Houston viewing myself as an academic historian, eager to write more books, looking forward to new students and new courses. I no more saw myself as a public historian as the man in the moon. Had I thought about it for a while, I would have realized what I know now—that I had an abiding interest in connecting my historical scholarship to important issues of the present. The best compliment I ever received was, “Marty writes history as if it matters.”

Coming to Houston I had no idea that history done for the public benefit, history done in the community, history that connected our past with concerns of our own time, would be so important and so satisfying. I would not trade my thirty years of wearing two hats—one as an academic historian and the other as CPH director—for any other professional life. CPH, and especially the people who have helped it to grow, make me delighted to share these few words with you.

Martin V. Melosi is the director of CPH and the Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen University Professor at the University of Houston. His research specialties are urban, environmental, and energy history.

The Tenneco Distinguished Lecture Series, now the Center for Public History Lecture Series, brings many renowned speakers to the university such as historian James T. Patterson, who spoke on campus a few months before the release of his book The Dread Disease: Cancer and Modern American Culture.



A well-known chef and public history graduate, Tony Baran, recently published a book on food as art.

Uncovering the Story of Quality Hill, Houston's First Elite Residential Neighborhood: *A Detective on the Case*

By Sidonie Sturrock

Sometimes the quest to find historical information becomes a story in itself, revealing a different history than expected. My research on Houston's Quality Hill neighborhood began thanks to hints left in unlikely places: two turn-of-the-twentieth-century houses next to Minute Maid Park downtown (a strange juxtaposition visible from Highway 59) and the words "Quality Hill" and "Houston's first elite residential neighborhood" dropped together in an article. Searching for more information and clues to solve the mystery, I imagined that I would eventually come upon a wealth of old, exciting documents that would provide a clear window into Houston's past. But when I searched the keywords "Quality Hill" and found almost

How does an entire neighborhood simply vanish from the historical record? What about the people who lived there?

nothing, I realized things were going to get complicated.

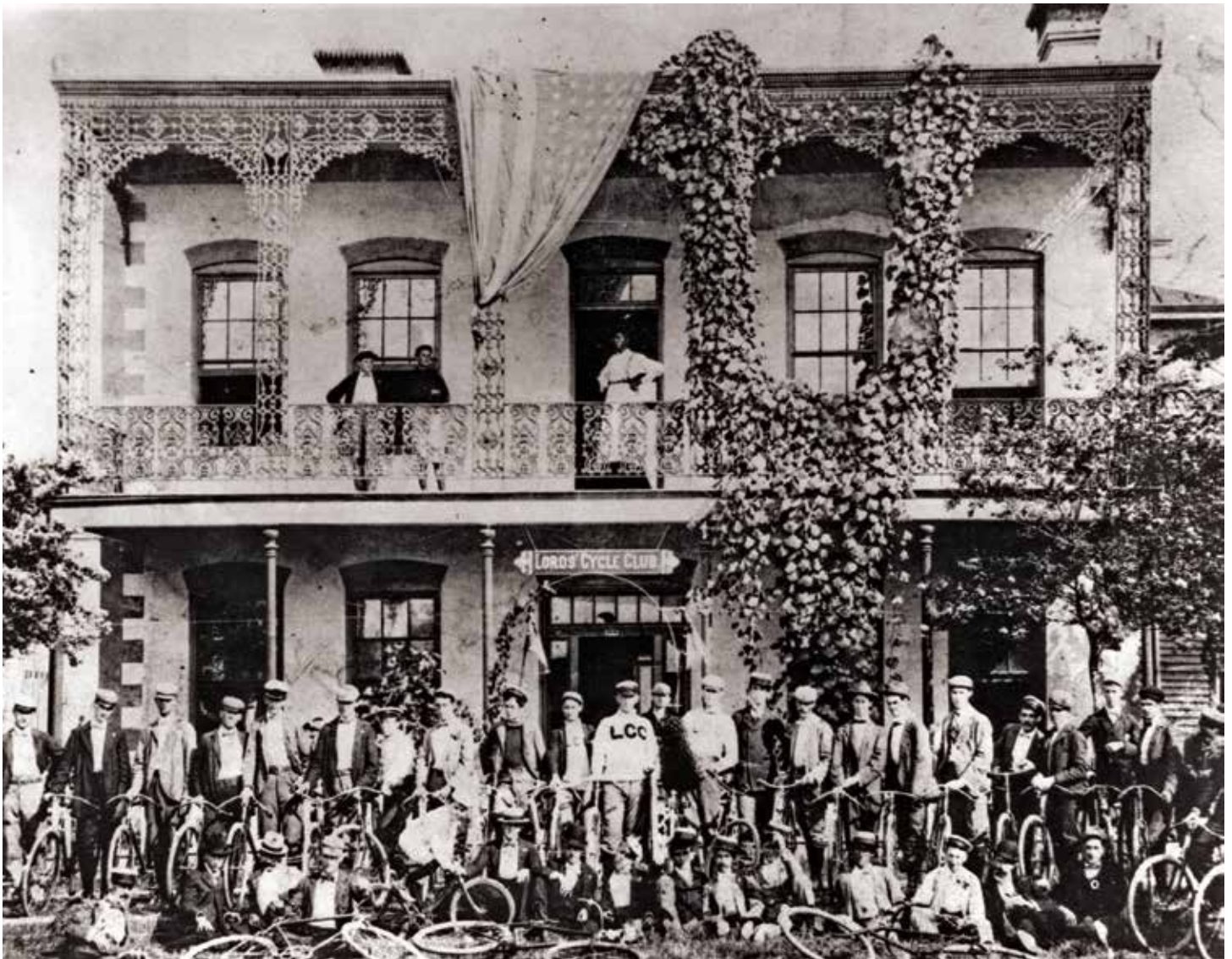
Respected Houston historian Betty Chapman recommended the Houston Metropolitan Research Center (HMRC), part of the downtown Houston Public Library, as a place to look for evidence of the area. I went there hoping to find someone who could point me in the right direction, but even the HMRC staff questioned if I would be able to find much information. Two files specifically labeled "Quality Hill" mostly contained articles written about the area when it was being demolished.

A few names that appeared in the book *Houston's Forgotten Heritage*, a thorough account of early domestic Houston architecture, helped jump-start my project.

Once a thriving neighborhood for Houston's elite, Quality Hill has been all but lost in Houston's history. Map circa 1873.

Map courtesy of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library, Houston, Texas.





Once the home of Houston merchant Charles S. Longcope, this structure became the headquarters for the Lords' Cycle Club in 1897 before being demolished in 1949. Photo courtesy of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, MSS0248-1935.

William J. Hutchins, Cornelius Ennis, William L. Foley, and Arthur B. Cohn all evidently owned houses in Quality Hill and had a significant impact on Houston's early history. Files on all four of these men explained a good deal about their lives and legacies. While Quality Hill itself remained largely a mystery, a picture of what that neighborhood might have been gradually began to take shape.

The research process differed vastly from what I had imagined. As Betty Chapman suggested, I tried to piece together Houston maps with the information I found in books and articles. Near Buffalo Bayou when the bayou was still a natural part of Houston's landscape, the neighborhood took up, at most, five blocks going east to west and three blocks going north to south. The borders, however, are disputed. *Houston's Forgotten Heritage* states that the neighborhood was located along Commerce and Franklin Streets east to west and Chenevert and Carolina (now Caroline) Streets north to south.¹ A local historian and cotton broker who had an office nearby, Jesse Ziegler indicated in his 1934 book *Wave of the Gulf* that Quality Hill was bounded by Buffalo Bayou and Congress Avenue running east to west and Crawford and Austin Streets running north to south.²

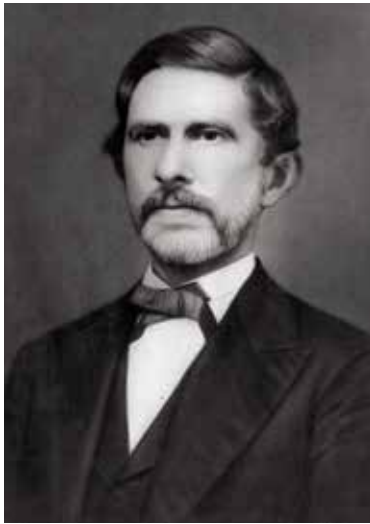
A *Houston Press* article from 1961 said that the area was bounded by Congress, Crawford, Chartres, and Buffalo Bayou.³ Since the neighborhood existed from approximately 1850 to 1930, changes to the boundaries of Quality Hill's very small area might account for these varied descriptions.

Before 1850, most Houston businessmen lived very close to or in rooms that adjoined their places of work. William Marsh Rice, for example, came to Houston from Massachusetts in 1838 and lived above the Milam House, where he found employment furnishing the establishment's bar with liquors.⁴ He did not move into his house on Courthouse Square until around 1850.⁵

One of the first businessmen to build a house in Quality Hill was William J. Hutchins. Although Hutchins was a prominent figure during his time, most Houstonians may only vaguely recognize the name, perhaps in association with Hutchins Street, a modest roadway near downtown. Born in Fishkill, New York, in 1813 and educated in New Bern, North Carolina, he began his career in the mercantile industry in Tallahassee, Florida, in 1835 and three years later began doing business in Houston, where he quickly made a profit in the dry goods business. His reputation for

fair trades and business integrity during the 1840s gained positive recognition for Houston throughout Texas and the northern states.⁶

In 1850 Hutchins built one of the earliest and what was considered one of the finest houses in Quality Hill. It stood on the corner of Franklin Avenue and La Branch Street, near Hutchins's place of business on the corner of Franklin Avenue and Main Street. He constructed the house in a Greek Revival style popular throughout other parts of the South. It featured fluted Ionic columns, a full entablature, and a low-pitched pediment. Its deep moldings, brick fabric, and monumental size suggest just how expensively it was made.



William J. Hutchins.

Photo from the *Mayor's Book* courtesy of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.

During this time in Houston, architects produced drafts of a house's design throughout the building process. The builders themselves took care of the owners' specifications and referenced builders' handbooks to recreate desired details, requiring only rough sketches to get room numbers, sizes, and placements correct. Hutchins's grand house was most likely constructed in this way, indicating the skill and expertise required of its architect-builders.⁷

In 1861, Hutchins started construction on

Hutchins House, the largest contemporary hotel in Texas at the time, which he completed in 1866.⁸ His main contribution to Houston's growth was bringing railroads to Texas as one of the original projectors and stockholders of the Houston & Texas Central Railroad. After managing the railroad company for seven years, including the entire period of the Civil War, Hutchins remained involved with the company until 1880, when he disposed of all his interests in it. He held stocks and served as director for many other area railroads, including the Galveston, Houston & Henderson; the Galveston, Harrisburg & San Antonio; the International & Great Northern; the Texas & New Orleans; and the Houston Tap & Brazoria Railroads. Although he served as Houston's mayor for one term in 1861 and as alderman for several terms, William J. Hutchins's main contributions to Houston were made possible through his business successes.⁹

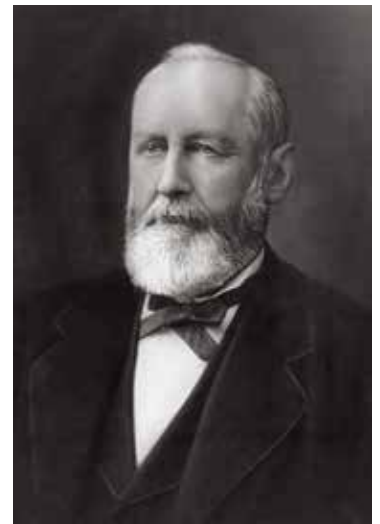
By 1866, the year of Houston's first city directory, other residents of Quality Hill included Charles S. Longcope, another prominent merchant, and B. Tuffly, a confectioner.¹⁰ Longcope, a former Mississippi River steamboat captain, bought a house on Chenevert between Franklin and Commerce in 1865. Originally built in 1859, the house belonged to German baker Michael Floeck before it was deeded to his son, Paul Floeck, and then sold to Longcope who remodeled the house in 1870 as one of Houston's few French Colonial style homes. His additions of expensive, custom-

made iron grillwork from New Orleans, stucco to cover the original brick exterior, and a two-story addition on the back to make space for a ballroom spanning the building's width made Longcope's home a truly impressive addition to the neighborhood. Longcope's office stood nearby on Congress between Main and Fannin, and the *Houston Directory for 1866* lists his profession as "Cotton Factor and Commission Merchant." B. Tuffly's advertisement in the same directory reads: "Manufacturer of all kinds of candies, cakes, etc. Orders from everywhere promptly filled. Franklin Street, Houston, Texas." Tuffly's business on Franklin stood between La Branch and Crawford, and his home was just around the corner on Crawford between Commerce and Franklin.

The earlier families of Quality Hill also included those of James Bute, a paint and oils merchant; Dr. J. Larendon, a druggist; Theodore Keller; W. P. Hamblin, an attorney; and others notable in the Houston community.¹¹ By 1871, Cornelius Ennis, another important pioneer in Houston's development, moved his family into a Greek Revival house on the corner of Jackson and Congress toward the end of an already long and productive career.

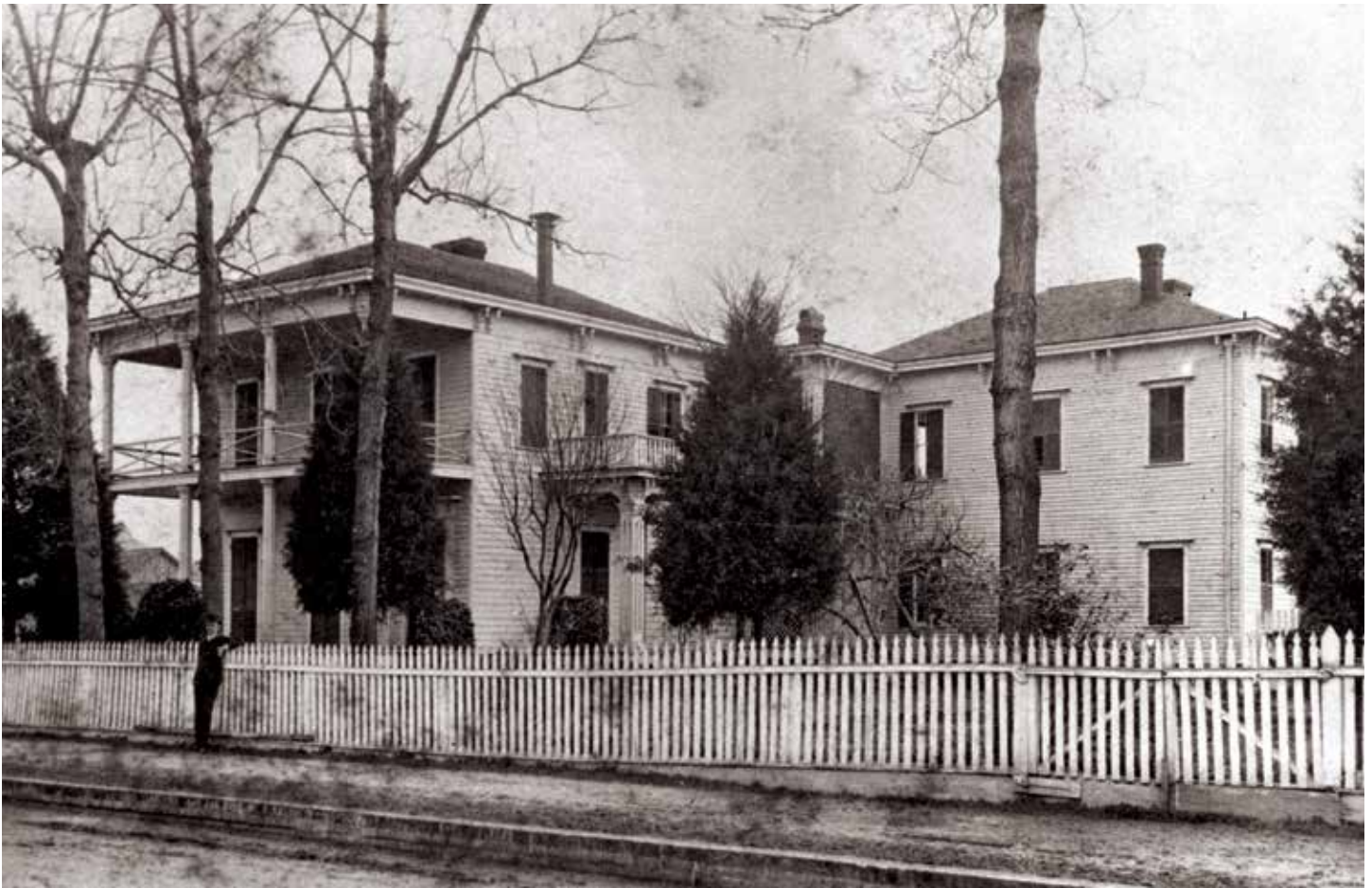
A native of Bellville, New Jersey, Ennis came to Houston in 1839. His determination to reach Texas was brought on by many enthusiastic Texan travelers whom he met in 1837 on a voyage down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers as he searched for a place to "apply his energies." Before arriving in Texas, he returned to New York, where he had gotten his start in the mercantile business in 1834, and then went to Galveston with a stock of dry goods and drugs. Finding Galveston "sparsely settled, without a hotel and without wharves," he came to Houston and totally dedicated himself to the city thereafter. He quickly bought a location on Main Street, which he enlarged into a general mercantile and drug business.¹² Partnering with George Kimball of Vermont around the same time that he opened his business, Ennis and his new partner became Houston's first cotton merchants by 1840. After they shipped the first bale of cotton from Galveston to Boston in 1841, Ennis married Kimball's sister, Jeanette Ingals Kimball, and they went on to have two sons and three daughters over their years together. Shortly after Ennis's marriage, his business partner and brother-in-law died at sea on a business trip to New York.¹³ Ennis, however, was not discouraged and found success as both a cotton shipper and a builder of infrastructure.

He was an early supporter of the "plank" road connecting Houston with Hempstead, now Washington Avenue, and served as general superintendent and comptroller of the



Cornelius Ennis.

Photo from the *Mayor's Book* courtesy of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library.



Cornelius Ennis built this Greek Revival home for his family at the corner of Jackson and Congress.

Photo courtesy of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, MSS0248-0189.

Houston and Texas Central Railroad. In addition to building up the International & Great Northern and Houston Tap Railroads while he served as mayor during 1856 to 1857, Ennis devoted his personal energies to protecting Houston's trade with surrounding territories from what he considered Mexican bandits, renegade Americans, and hostile Indians. His success in driving out these groups allowed the city to expand and develop more rapidly. During the Civil War, Ennis devoted personal time and funds to blockade running for the Confederacy. It was after the war that he continued exporting cotton, now with an office in Galveston, and later moved into his house in Quality Hill. He continued to do business until his death, investing in the *Galveston-Daily News*. His daughters all married rising businessmen, though his sons died at very young ages. Ennis and his wife supported Christ Episcopal Church throughout their lives in Houston, as did many other wealthy Quality Hill residents. Mrs. Ennis in particular gave charitably of her time and funds, most notably helping Houston cope with epidemics of yellow fever.¹⁴

By the time Ennis and his family moved to the Quality Hill area, downtown Houston was already experiencing rapid change. Thanks to businessmen's efforts, those of Hutchins and Ennis among the most significant, families in both Quality Hill and Frost Town, a neighborhood to the east, began to move out of the downtown vicinity to escape the area's industrial development, mostly due to the railroads that pioneer businessmen helped create.¹⁵

Toward the end of the nineteenth century and into the beginning of the twentieth century, families living in Quality Hill included the Warneckers, Scholibos, Taubs, Milbys, and others.¹⁶ Social activities included going to shows at Bell's Variety Theater in the 900 block of Franklin or walking to "The Circle" and strolling through Longcope Square.¹⁷ As residential areas pushed south, opulent houses and community hubs in this area began to disappear.

Residential areas continued to move farther and farther away from downtown with the development of streetcar suburbs like the Heights, Montrose, and Shadyside, and later residential areas like River Oaks, Washington Terrace, and Riverside Terrace. Today, the small area where Quality Hill once stood contains parking lots and industrial buildings, an image of downtown with which most of us are more familiar. Minute Maid Park, which incorporates into its structure the former Union Station, now stands next to strange remnants of the tail end of the Quality Hill era.

One of those houses belonged to William L. Foley, member of the Foley's Department Store family. An Irishman who came to the United States in 1870 at the age of twenty-five, Foley started his career in dry goods in New York and later moved to Brenham, Texas, in 1871. After coming to Houston in 1872 and working as a clerk until 1876, Foley started his own dry goods business at 214-218 Travis Street. At first employing just five people in a 15x90-foot space, the business grew to support three floors measuring 75x100 feet with fifty to sixty employees. Foley's nephews James A.



The Foley house (left) has been moved to the corner of Jackson and Texas as part of the plans to expand Annunciation Catholic Church. The Cohn house (right) is slated to become part of the Nau Center for Texas Cultural Heritage. Photo courtesy of author.

and Pat C. Foley joined their uncle's business early on and in 1900 opened Foley Brothers, which later became Foley's Department Store.¹⁸

William Foley built his house near Quality Hill on Texas Avenue in 1904. His wife Mary F. Foley (née Kennedy) had died very young in 1886. His daughters Blanche and Rose were educated in Canada, and his son John went to Fordham University in New York. The house, built late in Foley's career, was done in a Victorian, neo-classical style with Corinthian columns and stood on Texas Avenue until forced to move to 704 Chenevert at Capitol Avenue to make room for Union Station. After the sale of Blanche Foley's collection of the remaining family possessions on October 31, 1965, the house was used by a religious organization.¹⁹

The house that stands next to the Foley house today, also transplanted from its original location, belonged to Arthur B. Cohn. Cohn, originally from Little Rock, Arkansas, came to Houston and eventually became the principal accountant for William Marsh Rice's estate. He built his late Queen Anne style house in 1905 largely as a renovation and addition to structures already on the property. The former structures were built in the late 1860s by Mrs. Winnifred Browne, mother of John T. Browne, who was Houston's mayor from 1892 to 1896. Cohn bought the property and structures on 1711 Rusk the same year that he began reconstruction. He lived in the house until 1909, during which time he worked toward establishing Rice Institute (now Rice University) in 1912. He served as the school's business

manager and was assistant secretary on its board of trustees until 1936.

Cohn's house was sold to Michael Fitzgerald the year that Cohn and his wife moved just a block away to 812 Hamilton. The house later passed on to Cornelius D. Butler, Conrad and Amelia Westling, and finally Thomas J. Martin. After being converted into apartments, the house was purchased by St. Francis Charities in 1964 and refurbished by volunteers. With the help of the Harris County Historical Commission and St. Francis Charities, the Arthur B. Cohn House was designated a national and state monument in its original location on Rusk Street in 1985.²⁰

Both the Foley and Cohn houses were moved to a location along Avenida de las Americas in the 2000s. Once scheduled for demolition, the mayor announced plans in 2007 to convert them into a "regional heritage tourism center."²¹ The Cohn house is scheduled to become part of the future Nau Center for Texas Cultural Heritage, and the Foley house has been moved a few blocks away to become part of Annunciation Catholic Church.

While these two houses from the outskirts of Quality Hill have been saved thus far, every other house within the original Quality Hill area met a far less fortunate fate. Newspaper articles dating from the 1940s to the 1960s lament the passing of Houston's pioneer era and of individual Quality Hill homes. Many of the houses sat and deteriorated after their original inhabitants died or moved elsewhere. William Hutchins's daughter Ella and her second husband,

Seabrook Sydnor, lived in the house he built until 1914. The house was then left vacant until demolished in 1930.²² Cornelius Ennis died in 1899, and his wife died a year earlier.²³ Their house was subsequently owned by the Solomon Brown family until 1918, made into rental rooms until 1926, occupied by a furniture company and then by Tampico Café before being left vacant. It was demolished in 1934 or 1935.²⁴ C. S. Longcope's home became the headquarters for a Progressive Era Lords' Cycle Club by 1897 and was finally demolished in 1949.²⁵ B. Tuffly's property passed on to L. J. Tuffly, and the original house was divided in two in the 1890s. Two more structures were built on the property in the early 1900s. These structures at 1509 and 1511 Franklin, from the original Tuffly house, and 114 and 116 Crawford all passed into the hands of Joe Tuffly, who sold the property by 1946 to A. R. Hughes to build an "air-conditioned service station." Mrs. Florence Weill, sister of Jules Meyer of Krupp & Tuffly, had lived in the house at 1509 Franklin for approximately forty years and received an eviction notice when the houses were scheduled for demolition.²⁶

Not much has been done to preserve the stories of these early Houstonians thus far. "Houston has always been about business, and what you could do to increase business is what you'd do," notes Betty Chapman. "We've never been an old city, and not yet are we an old city, so people have never really seen any value in keeping anything old," she adds. "We always learn from the past. We learn what was done right or what was done wrong, and hopefully we don't

repeat mistakes or we can build on successes . . . The past is important in order to really move forward, and I think some of that is maintaining the built environment that we have. The old and the new can be very compatible . . . We have a past, and we're more aware of it when we can actually see it and experience it."²⁷

Without very much physical presence, the story of early Houston has inevitably lost importance and relevance in the minds of modern Houstonians. Though our beginnings are all too relevant to our story today, an urgency to preserve this story, whether by physical or even documentary means, has long been lacking in Houston at large. Betty Chapman thinks we should be more proud of our history. "How Houston grew is a fascinating, fascinating story, and how Houston always just set out to do something that nobody else had done, whether it was building the Astrodome or making a fifty-mile-inland port, one of the biggest in the world, they've taken on projects that they felt like they could accomplish . . . What happened in the beginning is crucial to what we're doing today. It's a whole journey, and you need the whole journey in order to really tell [the story]."²⁸ Quality Hill is only one small piece of Houston's whole journey, but perhaps it can serve as a lesson not only about our origins but also about the vitality of preservation itself.

Sidonie Sturrock is an art and liberal studies major at the University of Houston, where she is a member of the Honors College and volunteers with *Houston History*.

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Dawson Lunnon Cemetery: “The future is nothing without the past”

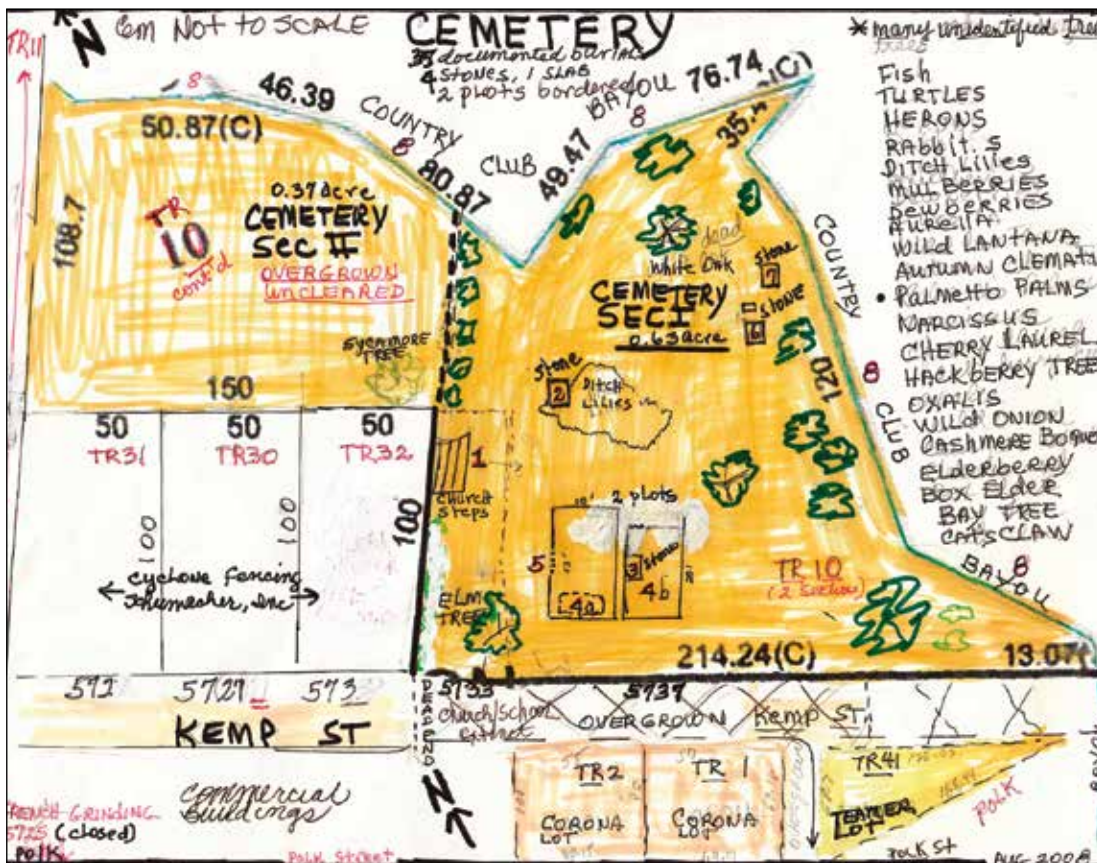
By Aaron P. Goffney

Nestled in the middle of an industrial neighborhood where many awake to the vigorous hustle and bustle of everyday life lies an area where thirty-five, and possibly many more, black Houstonians share their final resting place. Situated by a bayou that is lined with trash and home to squirrels, birds, rabbits, snakes, and herons, this African American cemetery holds the stories of its inhabitants' migration to Texas along with their dreams, challenges, successes, and tragedies.

When Texas was a Republic, slave-owners from neighboring states came to the area to take advantage of the opportunities Texas had to offer. According to Texas law, “all free white persons” who lived in the Republic for six months, intended to stay permanently, and swore allegiance to Texas could enjoy “all the privileges of citizenship,” which included owning slaves.¹ After the Civil War, an influx of newly freed slaves and emigrants moved west. States such as Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Virginia, and the Carolinas all share stories of freedmen and their families who traveled to Houston seeking job opportunities and a new way of life.

The lives of the people buried in the Dawson Lunnon Cemetery steer you through a timeline of the common toils and tensions most black families endured during the eras of Reconstruction, Jim Crow, and the civil rights movement. Virginia Hancock, researcher and advocate for preserving this historical site, assured me as we chatted and sipped our coffee that this story would be a good one. She explained that it has been hard for her to get people interested in this magnificent piece of history. Neither whites nor blacks seem to “feel a real response to this historical location like many school and volunteer groups,” she said. Yet employees at the nearby LyondellBasell Refinery and members of the Lawyers Against Waste Committee of the Houston Bar Association came to help clear the land, plant trees, and remove weeds. Virginia added, “Because of the perception of industrial and commercial businesses in the East End, they may not feel that the area is worth the trip.”²

Born in 1931, Virginia Hancock grew up in the East End near the Houston Ship Channel. At age ten, her family moved to the edge of the venerable Houston Country Club, a golf course built in 1908 and now Gus Wortham Park.



This map, drawn by Virginia Hancock, gives descriptive detail of the Dawson Lunnon Cemetery as it stood in the early 1900s. Section I of the map is the only part of the cemetery that is visible today. The front part of Section II was sold, and the back part is overgrown with trees and high grass.

All photos courtesy of Virginia Hancock.

Hancock developed an interest in the Dawson Lunnon Cemetery as she pondered who occupied the land before her parents purchased it.

While tracing the land records back to the original owners, Virginia came across an interesting story that included an East End landowner named Rufus Cage, the Lunnon family, and E. F. Simms, a Spindletop oil man. As Virginia extended her research, she discovered how all of these people were interconnected through the ownership of the land, where they lived and worked. Even though her interest has focused on the Lunnons, she explains they all depended upon one another: “The leaders, the people with the money and the power, made the choices to develop, but it would have been hard to accomplish their visions without the Lunnons and other families coming through from other neighborhood communities who did the work in the trenches and were very important to each other. They were maids for various homes, provided laundry services, and worked [in] the community’s filling stations.”³

Hancock focused her research during the early 2000s on the Lunnon family’s connection to Rufus Cage, names she knew from the land records. After a friend came with his machete to cut back the overgrown cemetery, which had become “a jungle,” Virginia found additional graves. She has since located thirty-five documented dead buried there, including eleven with visible markers, although she believes there are possibly many more.

According to Texas law during the Republic years, “all persons of color who were slaves for life” prior to coming to

Texas and were still held in bondage remained slaves in Texas. During slavery, many African Americans traveled with their owners, lived on their land, and raised families. This increased the number of slaves, created stability, and lessened slave rebellions.⁴

In the early 1840s agents of the Adelsverein (Society of Noblemen) encouraged German immigrants to participate in the slavery system and, as a result, saw their communities flourish. Plantations located along the lower Brazos and Colorado Rivers, such as Fort Bend and Wharton Counties, experienced great success. While many German emigrants advocated for slavery to culturally assimilate, others wanted to confront the volatile issue and campaigned for a slave-free zone.⁵

Rufus Cage Sr. (1826-1906), a Harvard graduate, landowner, developer, and respected businessman, moved to Houston around 1850. Residing in Houston’s Third Ward, his son Rufus Cage Jr. (1853-1918) served as the Houston School Board president. In 1894 the district established a school in his honor that still stands today at 1417 Telephone Road. The Cage family donated land for the original one-room, wood-frame schoolhouse called the Eastwood School (also Kirby School). The current structure opened in 1910, but Cage closed it between 1914 and 1925 to house families in the agricultural community.

A mulatto, Mike Lunnon was born in 1830 in either Mississippi or Tennessee and moved to Houston in the 1850s presumably with the Cage family. In 1870, Lunnon purchased seven and a half acres of land on Yates Gully (Michaux Gully) in the Luke Moore Survey from Cage for \$200. Lunnon’s household consisted of his wife Margarette Clyberg Lunnon and their seven children, three sons and four daughters, born between 1859 and 1877. In 1891, Lunnon bought eleven more acres in the Samuel Williams Survey from Col. John Thomas Brady. On these



Margarette Lunnon and her husband Mike traveled to Texas in 1850 with Rufus Cage.



Mt. Gilead students dressed as flowers at a May fete, circa 1920s. They are standing outside the church-school building facing the cemetery.

lands, the family resided, held church services, and attended elementary school, which met in the Mt. Gilead Missionary Baptist Church. The family continued to grow as two of Lunnon's daughters married the Williams brothers, Frank and Charles, and both had several children.

When Mike Lunnon died in 1906, he left a will that, when probated in 1909, gave all of his property valued at \$5,000 debt-free to his wife, an impressive accomplishment for a black man who could not read or write. It was also admirable that an African American man in that era had competed in the capitalist society and owned property, which equated to power in the eyes of many.

The Lunnons had created a foundation that allowed a black family to thrive during Reconstruction—an era that, for the first time, offered African Americans the opportunity to control their own destiny and fulfill their Constitutional right to pursue the American dream. Mike Lunnon was part of the first generation after slavery came to an end that bequeathed an estate to his family. Jack Yates, a respected leader among Houston's population of newly freed slaves, thought the road to prosperity and peaceful coexistence between the races required blacks to live in separate—but not distant—communities.⁶ Although Reconstruction was intended to provide this space and an opportunity to succeed, it did not last.

In 1911, the land in the Samuel Williams Survey was plotted and recorded as the Lunnon Tract. In 1913, developers and lawyers had Margarette Lunnon, Mike Lunnon's wife, declared incompetent in efforts to gain the land. In 1914, the first son of Mike Lunnon, Dawson Lunnon (1859-1935), transferred part of the Lunnon Tract to the Mt. Gilead Missionary Baptist Church for \$100 to four trustees: Aaron Harris, Charlie Williams (husband of Eula Lunnon), John McDonald, and Thomas Hodge. Although the church no longer exists on the street, it is still listed at 5733 Kemp Street on various online genealogy publications such as Ancestry.com. Virginia explains that part of Kemp Street has disappeared. According to the City of Houston's Public Works Department, it is not feasible or cost effective to replace it. The church and the Dawson Lunnon Cemetery were bordered by the Country Club Bayou, which crosses Polk Street and Yates Gully, standing a short distance from the former Houston Country Club. The absence of Kemp Street makes it difficult to find the cemetery.⁷

By 1916, after a six-year court battle over ownership of the land, the Yates Gully land became the site of Robertson's Transfer and is now a METRO Bus Operating Facility. Plots continued to disappear in 1923 when the City of Houston bought more land in a quit-claim deed. This purchase covered areas east of Hughes Street (formerly called Baker Street), in addition to ten more acres of the Luke Moore League.

The East End community, of which the Lunnons were a part, continued to play a supporting role in early Houston's entrepreneurial efforts associated with cotton, the Houston Ship Channel and port, railroads, refineries, and businesses that helped propel Houston's growth. For example, many of the men in the East End neighborhood worked at Hughes Tool Company. Known for his patented roller cutter that improved oil drilling, Howard Hughes Sr. provided many jobs for Houston's unskilled workers until the company suffered financial losses during the Great Depression from 1929 to 1933.⁸ When E. F. Simms bought 210 acres from the Lunnons and others, the African American women in the community worked as laundresses and cleaners in private households and as maids in his estate, frequented by notable Houstonians. The E. F. Simms estate was later sold to Jamail Properties and is now a Fiesta Supermarket surrounded by apartments.

As a consequence, the Lunnon Tract was wedged in the center of profound transformations, later absorbed by new infrastructure and an influx of families drawn by the jobs in Houston's thriving East End. The community had a grocery store, a barbeque place, a church, a public school, and a motorcycle shop run by Fred Williams, son of Frank and Anna Lunnon Williams. Unfortunately, Frank Williams



Cemetery caretaker Virginia Hancock explains that lilies not only beautify the cemetery but also represent those who rest there. When community members could not afford headstones, they planted lilies as markers. Possibly dating back a hundred years, these lilies leave one to wonder how many similarly marked graves were lost over time. Despite repeated efforts to divide and transplant the lilies, they seem to only flourish at the cemetery.



Virginia Hancock, shown with Paul Washington who has helped her clear the cemetery land, serves as custodian of the Dawson Lunnon Cemetery. Her hard work and dedication have yielded a new awareness of the land's historical relevance. Willie Williams was the last to be buried in the family plot, laid to rest in 1953. The "S" was placed upside down in the African tradition to heighten the deceased's chance of entering heaven.



was murdered in 1914 at the segregated Harrisburg Road Bar. Virginia noted that this hate crime left his wife Annie Lunnon with seven young children to raise.⁹

Hughes Tool Company became a centerpiece for racial discrimination during the Great Depression and the 1960s civil rights movement. Unions such as the International Association of Machinists (IAM) excluded blacks from membership because in the minds of many white employees, admitting them was tantamount to giving African Americans equal status in the union.¹⁰

Dawson Lunnon Cemetery as a final resting place provided a sanctuary for the Lunnon family and their descen-

dants. Mother Margarette Lunnon died at age eighty-five in 1915 and was buried in the cemetery, followed in later years by Cecelia Theresa Yates, Dawson and Henry Lunnon, and others. The Williams family was buried in their own plot up the hill near the former church site.

A University of Texas graduate and school nurse, Virginia Hancock retired in 1989. She has used her pension to maintain the cemetery property and regularly watered the plants until an irrigation system was installed. Hancock's passion derives from the interconnection she sees between the generations of people who lived in and transformed her community. Now eighty-four, she continues to be the catalyst in the preservation and upkeep of the Dawson Lunnon Cemetery. The community activist has motivated companies and organizations such as LyondellBasell, the Houston Bar Association, Trees for Houston, Keep Houston Beautiful, East End Management District, University of Houston, Harris County probationers, METRO, and various school groups to clean up and improve the property.

Virginia's goal is to find an organization that can take over the project when she is no longer able. Her selfless acts in preserving this "little jewel," as she calls the cemetery, are imperative to the city's historical memory of life and death in a segregated world.

In August 2009, the Texas Historical Commission certified Dawson Lunnon Cemetery as a Historic Texas Cemetery. The cemetery is important because it gives Houstonians insight into their broad past. History is the study of the past and how it relates to people. Who are these people? What did they mean to their community, to society?

The cemetery connects African American history to present black culture. The Lunnons' Mt. Gilead Baptist Church and the surrounding community came to its demise during integration, when blacks moved out of their segregated areas. From 1914 to 1970 this community was livable, viable, and self-contained. Today industrial businesses disrupt the area's historical essence where houses were burned or torn down. Extreme makeovers are ongoing, such as the new METRORail routes that travel from Magnolia Park through the historic East End and onto other business locations.

While integration of the East End gave its residents an opportunity to gain a sense of mutual understanding of their cultural differences, it also led to the dismantling of the autonomous black community. Virginia Hancock highlights the importance of Houstonians cherishing and understanding how this small community helped contribute to the formation of Houston. She remains a true advocate of the phrase "the future is nothing without the past" and has invited others to share in her conviction.

Aaron P. Goffney is an intern at *Houston History* and a senior at the University of Houston majoring in history and political science.

The Legacy of Leland

By Jacob N. Wagner

Mickey Leland. Houstonians with traveling experience will recognize the name of the international terminal at George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH). Houston residents familiar with downtown will recall the name on the federal building. Alumni from the University of Houston or Texas Southern University will also know the name. Unfortunately many Houston residents, especially those who are new to the city or too young to remember him, will recognize Mickey Leland's name but lack a thorough understanding of the former Houston lawmaker's contributions. Leland dedicated his political career to caring for his fellow man at home and abroad, demonstrating the importance of helping those in need. In the process, he left a legacy of humanitarianism that remains a model for us today.

The Leland story began in Lubbock, Texas, where Mickey was born on November 27, 1944. When he was three his father left the family, and afterward the two had little contact. At seven, Mickey received a bicycle from his father, a gift that represented one of the few interactions the two had before his father died when Mickey was twenty-one years old.¹ Mickey, his mother Alice Rains, and younger brother Gaston moved to Houston's Fifth Ward in the late 1940s. His mother worked in a drugstore until she completed her bachelor's degree and became a school teacher, setting an example for her sons.²

Mickey faced adversity growing up that went beyond his family circumstances. With a very light complexion and light-colored eyes, he found himself between two races—too dark to be white but too light to be black. Other children constantly made fun of him. Fifth Ward resident and childhood friend Robert E. “Bobbie” Lee III remarked that Mickey never fought back against the bullies. Once when a group of boys chased Mickey near Atherton Elementary, Lee, who was a student cross-

ing guard at the school, decided to take matters into his own hands. He snatched one of the boys chasing Mickey and beat him up and then walked Mickey home. From that day forward, the two remained friends.³

Understanding Mickey Leland's legacy is “almost like putting together pieces of a puzzle, and new pieces come up all the time.”

—Alison Leland

and inferior facilities because black schools did not receive the same level of funding as white schools. Since Mickey attended schools made up primarily of African American and Hispanic students, the school district did not give them much attention.⁴

Despite these obstacles, Mickey excelled in school and sports. In 1964, he graduated from Phillis Wheatley High School in the top ten percent of his class. Although he shined in all of the sports in which he participated, his greatest

Even though the Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown* decision declared school segregation unconstitutional, Houston schools still had not desegregated by the early 1960s. Mickey and other African American students had to deal with outdated textbooks and inferior facilities because black schools did not receive the same level of funding as white schools. Since Mickey attended schools made up primarily of African American and Hispanic students, the school district did not give them much attention.⁴

success came in football, and the University of Southern California (USC) offered him a football scholarship. Fortunately for Houston, his mother insisted he stay in town and focus on education instead.⁵

Mickey saw this as disappointing at the time. Alison Leland, Mickey's wife and a University of Houston political science professor, recalls that he felt that his life was different than it might have been had he pursued football at USC. After graduating from Wheatley, Mickey attended Texas Southern University (TSU), where he graduated with a bachelor of science degree in pharmacy in 1970.⁶

Mickey attended TSU at the height of the tumultuous sixties and found himself a vocal leader in the local civil rights movement. This initial involvement blossomed after Mickey graduated from TSU. He organized and led the Black Citizens Action Teams, or Black Cats, which protested against police brutality.⁷



Mickey Leland in Ethiopia in 1987. His shirt reads “Houston Proud” in Hebrew.

All photos courtesy of the George Thomas “Mickey” Leland Collection, Mickey Leland Center for Environment, Justice and Sustainability, Texas Southern University, Houston, Texas, unless otherwise noted.



Alice Rains with her son Mickey at a press conference, 1979.

At the same time, Mickey used his knowledge of medicine and health to help his community. When he found the people in his neighborhood lacked proper healthcare, Mickey set up an outreach program providing “door-to-door” visits in low-income areas, informing residents about their medical care options and giving them a preliminary health screening, free of charge.⁸ This effort represents one of Leland’s first and most charitable humanitarian actions.

Growing up in a home where his mother struggled to provide for the family motivated Mickey to ensure the poor received care. Citing the importance of good health to a person’s well-being, Leland urged Houston health officials to create community clinics. He used his status in the Black Cats to push for other reform measures to ensure availability of medical options for the less fortunate. In the Fifth Ward Leland helped create the Jensen Medical Referral Service, a free community health clinic. Mickey saw it as “deplorable that we are the wealthiest country in the world, and yet we are experiencing growing discrepancies in the well-being of our own citizens.”⁹ In short, as an adult representing his community, he attempted to compensate for what he lacked as a child.

Leland’s involvement in the city propelled him onto the political stage. John and Dominique de Menil, the philanthropic French immigrants and heirs to the Schlumberger fortune, were impressed by Mickey from the moment they met. They believed in him and gave him an opportunity to address the causes he thought were important. The de Menils funded Mickey’s campaign for the Texas House of Representatives in 1972, when he was one of five minority candidates running for seats. By that time Texas representatives and senators were being elected from single-member districts, which improved the chances of electing minority candidates. Leland’s groundbreaking victory placed him among the first African American state representatives elected in Texas since Reconstruction.¹⁰ The de Menils’

generosity became the catalyst for Mickey to showcase his potential and, perhaps most importantly, to travel outside of Texas for the first time in his life.

At first Leland stuck out like a sore thumb in Austin. He sported an Afro and wore a dashiki, a traditional, ornate African top. In the Texas legislature, this was seen as flamboyant and shocked more conservative members, particularly those from rural districts, who had served with few minority colleagues. After some time, however, Leland began wearing more traditional apparel.¹¹

Mickey “burst onto the scene with two close friends from Houston, Craig Washington, who was his immediate successor to Congress, and Ben Reyes, who went on to be a Houston City Council member,” Alison points out. While serving the 88th District in Houston, Mickey became a “champion of healthcare rights for the poor” and pushed for legislation that allowed doctors to prescribe generic drugs. As a U.S. Congressman during the 1979 oil crisis, he pointed out that the poor faced tough choices between spending money on heating fuel or food. Mickey insisted, “We must ensure that millions of Americans will not have to compromise their health and well-being so that they can pay their utility and fuel bills.” Americans should never have to face the “dismal choice of ‘food or fuel,’” he stated. In addition, Mickey became a strong force for state employment opportunities for minorities, prison reform, as well as occupational and industrial safety.¹² By ensuring that the poor had access to affordable prescription drugs and by promoting minority hiring practices, Leland served as an advocate that the underprivileged lacked.



Mickey Leland and Dominique de Menil at the Rice Museum opening of the Some American History exhibition, 1971.

Photo courtesy of the Menil Archives, The Menil Collection, Houston.
Photo by Hickey-Robertson, Houston.

After two more terms, Leland ascended the political ladder. When Barbara Jordan, the representative for Houston’s U.S. 18th Congressional District, retired from politics in 1978, Leland, confident after his successes in the Texas House of Representatives, ran and won the seat.

Despite his new title as Congressman Leland, Mickey



Alison and Mickey Leland at the Congressional Black Caucus Weekend, 1986.

remained devoted to the less fortunate. He had an innate ability to reach out to and gain support for his issues from unlikely sources. For example, he reunited Cuban families by visiting his friend Fidel Castro and bringing the separated family member back to the states with him. He met with Pope John Paul II to establish a way to bring food to those in need in Africa. He pushed to fund incremental vitamin A for Third World countries to help reduce child mortality. Regarding his efforts abroad, Mickey explained, “The moral stature of the United States as a world leader is based to a great extent on our generous humanitarian response to people in need.”¹³ Mickey took this sentiment to heart as he worked for others.

Mickey’s push to provide healthcare, food assistance, housing, and education to the poor met with some resistance, and he had to fight against policies that exacerbated the position of people below the poverty line. Mickey reminded his fellow lawmakers, “It is dangerous to develop public policy in isolation from the people those policies will affect.”¹⁴

He started by introducing the Homeless Persons Survival Act, “a comprehensive bill” that provided what was “needed over five years.” It included “nine small bills” that “covered physical and mental health, food assistance, housing, [and] education of homeless children,” and addressed “Social Security and Veterans issues.” The downfall of the Homeless Persons Survival Act was the bill’s cost, and it failed to pass. Nevertheless, he remained convinced that “proposed Federal legislation [was] vital to assure these children the education to help them escape from poverty.”¹⁵

The following year Mickey worked with other lawmakers to pass the Stewart B. McKinney Emergency Assistance for the Homeless Act. Among the campaign’s events was the Grate American Sleep Out, where Mickey and other congressmen “experienced sleeping on the cold streets of Washington, D.C., in early March for one night.” These actions helped pass the McKinney Act and gave Mickey a more personal experience with Americans living in poverty.

He described his experience as “only a bare inkling of what homeless people endure,” and it motivated him to continue fighting for the poor, saying that he was “haunted by their invisibility, their loneliness.”¹⁶

During Mickey’s second term as a U.S. congressman, he met Alison Clark Walton. She was in the first month of her first semester at Georgetown Law School when Mickey came to a reception she attended on Capitol Hill. Alison had heard his name but knew nothing else about him. Although she had no plans to speak to Mickey, her friends insisted she approach him about an internship. From that first meeting on, she recalled he was incredibly charming and welcoming.¹⁷

On their first date, the two attended a dinner at Al Gore’s home. Alison quickly went from a law student to a congressman’s girlfriend, drastically changing her schedule. She recalled a typical week included “[my] tax law study group on Monday, dinner at Senator somebody’s house on Tuesday, my study group on Wednesday, the White House on Thursday. It was crazy.” She soon found herself friends with many prominent people in Washington. After seeing each other for a year, Mickey and Alison married in 1983.¹⁸

Three years later, the Lelands welcomed their first son, Jarrett David. In the short time that Mickey had with Jarrett, Alison remembers him as an incredible father—the kind of father that he never had.¹⁹ This pattern of compensating for the things he lacked as a child was something that made Mickey Leland a remarkable man.

As Mickey and Alison began their life together, split between Houston and Washington, she noticed how many people in both cities knew Mickey and approached him as a friend. Everyday people and children from neighborhoods near where the couple lived recognized Congressman Leland with ease. This astonished Alison who had a com-



Mickey Leland and son Jarrett voting on Super Tuesday, 1988.



Mickey Leland speaking, with Gaston Leland and Rev. Bill Lawson (left) and unknown others in front of Houston City Hall at a rally for affirmative action, 1980.

completely different experience with politics in Atlanta and Washington, D.C.

The Lelands lived in a completely different era in Washington than that experienced by politicians today. In the 1980s, congressmen still moved their families to D.C., where Republicans and Democrats lived in the same neighborhoods. They carpooled together, their children attended the same schools, they socialized at the same clubs, and their children and spouses became friends. As a result, the political boundary lines were less stark. Alison Leland notes that it was more difficult to demonize opposing parties when they were your friends and neighbors.²⁰

Mickey forged relationships with politicians on both sides of the aisle. Many of his conservative colleagues in the House and in Washington found a friend in him, despite their best efforts to dislike him. They looked past differences in ideals and saw a good man who believed in helping others. These relationships were numerous and meaningful and included even the nation's highest-ranking Republican, President Ronald Reagan.

Mickey's success in politics came from his ability to transition seamlessly between the poor and the well-to-do. He had a connection with the poor and identified with them from personal experience. Yet he also won over people like the de Menils with his charming, welcoming persona.

Mickey used his influence as a House member for his most selfless work in traveling abroad to parts of the world where the poor remained unassisted. In discussing the success of federal funding, Leland noted that "the House Select Committee on Hunger has supported specific earmarks with humanitarian goals and found them to be effective."²¹ Specifically, Mickey focused on Africa with his most influential trip being to the Sudan. The refugees he encountered there motivated him to focus his efforts on ending the region's food crisis. He never wanted anyone to go hungry, at home or abroad, saying that he "grew up on

a Christian ethic which says we are supposed to help the least of our brothers."²² Alison Leland recalls how Mickey always felt guilty during trips to the grocery store after he returned from Africa because he compared the desolation there to the abundance that he found here.

Not everyone appreciated Leland's humanitarian work abroad. During one re-election campaign, he ran against a school board member who accused him of being out of touch with his home district because he had not put all of his efforts into Texas and Houston. He responded, "[I am] as much a citizen of the world as I am of my country."²³ He reminded people that during con-

gressional recesses, he did not take a family vacation but rather made trips to the most desolate locations to help people there. U.S. abundance made him feel "compelled to help," and he truly believed that "if you save one life, you save the whole world."²⁴

In August 1989, Mickey traveled to Ethiopia on his sixth trip to Africa. This humanitarian mission had a roster that included some of Washington's most prominent names today. Al Gore and Nancy Pelosi had both wanted to come on the trip but circumstances kept them away. Current Texas state senator Rodney Ellis was lined up to go, but someone else was selected to go in his place.

Sadly, Leland's plane with sixteen aboard crashed into a mountainside in the rough terrain of Ethiopia. No one sur-



Mickey Leland (center) assisting Ethiopian Jews constructing a building, 1987.



Mickey Leland with El Franco Lee and students visiting the Capitol from Forest Brook High School and the Contemporary Learning Center in Houston.

vived. Alison recalls the time between when Mickey was first reported missing and when he was found as one of the most tense times in her life. Reporters camped outside her home, and she received many calls from high-ranking officials. As if that were not enough, she had learned that she was pregnant with twins just four days before Mickey passed away. Nevertheless, when searchers finally found the plane a week later, she felt some relief because it left no questions about what had happened to him.²⁵

The *Los Angeles Times* reported: “Also aboard the plane were Hugh Anderson Johnson Jr. and Patrice Yvonne Johnson, both aides to Leland (who were not related); Joyce Francine Williams, an aide to Rep. Ronald V. Dellums (D-Berkeley), and an expert on child nutrition; Y. Ivan Tillen, a New York businessman and friend of Leland’s; Robert Woods, a political and economic officer at the American Embassy in Addis Ababa; Gladys Gilbert, a special projects officer for the mission of the U.S. Agency for International Development attached to the embassy; Thomas Worrick, the acting AID representative in Ethiopia, and Worrick’s wife, Roberta. Also on board were Debebe Agonofer, an Ethiopian agricultural economist with the AID mission, and six other Ethiopians, including the plane’s crew of three.”²⁶

Mickey Leland left an incredible legacy of humanitarianism during his short time in politics. He always represented those who were underrepresented because, at his roots, he was one of them. He advocated for the poor, the young, the

old, and the sick from the local to global level. He went on goodwill missions to nations where no one else had dared to go, he visited intimidating dictators and leaders, and he befriended the staunchest conservatives and inspired in them a desire to help others.²⁷

Alison remarked in our interview that she is reminded of Mickey constantly. While that is not surprising, it is unusual that she manages to discover things she did not know about her husband. She explains, “Over time, I still learn new things about him. I’ll still have someone share with me a story, or a time they spent, or something they worked on, or something he did, and so, I think I’ve been continuously learning things about him.”²⁸ She frequently has people tell her what an impact Mickey had on them.

Today, in many ways, Mickey is still alive. He established internships that allow local high school students to travel to Israel and others that send University of Houston students to Washington, D.C. In addition to local buildings named in his honor, Ethiopia has an orphanage and a university named for him, and TSU’s Barbara Jordan-Mickey Leland School of Public Affairs honors these two Fifth Ward visionaries. Downtown Houston’s Mickey Leland Federal Building is undergoing a renovation that includes a stunning all-glass exterior. The Leland International Terminal at IAH, which now serves four times as many passengers as it did originally, will be replaced in the near future with a 780,000-square-foot facility to accommodate more travelers and airlines. The Houston Independent School District recently renamed its Young Men’s College Preparatory Academy the Mickey Leland College Preparatory Academy and has plans to build a new facility to accommodate 900 to 1,000 students.²⁹

Many politicians, at the highest level, still recognize Mickey’s contributions as well. When Alison Leland introduced herself to President Barack Obama in their one meeting, he responded, “Leland...he was inspirational.”³⁰

Alison shared that she always felt as if Mickey was in a hurry. He tried to accomplish everything possible and make life easier for others. Hurried was his life, and hurried was his death, coming at age forty-four. Alison found herself a widow at thirty, suddenly without the life she was accustomed to or the future she anticipated for her family. Despite this, she feels as if Mickey is still by her side in spirit. For her, as well as for those who knew him or know of him, his legacy is like a puzzle: we don’t know everything, but we see the big picture, and it is incredible.

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The Mickey Leland Center for Environmental Justice and Sustainability administers the Mickey Leland Archives, a collection of unpublished papers, artifacts, and audio visual materials. The archives (www.lelandcenter.org) are located at 3100 Cleburne in the TSU Barbara Jordan-Mickey Leland School of Public Affairs, Room 105. The Reading Room is open weekdays 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and by appointment. Contact archivesmlc@tsu.edu or 713-313-7370.

HOUSTON BRINGS HOME A SHUTTLE

All photos courtesy of Alan Montgomery and Woodallen Photography, Houston, Texas.



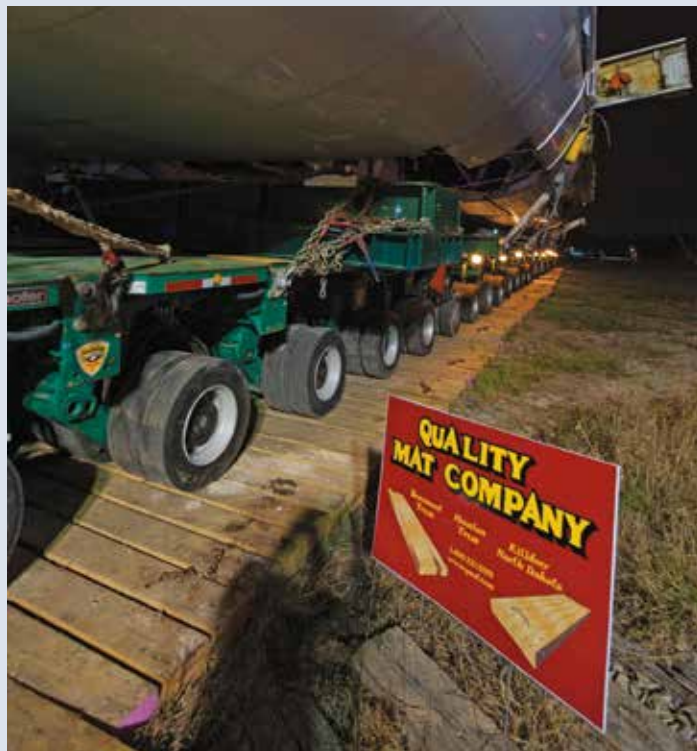
FOR EVERYONE TO SHARE *By Alicia M. Nichols*



The new Space Center Houston exhibit will feature the mock-up shuttle Independence sitting atop the Boeing 747, in the “ferry position.” Both exhibit director Paul Spana and educational director Dr. Melanie Johnson agree that the Houston exhibit offers a unique opportunity. Visitors here will have a far more tangible, hands-on educational experience than those who visit sites housing the formerly active shuttles. They can explore the insides of the 747 and the shuttle itself and see what it would be like to pilot the shuttle, crammed into the pilot’s deck. Interactivity and the higher level of engagement make it far more likely that young visitors will take away something from the experience, perhaps inspiring a future astronaut who will set foot on Mars.¹

Thirty-one years after NASA launched the first space shuttle into Earth's orbit, a shuttle carrier aircraft carrying the space shuttle *Endeavour* flew over Houston. In July of 2011, the shuttle *Atlantis*, STS-135, marked the 135th and final flight of the space shuttle program, known officially as the Space Transport System (STS). Just over a year later, while moving *Endeavour* to its permanent housing at the California Science Center in Los Angeles, the shuttle briefly stopped in Houston en route. *Endeavour's* arrival reminded many Houstonians how, controversially, NASA administrators bypassed Houston as one of the cities chosen to house the three remaining shuttles, despite being home to Mission Control since the Gemini missions of the nation's space program. Instead, *Atlantis* came to rest at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, the shuttle *Discovery* went to the Udvar-Hazy Center in Virginia, an annex of the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, and shuttle *Enterprise*, which was built for testing purposes and never actually flew in space, was sent to New York City.²

While perhaps not as glamorous as the Apollo missions and moon landings, the space shuttle program allowed for a number of scientific discoveries and advancements in human space flight, and the craft remain visible reminders of our journeys into space. The conception of the space shuttle dates to 1969, and President Richard Nixon issued a proclamation launching the idea in 1972. The shuttle was



The seven-truck convoy carrying NASA 905 began its historic trek from Ellington Field to Space Center Houston at 9:00 p.m. on April 28, 2014. Going no more than 4.5 m.p.h., it reached a stopping point at 6:30 the next morning. The fleet, unable to make the ninety degree turn from Highway 3 onto NASA Road 1, had to take the side street Commerce Road at the end of the first night. Cutting the corner required stacking wooden mats due to railroad tracks. The narrow spacing allowed no more than six inches on either side of the trucks. Fortunately, the 920-foot-long procession met fewer complications the second night.⁶

envisioned as a practical tool to transport people, goods, science experiments, and equipment between Earth and what became the International Space Station—a place to conduct further research and study space. Throughout the 1970s, NASA scientists and engineers continued to develop and test the shuttle's design.³

In April of 1981, *Challenger* became the first space shuttle to launch and orbit the earth. The orbiters *Columbia*, *Challenger*, *Discovery*, *Atlantis*, and *Endeavour* flew more than 130 times, carrying over 350 people traveling more than half a billion miles, or more than enough miles to reach Jupiter. The *Challenger* and *Columbia* tragedies in 1986 and 2003 respectively brought the space program and the shuttles to the forefront of the nation's mind and spurred investigation into the efficacy of the shuttle program. Originally intended to last a mere fifteen years, the program finally concluded after three decades of service.⁴

In 2012, Johnson Space Center (JSC) was awarded the mock-up shuttle *Explorer* housed at the Kennedy Space Center. It was then transported to Space Center Houston, the official visitor center for JSC. Renamed *Independence*, the mock-up shuttle is a full-sized replica of the shuttle models, complete with parts that were used in space flight, such as the landing tires. Memories of being snubbed for a “real” shuttle resurfaced among Houstonians, as Space Center Houston worked on a new exhibit to showcase *Independence*. In 2013 Space Center Houston also acquired NASA 905, one of the two modified Boeing 747 Shuttle Carrier Aircraft (SCA) owned by NASA. A convoy transported the SCA approximately eight miles from Ellington Field to Space Center Houston.⁵

Space Center Houston plans to open the exhibit the summer of 2015.

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The horizontal stabilizer and elevators were removed from the rear of the 747, exposing a portion of the fuselage that helps maintain cabin pressure. Also removed were the specially made vertical stabilizers placed at each end of the horizontal stabilizer of NASA 905 (and her sister carrier NASA 911) to enhance directional stability.⁷

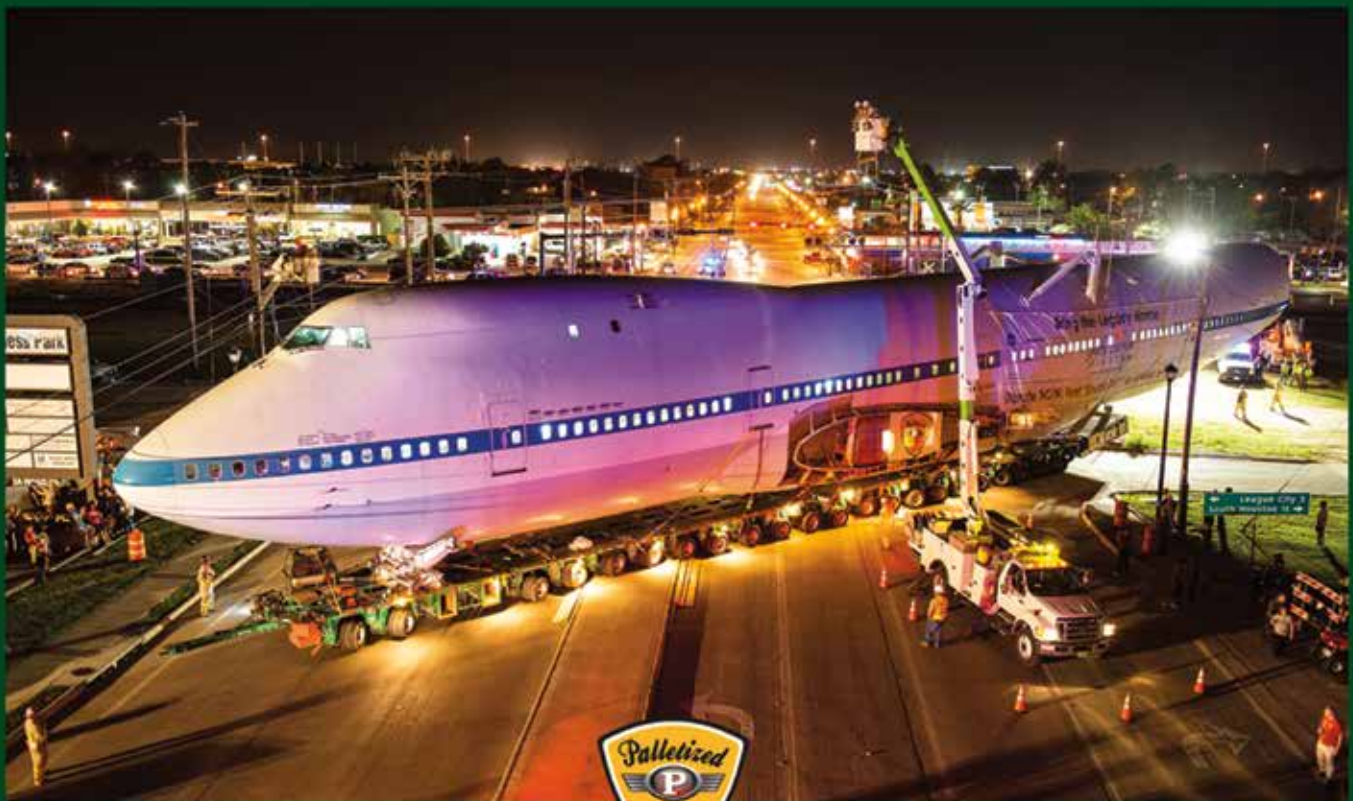
The Shuttle Carrier Aircraft (SCA) NASA 905, a modified Boeing 747, was disassembled in six weeks at Ellington Field by the Boeing Aircraft on Ground (AOG) incident repair crew, a unit accustomed to fixing 747s. The main wings rested on a specially built platform as they were transferred to Space Center Houston. Determining how to remove the wings from the 747 body was the most difficult part of the disassembly process, as neither the AOG crew nor Boeing had ever done so. Eight hydraulic pumps were required to detach the wings, which weigh approximately 14,000 pounds.⁸



The rudder and vertical stabilizer of NASA 905, emblazoned with the NASA logo, makes the final turn before reaching Space Center Houston. The subsequent reassembly of all seven pieces to the 747 after it reached its final destination took a mere month. The AOG had a much easier task than usual because they did not have to reconnect all the electrical wiring and hydraulic systems for the land-bound exhibit.⁹

The Palletized Trucking, Inc., team stops to commemorate the unique two-night move. Mike King, Palletized Trucking president and CEO, center, and his son Brady King, center kneeling, were among those who transported the SCA from Ellington to Space Center Houston. Palletized Trucking, founded in Houston in 1969 by Rex and Marilyn King, has grown to serve clients throughout the contiguous United States and Canada and regularly moves loads far heavier than the 747.¹⁰





NASA 747 Space Shuttle Transport moving from Ellington Airport to Space Center Houston

Woodallen Photography - Houston

As NASA 905 made its way towards Space Center Houston, traffic light lines had to be raised and sometimes removed, power shut off, poles taken down, and a traffic control plan implemented to alleviate issues caused by closing Highway 3. Once the convoy passed, traffic lines and the like were re-installed to resume regular traffic. Planning the “Big Move” took over six months of coordinating, and everyone from NASA, Palletized Trucking, Space Center Houston, the Department of Transportation, Boeing, Union Pacific, and state troopers were involved.¹¹



A Palletized trailer holds the space shuttle Independence in preparation for hoisting it onto the back of the 747. Each of the tiles on a shuttle, which protect it from the extreme temperatures of space travel and reentry, is unique to its place on the spacecraft and is marked with a number identifying its batch and location.¹²

Crowds gathered to see Independence placed atop NASA 905. Here a worker maneuvers Independence into the correct position as it is lowered onto the reassembled 747 on August 14, 2014. Before placing Independence on the 747, the shuttle saw many renovations and updates. It will feature two main decks: the lower mid-deck, where the crew would have worked and slept, and the upper flight deck, where the pilot and commander would have operated. The lower mid-deck also opens to the payload bay, which visitors can explore to see where cargo would have been stored.¹³



To the Red Planet and Beyond: The Mars Rover Celebration

Alicia M. Nichols

Space and space exploration have long captivated adults. For elementary and junior high students, the siren call of our galaxy and beyond is no different. Luckily for Houston-area students, programs such as the Mars Rover Celebration feed their curiosity.

The Mars Rover Celebration is an educational program for third through eighth graders at public and private Houston-area schools. For the first time in their educational careers, students are let

loose and given the power to choose what they wish to study about Mars. Research is what they make of it—anything and everything goes. Teachers anchor the students' various research projects with specially prepared 5-E lessons that are space- or Mars-oriented that make up part of the Mars Rover Celebration curriculum. NASA approves and certifies a majority of these lessons. After students spend class time researching more on Mars, teachers instruct them to create a Mars rover of their own—one equipped to carry out any experiments or tests needed to answer the questions posed by their particular project.¹

Eventually, mock-ups turn into real rovers made from everyday items found in and around the house. Some districts host large competitions where every student vies for one of the top coveted spots at the University of Houston Mars Rover Celebration event. Other schools choose their best students and send a select few. Still other schools enter every student they possibly can. On a given Saturday in January, hundreds of students, parents, teachers, and volunteers gather at the University of Houston main campus, which hosts the official event. The day is broken up into three parts—elementary judging, middle school judging, and awards.²

The elementary judging kicks off the Mars Rover Celebration event. Hundreds of third, fourth, and fifth graders set up tri-folds, posters, rovers, and other miscellaneous objects to aid them in their presentations. Working



Solar-powered rovers have small solar panels attached to their frames and must move when a light is shined on them for the group to receive the maximum number of points.

Photo courtesy of Dr. Edgar A. Bering III.

in groups with an average size of three people, students prepare to present their research and their model rover. They put on skits to showcase what they learned in a creative manner while they wait for the judging to commence. Some students wear costumes but they are not a requirement of the program.

With the announcement that judging is about to begin, organizers ask parents to leave the judging floor, and judges quickly review which tables they will visit during the next hour. Judges, who include University of Houston students, faculty, and various members of the Houston scientific community, have an hour to judge an average of four rovers.

Judges watch the skits and

then ask a series of questions to try and find out how much the students know about Mars and whether the students found an answer to the queries that prompted their research. A great interest is taken in their conceptual designs for their rovers. Judges note the scores on a Scantron form and continue on to their next table. At the end of the hour, elementary students pack up their projects and empty the room, making way for the middle school students.³

The judging process for the sixth, seventh, and eighth graders is exactly the same as that for the younger students. However, older students' projects tend to be far more complex, and their questions often reflect a higher caliber of thinking than their younger counterparts. During free time, elementary and middle school students alike get to explore the University of Houston. Students go on tours of the campus, listen to speakers about various STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) opportunities, and get a glimpse of college life. Parents can attend seminars on STEM, college education, and college readiness.⁴

After a long day of judging, presenting, and waiting, award ceremonies are held for both the elementary and middle school divisions. At the 2014 Mars Rover Celebration a representative from NASA brought a real extra-vehicular activity (EVA) space suit—the traditional big, white, puffy space suit one imagines astronauts wearing—and discussed current efforts at creating a new, more mobile and bendable suit. Former astronaut and head of the new University of



Set-up for judging involves a flurry of activity as students, parents, and teachers scramble to get everything just right before judging commences.

Photo courtesy of Dr. Edgar A. Bering III.

Houston STEM Center, Dr. Bonnie J. Dunbar, attended the award ceremonies and helped present trophies to the winning teams.⁵

In 2002, the Celebration's first year, thirty teacher-training participants and 180 students took part. The years 2007 and 2011 had seventy teachers in teacher training, the highest numbers in the program's history. In 2013, thirty-six teacher-training participants and 674 students participated. The decline in teachers attending teacher training can be at-

tributed to the fact that once a teacher is trained in the program, they do not need training again. The greatest number of student participants came in 2011 with 708. Incidentally, the NASA Mars rover *Spirit* got stuck in 2010, right about the time many students began the Mars Rover lessons. As a result, many students that year had ideas of how to unstick *Spirit*. Twenty-seven Houston-area public elementary and middle schools from seventeen districts participated in the 2014 Mars Rover Celebration.⁶

Michelle Viotti, Thea Cañizo, and Larry Lebofsky created the Mars Rover Celebration teaching material in 2000 at the Jet Propulsion Lab (JPL) in La Cañada Flintridge, California. This program, meant to supply elementary and middle school teachers with the resources needed to teach comprehensive lessons about the red planet, was part of the Mars Millennium Project, a national initiative established in 1999 by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, former secretary of education Richard Riley, honorary chairman John Glenn, and Mars Pathfinder mission chief Donna Shirley. Supported by the U.S. Department of Education, the National Endowment for the Arts, NASA and the Jet Propulsion Lab, and the J. Paul Getty Trust, along with the White House Millennium Council, the Mars Millennium Project was created originally to challenge students across the United States to "imagine establishing a village for 100 transplanted earthlings on the planet Mars in the year 2030."⁷ As a Mars Millennium project, scientists created educational material that teachers could use to teach students about space and the planets.

The city of Houston adopted some of the Mars Celebration curriculum as part of its SPARK School Park Program, a mission started in 1983 to create more public



Elementary students in the SDA or Science Discovery Association present their foil-covered freestyle rover. Freestyle rovers are judged on their creativity and do not have to complete any specific tasks, unlike the solar-powered or remote-controlled rover categories.

All photos courtesy of author unless otherwise noted.



Judges review approximately four rovers over the course of an hour, listening to students' skits and asking students about their results and what they learned about Mars to determine whether the group was sufficiently able to answer their research question.

green spaces in the city by updating local elementary school playgrounds with new equipment and features and opening the renovated areas to the public. A fourth grade teacher, Ms. Margaret “Holly” Smith at Bendwood Elementary in Spring Branch ISD took the curriculum offered by the Mars Millennium Project, through the SPARK Park Program, and began having her class study Mars and create their own rovers in class.⁸

Dr. Edgar Bering III, a physics, electrical engineering, and computer-engineering professor at the University of Houston, took an interest in the project after his own children made rovers in their fourth grade science class with Ms. Smith at Bendwood Elementary.⁹ Several years later, Dr. Bering became involved with the local organizing committee and was on the educational public outreach subcommittee for the 2002 World Space Congress, a meeting between the Committee On Space Research (COSPAR) and the International Astronautical Congress (IAC).¹⁰ The 2002 World Space Congress was held in Houston, and the University of Houston helped with a multitude of tasks, including having the drama and athletic departments set up ticket booths, having the band meet attendees at the airport, and hosting a cocktail party at the campus’s Hilton Hotel for the dignitaries in attendance. Due to lingering effects of 9/11, many international students who planned to attend the World Space Congress could not get into the country, and the number of registrations for the event was 5,000 fewer than planned.¹¹

Organizers, including Dr. Bering, wanted a strong K-12 student presence, and they succeeded. Twenty thousand students toured the exhibit hall, under the direction of former

Johnson Space Center employee Mary Sanchez, where they saw things like rocket engines and received knickknacks like an “official U.S. Air Force World Space Congress plush toy.” The University of Houston used the chance to host a space day on campus, which 8,000 students attended and saw presenters such as FIRST Robotics and FIRST LEGO League.

Concerned by the lack of a program available for elementary students or at Title I at-risk schools, Dr. Bering suggested a city-wide face-off of the Mars Rover models he assumed all fourth graders made.

After learning that the project his children had done in their fourth grade science class was not a part of the city-wide curriculum, Dr. Bering put together the Mars Rover Celebration program. For the first Celebration in 2002, he received \$5,000 from the UH provost. Today, Mars Rover gets its funds from a grant. Now the chair of the Mars Rover Celebration, Dr. Bering runs the overall event, trains teachers in special sessions, writes peer-reviewed

research papers on the Celebration, and makes sure that the Celebration continues to fulfill its grant requirements.¹²

Beginning with lessons on space implemented by local elementary and junior high science teachers, the program takes students through the process of identifying a scientific question and finding the answer. Teachers give students data and ask them to develop their own questions based on the data. Their questions on Mars range from what craters should be explored to where can water be found and where would be the best location to build a mud spa. The students then divide into various categories based on the way they build their rovers. For example, students can create solar-powered rovers with mini solar panels. These rovers must

Winning first place in freestyle in the elementary division for their rover Zuver, students from Rizzuto Elementary pose with former astronaut and director of the UH STEM Center Dr. Bonnie Dunbar.





Mars Rover Celebration participants create a skit to creatively showcase what they have learned. These middle school students acted like contestants and an announcer of a game show.

move on their own when a light source is shined on them. Other options include radio remote-controlled rovers and freestyle rovers, the latter of which do not have to move. “The kids start with the data, not a hypothesis,” Dr. Bering said. “They work in teams, not by themselves, and the budget cap kills the impetus of helicopter parents.”¹³

One of the goals of the Mars Rover Celebration is to get young Houstonians interested in the STEM field by showing them it is a fun and rewarding path to pursue. The Celebration strives to interest and include students who are generally not well represented in the STEM field. “We have a lot of girls in this program,” Dr. Bering said. “We’re all so happy about that.” Many students enjoy that they are in control of what they study, since they determine their own research projects. “From the standpoint of the educational excitement, the only thing that comes close [to space] to generating kid excitement is dinosaurs,” Dr. Bering said. “And dinosaurs, I hate to say it, are not the future.”¹⁴

The range of schools represented run the gamut from areas economically well-off to schools with 95% of their students considered economically disadvantaged (ED), 71% English Language Learners (ELL), and 84% at-risk of not passing.¹⁵ The Mars Rover Celebration allows students from disadvantaged areas to obtain additional STEM education they may not normally receive.

As we live in a technologically advanced world that shows improvement every day, it is important that schools emphasize science and technology. Not only does it represent a great source of economic power within the United States, but it also keeps the country in the forefront of a very competitive global market. The shifting of the U.S. economy to an “idea factory” rather than a manufacturer of the ideas puts the nation at a disadvantage compared to other countries. “Per capita, China is out-producing the U.S. four to one in engineers,” Dr. Bering said. “So the naked economic reality is we’ve got to start producing more engineers.”¹⁶

Younger students in particular are much more open to areas of study like science and mathematics, before they de-

cide it is “too hard,” they are not smart enough, or are told it is too difficult of a subject for them to do well. If teachers can stop this line of thinking, then many more scientific and engineering minds can be tapped. “If they are under fifth grade [and do not understand math] that is the teacher,” Dr. Bering said. “But what happens when they hit puberty, if they haven’t been engaged doing math, then the circuits decay—neurophysiologists call it pruning. So the high school senior who hasn’t done math may very well be unable to do math.”¹⁷

Nothing is quite like the Mars Rover Celebration program, especially since the celebration is so strongly grounded with its lesson plans, teacher training, and an educational backing. Currently, Dr. Bering holds teacher-training workshops across the country, and Mars Rover Celebration lessons are used in New Mexico, Colorado, and New Hampshire. While lesson usage spreads far, no other city has been able to replicate the contest itself. Efforts to spread to San Antonio have been impeded by difficulty in finding a suitable site to hold the competition.¹⁸

As scientists make further discoveries about the creation of our universe and the particles that make it up, the only place they have to go for more information is space. Only through a well-developed space program with a significant



Standing next to a real extra vehicular activity (EVA) space suit from NASA, UH professor and Mars Rover Celebration chair Dr. Edgar Bering addresses a crowd of students, teachers, parents, and volunteers to kick off the 2014 award ceremony.

space exploration component will scientists discover the answers to many of the questions they are asking one another today. Additionally, space exploration opens up whole new worlds of resources and information; they just have to reach out to get it.

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Houston's Graffiti Culture *By Nimra Haroon*

Graffiti. This disruptive, colorful, and self-boasting style of popular art has permeated walls for centuries, including in Houston. Modern graffiti has been around since the 1960s when gangs or “crews” created social order with preservation of writing and began spray painting names and messages on walls, as expressions of protest, violence, or leisure.² Undoubtedly graffiti has become a more mainstream and accepted artistic style through its appearance on clothing, advertisements, music covers, computer font styles, public art murals, and more. Much of Houston’s graffiti scene corresponds with the rise of the hip hop scene, as rappers like Bun B, Slim Thug, and others have spotlighted local graffiti artists and represented their artwork in music videos and album covers.

Houston has a shorter, less documented graffiti history than cities like Philadelphia and New York City that pioneered the movement. Nevertheless, Houston maintains a unique collection of events that have paved the way for graffiti’s success.³ In 1979 Edie Scott and Scott Prescott formed a group known as the Urban Animals that was

notorious for its graffiti art, bar-hopping, crosstown skating, parking garage surfing, and roller hockey. Art Car Parade photographer George Hixson remembered the first time he saw them, when, from around a corner, they suddenly appeared on roller skates, a “wild and fascinating collection of artists and other art-inclined people.” The group reached its high point in the late 1980s with several hundred members. The group consisted of lawyers, electricians, dancers, bartenders, filmmakers, artists, and a Harris County deputy. Although famous for its rebellious behavior, the Urban Animals group was unique for its charitable efforts in the community.⁴

The Commerce Street Artists’ Warehouse (CSAW) was founded in 1985 as an affordable home and studio for Houston artists, including graffiti artists. Located in a warehouse on the far eastern edge of downtown, the space had a performance area and exhibition space. Although CSAW dealt with internal leadership struggles, it maintained the facility as a living and studio space for up to forty artists at a time for over two decades.⁵

“There’s this whole back and forth about what is street art, what is graffiti, what is public art, what’s a mural...”

—Angel Quesada, visual artist and muralist¹



GONZO247 painted this mural in Houston's Market Square District in spring of 2013. The Houston Arts Alliance and the Greater Houston Convention and Visitor's Bureau commissioned it as part of the "Houston Is" campaign, promoting the city's eclectic personality and diversity.

Photo courtesy of GONZO247.



The Houston Food Park at 1504 St. Emanuel Street opened June 22, 2013. The parking lot is open to the public and serves as grounds for the food park. Several artists' graffiti and tagging can be viewed circling the building. Photo courtesy of author.

In 1989, Houstonian graffiti artists GONZO247 and MERGE360 of UPC, Underground Productions began documenting their activities—legal and illegal—and established a pen pal system with graffiti artists in other cities, exchanging videos of their work. The two then compiled these videos from around the world and created a video magazine, *Aerosol Warfare*, which sold worldwide. Although it covered many aspects of hip hop culture, it focused on graffiti. In 1992, the duo established the “Wall of Fame,” which still runs today on Palmer and McKinney Streets as a legal spot for artists to graffiti. In 1994 ChristianAZUL and Christopher Karl “BeZerk One” joined *Aerosol Warfare* and established Aerosol Warfare Gallery in 2000.⁶

Tagging, a way of signing one’s name anonymously, has been prevalent in Houston streets and on other artwork. On June 13, 2012, University of Houston art student Uriel Landeros was accused of spray-painting Picasso’s *Woman in a Red Armchair* at the Menil Collection. While Landeros faced up to ten years for felony graffiti and criminal mischief charges, he was sentenced to two years. After fleeing to Mexico, he turned himself in to authorities in January 2013.⁷

Union Pacific and BNSF Railway companies have dealt with this kind of graffiti vandalism for decades. Railcars

tagged with graffiti require a different removal process than city property because the cars are nomadic and cross state boundaries. For abatement of railcar graffiti, a non-mechanical repair order is issued and held until the railcar is empty and near an appropriate paint shop.⁸

ARTISTS

Researching graffiti artists is difficult because they often conceal their identities to prevent criminal prosecution. Often going out at nighttime to tag and paint, they are rarely known to the public, especially when their pursuits are illegal protest pieces meant to rock the public eye.⁹ Many such graffiti artists have left their marks on Houston. In November 2013, the *Houston Press* released a list of “Houston’s Top 10 Graffiti Artists,” which acknowledged legends such as Jade, Colors, Weah, Prime, Bekit, and Kaze, and showcased the best artists including: Howie, Abels, Article, Weah (Daniel Anguilu), SKEEZI181, Ack!, Machine & Machete, Colors Onor, W3R3 ON3, and GONZO247.¹⁰

NEKST is often regarded as the greatest graffiti artist to come out of Houston. Once stating “my work is about scale and visibility,” Sean Griffin, or NEKST, was known for his bold letters and fearless attitude and did not shy away from any territory. He began writing his name as NEXT in 1996,

but soon evolved to NEKST.

He planned his structure, size, colors, and location in high-traffic areas to make a statement. Starting in Houston, his graffiti crew was DTS (Def Threats) and eventually became part of the MSK crew, or the Mad Society Kings, known for having some of the world’s greatest and most famous graffiti artists. NEKST painted in New Orleans, San Francisco, Detroit, Los Angeles, Miami, and other cities. Some of his best work was done during a six-month detention in a Dallas prison, where he drew dozens of



The Urban Animals united for their thirty-fifth anniversary in 2014 at Numbers Nightclub in Montrose.

Photo courtesy of Sylvester Garza.

portraits of fellow inmates with pencil and paper. Voted “Best Graffiti Artist” by the *Houston Press* in 2003, NEKST died of an apparent overdose in December 2012, shaking the global graffiti community.¹¹ Daniel Anguilu recalls, “He painted on stuff that didn’t belong to him, and he did it well . . . he did it all over the place, vivid, big. No one could deny him. I mean this guy passed away and there’s like a memorial piece that someone has done for him in every major city of the world.”¹²

Those who mourned NEKST’s passing knew the impact he had on the art scene, but for Vizie, losing NEKST also meant the loss of a brother. Like his brother, Vizie paints colorfully vibrant pieces and masterful murals. While he has his own style, it is not too different from NEKST’s, and both are often referred to as kings of the graffiti world, especially in Houston. Vizie participated in the *Call it Street Art, Call it Fine Art, Call it What You Know* exhibition at the Station Museum of Contemporary Art in Houston in 2013. His piece titled “NEKST” spanned three walls and featured a rainbow-hued mixture of their names. Vizie commented, “my piece intertwines my graffiti name with my brother’s, NEKST. I feel his name is something.”¹³

Native Houstonian Mario Enrique Figueroa Jr., or GONZO247, began his career as a graffiti artist in 1984. He became one of the first to capture the graffiti subculture by producing a video magazine series in the 1990s. Interested in giving artists a place for experimentation, he and partner MERGE360 founded Wall of Fame as a legal place for artists to graffiti. GONZO founded Aerosol Warfare Gallery in 2000 and introduced street art to the masses. Today, the gallery serves as a local street, urban, and graffiti art resource. GONZO began as a traditional graffiti artist, using spray paint to create letters and words on walls. Since then he feels he has evolved as an artist, also trying



Dead-Lee, GONZO247, and MERGE360 painted this image in 1993 at Summer Street in Houston. Photo courtesy of Aerosol Warfare.

new techniques and media. GONZO has worked his graffiti magic around house designs, automobiles, skateboards, helmets, fashion apparel, interior design products, and more. GONZO observes of his evolving style, “I still consider myself a graffiti artist. Right now, there’s a bigger umbrella called street art and that encompasses, for most people, everything under the sun that you can put on a wall. All of that is still technically considered graffiti. . . . The style of art I’m working on right now – it’s aerosol art. It’s artwork that, if you didn’t see me do it, you would look at it and ap-



This 2009 piece on the parking lot side of XL Parts at 3000 Crawford Street is the last legal piece NEKST painted in Houston. Many, including Daniel Anguilu, have fought to save this wall, one of NEKST’s last remaining pieces. Photo courtesy of author.



In September 2012, two murals appeared on a railroad bridge over the Gulf Freeway. “REMüV HATE” was done by Remüv and appeared northbound. “Be Someone” by an unknown artist appeared southbound. City authorities have not removed either piece.

Photo courtesy of Ashley Nicole Photography.

preciate it for what it is, versus seeing it and thinking, ‘that’s a piece of graffiti, I’m going to move on.’ I try to blend different styles to create a unique piece of art.”¹⁴

Another artist, Daniel Anguila, creates works of intricate shapes and political messages seen across the city. A painter and muralist, Daniel began painting graffiti at a young age, using freight trains and walls as his canvas. Born in Mexico, he came to the United States when he was fourteen and began trading photos of freight trains with people, similar to a pen pal system, and painting with the name Weah. Discussing his past, Anguila states, “To me graffiti really opened my eyes to the world. If it wasn’t for graffiti or the fact that I was doing graffiti, I would not know anything. But that’s the people who do, live graffiti. There’s guys who come around, they just do things here or there. We actually, all of us, all of the guys I painted with, that’s all we did. For years. Not one of us didn’t have something to do with illegal graffiti.”¹⁵

Now coining the term “muralist” for himself rather than graffiti or street artist, Daniel has painted for Art League Houston, Texas Art Asylum, Houston METRO, The Station Museum, Aerosol Warfare, The Glassell School of Art, Lawndale Art Center, Houston Bahá’í Center, the Mexican Consulate, and dozens of other places. He has traveled the world, participating in graffiti art exhibits. Daniel does graffiti through passion and dislikes the “street cred” and market value that people seek, saying, “The only way I know how to approach anything is through the activist mind. I don’t have an artist mind. When someone offers me something, I think more progressive, like okay cool, what can this do? How is this beneficial, how is this gonna do something? And how is this gonna, how, how, how? And artists think differently. They’re more like ‘how’s this gonna push my career.’”¹⁶

Daniel continues to reflect on his past with graffiti and still misses it. Unfortunately, graffiti has a violent side, which Daniel dealt with in his past, “All of my friends have been stabbed, shot, gone to jail. Not one of them has ever stopped and said ‘what the f*** are we doing’. . . But I look back and I never say ‘don’t’ . . . man people should

do graffiti. . . . It’s good. Take you to jail, you learn places nobody’s ever been to; you make a lot of friends, good and bad friends, but it will open your eyes.” At one point the graffiti scene got so dangerous that local people began fleeing the city, while others never visited. “People didn’t even like coming to Houston to paint because they were getting jumped,” he added.¹⁷

Through collaborations, mentorships, and shared exhibitions, graffiti has impacted a variety of artists. Born in Laredo, Texas, Angel Quesada is a visual artist, curator, art preparatory, and arts administrator who has individually organized over twenty exhibits and painted seventeen murals and public arts works in Texas. In discussing graffiti’s perceptions, Angel states, “On the artist side, there can be a lot of bad messaging. . . . Very few think about their imagery—what impact it has on the general public, and I think that is something that can be improved. . . . On the other side there are detractors in the fine arts community that don’t see it as a viable art form. It’s just monkeys making marks.”¹⁸

Visual artist Kelyne Reis moved to Houston in 2009 and met GONZO247 who exposed her to graffiti. She asked him for private lessons, and her first assignment was to “create an alphabet,” which she explains “each real graffiti artist has” as a symbol of recognition. She practiced at the Wall of Fame, experimenting with spray painting. Kelyne did not realize the impermanence of graffiti and had to deal with someone painting over her work, “From the moment that you put your things there, that’s it, and then you move on and do something else. Somebody else can come and use this piece of wall, but I didn’t know that. . . . It’s like a war. Being in the war, being a soldier, you have to protect yourself.”¹⁹

ERADICATION EFFORTS

While the new millennium has allowed many artists to shine, graffiti without permission remains illegal. The City of Houston Visual Blight Ordinance addresses all graffiti and vandalism restrictions. The city leads several graffiti abatement programs and has a section of its website dedicated to “Wiping Out Graffiti,” noting that “the decision to create graffiti, not ‘art,’ has consequences.” Inspections



Daniel Anguilu is famous for his murals that are formed by intricate shapes, elaborate designs and powerful messages on human rights and justice. This piece is painted along Pak's Food Store at 301 West Alabama Street. Photo courtesy of author.

and Public Services (IPS), a division of the Department of Neighborhoods, the General Services Department, the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, the Public Works and Engineering Department, the Mayor's Anti-Gang Office, and Solid Waste Management Department's Environmental Service Center all collaborate to eradicate graffiti. The Environmental Service Center provides free paint for citizens who have been victims of illegal tagging.

The website has a "Take Action" link, providing tips and advice on removing graffiti, and explaining its distress on the community. It states: "Graffiti comes in all shapes and colors and can be found on buildings, highways, fences and other surfaces. It's often done without permission and it's against the law. Graffiti is an eyesore that decreases property value, is a drain on tax dollars and makes residents feel unsafe. The City of Houston and several local organizations are doing a number of things to decrease this vandalism, such as painting over and removing graffiti on public property and other areas in designated corridors. Property owners are also encouraged to plant trees or ivy to cover walls and fences that have been marked with graffiti."²⁰

The East End often receives graffiti. The Greater East End Management District Graffiti Abatement Program began operating in 2001 and cleaned its 100,000th graffiti site in March 2013. The Greater East End Management District has four trucks it uses to remove graffiti, and covers sixteen square miles in the city.²¹

PLACES THAT WELCOME GRAFFITI

Although Houston has anti-graffiti efforts and laws against graffiti, street art graffiti seems to have been embraced recently as the government and local businesses have commissioned public murals. Several places have welcomed the public to graffiti in a safe, legal environment. While the Wall of Fame and Aerosol Warfare continue to provide a place for painting and exhibiting graffiti and urban art,



Aerosol Warfare serves as an urban art workspace and mecca for exhibitions and workshops. Photo courtesy of Aerosol Warfare.



In October 2011, Aerosol Warfare and CKC StART Street & Urban Arts unveiled a mural titled *Linking You to the World in the Houston Public Library's underground parking garage*. GONZO247 and MERGE360 were lead artists with Carolyn Casey serving as visual and project manager. Deck Wgeef, Joseph Echavarría, Siego & Gabriel Prusmack helped with the dedication.

Photo courtesy of GONZO247.

the Kingspoint Mullet in Southeast Houston is perhaps the most exciting place for the current generation to legally graffiti. At nearly 17,000 square feet, it is the largest graffiti art space in Texas. It also houses Overspray Art Supply, which sells paint and art. With every inch of this space covered in paint, the Mullet provides a gathering space for graffiti artists, as hundreds of artists from around the world have left their mark there. Although it has recently faced eviction, Jonathan Estes and SKEEZ181 opened the Kingspoint Mullet in 2011 and hoped to expand the center into a charity, raising funds for autistic children.²² Tragically Estes was killed in August 2014, but the Mullet continues to promote his legacy of a welcoming space for graffiti.

GRAFFITI EXHIBITIONS IN HOUSTON

Many fine arts institutions and public spaces have come to support the art form and held graffiti and urban arts exhibitions. In the fall of 2011, Aerosol Warfare teamed up with CKC StART Street & Urban Arts and the Houston Public Library to paint a mural in the central Jesse H. Jones Library parking garage.²³ From November to December 2011, DiverseWorks exhibited *Grandalism: EPISODE*. “Born and raised on Houston’s north side,” *Glasstire* notes that “EPISODE’s influences come from old school Northside crews like RAGE*KTK.” His legal writing for the past ten years used many materials, including stickers, markers, and paint.²⁴

The Station Museum of Contemporary Art held *Call it Street Art, Call it Fine Art, Call it What You Know* in 2013. Curator Jordan Poole called the works of these artists “an expression of personal anarchism.” He added, “as the world becomes more corporatized and monotonous, and thus continues to render our lives evermore insignificant, these artists articulate the sentiments and attitudes that carry a message of personal growth.”²⁵

In June 2013, four artists were called on to create an outdoor mural at downtown’s GreenStreet, formally known as the Houston Pavilions. Like the Market Square

mural, the GreenStreet art is part of the “Houston Is Inspired” marketing campaign, with four key words plastered on walls that surround restaurants, shops, and offices. GONZO247 painted “tasty,” Gabriel Prusmack painted “hip,” Kelyne Reis did “funky,” and Wiley Robertson painted “inspired.”²⁶

PERSISTENCE OF GRAFFITI

Graffiti continues to evolve with variations of its original block lettering and other forms such as wheat pasting, an inexpensive way to adhere posters to surfaces. In 2012 Houston filmmaker Alex Luster, along with writer Tony Reyes and producer GONZO247, released the film *Stick ‘Em Up!* chronicling the inner-city art form, which Alex had been capturing since 2007.²⁷ The movie offers insight “into the minds

and motivations behind some of Houston’s most active guerilla street artists, capturing the lifespan of their art—conception, creation, placement, and ultimately removal by the city’s abatement enforcement.” It features commentary by city and law enforcement officials, such as Sheriff Adrian Garcia, and street artists Give Up, Shepard Fairey, DUAL, Eyesore, Cutthroat, and Bomit.²⁸ Luster said his film “covers street art from birth to death” and that “it’s not a good documentary if it doesn’t show both sides. Ninety-nine percent of street art documentaries are one-sided. They are all about the artists and why they do it. There is no negativity to what they do. So we decided to step out and show several sides of the issue. I wanted it to be real, fair, and balanced. I want stories of real life people who will add to the story.”²⁹

“Who knew that the style-ized signatures of inner city kids would go on to have such a monumental impact on popular culture?”

—Jon Naar, author of *The Birth of Graffiti*³⁰

From restaurants to city government, many have embraced graffiti and street art as a true art form. Depending on one’s views, personal taste, and artistic intent, every individual has definitions for the words graffiti, street art, urban art, neo-graffiti, murals, vandalism, and crime that differentiate which words are synonymous and which are not. In our urban context, graffiti will continue to endure, transform, and regenerate. It is up to the public to maintain its story and purpose.

Nimra Haroon is a junior at the Jack J. Valenti School of Communication and Honors College at the University of Houston. She is studying advertising, energy and sustainability and is certifying in nonprofit leadership.

Donald Barthelme and the Adams Petroleum Center

By Stephen James

One of Houston's most important literary figures was the late writer and novelist Donald Barthelme (1931–1989). But for many years Barthelme labored in the shadow of his better-known father, Donald Barthelme, Sr. (1907–1996), a nationally prominent architect.¹ A native of Galveston, the senior Barthelme trained at the University of Pennsylvania and first gained attention in 1936 as the lead designer for the Hall of State, the principal building of the Texas Centennial Exposition in Dallas.² In 1948 he won an award from the American Institute of Architects for Houston's St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church, applauded for its simple Scandinavian modern forms.

Yet Barthelme made his reputation with the West Columbia Elementary School of 1951, which won many awards and was recognized internationally. Its innovative design departed from the traditional practice of placing classrooms along both sides of a long corridor. Instead, Barthelme arranged the building around two large courtyards; classrooms opened to the courts through floor-to-ceiling glass. This flooded the rooms with light while pro-



Donald Barthelme, 1954.

All photos courtesy of Donald Barthelme, Sr., Architectural Papers, University of Houston Libraries, Special Collections Department by permission of Estate of Donald Barthelme, Sr.

viding a sheltered environment for the students. At the main entrance a flamboyant scalloped canopy greeted visitors.³

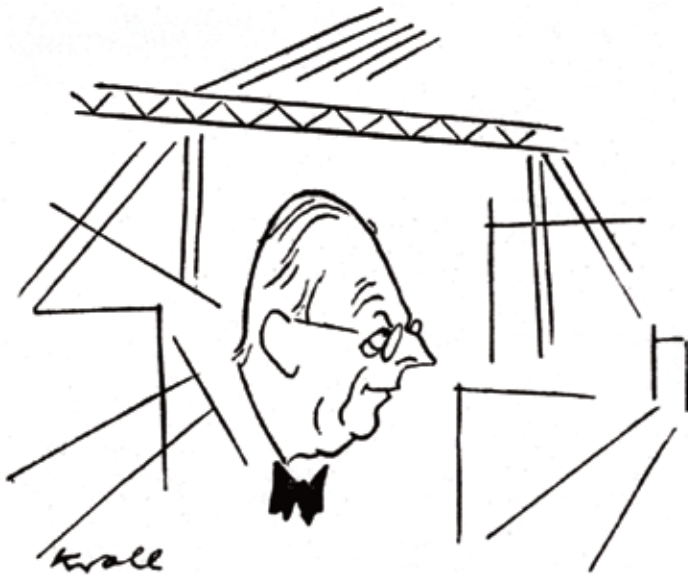
Barthelme's successful school buildings benefitted from a post-war faith that modern methods could improve the way students learned.⁴ Educators promoted new curricula while architects offered their own solutions to perceived problems. An intellectual with an active mind, Barthelme parlayed his reputation as an expert on the design of school buildings into a new role as an educational reformer. In speeches and articles he argued for a more holistic learning environment in which students solved problems that combined multiple academic disciplines. As the father of five children, his interest in education was not surprising. In 1946 he joined the faculty of the University

of Houston's College of Architecture and in 1959 became head of Rice University's School of Architecture.

Barthelme's frequent appearances in newspapers and national magazines made him one of the best-known architects in Houston during the 1950s. He was a larger-than-life figure, a local celebrity who drove a sporty convertible

West Columbia Elementary School, West Columbia, Texas, 1951, north courtyard.





DONALD BARTHELME, architect: "Everything good ever done was done by people who followed their own ideas. Walk alone, if necessary. Don't walk the beaten path."

Donald Barthelme was caricatured as part of a New Year's Day feature on the wisdom of local celebrities. Houston Post, January 1, 1956.

Julius Kroll – *Houston Post*, 1956 © *Houston Chronicle*.
Used by permission.

and charmed the newspaper columnists. He cultivated the image of a loner who went his own way rather than follow the crowd, a sentiment he shared when interviewed by the *Houston Post* in 1956.⁵ In some ways his public persona seemed modeled on that of Howard Roark, the iconoclastic architect in Ayn Rand's novel, *The Fountainhead*.⁶ Barthelme's sons later called him "the hero of his self-created myth."⁷ Barthelme was a passionate amateur photographer, and he was one of his favorite subjects. The view seen at the beginning of the article is a self-portrait, carefully composed and orchestrated. It is Barthelme as he wanted the world to see him—thoughtful but direct and unflinching.

As Barthelme's reputation grew, Kenneth S. "Bud" Adams, Jr. (1923–2013), was making his own mark in the oil industry. His father was head of Phillips Petroleum Company in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. After the war, the younger Adams moved to Houston and founded the Ada Oil Company. By the mid-1950s, ready for larger offices, he purchased a thirteen-acre tract of land at the edge of the city, on Fannin Street at Brays Bayou. Across the street the Prudential Insurance Company had just erected its new regional headquarters building. They seemed to be the leading edge of a movement, with many businesses poised to abandon the downtown business district for suburban locations.



Donald Barthelme, Adams Petroleum Center, aerial view looking southwest, 1956. APC tower is at right; Fannin crosses Brays Bayou at middle left.



Hoping to capitalize on that trend, Adams decided to develop his large property as a mixed-use complex with office, retail, and residential components, to be known as the Adams Petroleum Center. To give credibility to such a speculative venture, Adams wanted a high-profile architect and chose Donald Barthelme to help him.

Barthelme welcomed the Adams commission. Because he insisted on working alone, he was limited to doing smaller projects that he could produce by himself, assisted by a few draftsmen.⁸ What Adams was proposing would be the largest and most ambitious project of Barthelme's career.

Completing such a complex would take years, so Barthelme planned to build it in stages. Phase I, a low three-story building, would house the Ada Oil Company offices. When completed, this building would serve as the base structure for Phase II, a fourteen-story tower for outside tenants, to be erected above it. The brash and colorful Adams had big plans for the rest of the complex. Phases III and IV would include office buildings, parking garages, retail shops, and residential apartments. Adams envisioned the Adams Petroleum Center as a headquarters for the oil industry that would rival Houston's downtown business district. Therefore his development would offer "common facilities available to the oil, gas and chemical industries such as libraries, laboratories, showrooms and a meeting hall and exhibition space on a raised parking plaza forming the focal point of the group." A communications tower and a helipad rounded out the amenities. When complete, the multimillion-dollar project would be home to 5,000 people.⁹

Behind the scenes, Barthelme gave form to Adams's dreams. Between 1954 and 1957 the architect spent hundreds of hours studying different designs for the APC tower and preparing a dramatic aerial view of the complex. His working drawings for the initial building exceeded 300 sheets. It was an enormous effort for Barthelme's small office, also busy with several school projects. His family noticed: his sons wrote later that their father had "by then for the most part excused himself from the child-rearing business to spend his energies on buildings he was designing."¹⁰

The Ada Oil Company moved into its new building in early 1958, and Barthelme continued planning the tower that would follow. Adams hoped to lure the Humble Oil & Refining Company to the new office complex, reasoning that if one of the state's largest oil companies relocated to the Adams Petroleum Center, others would follow its lead. But by 1959 it was clear that other companies had little interest in moving to an office development named for a competitor. Adams abruptly abandoned the scheme and even declined to add the tower to his own modest building. By then he had turned his attention to another project. In August 1959, in the conference room Barthelme had designed for him, Adams and Dallas oil man Lamar Hunt announced the creation of the new American Football League. Adams would own the Houston franchise, Hunt the one in Dallas.¹¹ Adams now planned to use the undeveloped land for offices and practice fields for his football team, to be called the Houston Oilers.

Barthelme was no doubt disappointed by the project's failure, but he too had moved on. In mid-1959 he agreed to become head of the architecture school at Rice University.



Donald Barthelme, Adams Petroleum Center, perspective view of APC Tower, 1956.

He embraced the opportunity to implement the new reform curriculum he had developed. But it was a drastic change for the school, and Barthelme—never known for his affability—failed to win the hearts and minds of his colleagues. After two stormy years the faculty revolted and succeeded in having him fired.

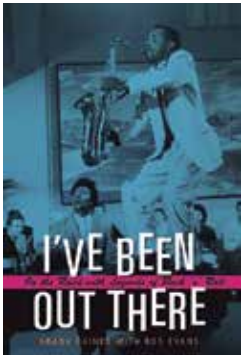
For Barthelme, the failures of the Adams and Rice ventures took a toll, aggravated by years of contentious relations with the building contractors who failed to meet his high standards. In 1963, at the peak of his career, he closed the doors to his office and retired from architectural practice. Barthelme was clearly discouraged, but he was only fifty-six, and his passion for education offered a new challenge. He returned to the University of Houston where he devoted himself to shaping the next generation of architects. He retired from teaching in 1974 and died in 1996.

In 2001 the University of Houston Libraries acquired Barthelme's papers and drawings from his estate. They are available to researchers at the library's Special Collections department, where they sit near the Donald Barthelme Literary Papers, a collection of materials produced by Barthelme's son. Recently, the UH Digital Library added a number of items from the Donald Barthelme, Sr., Architectural Papers. The Digital Library makes accessible online important holdings of the UH libraries and archives. These items illustrate Barthelme's designs through pencil sketches, photographs, and the detailed working drawings used to construct his buildings. His work was published widely during his career, but because the Adams Petroleum Center was never built in the form Barthelme intended, his sketches for the project have rarely been seen. Significantly, the online collection includes a few of the dozens of studies that the architect made for the Adams project.

Stephen James is Curator, Architecture & Planning Collections, University of Houston Libraries, Special Collections Department. He holds a Ph.D. in Architectural History from the University of Virginia.

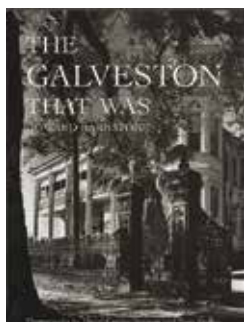
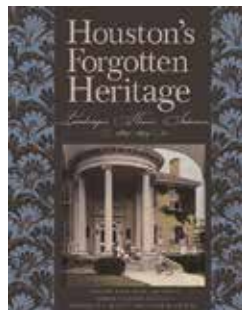
News Updates & Books *by Barbara Eaves*

BOOKS & VIDEOS



I've Been Out There by Grady Gaines (with Rod Evans) is the autobiography of the Texas blues and jazz tenor saxophonist who recorded with and backed up such artists as Little Richard and Dee Clark. Former mayor Bill White commented: "The book tells how powerful music broke down barriers that had once divided Houston, and our nation, by race."

Out of print since 2003, *Houston's Forgotten Heritage*, by Dorothy Knox Howe Houghton, Barrie M. Scardino Bradley, Sadie Gwin Blackburn, and Katherine S. Howe (with foreword by Margaret Swett Henson), details Houston home life and culture from the 1820s to World War I, when rapid economic development and modernization spelled demolition for many nineteenth-century structures.



The Galveston That Was, first published in 1966 by the late architect Howard Barnstone with photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson and Ezra Stoller, presents a vivid record of the mansions and buildings of Texas's largest, wealthiest, and most cosmopolitan city until 1900. Cataloguing some of the best U.S. Victorian architecture, it illustrates how (and why) many of Galveston's historic buildings were saved.

The above books are from Texas A&M University Press, www.tamupress.com.

San Antonio and the Alamo, a new documentary from Houston Arts & Media, tells the story of the Siege of Bexar and the Alamo with primary source material from both sides. It is one of eight documentaries in The Birth of Texas Series about the period from 1820 through 1845. The *Houston Press* gave HAM a Master Mind Award for 2015. "We don't try to save buildings," said founder Mike Vance. "We try to save stories." HAM also collects oral and photographic stories from pre-1950 area schools and produces two-minute HAM Slices seen on Channel 8. Visit www.houstonartsandmedia.org.

NEWS

BRIAN A. BOLINGER was named chief executive officer of the Texas State Historical Association. An attorney, Bolinger has sixteen years of senior management experience in the corporate and non-profit sectors, most recently with Apollo Power & Light and the Vascular Birthmarks Foundation. TSHA, Texas's oldest learned society, publishes the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, the *Handbook of Texas Online* with over 26,000 entries, and the *Texas Almanac*.



ELIZABETH SARGENT was promoted to deputy assistant director of customer experience for the Houston Public Library system. **Laney Dwyer McAdow** became HMRC manager, and **Jennifer Sessa** is now assistant manager/lead archivist. Other new HMRC faces belong to **Adrienne Cain**, oral history and media librarian; **Clint Drake**, collection development librarian; and **Marlene Astorga**, senior customer services clerk.

SAN JACINTO CONSERVANCY has placed a significant Spanish cannon on loan to the Alamo. The barrel bears the Spanish royal crest and has the same damage as other cannon used by Alamo defenders. The cannon's provenance states that the Howard B. French family received it in the 1880s to pay a debt and displayed it at their Philadelphia country estate, Aulderbrook. In 1986, J. P. Bryan located and purchased it and shipped it back to Texas to be auctioned to raise money for TSHA. Buyer John McRae constructed a carriage and donated the piece to the San Jacinto Battleground Conservancy, which had it conserved by Texas A&M Conservation Research Lab. The cannon's dedication coincides with *Flintlock to Cartridge*, an exhibition at the Alamo through April 15.



Photo ©Bob Owen/San Antonio Express-News/ZUMAPRESS.com.

NEWEST DISPLAY OF

OLDEST ITEMS: Some of the oldest artifacts in the vast collection at the San Jacinto Museum of History went on permanent display in January. Items include native regional pottery executed by Mayan, Aztec, and Mezcalan craftsmen from as early as 200 BCE.



Photo courtesy of the San Jacinto Museum of History.

PRESERVATION HOUSTON: Thirteen projects have received 2015 Good Brick Awards, including the Heritage Society, which won the Martha Peterson Award for restoring and reinterpreting the Fourth Ward Cottage in Sam Houston Park. Other winners are: Glen Rosenbaum for a mid-century modern house in Meyerland; Pearl Hospitality for the J. W. Marriott Houston Downtown in the Carter Building; Cristo Rey Jesuit College Prep School for the former Mount Carmel High School; Michael Skelly and Ann Whitlock for a Victorian cottage and six houses in East End; Harris County for converting Robert E. Lee Elementary School to the Leonel Castillo Community Center on the Near North Side; Stephen Howe and Alicia Blaszk for their Tudor Revival house in Boulevard Oaks; Houston Community College for the former San Jacinto High School in Midtown; Nature Discovery Center for the Henshaw House in Bellaire; Eva Hughes and Brenda Hughes for the Loggins-Hughes Building on Washington Avenue; Ellie and Christian Busker for a 1920s bungalow in Sunset Heights Annex; Carl and Karine Holliman for their Victorian cottage in the Sixth Ward; and James Gast for his book, *The Astrodome: Building an American Spectacle*. The President's Award went to Phoebe Tudor for her contributions to historic preservation. Instrumental in restoring the Julia Ideson Building, Tudor chairs the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission and is leading the Friends of the Astrodome effort. The Community Pillar Award went to Buffalo Bayou Partnership for preserving green space and historic structures, and the Future Landmark Award went to BBVA Compass Stadium for significant new construction.



Fourth Ward Cottage.

Photo courtesy of the Heritage Society.

IDESON AWARD ENTRIES: The Julia Ideson Award for 2015 will be awarded to a scholarly book completed within the past five years (2010-2015) documenting local Houston

and/or Texas history and culture that uses the resources of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center significantly, though not necessarily exclusively. Deadline for submissions is June 1, 2015. Visit www.friendsofthetexasroom.org or contact Kathleen Colt at kbcolt@yahoo.com for information.

ASTRODOME MEMORIES: The Houston Public Library received a grant from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission and the Institute of Museum and Library Services to create *Astrodome Memories*, a digital gateway to Astrodome-related materials, including oral histories, photographs, blueprints, printed material, and memorabilia from the past fifty years. Portions of this material should be available online by summer to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the stadium's opening season. HPL partnered with the Harris County Archives and Public Library, the University of Houston Libraries Special Collections, and the Woodson Research Center at Rice's Fondren Library. The project wishes to contact owners of major private collections of Astrodome materials – individuals, corporations, archives – and to secure permissions to share their materials with the public. Contact Jennifer.Kirk@houstontx.gov.

HARRIS COUNTY will restore *The Rebirth of Our Nationality*, a block-long mural painted in 1973 by Leo Tanguma and fellow artists portraying the history and heroes of the Chicano movement. Harris County purchased the building at 5900 Canal Street to house Precinct 6 Constable staff and records. Work on the mural, a neighborhood icon, will begin late this year after the building is renovated.



Photo ©Houston Chronicle. Used with permission.

GLO DIGITIZES MAPS: Frank and Carol Holcomb's private collection of some of the oldest and rarest Texas maps have been digitized. These and other maps are available online through the General Land Office at www.savetexashistory.org. Reprints are available for as little as \$20. All proceeds help Save Texas History, a public-private effort to preserve the 35.5 million maps and documents at the GLO, recognized by the Texas Historical Commission for its effort to digitally preserve these historical treasures.

HOUSTON AUDUBON SOCIETY, a chapter of the national society, protects birds and their environments in an eleven-county area. Three upcoming programs include: The Everything Natural lunch series, summer camps at Sims Bayou and the Edith L. Moore Nature Sanctuary, and the Saturdays in Nature series. Visit www.houstonaudubon.org for details.

ARCHIVISTS GIVE DIVERSITY AWARD TO UH:

The Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage Project, led by UH's Nicolás Kanellos and Carolina Villarreal, received the 2014 Diversity Award from the Society of American Archivists. Recognized for accessioning important Latin American archives and making them available physically and electronically, the Project acquired the collection of Leonor Villegas de Magnón, a Laredo activist who recruited women for a nursing corps to tend the wounded on the battlefields of the Mexican Revolution. The Project also assembled the largest collection of micro-filmed Hispanic newspapers published in the United States between 1808 and 1960.

SPARK PARKS dedicated six new parks in two school districts in November 2014. Houston ISD added parks at Revere Middle School, Chavez High School, Helms Elementary and Port Houston Elementary. Spring Branch ISD added parks at Valley Oaks Elementary and Spring Forest Middle School. SPARK Parks, constructed on existing school grounds, are required to be open to the community after school hours and on weekends. The 2015 calendar is available at www.sparkpark.org.



EVENTS

Through May 16, Heritage Society: *Financing Texas* exhibits the currency used by the Republic of Texas, and later the State of Texas, through the mid-nineteenth century. 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., 1100 Bagby. www.heritagesociety.org.

Sat. April 18, San Jacinto Symposium: Six speakers will focus on the impact of Native Americans in the Mexican colonial era, the Texas Revolution, and the Republic of Texas. 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., United Way Community Center, 50 Waugh Drive. www.sanjacintoconservancy.org.

Committeemen Mark Pirtle and David Singleton have posted the full content of all fourteen prior symposia on the website – a wonderful resource for historians, teachers, and history buffs. Go to the website above, and click on “Lectures, Videos and Newsletters.”

Sat. April 18, San Jacinto Day Festival and Battle Reenactment: Watch the Texas Army win the Battle of San Jacinto – again; visit Mexican and Texian camps; enjoy live music, food, and drink. 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the San Jacinto Battleground. www.sanjacinto-museum.org.

April 22 and May 21, The Heritage Society: Sip cocktails, munch hors d'oeuvres, support The Heritage Society, and take an inside look at some of Houston's historic homes and buildings. In April, visit a mid-century modern home in Glenbrook Valley; in May, the Esperson Building. 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Tickets are \$75 for each site. www.heritagesociety.org.

April 24-26, CASETA: The Center for Advancement & Study of Early Texas Art will hold its 13th annual CASETA Symposium at the University of Houston. Topics include mid-century modernism, Lone Star sculpture, gay/lesbian artists of the 1930s, and the San Antonio/Spanish artist Jose Arpa y Perea. Speakers include J. P. Bryan, founder

Thank You!

Houston History thanks the Houston Maritime Museum, its director Leslie Bowlin, and board chair Niels Aalund for hosting the launch party for our fall issue, “Dredged to Excellence: 100 Years of the Houston Ship Channel.” Everyone in attendance enjoyed the amazing exhibits and learning about the history of shipping in our region as well as maritime history going back to the Bronze Age. We greatly appreciate the support Leslie and Niels offered by making contacts, contributing to the issue, and sponsoring the launch. We look forward to working with them and the museum in the future.

Thanks also go to board members Betty Chapman, Susan Bischoff, Bill Kellar, and Oscar Gutierrez who contributed to the refreshments.



Members of the Houston Pilots, authors, and guests enjoy the program and exhibits at the Houston Maritime Museum during the launch party for the fall issue.
Photo courtesy of Nimra Haroon.

of Galveston's Bryan Museum, and architectural historian Stephen Fox. www.caseta.org.

April 25, Texas History Play Series:

A concert reading of *To the Alamo and Back*, Diana Howie's new play focusing on the life of Susanna Dickinson, is planned at the new Queensbury Theatre (opposite City Centre). Dickinson experienced (with her husband Almeron) Texas history from Gonzales to the Alamo. Fully staged performances will run at the Queensbury in October. *To the Alamo and Back* is the second in a series of Texas history plays commissioned by the Houston Masonic Library and Museum Foundation. www.houstonmasoniclibrary.org and www.queensburytheatre.org.

Sat. and Sun., May 2 and 3: Take the Good Brick Tour to visit several winners of Preservation Houston's second annual Good Brick Awards (see page 42). www.preservationhouston.org.



Sat. May 16: The Bryan Museum will hold its grand opening in the restored Galveston Orphans Home at 1315 21st Street, Galveston. The Mary Jon and J. P. Bryan Collection includes art, artifacts, and documents detailing the settlement of Texas and the American Southwest. The library and archive for research will be open by appointment. Director Jamie Christy and curator Andrew Gustafson are seeking docents. www.thebryanmuseum.org.



Sun. May 30: The Texas General Land Office hosts the second Genealogypalooza in Austin. Experts will discuss online records at GLO, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, resources for German research in Texas, paleography, and more. www.SaveTexasHistory.org or email archives@glo.texas.gov.

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BARTHELME AND THE ADAMS PETROLEUM CENTER

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