# Houston History

# Summer Sampler

VOLUME 13 • NUMBER 3 • SUMMER 2016
UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON
CENTER FOR PUBLIC HISTORY

## Carolyn Farb, "First Lady of Philanthropy"

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Last

## LETTER FROM EDITOR JOE PRATT

# Ringing the History Bell

*Joseph A. Pratt*

After forty years of university teaching, with thirty years at University of Houston, I will retire at the end of this summer. For about half my years at UH, I have run the *Houston History* magazine, serving as a combination of editor, moneyman, manager, and sometimes writer. In the first issue of the magazine, I wrote: "Our goal…is to make our region more aware of its history and more respectful of its past." We have since published thirty-four issues of our "popular history magazine" devoted to capturing and publicizing the history of the Houston region, broadly defined.

The magazine has been my favorite hobby while I worked at my real job teaching some 10,000 students and publishing roughly 4,000 pages of academic history in books and articles. It introduced me to smart, creative student workers who passed through our magazine staff in three or four waves. It pulled me off campus and out into the lively world of Houstonians who shared my commitment to our region's history. It encouraged me to reclaim the writer's voice of my youth after decades of writing academic books.

At this point, I need to thank the editor of the magazine, Joe Pratt, who seemed to like everything I wrote. After years of trying to help students see historical trends all around them and recognize that these trends shape their lives, writing for the magazine has encouraged me to do the same. It has been fun to reflect on young Joe's life against the backdrop of the historical knowledge old Joe has accumulated over 67 years.

My articles and letters from the editor helped me better understand my dad's experiences in World War II, my lifelong love affair with the Bolivar Peninsula, my obsession with hurricanes, my passion for country music, the impact of race on my upbringing and my mature self, and especially my calling to be a teacher. I had the chance to interview interesting people as varied as Jane Blaffer Owens, George Mitchell, Ben Love, and Larry Dierker, gaining new perspectives along the way. I came away from all of this much more certain that history matters on both regional and a personal levels.

In retirement, I hope to convey some of our family history to our two grandsons.

In memory of my Grandma Pratt I keep her dinner bell, which she rang to call the "men folks" home from the fields for supper. After ringing the bell long enough to make us wish we had a field to retreat to, Felix, my six-year old grandson, asked me what it was like to live on a farm in the old days. We talked at bedtime for almost an hour about my grandparent's life on an East Texas farm that for decades lacked both electricity and running water. I relived for him my memories of regular trips to their farm: moving the outhouse to virgin land with my cousins, "helping" my dad and grandpa slaughter cows and hogs and hanging up their meat in the smoke house, drawing water from a well instead of turning on a faucet, winding up last in a long line of cousins for a bath in a big tub filled with increasingly dirty water heated on the stove. Felix especially liked my memory of the day I joined my cousin in shooting a bull in the behind with BB guns to see what he would do. The enraged bull broke through the fence separating us and chased us back to the farm house, where we confronted uncles who grew angrier than the bull when they realized what we had done.

*Grandma and Grandpa Pratt with baby Joe.* Photo courtesy of Joseph A. Pratt.

At the end of our talk, I told Felix that I lectured to my students in my large American history survey classes about what it was like to live on a farm without electricity and running water to help them understand how different life was in "the old days." I showed them my grandma's dinner bell and told them that she used it to announce it was time to come to supper. Then before each class, after hundreds of rowdy students had filed into the big auditorium, I vigorously rang the history bell to announce it was time to come to order and learn some history.

Felix seemed amused by this. When he asked if he could have the bell, I assured him that someday it would be his.

The uses of history are many, and awareness of history and respect for the past are good for us all.

**Happy retirement, Joe! We will miss you.**

*—Your colleagues, students, and friends*

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**EDITORIAL POLICY**

*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, 3623 Cullen Blvd., Room 320, Houston, TX 77204-3007 or email *HoustonHistory@uh.edu*. Phone 713-743-3123.



**COVER PHOTO:**

*Carolyn Farb with her Lucas terriers, Lucas and Max, in front of* Memphis King *by artist Angelbert Metoyer.*
Photo courtesy of Sofia Van der Dys.

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Photo courtesy of Sofia Van der Dys.

# Carolyn Farb: Fundraiser Extraordinaire

## A conversation with Carolyn Farb and Bob Boudreaux

The world perceives my friend Carolyn to be a bold, innovative, striking, commanding, and dedicated civic leader whose impressive commitment to helping others through philanthropy approaches legendary status. All these are appropriate, applicable, and deserved. But as a friend for over three decades I know the lady to possess an indomitable spirt of a true romantic; a Rennaissance woman of the highest order; a sweet, caring and loyal friend; a person of unquestionable courage in the face of personal adversity, tragedy, and heartbreak; and a lovely soul blessed with great abundance, beauty, and clever wit.

While often seen as a trendsetting, highly visible member of what others would denote as "High Society," I know Carolyn to be a simple Houston girl who would, by her own admission, rather have a burger and a glass of wine at some local restuarant with a close friend, than to dance in a designer gown in the spotlight of a major gala, which she more than likely organized and chaired. Or most preferably, spend quiet time with her beloved pets.

One does not so much "know" Carolyn Farb as one "experiences" Carolyn, for she is akin to a force majeure: in constant motion with brain circuitry continually pushing near overload at all waking hours and, most probably, beyond. She appears to be in a constant state of planning, either for the next gala event (which she always says will be her last) to organizing ideas for her next book, or researching for an art acquisition to add to her magnificent personal collection. Her network of friends and well-earned contacts is expansive and covers the globe in all professions, from European bluebloods to Hollywood movie stars; from international leaders to business legends; from renowned artists and famous authors to just plain folks as myself.

> Holy, fair, and wise is she.
> The heaven such grace did lend her
> That she might admired be...
> To her let us garlands bring.
>
> William Shakespeare
> (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona* 4.2)

She has an amazing intellectual capacity to discuss any and all subjects with informed, well-thought and articulate opinions, often spiced wth a rapier wit that will leave you chuckling; and she does not suffer fools lightly. I know. And those who know her well will tell you that she is not the type of person who takes "no" for an answer.

Having been her companion at numerous public events over the years I saw firsthand how others responded to Carolyn with a genuine sense of respect, appreciation, and admiration bordering on occasional awe. She took all this in gracious stride, moving about in total control of whatever room she entered as an almost automatic center of attention. She is one of those people whom you will know is there, even if you don't immediately see her, because someone will tell you. It was and is always a memorable night to head out anywhere with her.

I have been multiply blessed in knowing her. Although she is as busy as a one-armed carpenter, she will find time for her friends. Always. I know that, too. She cheered me when I needed a cheerleader, she extended her hand to help me when I needed help, extended her arms to give me a shoulder to cry upon, opened her home to me, included me in her many events, opened her heart to my friendship, and kept me in her thoughts and prayers, as I have her, even as we have been separated by oceans and time. I am most grateful to call her friend and honored to have been asked to offer these few introductory words for her.

She is a special person and Houston and the world are not likely to see her like again. God bless and keep you, sweet Caroyln.

*Bob Boudreaux | Prague, March 2016**

**BOB BOUDREAUX:** Describe your earliest childhood memories and relationship with your family.

**CAROLYN FARB**: I felt as though we were a typical American family. I was the eldest of three children. Although now I ask my brother Bobby to say he is older. We grew up in West University in a charming two-story red-brick home with a wonderful backyard on Amherst Street. I have fond memories of magnolia and pecan trees, wonderful neighbors, touch football, dogs abounding. It was all rather idyllic. My siblings and I would walk to school without a care or caution, visit the neighborhood Village Theatre on Saturday mornings for the Fun Club, enjoy skinny burgers and Tex-Mex food at the late, great Felix's — I'm still a devotee of all that. I fell in love with my first dog Charcoal, who had sparkling green eyes and a shiny black coat, at the pet store. I took my dad, Nathan, to look at that doggie in the window. On Saturdays, it was fun to ride the bus downtown and go to Sakowitz for lunch with my friends and cousins and catch a fashion show in the Terrace Room. We all felt very grown-up.

On the weekends, we would visit both sets of grandparents. I loved them all for different reasons but especially my paternal grandfather Jakie, who was and still is my mentor. He affectionately called me "Tissue Paper" as he said special things came

*Carolyn and her brother Bobby, ages eight and six. Bobby later graduated summa cum laude from the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics at the University of Houston and spent most of his career at Schlumberger.*

All photos courtesy of Carolyn Farb unless otherwise noted.

*In April 2016, Bob Boudreaux sat down with Carolyn Farb to interview her for *Houston History*.

wrapped in tissue paper. My brother liked to play touch football in the neighborhood and wasn't too interested in spending time with my sister, Beverly, and me.

**B:** What were your earliest ambitions? Education? Describe your Las Vegas childhood.

**C:** I thought of myself as a writer and would send articles off to *The Atlantic Monthly* and always received a nice letter back. Since I was a conscientious young lady, my sister affectionately called me "Ms. Goody Two-Shoes" — the term coming from a 1765 children's book where author John Newberry described Goody Two-Shoes as a virtuous person and do-gooder — I'll take that. I enjoyed spending time alone, working on projects, listening to soap operas on the radio, and discussing them with anyone who would listen.

My grandfather Jakie gave me a fabulous turquoise Thunderbird for my sixteenth birthday, which he had driven up to San Jacinto High School, where I was a student. When I graduated, he wanted me to go to Mills College on the West Coast, which was closer to Las Vegas, where he had moved to build the Sands Hotel. I enrolled at the University of Oklahoma, to be closer to home, and planned to transfer later to Mills. Sadly, he passed away during my freshman year, so I stayed in Norman.

Visiting my grandfather in Las Vegas for summer vacations was something I looked forward to with great anticipation. I loved swimming in the pool behind his and my grandmother Sadie's home on Sadie Lane. The neighborhood offered plenty of fun for an amateur photographer. I wish I had spied on Howard Hughes as he had the bungalow behind my grandparents' home. Sadie was very glamorous and looked like a movie star. In fact, Las Vegas was glamorous then, and people dressed up for the dinner shows. There were performers like Danny Thomas — my grandfather's favorite — and others like Johnny Mathis, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Peter Lawford — the real Rat Pack. Ironically Danny's daughter Marlo and I later worked on the Texas Innocence Project, a non-profit organization dedicated to securing release of the wrongfully convicted.

*During one summer vacation Carolyn and her grandfather Jakie Freedman had a photo session at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios while visiting film producer Joe Pasternak.*

*In 1983, Carolyn teamed up with American composer and conductor Marvin Hamlisch to host A Million Dollar Evening, a star-studded event to raise money for the Stehlin Foundation for Cancer Research. It was the first time in Texas an event raised one million dollars for a single charity in a single night. Left to right: Dr. John Stehlin, Carolyn Farb, Ann-Margret, Marvin Hamlisch, Liza Minnelli, and Alan King.*

It was fun to go on business trips to Los Angeles with my grandfather. The Sands had its reservations office at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, where we stayed. When he was busy, he would have someone take me shopping at Lanz or on an excursion to the farmer's market.

One of my hobbies was collecting autographed movie star photos, so the studio secretaries provided me with quite a selection. I had visions of becoming an actress and later studied briefly with Sandy Meisner at Desilu Studios, which was owned by Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz. I suppose I needed a stage mother, which in that era would have been most helpful. My mother, Ruth, sang and danced with Ann Miller on the radio.

**B:** How and why did your grandfather become such a dominant influence?

**C:** Everything I have accomplished in my life was to make my grandfather proud of me. He was my mentor, encouraging me to be all that I could be. He gave me the courage to dream and the wings to fly. He introduced me at a young age to the glitzy world of celebrities and philanthropy and was best known as a pioneer Las Vegas hotelier and high-stakes risk-taker. He had the warmth and charm of a Maurice Chevalier and favored ten gallon hats, cowboy boots, and specially designed western clothes. He was larger than life and people knew him as the "Little Man," which was how he referred to himself. He would say that he was known from "Maine to Spain and Nome to Rome." He belonged to an inner sanctum of Houston powerbrokers that included John Mecom Sr., Judge James Elkins, and wildcatter Glenn McCarthy. I loved my grandfather's Will Rogers-like sayings that were both funny and wise. He used to say, "In politics the winner will forget you but the loser never does."

One of the more important lessons that I embraced in Las Vegas, a city of big contrasts — broken hearts and tender hearts — was the importance of sharing and giving.

No one who came to my grandfather for a loan ever went away empty-handed. He would clothe poor families, set them up in business, send children of employees to college, or help a bankrupt publisher's newspaper survive through tough times. I respect that he was self-made, original, witty, compassionate, and with a fierce individuality that is rare. When I left the University of Oklahoma, I thought Los Angeles was the place to go because it was close to where my grandfather lived when he was alive. If you ever had an acting bug, California was the place to be. It was fun to whiz through the Hollywood Hills on the back of a motorcycle with no helmet. You can see that I was a bit of a daredevil.

**B:** You mentioned being attracted to volunteer work even as a teen. What did you do to begin that work?

**C:** I began my volunteering as a teenager at Texas Children's Hospital. The Medical Center was in its infancy. I was always inspired by the beautiful portrait of a horsewoman named Joan Robinson Hill that hung in the lobby across from the snack bar, which was my territory.

It made me sad to see young children so ill and how helpless their families felt. Being a positive young lady, I took pride in making pimento cheese sandwiches in the snack bar and bringing cheer as a candy striper. Whatever you do in life, you should always give it your total commitment.

**B:** When you left L.A. you went to New York. Why did you move there and what brought you back to Texas?

**C:** I wanted the experience of living in a big city. My grandfather had passed away, and I was still somewhat adrift. Most of my friends wanted to get married, have children, and live happily ever after — and they did. Now that I reflect on it, it wasn't such a bad idea. New York was very exciting for an adventurous girl from Texas. I had a dream opportunity working for Norman Rosemont Productions. Our offices were on the top floor of the Plaza Hotel. At times, one could detect the mood of the day by the way the door slammed and the chandeliers shook. Even if you didn't know everything, you had to pretend you did. This was great training that helped me embrace challenges and think on my feet. During this time, I did some volunteer work writing articles for the *Catholic Digest,* published by the New York Foundling Hospital. I mostly wrote about the children who I met there and hoped that they would all find a family and be well.

*Ribbon cutting for the West Gray Multiservice Center. It surpasses ADA requirements to give children of all abilities the opportunity to join in the fun. Left to right: Houston Parks director Joe Turner, Wanda Adams, Michelle Colvard, Vale-Asche Foundation's Anna Leonard and Asche Ackerman, Carolyn Farb, and then mayor Annise Parker.*

*Carolyn with her son Jake Kenyon Shulman at the Houston Arboretum in the mid-1970s.*

**B:** You had one child. Who was he and what was he like?

**C:** When you have a son who has your heart from the moment he comes into the world like Jake Kenyon Shulman, you are truly blessed. He was very kind-hearted, brilliant beyond his years, with a devastatingly electrifying personality. I have never accepted nor will I ever get over his leaving so young and before me. I can only imagine and think about him with every breath and wonder what he would have contributed in life. I miss the grandchildren that I would have had, as he loved children. When I was raising funds for the two Playgrounds Without Limits in Memorial Park and the West Gray Multiservice Center, I always tried to honor Jake, whether it was a plaque or a stone with a quote. When people ask me how his unexpected death affected me, I can only say that I lost years — it felt as though I was hit by a train.

**B:** How do you honor him and remember him?

**C:** To immortalize Jake Kenyon would be impossible. I try to remember him whenever and wherever I respond to a calling that changes a life. I can see him smiling down from heaven because he felt I took on too many projects. He would always tell me I wasn't Wonder Woman. I honored him with the beautiful *Beloved Immortals* memorial site, which took three years to conceive and create, at Glenwood Cemetery. That side of the cemetery with the beautiful hill was less occupied then. Only Howard Hughes and a few others were there. I felt that Jake wouldn't mind if I moved him from another resting place at another location, as he had great admiration and respect for Hughes. It was quite an undertaking. I had to learn so much as I was involved in every aspect of its creation — the selection of the stone, the color of the mortar, the design of the sarcophagus, the

*A passionate art collector, Carolyn Farb poses in front of* Carolyn's Flower*, a painting by Dorothy Hood that hangs in Farb's home. For three years, Farb has worked to raise $500,000 for a Dorothy Hood retrospective at the Art Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi and an accompanying monograph by curator Susie Kahil so that people will know the importance of Hood's work and life's dedication. The exhibit,* Dorothy Hood: The Color of Being/El Color del Ser, *opens in September 2016.*

landscaping with the cypress trees, the watering schedule, the width of the stairs and more — I wanted it to be my greatest artistic expression for my greatest love, my son. The site looks to the sky for the sun and to the stars at night. It took me a long time to commission the beautiful *Annunciation Angel*, who points to the heavens and watches over Jake Kenyon.

**B:** You noted your grandfather as an influence on you. Is there anyone else who stands out?

**C:** I loved the independent spirit of the late Nina Cullinan, patron of Houston arts and parks, and how she quietly parted the waters of matters that she strongly believed in. Nina always did her due diligence, irrespective of its popularity, when she undertook a project. She held everyone in great respect for their contributions to helping others, whatever their roles were.

I first met Nina when I chaired the Houston Ballet Ball Soiree on the Sewanee in 1979/1980. Having limited space at the Houston Country Club, I introduced the concept of the "silent auction" to the event, which raised $100,000 of the record-setting $200,000 evening. I changed all the light bulbs in the chandeliers to pink, creating an atmosphere of warmth without the cost of additional lighting, brought in Peter Duchin's New York orchestra, and had walking sticks as favors for the gentlemen. I can still remember Harris Masterson and his wife Carroll leaving with a handful of walking sticks. The women received ivory fans adorned with gardenias in keeping with the theme. Later, I chaired an event honoring Nina Cullinan when the archives were housed at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Sissy Farenthold inspires me because of her trailblazing, maverick style in giving women a voice. She is not intimidated by anyone. She courageously ran for governor and was the first woman seriously considered for vice president of a major party in the United States. Sissy is still a champion for human rights, and I served with her on the Rothko Chapel board.

Another inspiration is Dominique de Menil, whose achievements and gifts to our city were many. We both shared a passion for art and philanthropy. I worked with Dominique on several projects for The Menil Collection – one with artist Robert Rauschenberg – and another, the Byzantine Fresco Chapel Museum, which was designed by her son Francois de Menil. The glass and wood chapel is within a museum where the Madonna and apse were housed until 2012 when they were returned to Cyprus, as part of an agreement.

I'm inspired by people who are brave, pioneering, social and political activists, creative and unique – Gloria Steinem, the magnificent crew of the *Challenger* space shuttle and their families, Dr. John Mendelsohn and Dr. Ron DePinho for their leadership at M. D. Anderson, Nelson Mandela and his sacrifices to end apartheid, Clint Eastwood and his dedication to his craft, architect Philip Johnson, fashion designers Jimmy Galanos and Bill Blass, Olympians like Carl Lewis and Mary Lou Retton, artists like Frida Kahlo and Robert Rauschenberg – these are all people who have played a part my life.

**B:** How do you choose your causes to support?

**C:** I'm never at a loss on what to do or what's next. Some days I barely have a moment to breathe. There is so much need for solutions to problems that I wish I could wave a magic wand and solve everything. I select causes that speak to my heart.

**B:** Of the hundreds, of which events are you most proud?

**C:** The Houston Ballet Ball Soiree on the Sewanee, the Quest for Excellence benefitting the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics at the University of Houston, M. D. Anderson Cancer Center's Marvin's Million Dollar Dream, My Heart Belongs to Daddy benefiting the Neurofibromatosis Foundation, the Stars of Texas Gala benefiting the Ms. Foundation for Women, An Evening of Hope benefiting the Bering Community Service Foundation, the Rice Design Alliance A Step Back in Time 15th Anniversary honoring the College of Architecture's dean, A Renaissance Evening benefiting the Museum of Fine Arts with commemorative plates featuring a Buck Schweitz drawing of Bayou Bend,

the Challenger Learning Center benefit concert establishing the center, and A Night at The Alhambra benefitting the Houston Grand Opera. This also includes twenty years organizing events for UNICEF such as a 2004 concert and gala with Erykah Badu raising $450,000 for programs benefitting AIDS orphans, a concert and gala in 2005 honoring George H. W. and Barbara Bush that netted $500,000 for Tsunami Emergency Relief, and a 2006 gala and fashion show with Jane Seymour, raising $350,000 for AIDS Programs in Africa.

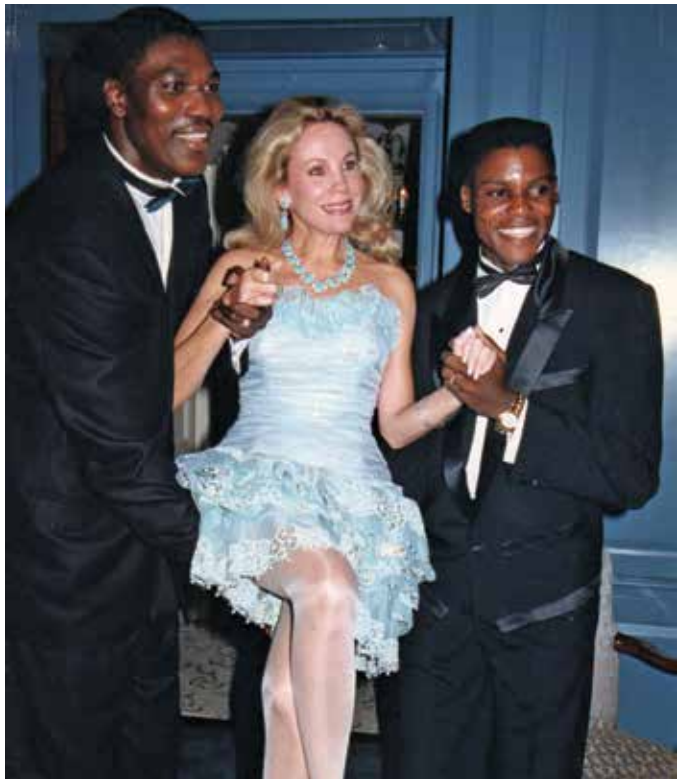
It's hard to say what event I am most proud of as they are all important in my life. They are my art — created with rationale and relentless devotion.

**B:** Do you consider yourself to be adventurous, daring?

**C:** William Shakespeare's quote "The world is your oyster" suggests that you can achieve anything you wish in life. I embrace challenge and do not adhere to the status quo. Another adventurer was Walt Disney who believed that, "If you can dream it, you can do it." When I first set a fundraising goal of a million plus for M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, I was the first person in Houston to price gala tables at $100,000. I dreamed it and did it. I went to Galveston to meet Don Henley (he was doing a book signing) and asked him if he would donate his talent for the evening, and the same for Lyle Lovett. Don's beloved mother-in-law and Lyle's father had both been touched by cancer, as had I. It was a room filled with 1,200 supporters, who had been directly or indirectly affected by cancer, who gathered at the Hyatt Regency in Houston. Everyone donned their blue glasses in homage to honoree and legendary Houston television personality Marvin Zindler. My philosophy is "you don't have to spend money to raise money." This is my zero-budget philosophy. All 1,200 pairs of the sunglasses were donated. Sadly, too many people have made a business of philanthropy. Too much money goes to pay for items that could be in-kind donations. People are generous and would gladly give if only they were asked.

**B**: Do you consider yourself political?

**C:** I've supported a variety of candidates. I believe in crossover, and this year 2016 is certainly an example of when you will see that happening. Kinky Friedman was my candidate when he ran for governor and later for agricultural commissioner — the odds were long. I was the campaign manager for Kim Ogg in her first run for district attorney, and I believe she will be our next district attorney in 2016. She recently won an eight-year battle that made it all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. Also, I supported Kathryn J. Whitmire when she was mayor and now Mayor Sylvester Turner. I also co-chaired the President's Dinner when Ronald Reagan was president. My friend J. P. Bryan and I supported Bob Dole when he ran for president. It is about the candidates and what they stand for. I'm not afraid to take up complicated and unpopular causes such as AIDS in the eighties or neurofibromatosis.



*Former UH athletes, Houston Rockets center Hakeem Olajuwon (left) and Olympian Carl Lewis (right) with Carolyn at the Tribute to Excellence Reception at her home preceding the fundraising event at the River Oaks Country Club to benefit the University of Houston Athletic Department, giving scholarships in honor of Mary Cullen and Lucile Melcher, August 2, 1989.*

**B:** Are you concerned that the art and heart of philanthropy is being lost?

**C:** I feel that the spirit of volunteerism is being

*Art Guy Jack Massing, Carolyn Farb, Dominique de Menil, and Art Guy Michael Galbreth at the Byzantine Fresco Chapel Museum in 1995. Carolyn reminisced, "[Dominique] invited me to Richmond Hall to view the Madonna and the apse as she wanted me to chair a benefit for the chapel. She asked me to lie down on the floor with her so we could have the full experience of that vision. While we lay there, she told me that Richard Gere had been there the week before."*


*Founder of the Texas Neurofibromatosis Foundation, Bob Hopkins, with Hines executive George Lancaster and Carolyn at the My Heart Belongs to Daddy event to raise money for neurofibromatosis, sometimes thought of as the elephant man's disease. Farb had a lectureship endowed in her name at M. D. Anderson when researchers were trying to determine if NF tumors have a parallel with cancer tumors.*

erased by our jet-fueled technological lives. The human spirit is not reigning supreme. You need to touch the hearts and passions of individuals in order for them to become ignited. Put yourself in their place to see how you would respond to an impersonal outreach from a non-profit. Philanthropy has become a business to many individuals without passion or commitment who want to get on a social bandwagon without proper qualifications, intentions, due diligence, and volunteer experience. It has to be about more than money. People enjoy the touch of a bid sheet at an auction rather than a pager that vibrates like an order at a fast food restaurant. Volunteers need to commit 100 percent to every task of their roles and are vital to the success of any event. They are the goodwill ambassadors of any organization. People shouldn't commit to serve on a board if they don't plan to give of themselves, their funds, reach out to others, and advocate the cause. It should be a team effort! I was very pleased that 450 people came to the annual Volunteer Houston luncheon, where I was honored with the Impact Award, presented by Neil Bush.

**B:** You must have developed some special secrets to fundraising. What are the basics?

**C:** As a volunteer, you have to be passionate about your cause when fundraising. To quote E. M. Forster, "One person with passion is better than forty people merely interested." In my book, *The Fine Art of Fundraising*, my best advice is to answer your calling. My moral compass has always directed me to the world of philanthropy. If you believe that you can make a difference, that belief brings about change. Giving is a belief in optimism, ideals, and principles that elevate individuals and offer hope.

**B:** How have you developed such a keen eye to recognize emerging artists?

**C:** Some gifts are innate, and I am blessed with the sense to understand and nurture young artists. Before Frida Kahlo became the artist that she did, I acquired her work *The Wounded Deer – La Venadita*. I traveled the world with her for twenty-one years so that people would have the opportunity to see and feel close to this iconic work. There are paintings and artists that you will treasure that may not even emerge as significant during your lifetime – think of Vincent Van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, Claude Monet, El Greco, Johannes Vermeer. To quote Daniel Grant of *The Huffington Post*, "an artist is only appreciated after he is dead."

**B:** How and why did you become a lover and protector of animals, especially dogs?

**C:** It may have begun with my grandfather's Harlequin Great Danes. Sonny Boy was our favorite. My grandfather loved Al Jolson and named Sonny Boy for the song Jolson made famous. Sonny Boy used to roam around my grandfather's Houston estate called the Domain Privee. I mentioned my dog Charcoal earlier, who tragically was hit by a school bus. Dogs have been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. Bogie, my beloved Shih Tzu, lived eighteen years and waited a year after my son died to stay with me. Growing up, the story of *Black Beauty* was my favorite movie, and I have a soft spot for all animals as they touch people's hearts in one way or another. I now live with two enchanting gentlemen, Lucas and Maximillian — a father and son, respectively. I've actually written a children's book, *Lucas Comes to America*. He has an app as well.

*Carolyn Farb received an honorary doctorate degree in humanities from Northwood University, Midland, Michigan, on May 23, 2003.*

**B:** You once stood against development in historic areas, putting you at odds with some of your neighbors. Are you sensitive about what people think of you?

**C:** One can always be sensitive to the opinions of others, but they must be true to themselves. You're probably referring to the glorious John Staub home that was located on Pine Hill. Gayle Bentsen and I protested against it being taken down by two brothers from a prominent family who wanted to build two homes on the property. They never built their homes, maybe they had a change of heart. Now, we only have the memory of the great Spanish Colonial home that once stood there.


*Carolyn organized a protest when the owner of the River Oaks Shopping Center threatened to take down the River Oaks Theatre, helping it avoid the wrecking ball. She explains, "Our vigil was heartfelt toward this historic neighborhood theater and not destroying places that people treasure."*

Photo courtesy of Jim Oliver.

Also, we have the River Oaks Theatre that does need a rehab with an escalator, paint, carpeting, and bathroom renovations. We were and are still trying to save so much of Houston's rapidly disappearing history, whether it's the buildings or their original names — the ones to whom the buildings were dedicated.

**B**: If you were on a different path of life, what else would you have liked to be?

**C**: I might have chosen to run a corporation, a small museum, and perhaps mentor others in the *Fine Art of Fundraising* (my second published book) in a more formal way. I have no regrets for the spirit of service I've followed.

**B:** Describe a day in the life of Carolyn Farb.

**C:** My days are very active. My Lucas Terriers and trusted companions, Lucas Jr. and Maximilian generally go to bed early and like to wake me up at 5:00 a.m. or earlier. Max has a high pitched bark so he sounds the alarm and we go out in search of lizards and other things in the yard. Then we have breakfast and cookie rewards for the boys. I like to have a cup of coffee and watch the news. After I'm dressed, I go up to the office and see what's new on Facebook for a little fun, check the progress with my various projects, and look at email to keep connected.

Recently, I was an honoree for the Blue Cure Benefit Dinner with Dr. Dean Ornish and later this year I will receive an award at the John P. McGovern Museum of Health annual gala. When one is an honoree, board chair, event chair, I believe one must be committed to the mission. Plans that go into these non-profit fundraising events require full participation from those they honor as well as their board.

This year I was deeply honored to receive the Daily Point of Light Award, which originated in 1989 under President George H. W. Bush and is given to exceptional volunteers who go above and beyond in their call to service, and the Impact Award from Volunteer Houston. I give my time and energy, meeting with people asking for advice (i.e. nonPareil Institute and other groups working with autism, arthritis, stem cell therapeutics) on how to reach out to people that I have previously worked with and for my ideas and experience.

The stewardship of funds is the responsibility of any volunteer who asks others to support an effort. Fundraisers should make certain the funds they raise are properly channeled – be it to educational programs, venue tours, installations, or travel arrangements. Funds can be misused without proper stewardship.

After my day's work comes to an end, I enjoy dinner with friends, going to art exhibits, theater, concerts, or just staying home with the boys.

**B:** What are your tastes in fashion? Do you consider yourself a trendsetter?

**C:** I like to think I have my own sense of fashion because it is creative and represents me. Everyone always asks questions about what I'm wearing. Usually, I redesign, add things to complement articles of clothing — i.e. a necklace, a dress with a petticoat. You don't have to spend a fortune — you can create your own aura, get ideas from designers and combine those with yours. Don't be afraid to think outside the box. If we all wanted to look alike, we could wear uniforms. It's important to have your signature look.

**B:** What would you like people to know about you that they don't know now? How would you like Houston to remember you?

**C:** I want Houston to remember me as someone who gave her all to her native city and beyond, leaving a positive footprint. To quote co-founder of Northwood University Dr. Arthur Turner, "Service to humanity is the best work of all."

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# Los La Rottas de Houston: A Colombian Family's Immigration Story

*By Alex La Rotta*

Growing up, my siblings and I occasionally asked our parents how we ended up in Houston. I was particularly interested in trying to find meaning in my dual Colombian-American identity. Here we were, this large Colombian family (forty-plus members and counting) spread across Houston, yet it seemed so happenstance. We did not have roots in Houston, or the United States; our family had just arrived, really, and we were trying to learn the language and culture. The irony that my grandmother, Cecilia La Rotta, moved our family here in 1973 for the prospect of "free education" is not lost on me as a Ph.D. candidate who has spent most of his life toiling in academia. Undertaking the study of my family's immigration story accentuates that point in a positive and meaningful way. What follows is hardly a definitive family history, but a singular interpretation with specific objectives, and a formal response to that age-old question: How did we end up here?

I sat down with the elders of my family—parents, aunts, and uncles—and asked about their experiences and remembrances on moving to Houston. Motivated by my growing interest in my family's history, in Houston history, and as a means to communicate our story to the next generations of La Rottas, including my newborn daughter, I inquired about my family's preconceptions of Houston and the United States. What were their expectations and what were their realities when they arrived?

University of Houston sociologists Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Saltzman Chafetz note that mass immigration in Houston occurred mostly within the last few decades of the twentieth century, as opposed to other cities such as New York or Los Angeles.[1] The La Rottas' arrival in Houston slightly predates the immigration wave during the 1980s, or "demographic revolution," as Steven Klineberg of the Kinder Institute of Urban Study at Rice University describes it. According to his synopsis of local immigration patterns from 1982 to 2012, Houston and the surrounding region "recovered from the collapse of the oil-boom in the 1980s to find itself squarely in the midst of a restructured economy."[2]

Houston's recent recognition as an international city is also reflected in the Migration Policy Institute's 2013 study declaring the city as "the most diverse metropolitan area in the United States."[3] In early 2015, the *Houston Chronicle* started investigating this immigration phenomenon with its series, "The Million," documenting the lives of the city's most recent foreign-born arrivals. This recognition helped shape national and international perceptions that differed from Houston's stereotype as just a southern oil-and-gas city. By 2013, Greater Houston was home to over six million people with nearly 1.4 million foreign born — an increase of 60% since the turn of the twenty-first century.[4] Mexican, Vietnamese, Chinese, Asian Indian, Salvadoran, and Honduran immigrants comprise a large portion of these newly arrived groups.[5]

*Three generations of the La Rotta family gather in 2014.*

All photos courtesy of the La Rotta family.

South American immigrants are rarely mentioned in these analyses, and, as part of a smaller demographic within the overall Hispanic population, it is a reasonable simplification. The organization of Latin American nationalities into a monolithic "Hispanic" category creates complex identity issues for non-Mexican communities.

In 1965 Congress passed immigration reforms that opened the door to groups previously denied entrance based on quotas by country of origin.[6] According to Latino/a studies scholar Maria Elena Cepeda, Colombian immigration to the United States occurred during the post-1965 wave that brought immigrants to regions generally outside of the American South. Cepeda adds, "while Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, and New England are frequent destinations, most Colombians, with the exception of trained professionals, tend to settle in the Miami or New York area."[7] Seventy five percent of those immigrants went through Miami first, as international airports effectively replaced immigration depots such as New York's Ellis Island.


*This passport was issued to Guillermo Salazar La Rotta in 1946. Stamps on the passport read "Valid only for American countries" and the information written in includes birthdate, place of birth, marital status, and profession.*

Houston has not retained a large Colombian population or traceable enclave, as noted elsewhere. Nevertheless the city's Colombian population has expanded to roughly 10% of the overall Hispanic demographic with 75% belonging to those of Mexican origin.[8] During the late 1970s and 1980s Central America experienced widespread civil unrest, causing large-scale displacement and immigration to the United States, exacerbated by an economic downturn. Part of Houston's draw was the city's booming economy and relative proximity to the border. Colombia suffered from its own civil unrest during the 1980s and 1990s, with refugees often moving internally to cities such as Bogotá or to neighboring countries. Ours, fortunately, is not a refugee story, but elements of Colombia's complicated, decades-long civil war effect extended family and friends there. Likewise, these events shape Colombian identity as the country is portrayed in the national and international media and its enduring negative stereotypes.

My grandmother, Cecilia "Ceci" Barbosa La Rotta, married my grandfather, Guillermo La Rotta Salazar, in 1943 in Fontibón, Colombia, near the capital of Bogotá. They later moved to the coastal city of Cartagena, Colombia, where they raised seven children, Mary Luz, Gladys Cecilia, Felipe Alberto, Sonia del Niño Jesus, Maria Claudia, Francisco Santiago, and Sylvia Vivianne. Mary Luz and Gladys passed away in 1991 and 2013, respectively, but their stories and spirit live in the recollections of their siblings.

The La Rottas lived in a middle-class neighborhood in central Cartagena during the 1950s and 1960s, coming of age in the distinct Caribbean *costeño* (coastal) region of Colombia — the cultural backdrop of Gabriel García Márquez's iconic literary works. With its subtropical climate and renowned Spanish colonial features, Cartagena of my grandparents' generation was a sleepy seaside city on the Caribbean coast, physically and culturally separate from the mountainous and forested Colombian interior and cosmopolitan Bogotá and Medellin.

My grandfather, Guillermo, remembered lovingly as an astute and orderly man, passed away suddenly in 1963 due to a heart attack at age forty-nine, leaving my grandmother solely responsible for the family and estate. She survived in those years by renting out rooms to itinerant workers in the city's bustling port industries, as well as receiving occasional income from Guillermo's pension. My aunt, Claudia, who was ten when her father passed away, recalled her mother borrowing money to finish construction of their house, and her mother's siblings insisting on adopting the kids to ease my grandmother's burden. Still, Cecilia resisted doing that, despite the mounting pressures.

The prospect of starting anew in the United States had its appeal, but many of Cecilia's siblings openly pro tested against the idea.


*A postcard depicts the Public Clock Tower in Cartagena, Colombia, where the La Rottas lived.*

Many years later, a few of her elder brothers still resented her decision, due in part to their unfavorable impressions of North American society. Santiago recalled a vicious episode when Cecilia's brother told her she was "going to raise whores" if the family moved to the United States, which her brother considered an "evil country" unfit for children.

Over time, the eldest children — Mary Luz, Gladys, and my father, Felipe — left the house following their high school graduations, relieving the financial burden. Santiago observed that his mother "obviously had some reservations about moving, but the overwhelming desire of giving her kids an education and other opportunities was bigger than that, so the decision was made. There was no other choice — she was going to do that anyway."[9]

In 1969 Mary Luz became the first La Rotta to move to Houston when she and her husband, Jaime Jaramillo, settled into a Montrose apartment. They chose Houston because Jaime had a few cousins living there, but a feud soon caused them to stop talking to each other. While neither is still alive, family accounts describe a brief settlement period when they both worked in service and factory jobs. They quickly befriended a young Ecuadorian couple, Angel and Lelia Armijos, who became important family friends in the early years and helped them assimilate. During this time, Mary Luz convinced her mother to bring the family and join them in their new life.

By early 1972 Cecilia had moved the family to Bogotá where they applied for resident visas at the American Embassy. After waiting nearly a year, Cecilia moved the family to Houston on January 27, 1973, just three days after a ceremony at the embassy where she and the kids recited the Pledge of Allegiance in the hand-over-heart pose. (At least they think that is what they were reciting.) The ceremony occurred on my grandmother's forty-ninth birthday — the last she spent in Colombia.

When the La Rottas arrived in Houston, it was a cold and rainy day in the middle of a particularly cold winter. It marked the first time the kids remembered wearing jackets, having never needed them in Cartagena's perennial sunshine. Santiago and Sylvia, the two youngest children, reflected how futuristic their new homeland seemed as they drove home from the airport with Mary Luz, Jaime, and the Armijos. They likened it to Disneyworld: everything was electronic, moving, automated. The doors at the airport magically opened and closed by themselves.

*Cecelia La Rotta poses with her grandchildren. Clockwise from top left: Monica Jaramillo, Carol Jaramillo, Juan Guillermo La Rotta, Sandra Jaramillo, and Carlos La Rotta.*


*Much of what the La Rotta children expected to find in Houston was influenced by postcards they received from Mary Luz, such as this one, advertising the city's attractions.*

Loudspeakers with booming voices echoed throughout the terminals. Even the Coca-Cola machines, with automatic dispensers, "seemed like something from *Star Trek*," Santiago enthusiastically recalled. None of the kids understood English, which some of the people they encountered found odd since they appeared to be white and therefore American. Accordingly, they began to pretend they understood when someone spoke to them and, as an inside joke, made up a gibberish language that they thought sounded like English.

My aunts and uncles knew little about Houston except what they learned from Mary Luz, who sent them postcards of Astroworld, the Houston Zoo, and NASA to enhance the intrigue, causing them to think that they were literally moving to a theme park. She described the wonders of sprawling freeways, an air-conditioned baseball stadium, and an amusement park magically dubbed "Astroworld." These flashy descriptions and colorful postcards of a modern, space-age playground provided her siblings' impressions of the Bayou City before their move.

Santiago and Sylvia also noted that a few of them remembered popular depictions of the Wild West and John Wayne movies, which were in vogue in Colombia. But while the Lone Star State and its iconography were well known, Claudia attested, "Houston was not even on the map for us — we had never even heard of it." Before the La Rotta children left, some of their friends teased them about riding horses to school with cowboys. While that never happened, they did see cows and horses near the main thoroughfares, reminding them of these forewarnings.

My grandmother passed away when I was sixteen years old. I was old enough to get to know and remember her, but too young to think to ask questions about her choices to move the family to Houston. We also had generational, cultural, and linguistic divisions, which may have impeded more meaningful connections, but she was sweet to me. My parents, aunts, and uncles describe my grandmother as graceful, classy, and elegant; she never let the children know of any of the struggles she faced. She was garrulous

and sociable, enjoying her time with her kids, grandkids, and newfound friends in Houston.

Cecilia instilled in her children a sense of pride and, what Sylvia calls, a "sense of togetherness" from the very beginning. Cecilia often described the family's bonds like a chain, frequently reminding them that the chain needed to remain strong and connected for them to survive in the United States.

My aunts and uncles agree that Cecilia could have made it in Cartagena, but educational opportunities in the United States attracted her. Naturally she wanted a better life for her children. Sylvia recalled that Mary Luz told their mother stories of "enormous, new, beautiful schools" that were free to the tax-paying public. And as new homeowners, that included them, too.

In Colombia Cecilia struggled most with putting her children through private school on her modest income. Public school was, and is, virtually nonexistent in Colombia. Accordingly she decided moving to Houston would enable her children to continue their education and reunite them with Mary Luz and Gladys. As my father wittily put it, "School is very expensive there, more expensive than college. You do whatever you have to do, eat dirt, but you put your kids through private school. The costs were getting increasingly more difficult for my mother." Meanwhile, Felipe, who was away at college in nearby Barranquilla, further encouraged his mother to move the family. They agreed that he would join them in Houston temporarily after he finished his studies in chemical engineering. His dream job was at the Cartagena oil refinery, where he applied after graduation and shortly before leaving for Houston, but he never got a call back. Reveling in the oil and petrochemical job opportunities in Houston, he applied for his residential visa to stay with his family. After working at a few local oil companies, he started his own oil equipment business in the early 1980s, Kolda Corporation, which he and my mother, Alegria, still maintain.

Gladys moved to New York City for a short spell in the early 1970s but later moved to Houston to meet the other La Rottas arriving at Mary Luz and Jaime's new suburban home in Alief. Today, much of my family remains


*The author's parents, Alegria and Felipe, and Claudia La Rotta (center) stand in front of their first home in 1978.*

*Felipe La Rotta, Ester de Guzman, and Mary Luz Jaramillo visit NASA in 1975.*

in Alief and Southwest Houston, settling within several miles of Mary Luz and Jaime's first home. Alief made an immediate impression on the young siblings: its sprawling, semi-rural appearance was unlike anything they had experienced. Cow pastures stood alongside major thoroughfares next to new subdivisions. It was far from the city's core and less connected than it appears today with rows of shopping centers, buildings, and schools. "It took thirty minutes to get everywhere," said Sonia, who remembers cruising along Bellaire Boulevard, which was a small, two-lane thoroughfare, and gasoline costing just thirty cents a gallon in the early 1970s.

Though the founding of Alief dates back to the mid-nineteenth century, suburban Alief began in earnest with a series of bond programs in the 1960s to fund new schools that became the bedrock of the fledgling suburb. Sonia, Claudia, Sylvia, and Santiago all attended Hastings High School, Alief's first public high school. In the mid-1950s developer Frank Sharp transformed Southwest Houston into a modern freeway suburb, Sharpstown, touted as "the world's largest residential development."[10] At the core of his master plan was the concept of a self-sustained community with a giant shopping mall, schools, churches, hospitals, country club, and creation of the Southwest Freeway, one of the country's busiest by the end of the 1970s.

At the time the family arrived in Houston, the Southwest Freeway ended at Fondren Road just before Bellaire Boulevard. From there, a person took Bellaire to travel further south into subdivisions such as Alief and Mission Bend. It was at least a half-hour drive from downtown to Mary Luz and Jaime's new home on Hendon Lane. Finally, the Sugarland extension of the freeway opened in 1976, making southbound travel easier.

Whenever an elder family member recalls their early Houston experiences, they talk about life on Hendon Lane. For about a year, nine people lived in the modest three-bedroom cottage, including Mary Luz, Jaime, and their first daughters, Monica and Carol. By the time the elder siblings could work, they divided chores and split their

*The entire La Rotta family in 1975. Left to right: Claudia La Rotta, Sylvia La Rotta, Santiago La Rotta, Carol Jaramillo (toddler), Mary Luz Jaramillo, Jaime Jaramillo, Cecilia La Rotta, Monica Jaramillo (child), Gladys La Rotta, Alegria Anzola, Felipe La Rotta.*

paychecks evenly to pay rent and utilities. Looking back, none of them thought this strange or uncomfortable. "That's just the way it was. We never thought it was bad or anything," explains Claudia. Cecilia, Mary Luz, and Jaime were doing the best they could, and everyone was happy to be under the same roof. Fewer individual concerns existed, since they shared just about everything, including one car.

Assimilating into Houston was a challenging experience for the young La Rottas. Beyond the physical relocation, they faced prejudice, but none of these incidents reflected, in their minds, overt and recurrent discrimination. For example, school children sometimes made fun of their inability to speak English so they had to learn the language immediately as they did not know many other Hispanic school children. Claudia recalled being made fun of by one of her teachers for her broken English. When asked about their experiences with racism during that time, many of them point out that many people confused them as Anglo or Italian. No one really knew where Colombia was on the map, thus adding to the confusion and ambiguity. Furthermore, their arrival predated the drug wars and guerilla warfare associated with Colombia during the 1980s. Still, as an Italian-descended family, many of the La Rottas are fairly light-skinned, so that may have made racial discrimination less severe for them.

Some of the worst assimilation experiences were psychological and often a result of school incidents. Claudia, Sylvia, and Sonia described their first interactions with Houstonians, when the girls would just say, "yeah, yeah," to everything to avoid being considered rude. In case of a threat, they made up a phrase in Spanish, "peligris, peligris!" which sounds like *peligro*, the Spanish word for danger. Claudia endured mental shock; her arms and hands went limp for the first few months. At sixteen she was unable to cope with the stresses of adjustment to losing her life and friends back home. Sylvia was very confused by her dual identities and did not know whether she should pray in English or Spanish. Santiago even went mute for a while and could no longer speak any language due to confusion. But they had to learn the language and did. With language immersion in school, they only spoke Spanish at home.

During the early 1970s Houston had few strictly Spanish-speaking enclaves or Spanish media outlets, such as Univision. They became fully absorbed in their adopted culture and note how popular culture, from *Star Wars* films to Kiss records, helped them stay in the know and adapt quickly.

By 1974, just a year after arriving in Alief, Cecilia, Claudia, Santiago, and Sylvia moved further south to their own home. Shortly thereafter, they were landing careers, marrying, and striking out on their own with their new families. By the end of the 1980s, our family spread far and wide, from Kingwood to Katy, Mission Bend to Missouri City, and elsewhere. My grandmother passed away in 1998, leaving behind a legacy of children and grandchildren and a new family tree in Houston. Certainly she faced tough times that I may never know, but it is clear she was steadfastly committed to bringing the family to Houston. As Santiago put it, "She didn't know what was going to happen, but she made it clear that she wanted a better life for her children. She had no money, no options, but she just did it. I think it was truly just a bold decision. And I think we as a family, and the descendants of our family, are much better off because she decided to come."

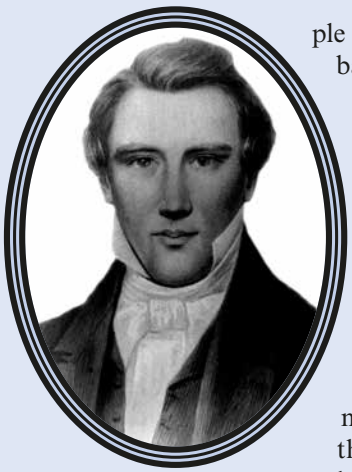
I asked my father to reflect on my initial question about how we ended up here. He thought carefully about his mother's actions, offering various explanations and conclusions. After a slight pause, he admitted, "I think if my father hadn't died, we wouldn't have ever moved." Maybe it is true and maybe that is part of what I wanted to know, trying to find meaning in significant events and their unintended consequences. But out of that tragedy came opportunity through the bold decision to uproot and immigrate.

**Alex La Rotta** is a first-generation Colombian American and native Houstonian. An avid record collector and deejay, as well as a history Ph.D. candidate at the University of Houston, he is currently working on his dissertation on San Antonio's "West Side Sound" of the mid-twentieth century.

# Binding People Together in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

*By James Thornock*

I have never been happier than on January 3, 2015—the day I was married in the Houston Texas Temple. This place remains in my memory as an edifice to my marriage and to The Lord. Many thousand members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have had the opportunity to worship here, however, that was not always the case because Houston did not have a temple until August of 2000. Temples are vital to the worship of the Latter-day Saints, but with only 150 around the world, they are not always nearby. To qualify for a temple, a city must reach a certain level of membership and church attendance. As a result, the Houston Church needed to grow substantially following the arrival of the first "Mormon" around 1918 before a temple could be constructed.



*Founder of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Joseph Smith.*

The story of the Church in Texas began with the founders of the religion as well as the state of Texas. Just before his death in 1844, church organizer Joseph Smith sent a representative to Sam Houston to negotiate for a tract of land where the Latter-day Saints could establish a settlement. The proposal for all church members to settle in Houston was called the "Texas Plan." Although Sam Houston was on board, it never came to fruition because the Prophet Joseph was martyred by an angry mob in Carthage, Illinois, before completing the deal.

The Church struggled to maintain its identity under the absence of its recently lost prophet and might have gone through with the deal had the early leaders acted more quickly. It chose instead to complete the temple in Nauvoo, Illinois, where the Church was based at the time. This temple was critical because it was the members' only way of providing salvation for their ancestors. During this time of crisis, church leaders concentrated their efforts on keeping the Church together, thus preventing the immediate move to Texas. The next time Latter-day Saints came in contact with the city of Houston was approximately 1918.[1]

From the organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1830, members were encouraged to immigrate to the location of the church's main body, which began in Palmyra, New York, but later included Kirtland, Ohio; Nauvoo, Illinois; Winter Quarters, Nebraska; Independence, Missouri; and finally Salt Lake City, Utah.[2] During this time of transition, Joseph Smith and his counselors encouraged recently converted members to go to Utah. As more and more people converted, however, it became less practical to send them to Utah and made more sense for them to stay where they were and create their own colonies. The saints who came to Houston were not typically members who moved from the main body of the Church in Utah but rather the natives of Mississippi and Alabama who had converted to the faith and relocated to Houston for employment. Although missionary efforts started

*Before the Houston Texas Temple was dedicated in 2000, the nearest temple was located in Dallas. Temples host a number of sacred ordinances such as baptisms for the dead, Endowments, and Marriage sealings.*
Photo courtesy of Uriah 923, wikicommons.


*Chuck and Georgie Wilson, the last remaining members of the original Katy Branch still living in the Katy area.*

Photo courtesy of author.

in Mississippi and Alabama, soon missionaries were called to preach in Texas.[3]

Elder John K. Nicholson of Salt Lake City headed the first mission that focused on the "Texas Conference" on June 10, 1894. The Prophet Spencer W. Kimball called twelve elders (missionaries) to preach the gospel under Elder Nicholson who then preached and baptized throughout Texas. The first Harris County converts were baptized into the faith in June of 1897. By 1901 the faithful were organized in several settlements. As the Church grew it changed its organization and called Texas missionaries to set up congregations.[4]

The Church established its first congregation in Houston on December 5, 1921. The Houston members met in a small house donated to the organization by Mrs. Gussie Farmer. That first building was later renovated and officially dedicated for the purpose of worship on November 19, 1933, by which time some 2,600 church members called the Houston area home. The Church's Houston Branch covered the entire region during the early twentieth century, eventually splitting multiple times into smaller areas with more members in each congregation, a common practice in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.[5]

Whenever a congregation or ward reaches more than 500 members, it can be split, and the larger the ward becomes, the more likely it will be divided into two congregations. A smaller congregation is called a branch. This process of growth and reorganization is key to the feeling members have in the church organization. Although there are over 15 million members worldwide, each ward and branch is focused on individual family units, as well as their familiarity with each other. Whenever the congregation becomes too big for recognition, it is split to maintain that intimate spirit and be more accessible for the members. A stake is organized with a minimum of five congregations, either wards or branches, with a maximum of sixteen. Stakes also split when they approach or arrive at sixteen.[6]

By 1953 the Church had organized the Houston Texas Stake composed of fifteen local wards and branches in the forty-eight-county region. This advancement gave the smaller or less prominent areas of Houston the opportunity to have their own congregation, resulting in far shorter commutes to church for Sunday services and other activities during the week.

One such area was the town of Katy, Texas. After the conversion of many souls to the faith, the Katy members organized and became part of the Katy Branch. The branch's story is one of people who attended, served, taught, and grew up together in the church in a spirit of love. Katy church members first attended the Melbourne Ward in Houston, which is still located on Melbourne Street just north of the 610 North Loop. For each meeting and several times on Sunday, the members made the long journey to church. Many members took their lunch so they did not have to go home in between meetings.[7]

Two of these first church members were Georgina and Doyle "Chuck" Wilson. They originally hailed from California but had settled in an apartment right off of Avenue D in Katy in 1973.

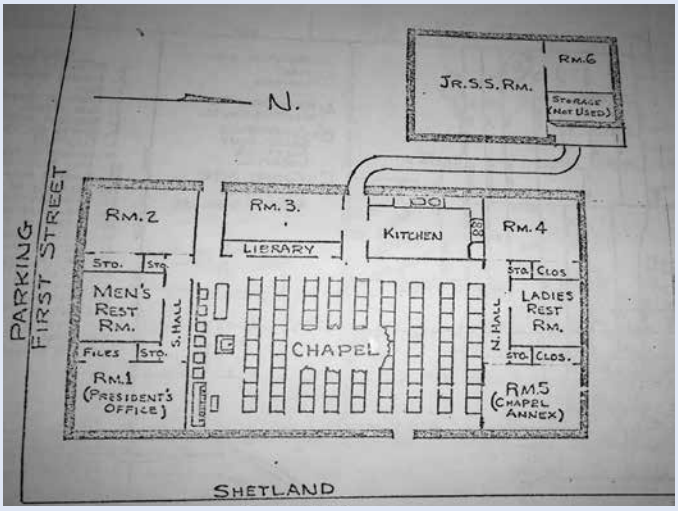
Although the Church was experiencing growth and prosperity in Houston, outlying areas like Katy suffered from persecution, and did not have adequate membership to form their own branch. The opposition to the Church was violent at times, but usually manifested in name calling and looking down on church members. Being a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints meant sacrificing at least some social standing, especially in the Church's early days. Not long after the Wilsons' arrival, long-time member Joe Bright knocked on their front door and said, "We're starting a branch in Katy proper and we need you." At that time, Katy had few members and all were needed to form the branch. They started with only six families, making more of a church "group" than an organization.[8]

In 1973 the Houston Texas Stake presidency organized the Katy Branch of the Houston Texas Stake of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Branch president Aubrey Chudleigh led the little group in all of its meetings. Georgie recalls that Chudleigh was extremely kind, and so was his wife Sharon. The Chudleighs did not live in Houston or in Katy, however, but closer to Waller, Texas. The couple willingly gave much of their life in the service of the young branch, even though they had to travel quite far to get to any meetings or to visit other members.[9]

The church family worshipped in several locations, including Katy High School and the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) Hall. Later the first convert to the Church in Katy donated a duplex off of Shetland Lane and 1st

Street, in what is now known as Old Katy, to be renovated. Quickly walls came crashing down and a new room in the center was created to serve as the social center of the building, which it did for several years. It hosted sacrament meetings on Sunday, dances on Friday nights, and other activities from Boy Scouts meetings to potluck feasts.[10]

On October 4, 1977, the five-day Katy Branch conference commenced. Branch or ward conferences occurred annually and included many speakers and congregants. Katy had grown to 125 church members, up from the six families it had five years earlier. These faithful members had looked forward to a day when they could meet in their own building, but strict attendance standards had to be met before it could be constructed. Church headquarters in Salt Lake City required attendees to come to church frequently to justify the expense of a new building in the area. At the conference, local church leaders showed a mock-up of what the long-awaited building would look like. The members were elated. Today church organizations usually design and build their churches quickly by using various contractors, but this Katy building at 1928 Drexel Drive was built with care by the people who later worshiped there for years to come.[11]




*The floorplan of the original meeting place where church members hosted all activities for the Katy Branch.* Photo courtesy of author.

Construction on the building commenced December 10, 1977. Twenty-three months after the groundbreaking and eleven months after completion, the church was dedicated.[12] In time and through heavy use of that building, the Katy Branch became the Katy Ward, and then split into two parts. Time and time again the wards were split, until eventually the area had enough congregations to form the Katy Stake. Groundbreaking for the Katy Stake Center was held on September 12, 1992.

Of the six original families who started the Katy Church, only Chuck and Georgie Wilson remain in Katy. Other original members have followed jobs to other places or died leaving only their legacy. Beyond the facts, dates, and

*Church members built the Drexel Building from the ground up.* Photo courtesy of Google Street View.

empty buildings lies a greater story of development—the development of the individual. This is the most important thing to understand from the story and can be most fruitfully found in Georgie's tone, which is hard to capture on paper. Her voice exuded great fondness over those days. She spoke for a while about cleaning up the cigarette butts and rearranging the room. To many this might not seem like an important part of history, but it was to her. At greater length she told a story of the microphone that they had when the saints met in the renovated duplex. While in a usually solemn meeting, the microphone picked up a CB radio signal and a trucker's voice blared out something like, "Breaker 1-9, this is the Bandit. You got a smokey on your tail." Georgie said, "There was no way to avoid this type of thing." This story excites the imagination, and begs the question, what was it like to have attended and worshiped in the church in those early days? [13]

Georgie remembers the days started out like any other Texas Sunday mornings. It was likely hot and humid. Church members dressed not to impress their fellow man but to show God that they were serious. After donning their Sunday best they drove or walked to the church. After arriving thirty minutes to an hour early, they swept away cigarette butts in the VFW Hall, shuffled the chairs around, moved tables, and talked to the other members who came a little bit later.[14]

When the meeting began, President Chudleigh or one of his counselors stood at the old microphone, welcomed everyone to the meeting, and announced any activities for the week. Chuck Wilson then led the small group in song, while the president's wife, Sharon, accompanied them on the old, out-of-tune piano. After a few verses, the priesthood brethren, in silence, passed the bread and water, which church members ate and drank in symbolic remembrance of Jesus Christ and his payment for their sins. Members lowered their heads and said a quick, silent prayer to Heavenly Father, muttering their regrets for the past week and their desire to do better in the next. Once the sacrament was passed, an assigned brother or sister from the small group spoke using scriptures, the words of the prophets, and their own words to bring home the gospel message to which they were assigned.

Each meeting ended with a hymn such as "Praise to the Man," "We Thank thee O God for a Prophet," or

"Onward Christian Soldiers." After the tattered hymnals were lowered to their seats, a brother or sister closed with a prayer on behalf of everyone. These supplications often included gratitude for blessings they felt as well as the needs of all members. They often prayed for rain, growth of the small branch, and the needs of individual members. It was a small but tight-knit group. The members stayed and talked after the meeting before returning home.

After a good lunch, church members returned in the afternoon for "Sunday school." Initially they only had one class, which met together, but as their numbers grew the class split. Although the same people attended this meeting as the earlier one, the format differed. The sacrament meeting had two to four speakers who addressed the group in monologue style. Sunday school, on the other hand, followed the format of a traditional classroom with a teacher, questions, answers, and participation from the whole body of believers. Here any question was welcomed, and the best answers known were given. Typical topics included faith, repentance, baptism by immersion, eternal marriage, eternal families, the word of wisdom (the code of health for Latter-day Saints), and the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Everyone could contribute, learn, and excel together.[15]

During the week the church held youth activities as well as Relief Society meetings for the women. When the youth met, the young boys focused on Boy Scouts activities, and the girls concentrated on Young Women's values within the Church. The Relief Society, formed by the Church in 1842, is the largest and oldest women's organization in the world. The women engaged in "enrichment meetings" that focused primarily on how to incorporate the gospel into their lives, particularly through service. All of these activities created opportunities for people to experience what the Church and The Lord had to offer them. As converts flocked to the Church in Katy and Houston, church leadership in Salt Lake City took notice.[16]

The highest blessings in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints come to those who attend the temple to be "Endowed from on High" and to become sealed to their companion "For time and all Eternity." Unfortunately for the Houston region's church members, the closest location to receive those blessings was in Dallas.[17] Karen Hursman recounted that some members made the journey to Dallas once a month when they rented a bus and left at 4:00 a.m. to spend the day worshipping there on a Saturday. While these long trips offered an option for some, many did not have the time or perhaps the bus fare to make the long journey.[18]

Devout saints had always yearned for a temple, and before long the activity in the Houston area, as well as some persuasion on the part of church leaders, secured a temple for Houston. The Church broke ground for the Houston Texas Temple on June 13, 1998. In just a little over two years, the temple construction was completed. As is customary before a temple opens for worship, the Church hosted an open house for the general public, which was held August 5-19, 2000. The president of the Church, Gordon B. Hinckley, dedicated the temple on August 26, 2000. After dedication only members who meet certain standards of worthiness may enter. The temple is the culmination of all religious acts and is a most sacred place. [19]

*Author James Thornock and his wife Laura celebrate their "sealing" at the Houston Texas Temple.*

My experience with the temple has been not only sacred but also joyful. I remember many days of worship there, where I communed with my Father in Heaven and eventually took part in the church's highest ordinance, the "Sealing Ordinance." I was "sealed" for time and for all eternity to my wife Laura Jane Thornock. President Steward, who was at one time a president of the Katy Stake, performed the sealing. I had this opportunity because of the toil and dedication of members like Chuck and Georgie Wilson, who represent thousands of church members who built places of worship, and provided inspiration for the future. Without them I could not have this wonderful experience in this city that I call home. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will continue to provide these opportunities to Houstonians for generations to come. Opportunities that will bind people together, and to their Father in Heaven, as they have bound me.

**James Thornock** is a senior history major at the University of Houston and an intern at *Houston History*. He is also a substitute teacher and an Uber driver.

# BEING THE SPIRIT OF HOUSTON:

# THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON MARCHING BAND

*By La'Nora Jefferson*

Joining the University of Houston marching band when I arrived on campus as a freshman was a difficult but rewarding decision. In high school, I had thrown myself into the band life, participating in competitions, assuming leadership positions, and gaining some accolades, but by the end of my senior year I had had enough. Nevertheless, I could not imagine completely cutting music out of my life, so I joined the marching band, which offered a happy medium. As a new college student preoccupied with paying tuition and finding housing, I did not fully understand what that decision entailed until I arrived for the band's spirit week. Never before had I seen so many people excited to be marching and playing their instruments. The UH marching band lives up to its name, "The Spirit of Houston," and during my two-year journey with the band, I came to understand what that moniker truly meant.

## Background

The University of Houston marching band was founded in 1946. Any student could participate as long as they auditioned. Even in its early years, the marching band supported the Cougars at all football and basketball games, traveling to several away games. The band led the Frontier Fiesta parade and the first football parade, making its debut as a group that was ready and willing to serve its institution. This vigor has carried on and the Spirit of Houston continues to support the Cougars at football, volleyball, and basketball games. The band also makes campus and community appearances to show support for and represent the university.[1]

Initially, the band only consisted of wind players and percussionists. Now, the Spirit of Houston has grown to include the cheerleaders, Cougar Dolls dance team, mascots, Frontiersmen, color guard, and twirlers. The band is open to all majors, and no auditions are required. Although some people play in the band voluntarily, members have an option to enroll in the band for one hour of course credit. All band members receive grants for participating in football games and other city or campus events.[2] Applications are not required; however, candidates must be in good standing with proper attendance to receive the grant. The availability of funds is subject to change each year and determines the amount of money given to each student. The Spirit of Houston Alumni Association donates a large portion of the grant money.[3]

## Band Activities

The band's main performances are the pregame and halftime shows at football games. The pregame performance has, for the most part, kept with tradition. Since the 1970s the band has entered high-stepping and then marched downfield, creating shapes and words such as "Cougars," "Houston," or " UH," depending on the era. The band has always played "The Alma Mater," the fight song, and "The Star Spangled Banner."

*William I. Shepherd (center) was the founder of the Spirit of Houston marching band. He is joined by drum major Tommy Mercer and assistant drum major Grace Sullivan of the 1947 marching band.*

Photo courtesy of Houstonian Yearbook Collection, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.

In the new TDECU stadium, the band waits in the tunnel until the band video has played. At the signal of the whistle, the band high-steps from the tunnel to the sideline of the field with the train sound effects played by the drumline. Next the band runs onto the field while continuing high-knees as the drumline plays the roll off. The band then marches down the field, playing the pregame song, which includes the "Touchdown" fanfare followed by "The Horse," when the band runs to form the word "Cougars" on the field. Lastly, "Deep in the Heart of Texas" is played followed by "The Star Spangled Banner" and "The Alma Mater." Ending pregame, the band spins the "H" and plays the fight song while marching off of the field.

Halftime performances normally consist of a marching show from the band and then a performance from the drill team with the band playing in the background. The marching style used for halftime shows was an innovation of Dr. William Moffit, a director of the Spirit of Houston marching band from the late 1960s to the early 1980s. Before Moffit arrived, the band marched into a formation, stood still, and played in place. Moffit introduced more movement during the halftime shows, making the band more interesting to watch.[4]

Although the band has the spotlight for the pregame and halftime performances, its job is more than that. During play the members of the Spirit of Houston take pride in keeping up enthusiasm for the Cougars, win or lose.

The basketball band, the Cougar Brass, started around 1966. Since then it has supported the teams at home games and, in some cases, traveled to away games. Many members that participate in the marching band in the fall also participate in the Cougar Brass in the spring, which functions as a smaller version of the Spirit of Houston, although members of the Cougar Brass audition.

As far back as the 1980s band members have yelled insults at the opposing team's players and coaches during basketball games. Most might be shocked to find out that this is not against the rules at the basketball games. The insults are all in good fun and a lighthearted way of showing support for the Cougars. Today on the University of Houston campus, you can spot Cougar Brass members on game day by their red and white jackets and long sleeve shirts.

In addition to playing for games, the band supports other happenings on campus. When the band first began in 1946 it played all three nights of Frontier Fiesta.[5] When UH reinstated Frontier Fiesta in 1992 after a lengthy break, the band performed for the opening. Traditionally the band has played at pep rallies and other events leading up to homecoming since 1947, as well as the homecoming parade through 1963.[6] Since the late seventies the band has played at private parties and meetings of the UH Alumni Association and other high-ranking staff at the University of Houston. In the band's youth, it had few opportunities to play on campus, but by 1961 the band was deemed the most active campus group and has since been in greater demand.[7] For example, in the fall of 2014 the band performed for the opening of the new TDECU Stadium.[8]

The Spirit of Houston marching band is highly esteemed by the Houston community. From 1958 through the late 1970s, the band began every football season by performing with surrounding high school bands, bringing more than 1,000 students on the field.[9] From the early to mid-sixties the band hosted a regional high school concert in which more than 100 high school students participated.[10] Today the band participates in the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo parade as well as two Martin Luther King parades in Midtown and downtown.

The band also takes part in small gigs that do not always appear in the band calendar. Since the late seventies small groups from the marching band have volunteered their time for last-minute events upon request.[11] Band members take pride in this, and it shows how much people in the community love and support them.

*The 1952 Cougar Band, under the direction of Bob Hammitt, provided halftime entertainment at four home games, marched in the Homecoming parade, and made the trip to Oklahoma for the Houston-Tulsa game.*

Photo courtesy of Houstonian Yearbook Collection, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.

*Cathy Frank performed as a Cougar Doll with the Spirit of Houston marching band from 1976 to 1980. Today the Cougar Dolls perform separately while the band provides accompaniment.*

Photo courtesy of Cathy Frank.

## Atmosphere in the Spirit of Houston

The atmosphere in the Spirit of Houston adds to some of the best experiences and memories for its members. Cathy Frank was a member of the Cougar Dolls drill team from 1976 to 1980. The Cougar Dolls made their debut on campus in the early seventies performing with the band at football games. They now perform at basketball games as well. When Frank attended UH the drill team hosted the Texas State Cheerleader Competition and the UH Drill Team Invitational in 1980. Frank says that the band was a close-knit group of people, and she has maintained friendships with many members to this day. Her love for the band led her to become an active member of the Spirit of Houston Alumni Association, serving as a board member. She recalls that during her time at UH, students stayed for more than four years and enrolled in extra courses to continue participating in the band. Frank still supports the University of Houston by attending football and basketball games.[12]

Also greatly affected by her band experience, Rhonda Pitts played the trumpet at UH in the late seventies and early eighties. Pitts remembers how the band used to parade around campus playing the fight song during spirit week. The band was like family to her, and now Pitts works with the band.[13]

Another tradition that has continued with the Spirit of Houston marching band is its unrivaled school spirit, particularly at football games. Cathy Frank recounts her memory of UH's second Cotton Bowl game against Notre Dame in 1977. Dallas had just had its worst ice storm since the thirties. The trees were frozen and the limbs were cracking but the band still showed up to play for halftime. When given the option of going back on the bus many band members decided to stay in the stands, despite the freezing temperatures, to support the football team for the remainder of the game. Likewise, in the 2015 Lockheed Martin Armed Forces Bowl game, the weather was dreary, raining, and had temperatures below thirty degrees. Yet the marching band stuck it out with beanies, hand warmers, and scarves provided by the Spirit of Houston Alumni Association. This unfailing support of the marching band remains a constant.

*The Spirit of Houston marching band performs pregame at Robertson Stadium to pump up the crowd.*

Photo courtesy of Brian Reading.

*William Moffit came to UH as the director of bands in 1969. His musical arrangements and innovative marching styles revolutionized the band program at UH and other schools across the country. In 2004 Moffit attended a band alumni event where he met band member Kristin Deville who proudly displayed her Cougar spirit.* Photo courtesy of Kristin Deville.

## Traditions

As the band has grown it has adopted several traditions, many of which originated when Moffit was director in the seventies. One custom is to name the band's brass bell after the band secretary of the time. This bell is rung for every point shown on the scoreboard after the Cougars score. Every freshman instrument group or new band member has to take turns loading the bell and bringing it to the stadium. The trick is to keep the bell from ringing so as not to bring bad luck. Taking the bell to and from the stadium is no easy job, but it is always rewarding when the bell is successfully transported.[14]

For both the band and Cougar fans, the songs the band plays represent important traditions. Since David Bertman's arrival as director of bands in the early 2000s, he has kept this tradition and added to it. The band plays the fight song after every touchdown and "Touchdown," a portion of the pregame music, after every field goal. Following marching rehearsal, except on game days, the band gathers around and sings "The Alma Mater" in a four-part harmony sounding almost as if it were a choir. Members raise their right hands up high and proud, making the Cougar paw. Win or lose, the band always plays the fight song and alma mater after football games and other sporting events.

The band members love to play "Eat 'em Up," a song arranged by Dr. Moffit that has become a standard played at all types of sporting events across the country. The brass play first and are joined by the woodwinds, followed by a chant: "Eat 'em up, eat 'em up, go Coogs go!" The band plays this song to honor highly esteemed staff, including the band directors, head coach, and the football team. It is unclear whether Moffit composed "Eat 'em Up" while he was director of bands at UH or at Michigan State University.[15]

The Patterns of Motion marching show became a tradition during Moffit's tenure. This show requires high-knee marching, an older style, which is still used by some institutions. The band members lift their knees with each step, and their feet touch the ground from toe to heel. Another unique feature of this drill is that it is squad based, with the band members divided into groups and marching onto the field in squads.

Today the band uses corps style marching, in which the movement of the foot is from heel to toe and the leg stays low to the ground. Each individual marches to his or her separate spot and receives separate directions as to where he or she should go on the field. This show always requires more work, but since 2005, Rhonda Pitts has helped with demonstrating this style of marching.[16]

## Memorable Directors

William I. Shepherd founded the University of Houston marching band when he put out a call for a 100-man band in *The Cougar* campus newspaper in 1946. During World War II he was director for the Army Air Corps band and later associate conductor for the U.S. Air Force band and orchestra. He also founded Trinity University's community band in 1976.[17] Although his time at UH was brief, his legacy continues to impact the university.

Moffit served as band director at UH from 1969 to 1981. He was the first band director to implement new traditions that have remained a part of the band for decades. He innovated the marching style by adding movement while the band played, creating different patterns and shapes on the field.

Moffit changed the type of music that the band played at games from military marches, mainly composed by John Philip Sousa, to his own arrangements of popular, contemporary songs. In doing so he became the first to arrange this music with wind parts that the band could play, making the marching shows more enjoyable. The band still uses some of these arrangements today, including the

*David Bertman is the current director of bands at the University of Houston.* Photo courtesy of Sammy Butts.

# Players Are Needed For New U. H. Band

A hundred-piece band in uniform to add cheer to sports and other University affairs both on the campus and on tour is being planned by Willard I. Shepherd, director of the newly organized Cougar band.

Instrumentalists are wanted especially for oboes and tympani, for which instruments are available, Bandmaster Shepherd said. All instruments will be supplied by the University as soon as they are on the market, he added.

*This headline appeared in the 1946* Cougar *newspaper calling for a new band. The students wanted a band to bring more excitement to the football games and generate more spirit on campus.*
Photo courtesy of *The Cougar* newspaper, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.

four-part alma mater and "Eat 'em Up," considered the Cougars' second fight song.

David Bertman, director of bands at the University of Houston from 2000-2016, has made sure that Moffit's legacy continues. Bertman attended UH for his master's degree in music and is now the interim associate dean of the College of the Arts and associate director of the Moores School of Music. Upon his arrival, he worked hard to re-establish some of the the traditions lost after Dr. Moffit left the university.[18] Bertman has done this by using many of Moffit's arrangements of important school songs and performing the Patterns of Motion show in his honor. The marching band members have loved Bertman and before rehearsals often played "Eat 'em Up" when he entered the room, sometimes breaking out in applause to honor him.

Marc Martin, the associate director of bands, attended the University of Houston for his master's degree under Bertman's tutelage. More hands-on with the band, he makes sure that the band performs to its best ability. He works out band logistics and is also frequently honored by the band with the playing of "Eat 'em Up," and applause.

## Spirit on Campus

The purpose of the Spirit of Houston marching band is represented in its name — to increase school spirit. After all, the band was founded at the request of the students at UH in 1946. If the band is not at an event, then it is just not the same. During football games, the band usually takes the lead in chants and cheers, keeping the mood of the crowd up with the songs that it chooses. The band also receives big cheers from the crowds when performing the pregame and halftime shows. In the first week of the fall 2014 semester, the band had gigs across campus almost every day. Many agree that the band has long established itself as an integral part of the University of Houston.

## My story

It is pretty easy to see how one can fall in love with the Spirit of Houston marching band. Many of my greatest experiences at the University of Houston happened while participating in the band. Being in the band has taught me about school traditions and what it means to truely support your school.

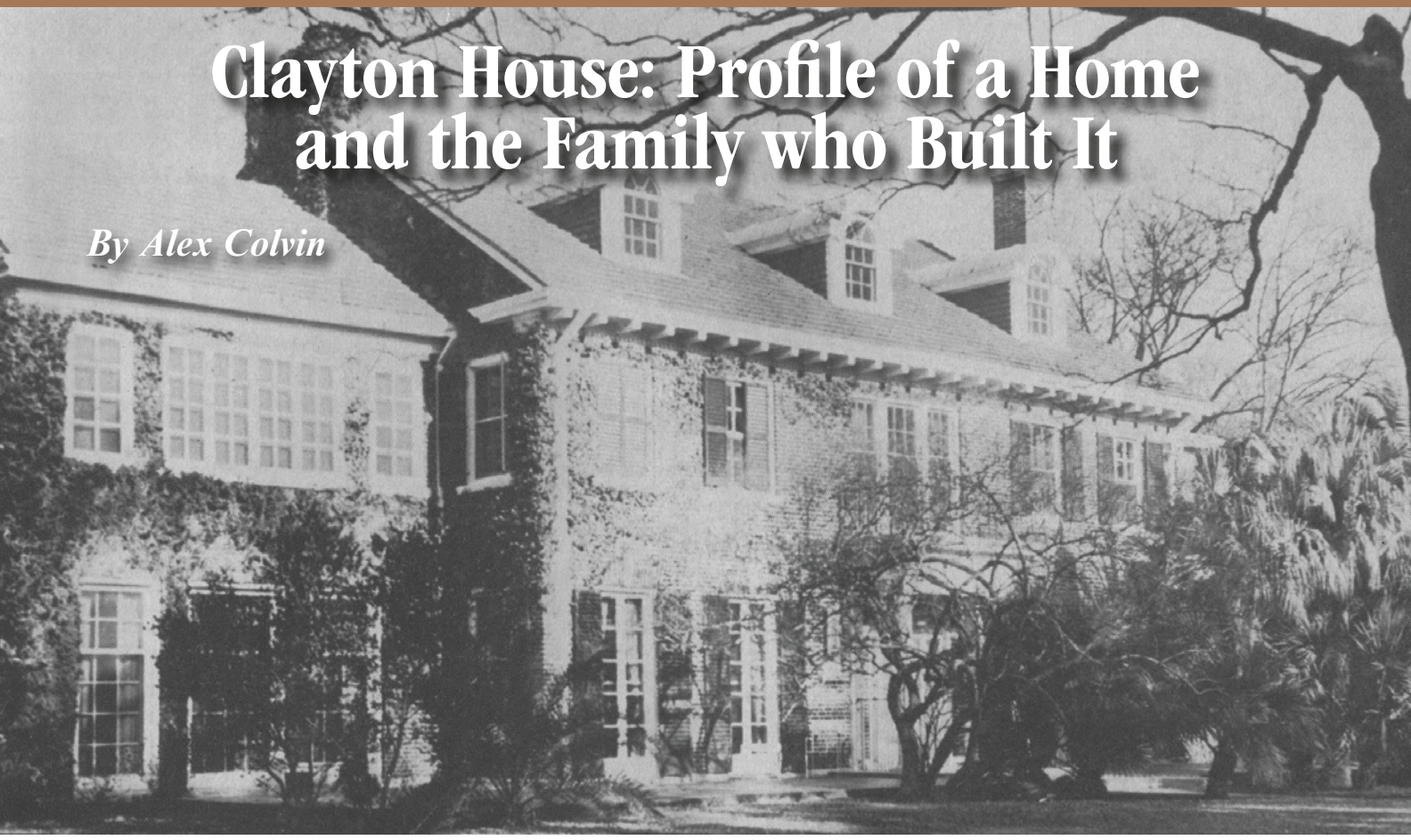
The University of Houston was my first choice when selecting a college, and it was love at first sight. The band in some ways made me love UH even more. It offered a place where people could join together, goof around, and go wild for their love of music and their school. The people in band were great, and I have made many friends that I know will be with me for years to come. No experience compares to running out onto the field for the pregame show or marching in a downtown parade and having people cheer for you. Nothing equals the feeling of people becoming excited when you tell them that you play in the band. Nothing rivals the feeling of hearing someone shout your name from the crowd or having people want to slap your hand as you go back into the stands. The Spirit of Houston marching band is an amazing organization led by hardworking people with a passion for what they do. I will forever love the Spirit of Houston marching band.

**La'Nora Jefferson** is a senior history major at the University of Houston, a member of the Honors College, and an intern at *Houston History*. She will graduate in August 2016.

*Author, La'Nora Jefferson (smiling at right) and her band friends engage in pregame shenanigans before marching into the stadium to perform.*
Photo courtesy of author.

# Clayton House: Profile of a Home and the Family who Built It

*By Alex Colvin*



*The Clayton House was donated to the City of Houston in 1958 to be used exclusively as a genealogical research library.*
All photos courtesy of Clayton Library.

In 2006 a $6.8 million private-public funding project formed to restore and renovate the aging Georgian Revival-style Clayton House in the Houston Museum District. Today the structure serves as a library and meeting space for the Houston Public Library's Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research (CLCGR).[1] Visitors to the home are immediately struck by its polished entryway exhibiting artifacts and family mementos, and its museum-quality display serving as testimony to the family who built the home in the early twentieth century. Many of these items praise William "Will" Lockhart Clayton, the cotton magnet who redefined how the United States conducted cotton trade and who became a key architect of the Marshall Plan following World War II. Yet the home, a symbol of the Claytons' prosperity, represents neither the beginning nor the end of their family narrative. This profile places Clayton House within the larger framework of the Clayton family's history, a trajectory that established their place in Houston's historic identity.

In 1917 Houston boosters trumpeted that an amazing "17 railroad lines meet the sea" at Houston. They also boasted that some half-dozen depots around town – the largest being Grand Central Station on Washington Avenue – served a full twenty-five rail lines.[2] Visitors unaccustomed to Houston weather who arrived by train noticed something the minute they stepped onto the rail platform – the heat. Yet, by the time they reached their destination, they realized it was not the heat so much as it was the humidity they felt. One could find partial refuge inside the terminal or a downtown skyscraper.

Along the streets, women still used parasols; indoors electric pedestal and ceiling fans offered the latest cooling technology. Folks made steady use of stiff hand-held fans bearing the ads of local merchants. With smoking considered both fashionable and harmless, cigarette smoke swirled in every part of every building – even hospital rooms.

To get around town or to the suburbs, people could hail a rattling, privately-owned jitney or try their luck on five-cent trolleys. The trolleys competed with increasing traffic from personal and commercial vehicles as well as pedestrians, all jamming downtown streets that bore neither traffic lights, stop signs, nor roadway markings.[3]

Before climbing into the jitney, a visitor could purchase a copy of the *Houston Chronicle* or the *Houston Post*, for two cents from paperboys, some as young as five years old.[4] On the ride to the new Southmore Addition neighbor-

hood, inner-city brick streets gave way to clouds of dust on oyster shell. At then 5300 Carolina Street (later changed to Caroline) sat a splendid two-story, double-winged Georgian-Revival style estate, home to Will Clayton — Houston's reigning cotton king — and his family. Stately rather than opulent, the site surrounded by a waist-high white picket fence commanded an entire city block, most of it for the gardens, none of which obscured the home's view. No other home in the suburb occupied such a huge lot.

Henry F. MacGregor, former manager of the financially troubled Houston City Street Railway Company, and F. J. DeMeritt, formerly of Galveston Street Railway Company, developed the Southmore Addition in two sections consisting of just over twenty-one city blocks divided into ten lots each.[5] Clayton House was built in Section One. A quiet, upper middle-class enclave near the city's southernmost boundary, tree-lined and picturesque, Southmore was far from the bustle of downtown but within a few minutes' drive to Rice Institute.[6] To the suburb's immediate south within walking distance lay hundreds of acres of land formerly owned by George Hermann who bequeathed it to the city for Houston's first major public park in 1914.[7]

Southmore Addition was bounded by Fannin Street to the west, Calumet to the south, Southmore Avenue to the north, and the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks to the east. Built on a site two blocks in from the suburb's western boundary, Clayton House fronted Caroline Street and the rising sun, and was bounded north and south by Prospect and Oakdale Avenues respectively. San Jacinto Street ran behind it.[8]

Prior to 1914 the Southmore Addition land was part of the Obedience Smith survey, a land grant given to a pioneer woman who came to Texas just weeks prior to the Texas Revolution in 1836. Nevertheless, because she resided here prior to Texas independence, she received from the impresario head rights of a league and a labor (more than 5,000 acres), and she resettled in Harris County. City officials and developers carved suburbs such as Montrose, Southampton, Westmoreland, Mandell Place, parts of River Oaks, and what became the Museum District from this grant.[9]

The home's exclusive location was not its only outstanding feature; its designer was a locally born architect, Birdsall Briscoe, whose devotion to historically accurate details earned him favor among Houston's blue-chip families such as the Blaffers, Andersons, and Paddocks, in neighborhoods like Courtlandt Place and, later, River Oaks. Briscoe came with his own distinguished pedigree, being the grandson of John Richardson Harris, the founder of Harrisburg.[10]

Briscoe's original drawings of Clayton House make it easy to see why he was so highly esteemed.[11] His designs show an exquisite simplicity and straightforward Colonial style with classical flourishes such as an entablature over the front door, paneled pilasters, a corniced roofline complete with dentils, and a green clay tile roof with three

*William and Susan Vaughan Clayton.*

evenly spaced fan-lit dormers. The front façade was enhanced with the standard Georgian-Revival complement of five ranked windows evenly spaced and double hung. Overall it resurrected the original Colonial style but paid homage to the Roman. It embodied that time-honored maxim, which has guided all great architecture: less is more. It had nothing phony about it, nothing superficial. The interior exhibited the same careful attention.

The Swiss-born master woodcarver based in Austin, Texas, Peter Mansbendel, was later hired to sculpt a mantel and fireplace motif for the family library on the first floor. The living room was well-appointed with decor and finely carved wood paneling, courtesy of the New York galleries of Charles of London, the preferred decorator of Will Clayton's wife Susan Vaughan Clayton, who was enamored of Mansbendel's tastefully-arranged rooms full of antiques and furnishings salvaged from aristocratic manor houses of Europe.[12]

No hard figures exist on the costs involved, but when completed, the Clayton's home reflected a design that came with a sizeable price tag. Most rooms, for example, were paneled, if not fully then with wainscoting, and finished with heavy crown molding. It had two fireplaces on the first floor and electricity throughout. On the northwest corner of the lot stood a two-stall garage that the family converted to a guest house facing Oakdale in 1928. The three-stall carriage house was added in 1932. First used as a livery, it later served as the garage for Will Clayton's

fleet of cars, including a Maxwell, a Pierce Arrow, and a black Cadillac limousine.[13]

The first floor of the main house's northern wing served as the porte-cochere where one entered the kitchen and pantry, which had a coal chute on the back wall. The solid maple staircase in the front hall led to a matching upstairs hall flanked by four evenly spaced bedrooms, each pair sharing a bath. A back hall stairwell led to the kitchen. The third floor attic contained the gymnasium and a separate bedroom and bath.

In 1936 a rear second-story porch was added to the main house. During this period Susan V. Clayton surprised her husband by expanding the home's southern patio and creating a library with paneling, a fireplace mantel, and carved relief by Mansbendel.[14] When completed, in quarter-sewn oak, the relief featured the intricate life of the cotton plant, its sinews and vine unwinding, blossoming in places, from the floor to the ceiling along a nine-foot path, then downward again on the other side of the fireplace.

Research materials available to Clayton House docents give insight into how the family used the rooms. For example, the Claytons served dinners, complete with Baccarat crystal, in the formal dining room, which featured not only a portrait of Susan V. Clayton standing on a hillside but also a small parrot-shaped bell she used to summon the serving staff. Though the staff did not live on the property, the second floor of the carriage house was their break and changing area.[15]

Over the next four years the Claytons raised four daughters and hosted innumerable family visits. In 1958, two years before her death, Susan V. Clayton deeded the home to the City of Houston for a library following the death of Will Clayton in 1966.

*Will Clayton's library was a surprise from Susan Clayton to her husband in 1936. This room still has the original paneling and Peter Mansbendel mantel carving.*

*The Claytons served countless dinners in this beautiful blue dining room. Tours are available for guests wanting to view the dining room, as well as learn about the house.*

In 1968 the building underwent extensive remodeling to become the first home of the Clayton Library, which housed the burgeoning collection of family histories and genealogical research materials and represented Houston's first stand-alone genealogy library. It remained Houston's epicenter for family history research until 1983, when the Houston Public Library (HPL) constructed the Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research, a new two-story brick facility, on an adjacent lot. Prospect Street was converted into its parking lot. This expansion paralleled the emergence of genealogy as a hugely-popular national pastime thanks to books like Alex Haley's *Roots* published in 1976.

By 2006 the Clayton House (nearing its ninetieth birthday) had begun to show its age. Interest in genealogy skyrocketed across the country giving birth to related industries and causing massive amounts of new research materials to become accessible, thanks in part to the Internet and the digitization of millions of records. Clayton House needed to stay relevant in this new era.

Clayton Library Friends, a non-profit support group, which had played an integral role in material acquisition and fundraising for the Clayton House library since 1987, was tapped to marshal the fundraising efforts along with the City of Houston and the Clayton family to combine forward-thinking expansion with respectful preservation. Susan Clayton Garwood, a great-granddaughter of Will Clayton headed the list for the private-public partnership to bring about the project. Garwood held fundraising events, and also contributed generously, as did the City of Houston, to gain approximately $4 million.

The architect firm of Glassman, Shoemake, and

Maldonado designed the project, which took three years to complete. The grounds blossomed with period flora and each building realized new life and new purpose, while maintaining its historical integrity. The Carriage House became a new meeting area with modern lighting and interiors to accommodate large events. Glazed white brick, a homage to Briscoe's original design, replaced the stall doors. The garage-turned-guest-house was modernized with equipment and lighting to serve as offices for various HPL-related functions. The main house underwent the most extensive overhaul, removing the dark paneled walls and floor rugs in many rooms and replacing them with lighter colors and recessed lighting and bookshelves to hold the library's voluminous collections. The entry hall became a welcoming panoply of displays showcasing Clayton family documents and images. The old library, with its Charles of London paneled walls and Mansbendel mantel, however, remained the most intimate room, dutifully preserved as a comfortable reading room or meeting space, with upgraded lighting.

Those involved with the restoration say none of it could have happened without the passion and financial support of Susan Clayton Garwood, who lives in the Briscoe-designed Clayton summer home in River Oaks which she inherited. Living in a home imbued with "so much history" that is "unique in many ways," Garwood explains ultimately inspired her to become active in Clayton House's preservation.[16]

Along the way, Garwood appeared on the news to advocate for historic structures. In 2010, when a 1936-era Briscoe-designed home in her River Oaks neighborhood was razed by its new property owners, someone called local television station, KTRK Channel 13, which sent Debra Wrigley and the station's helicopter to film the event. As backhoes ate away the structure, Garwood told Wrigley in a segment that aired during the evening's broadcast, "My friends told me it was being torn down so I raced over with my camera and ran up the driveway ... and started taking pictures and yelling at the contractors." She admitted to Wrigley that watching the demolition was emotionally difficult because the home had been built for her great-great-aunt, Dessie Burdine Clayton. It had been kept in good condition during its seventy-five years, but was never protected as a historic site. In retrospect, says Garwood, "It was important for the public to see that people do that [destroy historic homes] willy-nilly without giving it a second thought. So I'm pleased it was on the news. Hopefully it sent a message to buyers down the road."[17]

Garwood has more immediate family ties to Clayton House, however. Her grandmother, Ellen Burdine Clayton (1903-1993), was Will Clayton's eldest daughter and grew up in the home. Garwood clearly remembers her childhood visits to her great-grandfather's home. Snapshots of one of those visits are among the Clayton House's research materials. In most images she is very small, perhaps four or five years old, holding her great-grandfather's hand, and both are smiling. She is wearing a fancy dress. Asked about the images, Garwood explains it was during a period soon after Will Clayton was widowed but still involved with the European affairs for which he became so famous. "[He] ...was in Paris a lot, and he would often buy these little dresses for me and bring them back from Paris. I was the first great-granddaughter and I was named for his late wife so he really did dote on me even

*From the right side, spectators get a view of the home's porte-cochere.*


*This plaque greets the library visitors, explaining the significance of the house that was designated as a Texas Historic Landmark in 1988.*

though he did have some great-grandsons at the time. He would come home from Paris with all these exquisite little dresses. So, often, my mother would put me in these dresses when I would come over and visit with him... we called him Daddy Will. ... I definitely remember being here in this house when I was little."[18]

She also remembers other events, such as regular family dinners: "We would have dinner here every Friday night, with my parents and my brother ... it was just the four of us, and we would have dinner with him [Will Clayton]. I was around three, four, five years old [when] ... he would come visit us in our house in Briargrove. ... It was great fun. It was a formal dinner served in the dining room. And amazingly, he [Will Clayton] was happy to have the little-bitties join at the dinner table. I would sit on telephone books ... so I could reach the table. [After dinner] we would retire to the living room ... and have coffee. And he just let me run around. I have very happy memories of being here. Nobody was admonishing me or telling me to stop it or don't touch that."[19]

Memories like those are largely what caused Garwood to become so deeply involved in the home's renovation. Its garden restoration was her personal research project. The Clayton House gardens have always served as its floral foil, setting it off, but no original designs or photos had survived. Garwood explains, "We didn't have much to go on at all. And of course the whole field of landscape architecture was just [getting] underway [in 1917.] Having nothing to go on, … one idea I came up with was to use plantings that would have been found in the nursery trade at the time the house was built ... and plant those things. I ... went to Teas Nursery, and they had lots of wonderful archives, all their catalogues from their early years. ... I came up with a big list of plant choices. So we worked from that list. For instance, today we all have Saint Augustine grass, and azaleas and [wax leaf] lugustrum hedges. Well, in 1917, nobody [had those]. Instead we used Bermuda grass, and privet hedges and ... fruit trees."[20]

The painstaking care Garwood took to restore the early twentieth-century landscape design, stems from her desire to continue a gardening tradition, which earned her great-grandmother accolades from The Garden Club of America. In 1939 members chose Houston to hold their annual convention, and after judges visited Clayton House, Susan Vaughan Clayton was awarded top honors. This raises the question, with such high standards, does Garwood think her great-grandmother would be pleased with her efforts? Susan brightens as she answers, "Oh I do! Absolutely. ... I think she would be pleased."

With the Clayton House fully restored and protected by its historic status, generations of patrons will be able to enjoy its exterior grounds and its classic interiors that also serve as historic settings for state-of-the-art meeting facilities. Because CLCGR is now a full participant in the LDS Microfilm Affiliate Program, researchers can access the Family History Library's vast genealogy holdings in Salt Lake City, Utah, directly through Clayton House, saving time and money.[21] Patrons can also do research in the Clayton family related books, documents, and images, which highlight the socio-economic aspects of U.S. culture that played out in microcosm throughout the family's history.

The Claytons were instrumental, for example, in the development of Burdines, which eventually became Macy's, one of the nation's most popular department stores. This same family took part in an agrarian tradition that typified the underpinnings of the U.S. economy for several generations. Likewise, the choice of décor by Susan Vaughan Clayton for Clayton House, and by women like her in other such homes, reflected the aspiring taste of the upwardly mobile, and its application helped an embryonic antiquities salvage trade blossom during the early twentieth century. Finally, the Claytons cared so deeply about the cultural health of their hometown that they donated an entire estate to the City of Houston. Protected today both as a Texas Historic Landmark, and a City of Houston Protected Historic Landmark, the Clayton's donation will undoubtedly continue to enrich Houstonians and visitors well into the future.

**Alex Colvin** is a senior history major, minoring in anthropology at the University of Houston. He initiated the Walter Prescott Webb Historical Society chapter, Webb UH Main, and served as its first president from 2014 to 2015. Alex is also an experienced genealogist and retired freelance investigative journalist.

Please see the next page for more information on Clayton House; Clayton Library, Center for Genealogical Research; and Clayton Library Friends.

## CLAYTON HOUSE UPDATE

Clayton House, guest house and carriage house were restored meeting the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) gold certification, the second-highest ranking obtainable under the system. The project was voted "Best Historic Renovation" by *Houston Business Journal* in 2009. Moreover, the Clayton family was honored by Preservation Houston with their "President's Award" in 2009 for their long support and public service. The three historic buildings have been designated as a Protected Landmark of the City of Houston, and Clayton House has been recognized as a Recorded Texas Historical Landmark. The historic buildings as well as a newer, two-story research library building comprise the campus today for Clayton Library, Center for Genealogical Research, Houston, Texas, which is one of the top three genealogical research libraries in the United States. Clayton Library is part of the Houston Public Library system, but it is also supported by Clayton Library Friends (CLF), a not-for-profit organization whose sole mission is to provide volunteer as well as generous financial support for the library. Last year, CLF headed up a campaign to promote national visibility for Clayton Library when they were able to entice *Genealogy Roadshow* (GR) to come to Houston where the program was filmed at Clayton House as well as the Julia Ideson Library, Downtown Houston. The Houston segment of GR was broadcast on local PBS Houston Channel 8 on May 31, 2016. To watch, please go to www.pbs.org/show/genealogy-roadshow/. Furthermore, CLF is also sponsoring a Genealogy Symposium on August 6, 2016, at Rice University Campus, featuring speaker, D. Joshua Taylor, who is co-host of *Genealogy Roadshow*.

More information about Clayton Library and Clayton Library Friends can be found at www.claytonlibraryfriends.org and www.houstonlibrary.org/clayton/about_history.html. Or you may contact Randy Pace, Executive Board Director, Public Relations, CLF at grandypace@aol.com.

# How Do You Pronounce Kuykendahl?
## The German Settlers of Northwest Harris County

*By Stephanie Gomez*

*The Theiss family first arrived in Klein in 1846. Descendent Edwin "Butch" Theiss wrote a family history in 1978.*
All photos courtesy of Klein, TX Historical Foundation unless otherwise noted.

In the northwest corner of Houston sits the Tomball community, known for its safe suburban feel, old town buildings, and superior school districts. On a quick walk through Tomball, the visitor is exposed to a variety of delights that add to the community's character: small restaurants with the most comforting southern dishes, antique shops and boutiques full of treats and treasures, over forty historic sites, and its unmistakable German influence.[1] That very same charm is found in towns throughout Northwest Harris County.

While Tomball, Rose Hill, Spring, and Cypress may not be as well known for their German influence as Fredericksburg or New Braunfels, the local German heritage offers a pivotal point of interest, and many efforts have been made to preserve this history. The Tomball Museum Center located on North Pine Street in Tomball and the Wunderlich Family Farm located on Theiss Mail Route Road in Klein aim to educate the community about their town's heritage. Among the numerous historic markers located in Northwest Harris County are ones pinpointing the original Trinity Lutheran Evangelical Church and the Theiss House. Northwest Harris County also has many antique shops, museums, and educational centers where locals and visitors can find photographs and other valuable information regarding the community.

Several different groups of European settlers founded these local communities, with one of the largest and most influential being the German settlers who arrived during the nineteenth century. Like others who have crossed borders attempting to achieve a higher standard of living, many German settlers came to America in pursuit of economic opportunity and religious freedom.[2] Further, Kaiserism, a type of autocratic rule they experienced in their homeland, caused a significant number of Germans to look to North America, where personal freedom replaced an oppressive governing body.

Immigration to Texas proved to be a popular choice among the Germans. Friedrich Ernst is credited with

*Charlie Klein hands out mail in a horse-driven carriage.*

being the first German to establish a German settlement in Texas in 1831 near present-day Austin. Enamored with his new home, he wrote to Schwartz, a friend in his hometown of Oldenburg, to persuade Schwartz to move to Texas as soon as possible.[3] In response to Ernst's enthusiasm, Schwartz took the letter to a local newspaper, which soon published it. Word spread through Oldenburg and several neighboring towns, causing many to consider Texas as a possible home. Texas had a significant African American and Mexican population, but the number of German Texans more grew rapidly, exceeding 750,000 by 1890.

The abundance and accessibility of fertile land were critical factors for many of the immigrants when choosing where to settle. Present day Northwest Harris County contained several booming German settlements, such as Spring, Klein, and Rosehill, which now make up the Greater Tomball Area. Although the community was originally named Peck, the city changed the name to Tomball in 1907 to honor Congressman Thomas Ball who brought the railroad to town, boosting business and economic growth.[4]

Although the prospect of moving to Texas offered Germans a new start in life, albeit under challenging conditions, the availability of affordable land became one of Texas's most captivating benefits. Texas desperately wanted settlers and offered land to them at a low cost. After making the long, hard trip from Europe, many German pioneers took advantage of this offer and started from scratch to build homes and cultivate the land.[5]

The settlers and their families encountered many hardships. Disease ran rampant throughout the community, and many suffered spells of malaria, yellow fever, and other deadly diseases. These diseases had the capacity to wipe out entire families, if not communities.[6] Even through sickness, though, the settlers persevered.

The German settlers faced the same challenges as all pioneering peoples. Residents' lives were bustling and busy, leaving little time to become discouraged by the challenges that lay ahead. From the mother and father to the youngest of children, Tomball residents worked as a group to ensure their families' livelihoods and society flourished. In addition to growing crops for food, the settlers kept a variety of animals, which aided their survival and helped make their lives comfortable. Horses, oxen, and mules were used for transportation and pulling wagons. Sheep's wool was turned into yarn for fabrics used in clothing and blankets. Pigs, chickens, and cows provided the settlers with meat, eggs, and dairy products.[7]

In addition to tending to crops and animals, other everyday chores also proved to be burdensome and demanding. The settlers bathed and washed their clothes in a nearby creek, and the women often carried home extra water needed for tasks like cooking or cleaning. Wells had to be dug by hand, making them inaccessible initially. Further, the amount of water available in the well depended on its depth and the amount of rainfall.[8]

Due to the difficulty of obtaining water, clean clothes and bathing were luxuries. Laundry water had to be heated, clothes had to be presoaked, and then manually scrubbed with homemade soap, a scrub board, and human hands. After scrubbing, they were wrung and air-dried. Bathing was reserved for "Saturday nights" to ensure that the settlers were squeaky-clean to attend church or special occasions. Family members shared the water, with young children and women bathing first. On the other days of the week, the settlers partook in a sponge bath and general foot washing.[9]

*Theiss family members stand in front of the historic family home.*

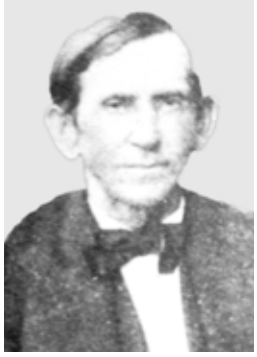
Following in the footsteps of their ancestors, today's Northwest Harris County residents retain a sense of community and comradery. Well-aware of their roots and German heritage, families have kept in touch with old traditions. This has allowed them to produce long-lasting friendships and marriages with others in the community. Through good times and bad times, they have counted on each other for support.

For their efforts and good deeds, many of the German families have been honored throughout Tomball and its surrounding area. Today parents who reside in that area probably send their children to a school in the Klein Independent School District, such as Mittelstadt, Benignus, or Hildebrandt. They might purchase their groceries at the Theiss Farm Market, or use Stuebner Airline, Telge Road, and Huffsmith-Kohnrville Road on a daily

*Frederika Klein (middle) seated amongst her family members.*

basis. A large number of descendants continue to reside in the Tomball community while serving as influential community figures, beloved by residents. Many descendants who understand the importance of conducting genealogical research and preserving artifacts have made an effort to educate people about their families, especially members of the Klein, Theiss, and Wunderlich families who serve as prominent examples of this enthusiasm for regional history.

Johannes Adam Klein and Christina Frederika Klenk decided to elope and immigrate to North America to take advantage of the opportunities there. Their hometown of Oberndorf was a charming place, although economic hardships and religious differences between the citizens and the national government created repeated problems. After a brief stint in Switzerland Adam and Frederika went to Le Harve, France, a bustling port city with large numbers of Germans who intended to leave. On November 25, 1851, Adam and Frederika boarded the *Elizabeth Hamilton* and set sail to New Orleans.[10]



*The Klein name is one of the most recognizable in Northwest Harris county. Shown is Johannes Adam Klein who emigrated from Germany with his wife Christina Frederika.*

Many of the immigrants who traveled on these ships did so in steerage, with minimal accommodations and unfavorable conditions. Families did not have the luxury of privacy, ventilation, or personal space and had to provide their own food and bedding. Almost all of the immigrants faced terrible spells of seasickness, with nowhere to go to seek relief for their nausea. The voyages often proved deadly, however, no one died on the *Elizabeth Hamilton* during its 1851 voyage. Despite the hardships Adam and Frederika encountered crossing the Atlantic, family legend has it that they were married en route by the ship's captain.[11]

The newly wedded Kleins arrived in New Orleans on January 26, 1852, after spending two months on the ship. Initially they made their way up the Mississippi River, where Frederika already had family. After meeting her brother Matthias Klenk, the Kleins made their home in Hermann, Missouri. Adam did not stay long before leaving to search for gold in California. The trip and the time spent in the West took a toll on Adam who experienced illness, hunger, and robberies. Despite this he came back to his wife a wealthy man.[12]

Thanks to Adam's newfound wealth, the Kleins traveled to Galveston in the hopes of moving to Texas and settled in the area near Buffalo Bayou. Seeking to purchase land, the Kleins looked to Reverend Casper Braun, who had emigrated from Wurttemberg, Germany, to help them find housing in Houston. Instead they opted for the fertile farmland available northwest of the city, purchasing more than 300 acres of land for about thirty-three cents an acre near Rose Hill.[13] Soon other German settlers such as Peter Wunderlich and Heinrich Theiss joined the Kleins.

Peter Wunderlich was the first of his family to arrive in America. A series of family letters, which have been preserved and translated, document the enthusiasm of both Peter and his family. Unlike the Kleins before them, Peter had a rather pleasant voyage to Galveston, and joined up with the Strack brothers (another well-known name in Tomball) who accompanied Peter to Tomball.[14] Unfortunately, he arrived there at the same time that Heinrich Strack's wife and children died of illness. Peter himself became ill with fever "so bad," he said, "I can't remember the next two months [following my arrival]."[15]

Nevertheless Peter's letters are brimming with words of admiration and positivity when describing his new life in Texas. In his first letter to his family, Peter writes, "Biding [sic] you farewell was not easy for me, for immigrating to a foreign country was uncertain, too. But I am quite happy that I have done it….Texas is an excellent country in which the people can live very well. I wish you all were here, then you would have a better life than in Germany."[16] He continued to tell his family tales of his work in Texas and of its economic differences and similarities with Germany. Not all talk was business, however, and within a year Peter wrote to his family about how much his life had changed since coming to Tomball.

Peter made a good salary and had the hope of increasing his income with each coming year. He wrote to his parents of his marriage to Katharina Hofius and their lives in the house of Jacob Theis, the son of Heinrich

Thiess who arrived in 1846. Throughout his letters, Peters writes of the good news in Texas, his love of the weather, and the ever-growing opportunities, which starkly contrast to the worries of his parents, who lacked those opportunities in Germany. Peter also updated his parents on the lives of the other citizens in the community. His letters always ended with something along the lines of "Greetings from Hermann Strack and his brothers," or "Say 'hallo' from us to Mr. Head," reinforcing the sense of connection between the communities in Tomball and Germany, as well as the personal connections between the families.[17] Although they were thousands of miles apart, the German Texans and their families in Germany remained involved in each other's lives.

The histories of these families exist thanks to the efforts of many of the descendants, such as Edwin "Butch" Theiss, who dedicate their time to unraveling the mysteries of their families' past. In his books *My Life in Klein* (2009) and *Theis/Theiss Family History* (1978), Butch goes into great detail, retracing the steps of his ancestors and piecing together their stories. These important historical accounts enable people to understand how the community has developed.

The Theiss/Theis family arrived in Klein in 1846, when Johann Heinrich Theiss and his wife, Katherina, immigrated to the Tomball area from Bottenhorn, Germany, after getting permission from their local government to come to Texas. Sailing out of Antwerp on the *Bohemia*, they came with help from the Adelsverein, an organization founded in Braunfels, Germany, to assist the German immigrants who "were sent to get things ready" for the thousands of immigrants coming into the United States. Although Butch originally thought that his family stopped at Indianola, Texas, at Matagorda Bay with the intention of heading towards New Braunfels, his new, ongoing research indicates that they actually stopped at Galveston due to numerous difficulties settlers encountered at Indianola after the Mexican government began buying those lands.[18]

Throughout the Tomball area, Theis is seen with two different spellings, Theiss and Theis, although they refer to the same family. The change in spelling resulted from confusion amongst Butch's ancestors, William Theiss from Klein and William Theis from Rose Hill, both of whom were cotton farmers. Butch explains that when the two men took their cotton to the Cotton Exchange in Houston, a clerk mailed checks to them and often the Theis in Klein received the check that belonged to the Theis in Rose Hill and vice versa, requiring them to travel to each other's homes to exchange checks. He adds, "That happened pretty regular, so they made a gentleman's agreement. The one at Klein added another 'S' to his name, and the one at [Rose Hill] stayed with the single 'S.'"[19]

The Theiss family owned a large portion of the land from Huffsmith-Kohrville to Spring Cypress and throughout the Rose Hill and Klein communities, which they farmed from generation to generation. The family continued to grow as children were born and later married, having their own children. Today thanks to Butch's efforts, they hold a Theiss/Theis family reunion every two years. Although he no longer serves as the chairman, he continues to play an active role in its management. The reunion is no small event, evidenced by an effort to draw out a Theiss family tree that grew to 120 feet long with about 3,000 names. The Theiss/Theis family reunion has caused descendants of other German families to the area to start their own family reunions.[20]

In addition to his dedication to recording his family's history, Butch served many years as a school board member for the Klein Independent School District between 1967 and 1985, and worked for the district from 1985 to 2002. Upon graduating from Klein High, Butch enrolled in an extra semester of course work to join the Bearkat football team when it started

*Peter Wunderlich built this home in 1891. His homestead at Wunderlich Farms in Tomball offers educational tours for all to enjoy.*

*Local high school students dress in traditional German outfits and perform at the Tomball German Heritage Festival. The festival is held in Old Town Tomball during early April and celebrates the town's heritage through music, costume, and food.*

Photo courtesy of Tomball German Heritage Festival.

in September 1947. Butch continued to be an important member of the football team, serving as an on-call member and helping the team in whatever way he could. Along with the duties working for Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, Butch helped take care of the stadium lights by climbing up the poles to change out the light bulbs for twenty-five years, and he remains highly involved with the team. To show its appreciation, the district honored him in 2010 by renaming the Klein Memorial Stadium, which he had taken care of all those years, Butch Theiss Field.[21]

*Klein Independent School District renamed its stadium Butch Theiss Field in recognition of Butch's many years of service.*

Photo courtesy of Butch Theiss.

Without the efforts of individuals like Butch Theiss and his colleagues, the German heritage of the quaint, suburban town of Tomball would be completely lost. Even so, some people who have spent their whole lives in the town are unaware of the German roots. Through the research of regional and genealogical history, individuals can gain a personal understanding of what it means to be German, Scottish, Mexican, or a mix of ethnicities. When asked what he wants younger generations to know about this history, Butch replied, "I want them to know about the hardships they [immigrants] went through when they came to this country….These were ships that carried cotton to Europe…Then after they got here, coming to a new country, not knowing anybody was a very hard thing to do…suffering through all the perils and conditions… it had to be very hard…They were pioneers, they struggled, and they helped build this country."[22] To show their appreciation for the efforts of the German settlers who built Tomball from the ground up, modern residents have memorialized them throughout the community. Those hard-to-pronounce names that decorate the local schools, streets, and businesses stand as a testament to the struggles, achievements, and perseverance of Tomball's early German settlers.

**Stephanie Gomez** is a senior at the University of Houston majoring in political science and history as well as a frequent Tomball German Heritage Festival attendee.

# "Texas wines find their place in the sun": George Fuermann and the Early History of the Texas Wine Industry

*By Maria R. D. Corsi*

George Fuermann, a columnist for the *Houston Post*, is perhaps best remembered as the man who helped bring fine wine appreciation to Houston. In his weekly column "Wine Talk," which ran from 1984 to 1995, Fuermann educated Houstonians about wine history, traditions, and industry trends. A regular topic featured in the column, and one about which he felt particularly passionate, was the Texas wine industry. A big proponent and defender of Texas wine, Fuermann provided a unique insight into the early years of winemaking in Texas. By telling the stories of Texas winemakers, he brought Houstonians' attention to this upstart industry, helping to fuel its growth.


*The logo for George Fuermann's weekly column, "*Wine Talk*," which ran in the* Houston Post *from 1984-1995.*

All images courtesy of the Hospitality Industry Archives, Massad Research Center, Hilton College, University of Houston.

At the time his column appeared, the Texas wine industry was comparatively young, with Fuermann dating the state's modern era of professional winemaking to 1975. Unlike the other more famous and better-regarded wine-producing regions in the United States, Texas has only one historic winery, Val Verde Winery at Del Rio, founded in 1883. In 1975 it remained the only bonded winery in the state, and vineyard acreage remained low, at only twenty-five acres. A year later, however, Texas saw its first new winery since Prohibition, Llano Estacado Winery located in the High Plains region.

Llano Estacado has roots that go back to the mid-1950s, when Robert Reed, a horticulture professor at Texas Tech University, planted discarded vine cuttings in his backyard. In 1973 together with his colleague Clinton McPherson, he established a wine lab at the university. Two years later they started Llano Estacado with a group of investors. In 1977 the winery produced 600 cases of its first vintage. By 1983 Llano Estacado's production was at 14,000 cases and at the beginning of the 1990s production had increased almost five fold, with 68,000 cases released to the market. Growth continued apace, so that by 1992 the winery expected to produce and sell 75,000 cases, with 90 percent of it slated for the Texas market. In 1990 Fuermann praised Llano Estacado as "one of the state's few distinguished wineries."[1]

Part of the reason for the early success of Llano Estacado lies in the winery's constant state of organized flux, as winemaker Dan Brady explained to Fuermann over lunch at Tony's, a popular Houston fine dining establishment, in 1992. Although blush wine led Llano's production for many years, the winery changed its focus in 1990, and cabernet and chardonnay became the top varietals. Fuermann saw this shift as "a tribute to the winery's maturity."[2]

Another Texas winery willing to experiment with new varietals was Fall Creek Vineyards, which Susan and Ed Auler started in 1975 after returning from a trip to France. As Ed explained to Fuermann, "I looked up at Clos de Vougeot [in Burgundy], and thought: We have limestone and sandy loam near a body of water on our ranch. Why can't we do that?"[3] Their first crush was in 1979, when they produced 350 cases of three wines, two from French-American hybrid vines. As the initial wines they produced were rather indifferent, the Aulers decided to start over in 1982. They removed the hybrid vines and planted *vitis vinifera* instead, which Fuermann described as the "traditional European varieties that give table wines their dimensions and distinctions."[4] Sixteen years after they got their start, their initial half-acre vineyard had grown to sixty-five acres, and they had produced ten vintages. In 1990 the winery made 14,000 cases and sold every bottle it made, some of them as far away as New York City.

Perhaps fitting for a vineyard that got its own start as an experiment, Fall Creek gained early renown for experimenting with a little-known varietal, carnelian. The University of California at Davis developed carnelian, which produces a light, fragrant red wine, for hot climates. Fuermann gleefully reported to his readers that after tasting Fall Creek's carnelian, the dean of viticulture for Fresno State, a leading California wine school, told Auler, "This damn grape has finally found its home!"[5] Wine critics agreed. Robert Lawrence Balzer, writing in

*Travel Holiday*, said that the wine exceeded all expectations, and California critic Bob Thompson called the 1987 vintage a "remarkably distinguished and stylish wine…the most intriguing Texas red I have ever come across."[6] Such high praise no doubt encouraged many Houstonians to try this wine for themselves, with Fuermann helpfully listing the places in Houston where Fall Creek wines could be found.

Texas wines really started gaining traction and national credibility in the mid-1980s. In 1986 Gerald Asher, wine editor of *Gourmet* magazine, wrote about his initial and unfounded skepticism of Texas wines. Fuermann argued that Asher's article gave Texas wines "their first national focus of importance," bringing credibility to "what many on the West and East coasts had scoffed at without even tasting."[7]

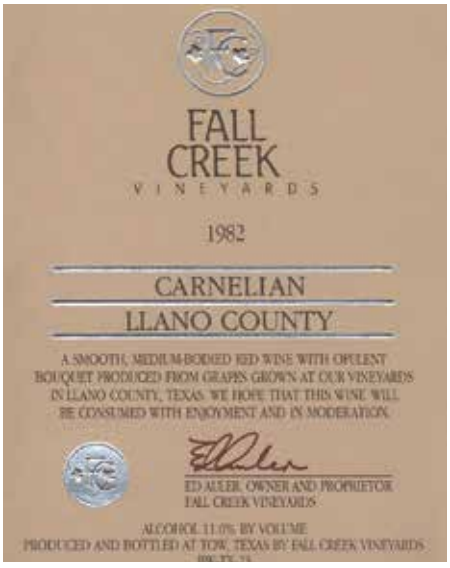

*Llano Estacado Winery, located in Lubbock, was founded in 1975, the first new winery in Texas since Prohibition.*

Likely what drew the attention of so prominent a wine writer was the fact that Texas wines were beginning to win prestigious awards. As Fuermann was thrilled to report, in that year, Llano Estacado won a double gold medal at the San Francisco Fair and Exposition's National Wine Competition for its 1984 Chardonnay, one of only eleven double gold medals awarded that year. It competed against 370 other chardonnays to come out on top, an impressive feat for any winery, let alone one from so maligned a wine state as Texas. Another Texas winery, Pheasant Ridge, won a gold medal at the same competition for its 1983 Cabernet Sauvignon, further adding to the credibility of the wine industry in the state. The following year Messina Hof Winery became the third Texas winery to win an important award when it received a gold medal for its 1986 Chenin Blanc at the Atlanta International Wine Festival. This was one of only forty-five golds awarded to U.S. wineries, and more impressively, one of only ninety-six gold medals awarded to the 1,806 wineries that entered internationally. As Fuermann boasted, Texas wines continued to impress skeptics such as Karen MacNeil, a New York wine consultant. In Texas to judge a Texas wine competition, she was asked her opinion of Texas wines following the judging. Her response? "I was prepared for sagebrush juice, but was bowled over by the quality of Texas wines."[8]

*Fall Creek Vineyards, located in the Texas Hill Country, portrayed on a 1980s postcard.*

One of the big challenges for the industry was to get Texans to drink Texas wine, a necessity since little Texas wine was sold outside the state. The numbers were dismal in the early years. In 1985, for example, Texas wine represented less than two percent of the wine consumed in the state. Ten years later that figure had not changed. Nonetheless, the total volume of wine produced by Texas wineries had increased exponentially. In 1982, the first year for which data exists, Texas produced some 50,000 gallons of wine, but by 1986 the state's wineries had produced 750,000 gallons, a fifteen-fold increase in just four years. This increase in production can be partially explained by the parallel expansion of Texas wineries, increasing from just one winery in 1975 to twenty by 1986. Five years later, in 1993, Texas wine sales had doubled and the number of wineries had increased to twenty-seven, further fueling industry growth.

George Fuermann and the Houston restaurant scene did much to help the fledgling Texas wine industry expand its presence in the city and gain credibility. In the 1980s Houston had a proliferation of food and wine societies as well as wine tastings and vintner dinners. As Fuermann explained in his column, wine tastings are generally stand-up affairs, with wine drunk over cheese and fruit. In contrast, vintner dinners feature a seated dinner at an upscale restaurant, allowing the winery to showcase its best wines over a fine meal. In exchange for a restaurant hosting the dinner, the winery contributes its wines and the presence of either its winemaker or owner. Regularly featured in "Wine Talk," venerable Houston restaurants of the period such as Joe Mannke's Rotisserie for Beef and Bird and The Confederate House hosted many such events. Bill Edge of The Confederate House also organized more unusual outings, such as a wine train to Galveston, a wine hayride at Red Deer Farms, and the Bayou Belle Wine and Food Cruise, featuring Fall Creek Vineyards. Tastings proved so popular that some restau-




*The wine label for Fall Creek's 1982 Carnelian. The winery received acclaim from viticulturists and wine writers alike for this varietal.*


*The wine label for Messina Hof's 1991 Chenin Blanc. Messina Hof became the third Texas winery to win a gold medal for its 1986 Chenin Blanc at the Atlanta International Wine Festival.*

rants, such as Chris Tripoli's Nicole's Restaurant, even began hosting vintner luncheons, with five wines served with a five-course lunch. Fuermann, as a leader in the Houston wine scene, routinely attended these events and reported on them to his readers. They were enormously successful, averaging between 150 and 200 attendees, and no doubt Fuermann's regular mention of them helped spur their popularity.

Because Houston was the largest wine market in the South, it is no surprise that winemakers frequently visited the city. Fuermann often sat down with winery representatives when they visited, and their interviews were a regular feature of his column, further exposing Houstonians to the history and merits of Texas wines. Houston restaurants showed their support by featuring Texas wines on their wine lists, and Fuermann let his readers know which restaurants had the best selections of Texas wines. Throughout the 1980s restaurants such as The Confederate House, The Houston Club, and the Rotisserie for Beef and Bird all helped support the Texas wine industry through their extensive Texas wine lists.

*Bobby and Jennifer Cox of Pheasant Ridge Winery, located in Lubbock. One of the oldest wineries in the state, Pheasant Ridge garnered national attention when it won a gold medal at the San Francisco Fair and Exposition's National Wine Competition for its 1983 Cabernet Sauvignon.*

The history of the first two decades of the Texas wine industry comes to life through the writings of George Fuermann. Although Texas wines were met with initial skepticism following the establishment of the first wineries in the 1970s, by the middle of the following decade Texas vintners were winning over critics and consumers alike. Prestigious awards and reviews in national publications helped to bring credibility to Texas wines, and local restaurants helped bring visibility through numerous wine tastings and vintner dinners. Growth in the amount of wine produced, the number of wineries, and vineyard acreage remained robust throughout this period, so that by the mid-1990s, the Texas wine industry as a whole seemed poised for continued success.

**Maria R. D. Corsi, Ph.D.,** is a historian and the assistant archivist for the Hospitality Industry Archives, Massad Family Research Center in the Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management at the University of Houston.

The Hospitality Industry Archives holds a number of collections related to the Houston food and beverage industry such as the Les Amis D'Escoffier Society of Houston Collection, the George Fuermann Wine Talk Collection, and the Houston Restaurant Association Women's Auxiliary Collection. For more information, visit www.uh.edu/hilton-college/About/hospitality-industry-archives.

# Sofie Herzog: The First Woman Surgeon Breaking Boundaries in Texas

*By Rachel Penland*

Texas is known for its tall tales and colorful characters who tamed the land. Exaggeration characterizes many of these stories but some are true. Such is the case with the state's first female surgeon, Dr. Sofie Herzog, a legend in our region.

Sofie Deligath was born in Vienna, Austria, on February 4, 1846.[1] Her family consisted of twenty-one prominent and successful doctors and surgeons, including her father. Sofie married another successful surgeon, Dr. August Herzog, at the tender age of fourteen. Over the next few years she gave birth to fifteen children, including three sets of twins. Sadly eight of her children did not survive to adulthood. During this time her husband accepted a position at the U. S. Naval Hospital in New York, moving the family to the states.[2]

*Dr. Sofie Herzog wearing her necklace created from bullets she extracted from wounded patients.*
All photos courtesy of Brazoria Heritage Society Photo Collection unless otherwise noted.

While living in New York Sofie decided to study medicine, but at the time women in this country did not have equal access to a higher education, especially in the professions. Realizing this would hamper her efforts to become a doctor, she returned to Vienna to study and in 1871 received her midwifery certificate. Dortha Pekar, a historian and expert on Dr. Sofie Herzog, notes that Sofie considered the day she received her midwifery certificate to be the day that she began to practice medicine.[3] When she returned to the United States, she began seeing patients and in 1894 went on to graduate from the Eclectic Medical College of the City of New York. Listed as both a midwife and a physician in the 1886-1887 Hoboken, New Jersey City Directory, Sofie practiced medicine in New Jersey for nine years during which time her husband passed away leaving her alone with an empty nest.

The series of events that brought Sofie Herzog to Brazoria, Texas, began with her youngest child, Elfriede Marie. A young school teacher, she met Randolph Prell of Brazoria in Philadelphia and married him in Hoboken on January 22, 1894. Elfriede and her new husband relocated to Texas, where Randolph worked as a merchant. Sofie eventually joined them to experience something new and to be closer to her daughter and grandchildren.[4]

Brazoria was known for its rough and rowdy gunslingers, with people frequently getting shot and needing care. Neither the town of Brazoria nor Brazoria County had a physician at that time, so when word got around that a Dr. Herzog was coming to town, the townspeople were ecstatic and eagerly awaited the new doctor's arrival. Their enthusiasm quickly died, though, when it became known that Dr. Herzog was actually a woman. Sofie moved to Brazoria, Texas, in February of 1895 or 1896 and settled into life at the Prell house, where she began practicing medicine right away. Sofie and her son-in-law got along well until he came home to find a man covered with red dots being treated in his living room. The patient had small pox, and Randolph, concerned about the safety of his wife and children, became furious. He threw the man out of the house and told Sofie that under no circumstances was she to continue treating sick people in his home. Sofie agreed with her son-in-law's assessment and built a three-bedroom house close by to serve as her treatment space and personal quarters. Naturally, this created interesting gossip for the townspeople of Brazoria.[5]

Now independent, Sofie began to upset the social norms of the era. Brazoria County is well known for its rainy seasons that come and go seemingly at random. The rains caused massive amounts of mud to be churned up by the multitude of wagon wheels and horses' hooves, resulting in endless problems for Sofie when she rode out at all hours to tend to her patients. At times her horse and buggy collected brown mud up to the seat. This difficult travel eventually convinced Sofie that her attire and mode of transportation needed an update. She disposed of the buggy and began riding her horse wherever she needed to go. Because riding astride was easier than riding sidesaddle, Sofie had a local tailor create a split skirt for better mobility.[6]

Most of the social elite living in Brazoria initially disapproved of Sofie's nonconformity. Sofie must have been a strange sight to behold walking down the street or riding

*Dr. Sofie literally "set up shop" in Brazoria County, not only treating patients but also selling her own medicines and other objects in her office.*

about town. With her curly hair cut as short as a man's, she proudly wore a man's top hat and her split skirts. Herzog was forty-nine years old when she began treating the citizens of Brazoria County, and she had an endless amount of energy and enthusiasm for her work. She eventually won over the people of Brazoria and became known forevermore as Dr. Sofie.[7]

By the 1890s a few male doctors had come to the area and the majority of the gunshot victims were taken to those doctors first. On the other hand, the patients who seemingly had no hope of recovery were transported to Dr. Sofie. She became an expert at extracting bullets and news of her prowess spread far and wide; soon more gunshot victims went to see Dr. Sofie. She had learned from experience that when tending a gunshot wound, probing inside for the bullet caused more trauma to the area and could possibly kill the patient. She discovered that if she elevated the patient, gravity, as she liked to say, would "bring the bullet to her." Her unconventional method proved effective, saving many patients from potentially deadly gunshot wounds.[8] Sofie quickly collected twenty-four bullets from her patients. To celebrate her success she had a special necklace made with the lead slugs separated by gold links, which she regularly wore.

Dr. Sofie is also known for treating patients from all walks of life regardless of their skin color and personally delivered dozens of African American babies up and down the Brazos River.

A well-educated woman, Dr. Sofie took an interest in anyone who was willing to learn or better themselves. Rumors and stories suggest that Sofie helped African Americans living in Brazoria learn to read and write. At one of the events honoring her, Pekar explains, an African American man, believed to be 109 years old, got up to speak about Sofie Herzog, who had been his doctor and possibly helped to educate him. He spoke fondly of her, with great respect and esteem, even shedding tears. If Sofie thought people had potential she helped them, including assisting students attend college.[9]

Dr. Sofie had a variety of interests. She dabbled in real estate, buying The Jefferson Hotel, which she successfully ran for many years while still managing to treat patients. Dr. Sofie opened a bigger clinic near the railroad tracks that had been added in the area. She ran her own pharmacy and took great pleasure in mixing medicines at the office. Never missing a business opportunity, she also sold bric-a-brac in her clinic, such as post cards and other odds and ends. Because she owned hundreds of books, Sofie became the town's first librarian, lending out her personal collection to readers on the promise that the books be returned. She built Brazoria's Episcopal church after a dispute with the local Catholic church over the terrible condition of the community's Catholic cemetery.

Weird oddities of the medical field intrigued Sofie, and she collected specimens and other interesting objects in jars of alcohol to display in her office. The main display allegedly held a human fetus that sported two heads and three arms. Dr. Sofie was vastly interested in the local Texas wildlife, so to go along with the other strange items dotting the office walls, she began to acquire taxidermied animals. For example, she kept an eight-foot-long stuffed alligator in one corner of her office and carried an alligator purse with the feet still attached. She even skinned a few snakes herself to display.

Sofie remarried at the age of sixty-seven to seventy- year-old Marion Huntington, who owned Ellersly, a plantation on the outskirts of town. She commuted to and from her home to her office every day in one of the area's first automobiles, a Ford Roundabout.[10]

Dr. Sofie Herzog actively participated in five different medical societies and reportedly never missed a conference. The South Texas Medical Society invited her to speak at its conference just twenty-two months after

*Dr. Sofie influenced Brazoria County through more than her unique and effective medical techniques. She also owned and operated other business ventures such as the Jefferson Hotel, pictured above.*

her arrival because her method and her success rate at removing bullets caught the society's attention. Later four other medical societies invited Dr. Sofie to speak at their conferences regarding her unique improvements to medical practice. The societies' members were intrigued by Sofie's insistence on using only one clean and sterilized finger if she absolutely had to dig for a bullet because this kept the wound free of germs and limited the impact to the delicate tissue being prodded. By 1897 Dr. Sofie had become the first female member of the South Texas Medical Society and also the first woman to be elected as its vice-president.[11]

In the early twentieth century the railroads began laying track through South Texas, including Brazoria County, which was a tough and risky job for the workers and resulted in many injuries. In 1905 the St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Railway expanded in the area, and the influx of people drastically increased Sofie's patient load. She raced out to see to her patients at all hours of the night, and news of her work reached the railroad commission board. When asked about Dr. Herzog, the railroad officers gave a glowing report; and just like that Dr. Sofie was hired, becoming the first female railroad doctor. Nevertheless when the railroad commission realized that Dr. Herzog was a woman, they balked and hurriedly sent Sofie a telegram stating that they would understand if she quit because the job was not fit for a lady. Furious, Dr. Sofie fired back with a heated telegram of her own, saying that they could fire her when she was unable to do her job. Her prowess as a physician kept her employed with the railroad until she suffered a massive stroke at the age of seventy-nine.[12]

Dr. Sofie Herzog was an amazing woman. A mother, grandmother, and wife who liked to knit and crochet, she was a woman working in what was considered at the time a man's profession. She did it with grace, poise, and a lot of confidence. Turning society's norms upside down by refusing to listen to the nay-sayers, she fought to achieve her goal — to be the best doctor possible — and she succeeded beautifully. Sofie Herzog paved the way for other women to realize their dreams. She brought new practices and procedures to the medical field and offered care to the sick and injured.[13]

Dr. Sofie can be seen as an early feminist. She pushed her way into two colleges to study medicine and later opened clinics in New York and Texas. She made a fortune from investing in real estate after moving to Brazoria, all the while serving as the best doctor in the area. Sofie gained respect from the all-male medical societies because of her hard work and determination. She endured the slander and gossip from townspeople, who first thought she was ill-suited to her profession, and stood up to the railroad to keep her job. Dr. Sofie made a name for herself in the 1800s when it was a man's world, becoming a role model for young girls and women.[14]

Dr. Sofie enriched the life of anyone who came into contact with her; she was energetic and lively in every aspect of her life. She brought a much needed profession to Brazoria and spent her life trying to help others in any way she could, bringing hope to the townspeople. Dr. Sofie worked until the day she died on July 21, 1925, just before her eightieth birthday. Mourned by all who loved her, she was laid to rest wearing her ever-present bullet necklace. She is still remembered fondly and has become a legend in Brazoria, Texas, with her stories being passed down through the generations.[15]

**Rachel Penland** received her BA in English from the University of Houston.

*This Brazoria Heritage Society exhibit represents Dr. Sofie's unique bullet removal technique.* Photo courtesy of the author.

# News Updates & Books *by Barbara Eaves*

## NEWS

**Stephen C. Cook** is the new president of the Texas State Historical Association. Cook and his wife Allyson, a former TSHA board member, were actively involved in moving the Handbook of Texas from a print to online publication in 1999, which helped attract foundation support for the digital gateway. Cook has chaired the TSHA Handbook Committee for the past five years and most recently served on the Development Committee. He is CEO of Fieldstone Partners, a private equity and financial advisory firm based in Houston.

The University of Houston has established an on-campus pocket prairie, **Shasta's Prairie**, as a living laboratory to drive student research, restore Houston's rich natural history, and create sustainable habitats for bees and other pollinators. Located on a green space between three science buildings on Cullen Blvd., the project partners with the Office of Sustainability, UH Coastal Center, College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture's DesignLab Houston, Facilities Services, and Facilities Planning and Construction. The Katy Prairie Conservancy is driving the effort to build Shasta's Prairie as well as similar prairies at Rice and Saint Thomas. For information about coastal tallgrass prairies, visit the Coastal Center website at www.eih.uh.edu or www.katyprairie.org.

**Memorial Park Conservancy**'s master plan to restore and conserve the flora and fauna inside this nearly 1,500-acre urban treasure is underway. Join Friends of Memorial Park and/or Urban Wild to participate in tours, lectures, mixers, and tree-plantings. Many events are for members only. Memberships begin at $40 ($25 for children). Visit www.memorialparkconservancy.org.

**Buffalo Bayou Partnership** has moved into the newly restored, 106-year-old Sunset Coffee Building at Allen's Landing, at the center of the $58 million, 10-mile Buffalo Bayou Park between Shepherd and the Port of Houston Turning Basin. A bike/kayak-rental facility on the ground floor opened in early summer. A second-floor Sunset Coffee shop, offering special coffees, will open in late summer followed by a roof-top terrace for company parties, receptions, etc. BBP worked over a decade to raise money to renovate the 12,000-square-foot building and, in 2013, finalized an agreement with Houston First Corporation to contribute $2.5 million to the job, and take ownership of and operate the facility upon completion. Houston First is a quasi-public, local government corporation that manages such high-profile facilities as Wortham Center, Jones Hall, and more. "The Sunset Coffee Building promises to create a new nerve center in downtown," said Ann Olson, president of BBP. "This modern-day linking of Houston's first port at the foot of Main Street with its original seat of government offers a certain historical symmetry."

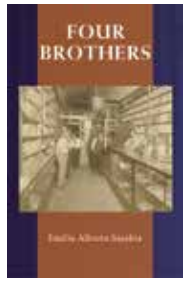
Kudos to the ***Houston Chronicle*** for celebrating its 115th birthday with daily features highlighting the people, places, and stories that built our city. They will run through October and then be bundled into a book. Email 115@chron.com with feedback and story ideas.

The ***Handbook of Houston***, a joint project between the Houston History Alliance and the Texas State Historical Association, is the first city-focused outgrowth of TSHA's renowned *Handbook of Texas* and is now on-line.


J. E. Fisher Private Collection

Visit www.tsha.online.org/handbook/houston. With Houston's extensive history, writers are needed to pen additional short entries, 400 to 800 words, and deadlines are generous (three months). Visit www.houstonhistoryalliance.org or email Lindsay Scovil Dove at lscovil@houstonhistoryalliance.org.

## BOOKS




***Four Brothers***, by Emilio Alberto Sarabia, Arte Publico Press, University of Houston, $17.95. This historical novel recounts the widely varied experiences of four brothers who flee the violence of the Mexican Revolution for a better life in the United States.


***Wednesdays in Mississippi: Proper Ladies Working for Radical Change, Freedom Summer 1964***, by Debbie Z. Harwell, Ph.D., University Press of Mississippi, $25, recently won the 2015 Julia Cherry Spruill Prize awarded by the Southern Association of Women Historians as the best published book in southern women's history. The only civil rights program organized by women for women as part of a national women's organization, WIMS brought interracial interfaith teams of northern middle-class women to

meet with their southern counterparts and open lines of communication across race, region, and religion.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Through September** – An exhibition of maps covering nearly 300 years of Texas history, *Mapping Texas: From Frontier to the Lone Star State*, is on display at the Witte Museum through September 4th. More than forty rare maps from the collections of the Texas General Land Office, the Witte, and Frank and Carol Holcomb of Houston are on display, many on view to the public for the first time. Included are three of Stephen F. Austin's most important maps. One, depicting the original land grants issued by Austin's Colony, became the model for subsequent land ownership maps housed at the GLO. The Witte is located at 3801 Broadway in Brackenridge Park, San Antonio, TX 78209. Visit www.wittemuseum.org.

**September 17** – The Texas General Land Office's 7th annual Save Texas History Symposium, *The Alamo: Keystone of Texas History – Past, Present and Future*, is at the Menger Hotel in San Antonio from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Speakers include Andres Tijerina, Andrew Torget, and more. Visit www.savetexashistory.com to register and sign up for GLO's free e-newsletter.

**September 30 to October 2** – The History of Houston Musical Soul, the annual symposium by the Houston History Alliance and partners, will be held on Saturday, October 1 at MATCH, 3400 Main. Zydeco to blues to country and Tejano will be disussed. Musical events will be held on Friday, September 30, Saturday after the conference, and Sunday, October 2, featuring Houston music and musicians. Visit www.houstonhistoryalliance.org and see the ad on page 10.

**Through October 15** – *This WAS Contemporary Art: Fine and Decorative Arts in Houston 1934-1968*, an exhibit at the Heritage Society produced in partnership with the Center for the Advancement and Study of Early Texas Art (CASETA), is modeled after the 1948 inaugural show presented by the Contemporary Arts Association titled *This Is Contemporary Art*. The 1948 concept grew out of the Bauhaus approach that art was something to bring into all aspects of life.

**October 24** – Randall Riepe will speak on *Restoring College Park Cemetery* at the Friends of the Texas Room meeting, Houston Public Library, Julia Ideson Building, 500 McKinney. Reception at 6:00 p.m. and program at 7:00. Free parking on the street or in the library's garage with a voucher available at the event.

**Through November** – *La Cruz Blanca*, an exhibit at The Bryan Museum in Galveston, focuses on the medical relief group formed by Leonor Villegas de Magnón to care for wounded soldiers serving in the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920). Documents and photographs are drawn from the Magnón Papers in the University of Houston's Special Collections. The exhibit also features fine art from noted Mexican artists such as Diego Rivera and artifacts loaned from other museums, historical institutions, and private collections. 1315 21st Street, Galveston. Visit www.thebryanmuseum.org.

**THANK YOU** We wish to thank COL Chaffee, SGT Wells, and members of the Cullen Rifles and the University of Houston Army Corps of Cadets for hosting the spring launch party at the ROTC facility and for demonstrating a portion of the Cullen Rifles' training. Both presentations truly helped bring the magazine articles to life! Thanks also goes to Nancy Clark who is always there for us when asked to help with anything UH related.

*Cullen Rifles cadets, elite members of the UH ROTC program, demonstrate the one-rope bridge at the launch event. The U.S. Army Cadet Command honored UH ROTC with the MacArthur Award, recognizing it as one of the top eight senior Army ROTC units out of 275 nationwide in the 2014-2015 school year.*

*Retiring editor-in-chief Joe Pratt, managing editor Debbie Harwell, and LTC Neil Chaffee enjoy the spring launch party hosted by ROTC. Chaffee, who heads the UH Army ROTC Corps and is director of the UH Military Science Program, was recently named Professor of Military Science of the Year for the fifth ROTC Brigade. He was promoted to full colonel on June 2, 2016.*

**November 6** – Celebrate the completion of the public/private, $33 million renovation and expansion of Emancipation Park, the state's oldest public park. Former slaves who pooled $800 in 1872 to buy the original 10-acre site at 3018 Dowling funded the park as a place to celebrate Juneteenth. Going forward, park programming will creatively advance the art, history, culture and genealogy of the African American experience. Event is 2:00-5:00p.m.

**Nov. 15-18** – *Past Forward*, a conference of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, will be in Houston, at the Hilton Americas-Houston Hotel. Of special interest might be the free Explore the Bayou Greenway, Nov. 15, 6:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. Visit http://pastforwardconference.org/pastforward2016/. See the ad on page 30.

**April 29, 2017** - The San Jacinto Battleground Conservancy returns to the battleground for its 17th annual symposium, which will explore the people, the uniforms, the arms, and the impact of this history-changing battle. Visit www.sanjacintoconservancy.org.

# ENDNOTES

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20 Garwood interview. Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, the winning entrants in a design contest for New York's Central Park in the early 1860s, are credited with the use of the landscape architect in their professional title to explain their use of structures, statuary, water features, and pathways.
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