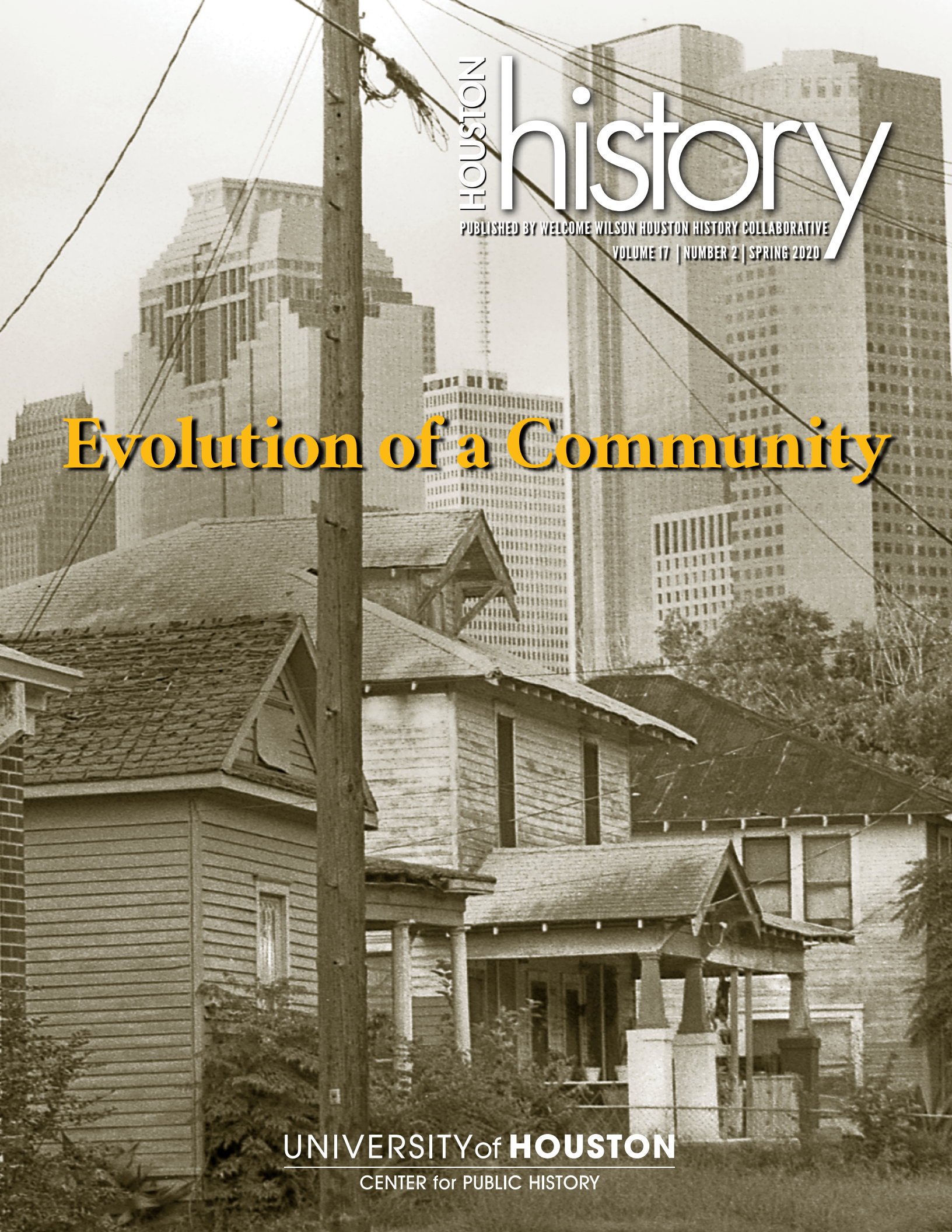


HOUSTON history
PUBLISHED BY WELCOME WILSON HOUSTON HISTORY COLLABORATIVE
VOLUME 17 | NUMBER 2 | SPRING 2020

Evolution of a Community

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON
CENTER for PUBLIC HISTORY

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR–CHANGING TIMES

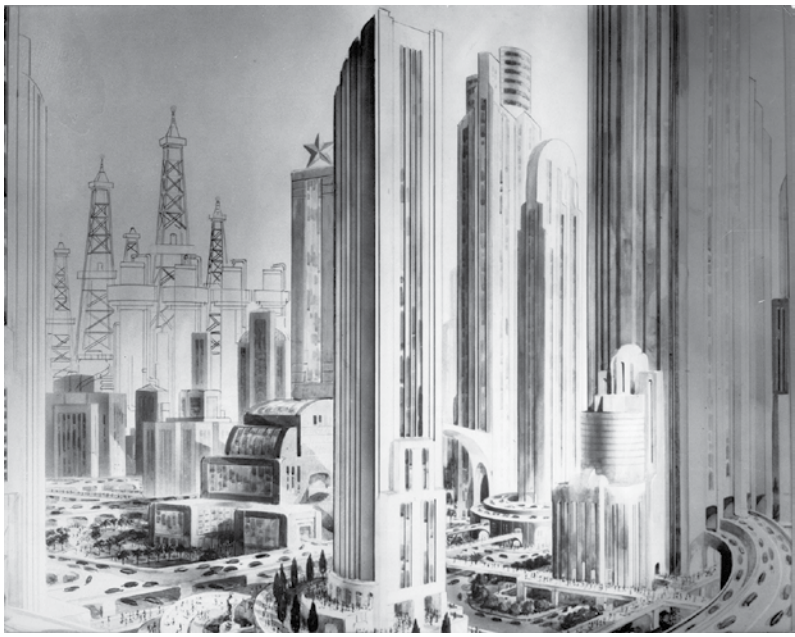
Debbie Z. Harwell, editor.

In the 1920s or 1930s, an unknown artist painted this futuristic vision of Houston in 1980 that is at once fantasy and truth. Houston has evolved to include elevated freeways that encircle downtown as the artist anticipated, although they do not cut through the skyscrapers like a Disney monorail. Likewise, oil wells are not towering over downtown, but oil companies – Humble, Gulf, Shell, Tenneco, and Pennzoil — built many of the iconic structures that defined our skyline as it evolved.

The cover photo from 1987 shows Houston's reality in the same time period. After the Civil War, Freedman's Town in Fourth Ward evolved into a bustling black residential and business district until urban renewal and gentrification began whittling it away in the late twentieth century, despite its historic designation. In what remains of the neighborhood, downtown still looms just a short distance away.

This issue looks at ways our community has evolved in its attitudes, politics, neighborhoods, and culture. The features open with Dr. Stephen Klineberg reflecting on thirty-eight years of Houston Area Surveys conducted by the Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University. These surveys have traced the shifts in our demographic makeup, how Houstonians reacted to those changes, and what they mean for education, our economy, and quality of life. The remaining features look at change in specific communities: Three generations of the Judson Robinson family exemplify their life-long commitments to protecting the rights and opportunities of African American and other marginalized communities; Roxanne Quezada Chartouni's photos of Fourth Ward from 1987 capture a moment in time that illustrates the neighborhood's rise, decline, and transformation; and New Hope Housing has created communities for Houston's homeless and those lacking affordable housing to give them a new lease on life.

The department articles, likewise, represent change over time. The article on Kellum-Noble House reflects both the home's physical transition since its construction in 1847 as well as the city's evolving attitudes toward historic preservation. Sakowitz played a major role in Houston retail over nine decades, starting downtown and expanding to the suburbs. Today its evolution is sadly evident in the repurposing of its downtown shopping palace as a parking garage. The Planned Parenthood of Houston and Southeast Texas Collection in the Carey Shuart Women's Research Collection at the University of Houston Libraries documents the organization's history in providing reproductive and general health care to women and men across the region. Lastly, marking the 100th anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment, the Suffrage Centennial Book Club highlights a monthly book and film selection related to the fight for suffrage and women's rights.



An artist's vision of Houston in 1980, painting circa 1920-1930.
Photo courtesy of the George Fuermann "Texas and Houston" Collection, Digital Library, University of Houston Libraries.

Houston has seen many changes in its 183-year history and will see many more. The year I was born Houston's population was approaching one million, but the city still had a small-town feel. I remember when Westheimer was a two-lane road, and going to my cousin's house in Memorial was like taking a day trip to the country. My uncle ran a gas station in an area that sits inside the loop today but was then near the end of the road on San Felipe (pronounced San Fill-UP-ee in those days). My family moved from Montrose to Westbury in 1959 and watched construction rip through several rows of homes the length of a (city of) Bellaire neighborhood to build Interstate 610 and make our commute easier; I was too young to understand the consequences this "progress" inflicted on others. In the 1960s we saw the opening of Houston's first indoor shopping mall at Sharpstown, the world's first indoor sports stadium, and our first twin-screen theaters at Gulfgate, Meyerland, and Northline malls, so we no longer had to drive downtown to see a movie. Nevertheless, Houston was still decidedly segregated and Anglo.

Today times have changed. We have numerous freeways, buildings and neighborhoods pop up so fast it is hard to keep track of their names, open-air shopping centers are trending again, our sports stadiums have retractable roofs, theaters with only two screens are considered "historic," and large numbers of Houstonians embrace diversity instead of shunning it. We have come a long way — that is evolution.

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Houston History is published twice 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: *Andrews Street in Houston's Fourth Ward in the shadow of downtown, 1987.*
Photo courtesy of Roxanne Quezada Chartouni.

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

TRACKING HOUSTON PERCEPTIONS IN REMARKABLE TIMES

A Conversation with Stephen L. Klineberg and Debbie Z. Harwell

This year marks the thirty-ninth annual Houston Area Survey produced by the Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University under the direction of Dr. Stephen Klineberg. The survey, which comes out each spring, has become something of a local legend, as its perspectives on the changing Houston demographics and the shifts in attitudes trace almost forty years of our history and growth as a community – both statistically and personally.

Stephen Klineberg is himself a local legend. If Houston Public Media's guest list had an equivalent for J. J. Watt or James Harden, it would be Stephen Klineberg, who monitors the city's pulse. A New York native, Klineberg received his Ph.D. in sociology at Harvard and taught at Princeton before coming to Rice University in the early 1970s for what he expected to be a short stint. Over forty years later he continues to be intrigued by the city, which he sees as a sociological laboratory, observing, "Houston may be the most fascinating and consequential city in America. This is where the American future is going to be worked out."

Klineberg's book, *Prophetic City: Houston on the Cusp of a Changing America*, due out this spring, examines Houston's demographic shifts, its economy increasingly built on technical skills and education, and the new importance of the city's quality-of-life attributes. He describes *Prophetic City* as "a book about Houston, written by the people of Houston," including not only those in the random samples who participated in the annual surveys but also the additional sixty interviews researchers conducted.

The Kinder Houston Area Survey began as a fifteen-minute telephone interview that has grown to an average length of more than twenty-five minutes. It reaches a scientifically selected, randomly generated, representative sample of one thousand adults in Harris County, with (in different years) additional surveys conducted in Fort Bend and Montgomery counties and oversamples into Houston's Asian communities. Some questions are included every year, others are asked every few years, when a shift in opinion or lack of a shift would be significant to note; and additional questions appear periodically to explore emerging issues. No other city in the United States has been tracked in this way over such a long period of time.

It was my privilege to sit down with Stephen Klineberg – who is just as delightful as the legend you hear on the radio – to discuss some of the historic changes Houston has experienced and how Houstonians are responding to our biggest challenges.

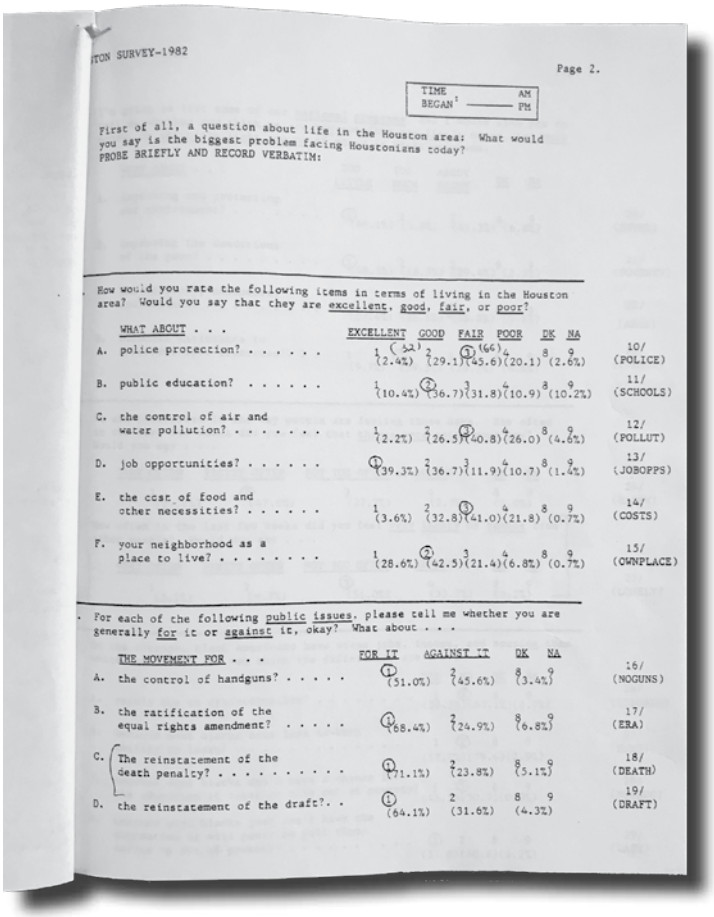
Houston skyline at sunset, July 4, 2018.
Photo by Ramiro Reyna Jr.,
courtesy of Shutterstock.

Launching the Study of a City in Transition.

DH: How did the Houston Area Survey get started?

SK: It fell to my lot back in the spring of 1982 to teach a class in research methods to sociology students, with a focus on survey research. We were planning to interview a random sample of freshmen and seniors at Rice, to explore the similarities and differences in their assessments of the university and in their perspectives on the future. Then a new and more intriguing possibility opened up. In the fall semester of 1981, Dick Jaffe from Chicago's National Opinion Research Center and Rosie Zamora Cope from Houston launched a new professional research firm, called Telesurveys of Texas, and they were looking for additional projects to get better known in the community.

Houston in 1981 was in the midst of a spectacular economic boom, brought about by the tenfold increase in the value of oil. The price of a barrel of Texas crude grew from $3.20 in 1970 to $10, $15, $20, $25, $30, to $37.50 in 1982. Houston's prime industrial products increased tenfold in value, with no lessening of world demand. Some one million people moved into Harris County between 1970 and 1982. This booming metropolis was also world-famous for having imposed the least amount of controls on development of any city in the western world: Who cares if it's ugly? So what if it smells? It's the smell of money. Come on down!



TON SURVEY-1982

Page 2.

TIME BEGAN: ____ AM PM

First of all, a question about life in the Houston area: What would you say is the biggest problem facing Houstonians today? PROBE BRIEFLY AND RECORD VERBATIM:

How would you rate the following items in terms of living in the Houston area? Would you say that they are excellent, good, fair, or poor?

WHAT ABOUT . . .	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DK	NA	
A. police protection?	1 (52) (2.4%)	2 (29.1%)	3 (66) (45.6%)	4 (20.1%)	8 (2.6%)	9	10/ (POLICE)
B. public education?	1 (10.4%)	2 (36.7%)	3 (31.8%)	4 (10.9%)	8 (10.2%)	9	11/ (SCHOOLS)
C. the control of air and water pollution?	1 (2.2%)	2 (26.5%)	3 (40.8%)	4 (26.0%)	8 (4.6%)	9	12/ (POLLUT)
D. job opportunities?	1 (39.3%)	2 (36.7%)	3 (11.9%)	4 (10.7%)	8 (1.4%)	9	13/ (JOBOPPS)
E. the cost of food and other necessities?	1 (3.6%)	2 (32.8%)	3 (41.0%)	4 (21.8%)	8 (0.7%)	9	14/ (COSTS)
F. your neighborhood as a place to live?	1 (28.6%)	2 (42.5%)	3 (21.4%)	4 (6.8%)	8 (0.7%)	9	15/ (OWNPLACE)

For each of the following public issues, please tell me whether you are generally for it or against it, okay? What about . . .

THE MOVEMENT FOR . . .	FOR IT	AGAINST IT	DK	NA	
A. the control of handguns?	1 (51.0%)	2 (45.6%)	8 (3.4%)	9	16/ (NOGUNS)
B. the ratification of the equal rights amendment?	1 (68.4%)	2 (24.9%)	8 (6.8%)	9	17/ (ERA)
C. The reinstatement of the death penalty?	1 (71.1%)	2 (23.8%)	8 (5.1%)	9	18/ (DEATH)
D. the reinstatement of the draft?	1 (64.1%)	2 (31.6%)	8 (4.3%)	9	19/ (DRAFT)

The report on the first Houston Area Survey, conducted in 1982, is protected by a light blue and gray cardboard cover bound by staples. While some of the results were expected, such as the positive ratings of job opportunities and the concerns about pollution, others were surprising, including the strong support for handgun control and for the ratification of the equal rights amendment. These were early signs of how often the views of ordinary citizens are at odds with public policies.

With the help of Telesurveys of Texas, we could conduct a study of Houston itself; we could explore the way area residents were balancing the exhilaration of the city's spectacular growth with mounting concerns about traffic, pollution, crime, and other social costs the unfettered growth was generating. Rosie, Dick, and I agreed to work together to offer a class in that spring semester to teach the students how to conduct a systematic survey that would measure the views of area residents.

In May 1982, two months after we completed the survey, the oil boom collapsed. By the end of 1983, more than a hundred thousand jobs were lost in this once-booming city. We thought it might be a good idea to conduct the survey again with a new class the following spring to measure reactions to the sudden turn of events. Then, as the changes accelerated further into the 1980s, we kept offering the course and conducting the survey in all the years after that; year after year, now thirty-nine and counting.

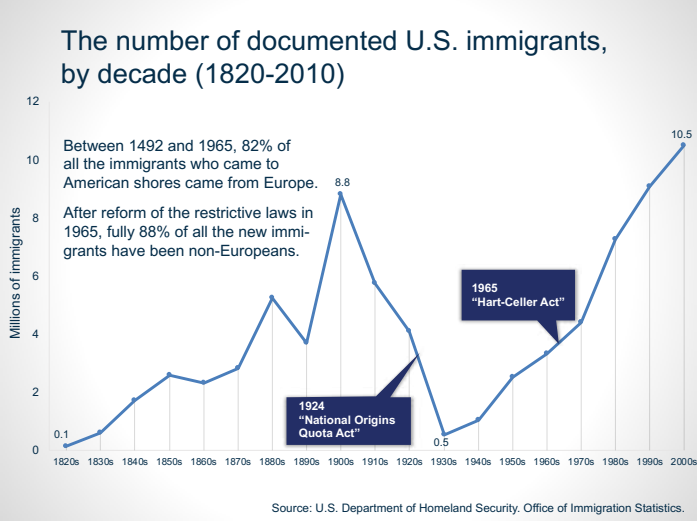
Houston History magazine has helped to clarify for all of us the basic DNA of this city. God surely did not intend a major metropolis to be built on this mosquito-infested, hot, flat, and treeless swampland; yet Houstonians have always risen to the occasion and seized whatever sources of wealth were available at each historical moment. Today we face new challenges and opportunities, and Houston's future is once again in question.

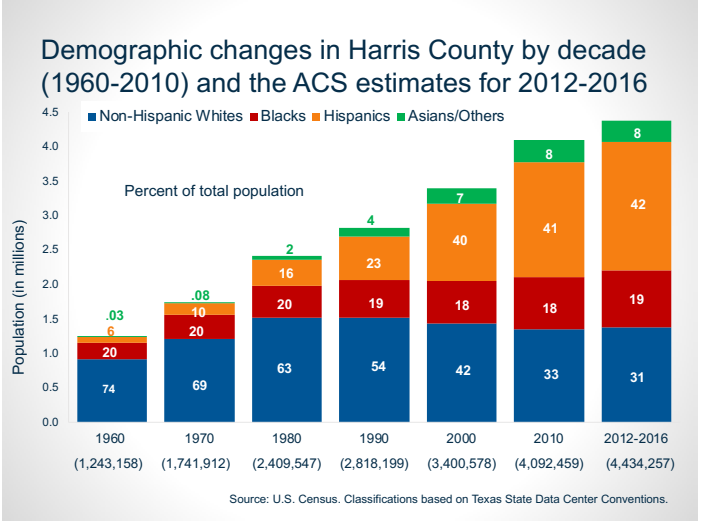
The Demographic Transformation.

DH: What stands out to you personally as a Houston resident witnessing those transitions, and does that coincide with your viewpoint as a researcher?

SK: Personal experience and sociological studies converge in the recognition that America is in the midst of an epic demographic transition, with Houston at the epicenter. Throughout its history, the United States was composed primarily of European nationalities — deliberately so. Between 1924 and 1965, we were operating under one of the most racist and restrictive laws the U.S. Congress has ever passed: the National Origins Quota Act, which sought to allow entry only to the "genetically superior" northern Europeans.

That law could not survive the shifts of consciousness brought about by the civil rights movements in the 1950s and 1960s. When immigration reform was finally enacted in 1965, its purpose was simply to get an embarrassing law off the books. No one thought anything much would change–but everything changed.





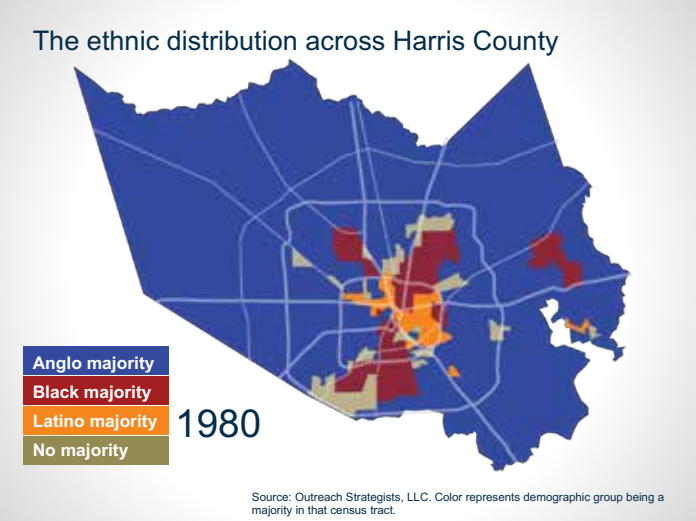
Immigrants were suddenly pouring into America once again, and 88 percent were coming from Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the Caribbean. The United States is transforming into a microcosm of the world. This is the first "universal nation"—the first nation in the history of the world that can say: We are a free people and we come from everywhere.

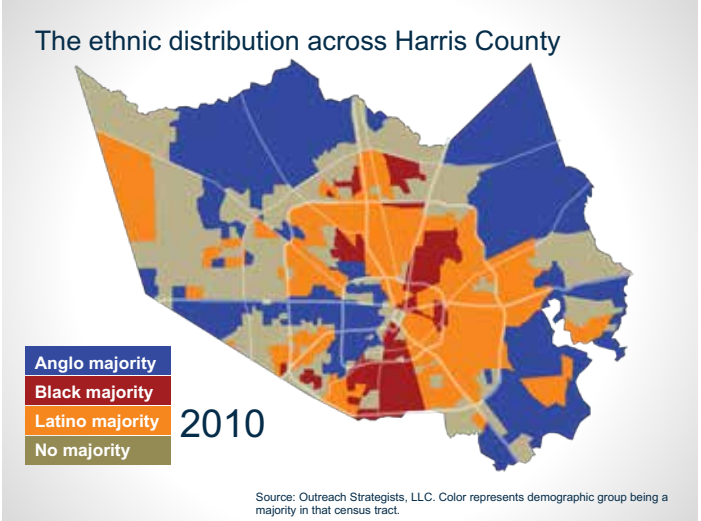
No city in America has experienced the transition as suddenly, as completely, and as irreversibly, as Houston, Texas. Throughout its history, this black/white southern city was dominated and controlled in an automatic, taken-for-granted way by white men. In 1980 there were 2.4 million people living in Harris County; 63 percent were Anglos, 20 percent were African Americans, 16 percent were Hispanics, and 2 percent were Asians. After the oil bust of 1982, the Anglo population of Harris County stabilized and then decreased.

During the past three and a half decades, all the net growth of this, the most rapidly growing city in America, has been due to the influx of Hispanics, Asians, and African Americans. Today, Houston is by some measures the single most ethnically diverse major metropolitan area in the entire country. As of 2016, Harris County, with a population of 4.5 million, was 42 percent Hispanic, 19 percent African American, 8 percent Asian, and 31 percent Anglo. Fort Bend County may be the most ethnically diverse county on the planet: According to the latest census estimates, the county is now 24 percent Hispanic, 21 percent Asian, 20 percent African American, and 34 percent Anglo.

No city has benefited more from immigration. Just imagine how different the story of Houston would have been if it had not become a magnet for the new immigration of the past thirty-five years: Houston would have lost population. It would have had the same fate as other American metros that are losing their status as major cities because for three and a half decades they have stopped growing—cities such as Philadelphia, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Detroit, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Buffalo. Instead, Houston is one of the most vibrant, rapidly-growing metropolitan areas in America, with a vigorous entrepreneurial economy, fueled primarily by the energy and commitment to hard work of immigrants who have been pouring into this city from Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the Caribbean.

The U.S. Census projects the demographic distribution of America as a whole in 2050, as the baby-boom



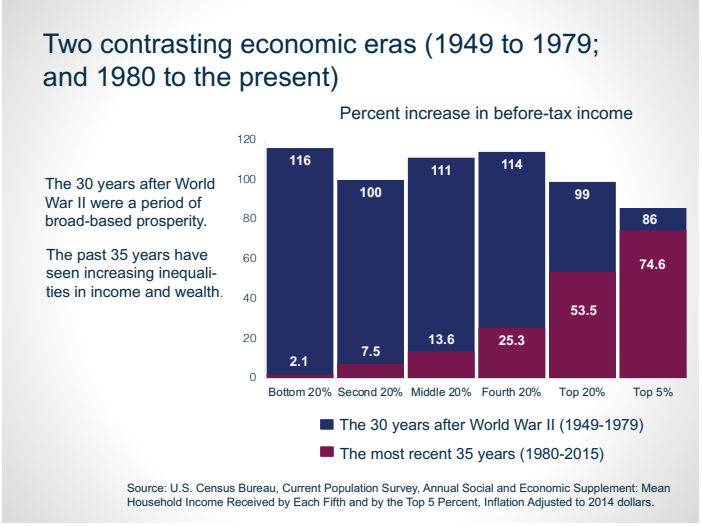


generation—the seventy-six million overwhelmingly Anglo babies born between 1946 and 1964—continues to age, and younger cohorts are disproportionately non-Anglo. By mid-century, all of America will look like the census depiction of Houston today.

Into the Knowledge Economy.

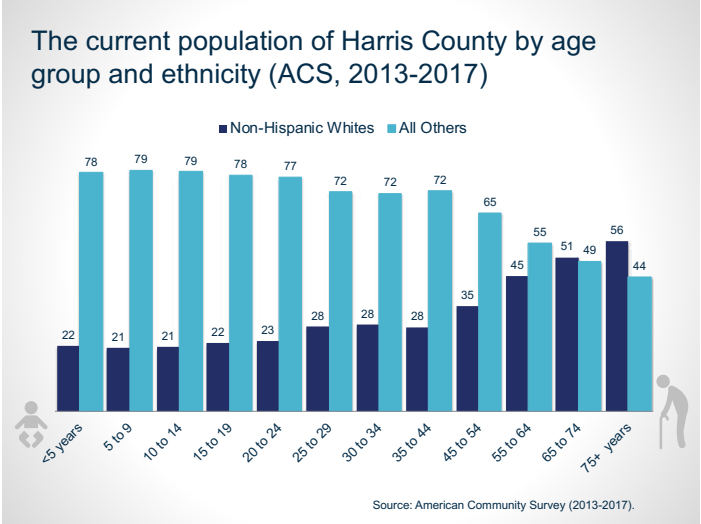
DH: How do you think this idea of diversity meshes with the economic underclass that the survey also indicates is developing here?

SK: These are the two fundamental transformations of our time: Number one, the transition from a bi-racial European-American nation into a multiethnic community made up of virtually all the ethnicities and all the religions of the world. And number two, the fundamental shift in the nature of the American economy itself. In the 1960s and 1970s, among the big employers in Houston were Hughes Tool Company and Cameron Iron Works. You could drop out of school, work in manufacturing or become a roustabout in the oil fields, and expect to make a middle-class wage.



That was the era when a rising tide did indeed lift all boats. The average American man, whatever his education, literally doubled his income in real terms during the post-war quarter century. Those were the years when we celebrated the stay-at-home housewife-mother in suburbia and the average American woman gave birth to 3.6 children. Like a pig being swallowed by a python, the seventy-six million babies born in that extraordinary period after World War II have been moving through the American system. The leading edge of the baby boom generation will turn seventy-four in the year 2020.

The broad-base prosperity had ended by the late 1970s. Since 1980 virtually all the benefits of economic growth have gone to the richest 20 percent of Americans. Sixty percent of American families, in contrast, have found their incomes growing very slowly, or not at all, during the past forty years, with prosperity predicated now more than ever on access to quality education and the mastery of technical skills. In today's global economy, companies can produce goods anywhere and sell them everywhere: If you are doing a job that I can train a Third World worker to do, and I pay that Third World worker fifteen dollars a day to do the job, I'm not going to pay you fifteen dollars an hour. And if you are doing the kind of work that I can program a computer to do, I will soon be replacing your job with an intelligent machine.

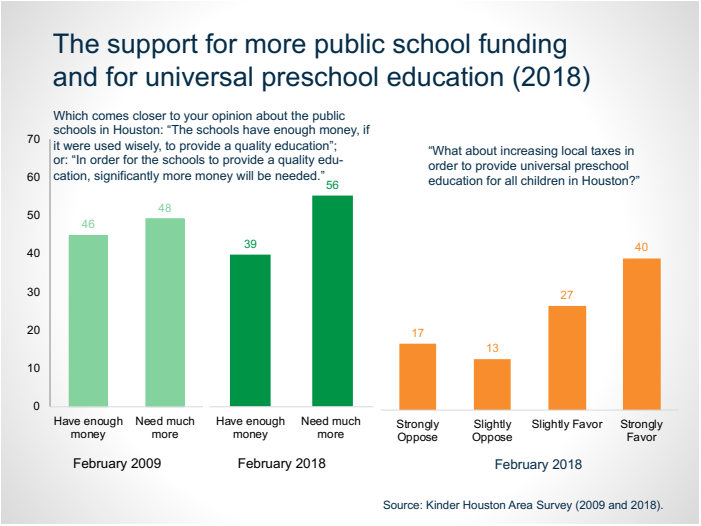


Fully 70 percent of all Harris County residents today who are under the age of twenty are African American and Hispanic—the two groups that are by far the most likely to be living in poverty, and we know what poverty does to your ability to advance in the public-school system. If too many of Houston's African American and Hispanic young people are unprepared to succeed in today's global, knowledge-based economy, it is difficult to envision a prosperous future. Houston's ethnic diversity can be the greatest asset this city could have as it builds the bridges to the global marketplace—or it could end up tearing us apart and becoming a major liability, reducing rather than enhancing the city's competitiveness in the new economy.

The Educational Divides.

DH: What do you see for Houston's prospects if we don't address better educational opportunities, especially for our African American and Latino communities?

SK: If we don't manage to turn the educational trajectories around effectively and soon, it is hard to see how Houston can prosper in the years ahead. During most of Texas history, you didn't need much schooling to succeed. Financial advance was based on exploiting the resources of the land: The big Texas fortunes were made from cotton, timber, cattle, sugar, and oil. The



source of wealth in the twenty-first century will have less to do with natural resources and more to do with human resources, with knowledge and skills. The future of Houston and Texas will now depend more than ever before on making sustained and effective investments in public education—from birth to college, from cradle to career.

Area residents are increasingly aware of the need for more investments in education. When asked in 2018 if significantly more money is needed to provide a quality education or whether the schools have enough money, if it were used wisely, a clear majority (by 56 to 39 percent) said that more money will be needed. In 2009, the survey participants were evenly divided (at 48 and 46 percent). When the question was first asked in 1995, only 38 percent thought more money was needed for the public schools.

In the 2018 survey, we also asked the respondents if they were in favor or opposed to increasing local taxes in order to provide universal preschool education for every child in Houston. "Increasing local taxes"—when you start a question with those words, you expect firm opposition. To our surprise, a whopping 67 percent called for more taxes for pre-K education, with 40 percent strongly in favor, and only 30 percent slightly or strongly opposed.

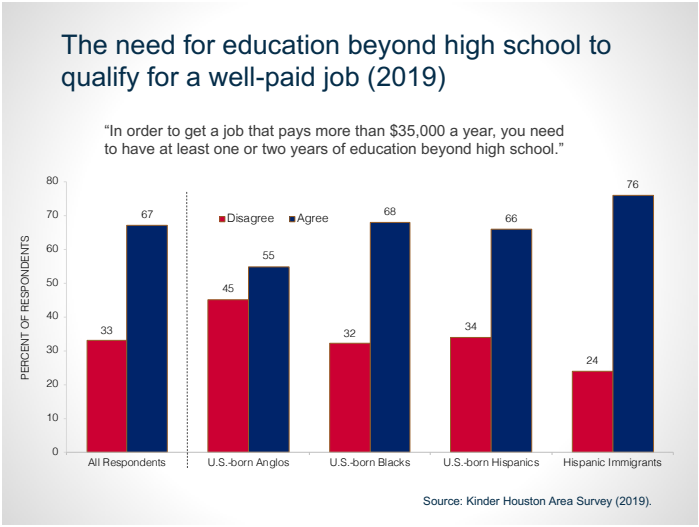
One of the moments of truth in American education is third-grade reading: If you're not reading at the third-grade level in third grade, you are four times more likely to drop out of high school. The most powerful predictor of whether you can read at a third-grade level is: Did you start kindergarten ready to learn to read? Rich kids generally enter kindergarten one and a half to two years ahead of poor kids. That gap didn't matter so much when there were plenty of low-skilled, well-paid, blue-collar jobs. Today, the educational inequalities matter enormously, and the public is increasingly aware of the need to address those new realities.

The Impact of Concentrated Poverty.

DH: What did you see when you focused on the demographics in relationship to attitudes about the importance of education beyond high school?

SK: In the 2018 survey, we asked about this statement: "In order to get a job that pays more than $35,000 a year, you need to have at least one or two years of education beyond high school." A clear majority of the survey respondents, by 67 to 33 percent, agreed.

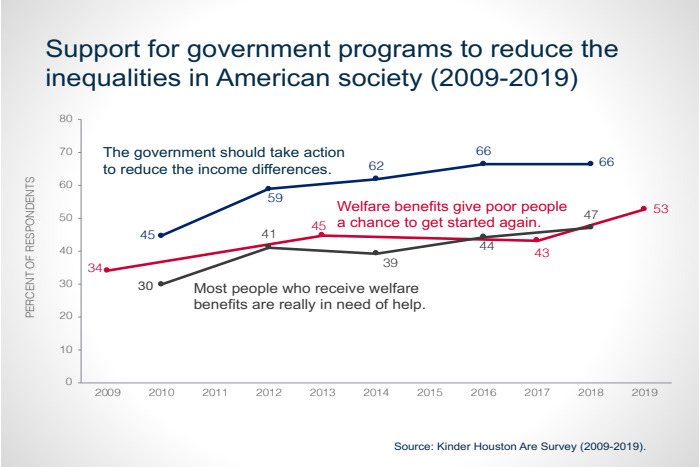
I fight a losing battle with many of the wealthy and powerful in Houston who say: If only blacks and Hispanics valued education and understood its importance the way Anglos and Asians do, everyone would get the education they need. But when we break down the answers to that question by ethnicity, we find that it is Anglos—with 45 percent disagreeing with that statement and just 55 percent agreeing—who are the most likely to believe that there are plenty of jobs in Houston for anybody willing to work hard, and having a post-secondary education is not that important. It is African Americans (at 32 to 68 percent), and U.S.-born Hispanics (34 to 66 percent), and especially Hispanic immigrants (24 to 76 percent) who are the most likely to agree that you need to have one or two years of education beyond high school if you hope to get a decent job in today's economy.



If blacks and Hispanics are not getting the education they need to succeed, it is demonstrably not because they and their parents do not value that education or recognize its importance. It is because these minority communities are far more likely than Anglos and Asians to be living in areas of concentrated poverty, attending underfunded inner-city schools, and facing all the additional out-of-classroom barriers that poverty imposes on a young person's ability to succeed in the public school system—the decaying neighborhoods, the constant threat of hunger and homelessness,

the unmet medical and dental needs, the continuing disruptions as impoverished families keep moving in search of more affordable places to live.

A City Reinventing Itself.

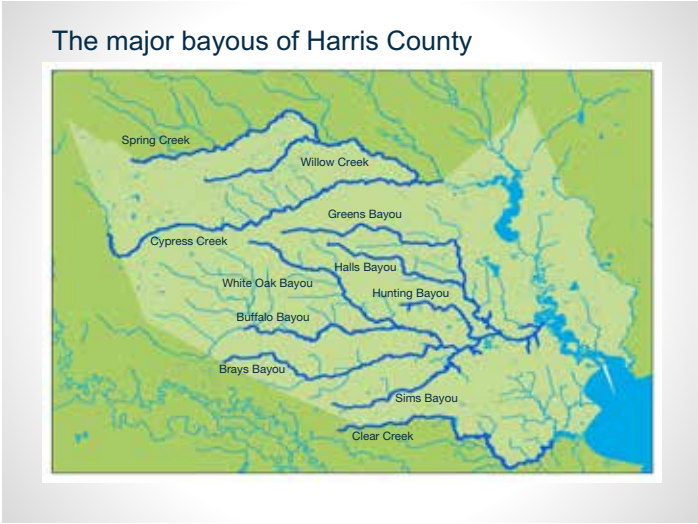


DH: One result that surprised me had to do with support for government programs to narrow the gaps in economic wellbeing. The numbers who agreed that government should take action to reduce the income differences between rich and poor in America grew from 45 to 66 percent over the past decade.

SK: That's right. You've touched on another of the central themes coming out of the surveys. Area residents over the past several years have been calling in growing numbers for efforts to reduce the economic inequalities, and they are more prepared to acknowledge that people today are often poor through no fault of their own. We've been asking over the years, for example, whether most of those receiving welfare payments are taking advantage of the system or are really in need of help. The percent saying welfare recipients really need the help they receive grew from 30 percent in 2010 to 47 percent in 2018.

More generally, Houstonians are clearly in the process of rethinking some of their basic assumptions. The survey respondents are much more inclined than in earlier years to support government initiatives and collective solutions. Houston-area residents, who once believed in building a city almost exclusively on the basis of short-term private-sector developer decisions, are increasingly recognizing the need for initiatives not only to reduce the growing inequalities and to advance education across the board, but also to make major improvements in Houston's quality-of-life attributes, partly in order to attract the talent that will grow the local economy in the years ahead.

One of the transformative events in Houston's history occurred on November 6, 2012, when the city's voters overwhelmingly approved a bond referendum proposed by the Houston Parks Board that would provide one hundred million dollars in public money, to be matched by $130 million in private donations, to transform three thousand acres along Houston's bayous into more miles of linear parks than can be found in any other city in America. The Bayou Greenways 2020 Initiative is in the process of building 150 miles of hike and bike trails along the city's nine major bayous, creating additional green space and recreational venues in almost every neighborhood. When the project is completed, 60 percent of all city residents will live within a mile and a half of a bayou trail, and Houston will be one of the greenest cities in America. A project of this sort, raising major public funds in order to beautify the city's communal spaces, would never have been seriously proposed in the Houston of fifteen or twenty years ago.

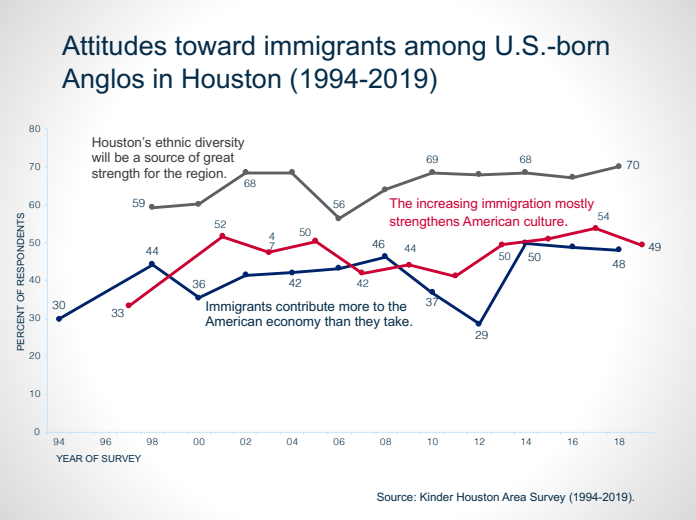


Change across the Generations.

DH: The support for investing in greenspace is encouraging.

SK: The surveys offer another promising sign in underlining the importance of age in shaping the attitudes and beliefs of area residents. We have asked a variety of questions measuring respondents' comfort with Houston's burgeoning diversity (e.g., "Will the increasing ethnic diversity in Houston eventually become a source of great strength for the city, or a growing problem?"); and their support for immigration (e.g., "Do immigrants generally contribute more to the American economy than they take, or do they take more than they contribute?").

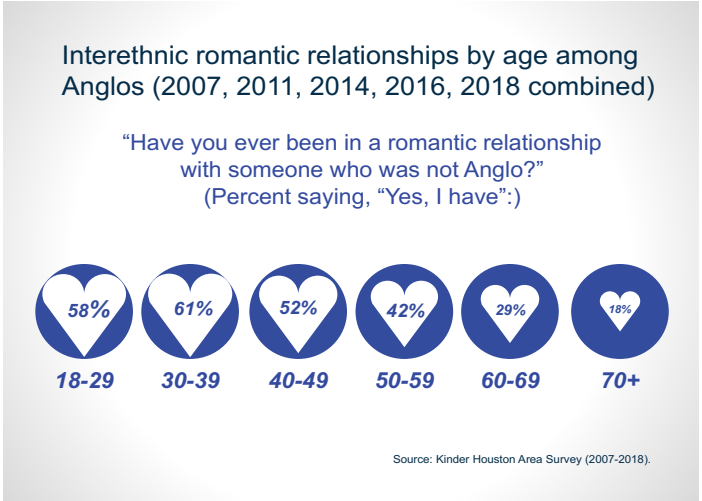
Over the years, the Anglo respondents have been expressing increasingly positive views about the new immigrants, and the most powerful predictor of their attitudes is not gender or levels of education; it's their year of birth. Just 50 percent, for example, of the Anglo respondents who were born in the 1960s thought the U.S. should admit more or the same number of legal immigrants in the next ten years compared to the last



ten years; this was the case for 57 percent of those born in the 1970s, and for 70 percent of the Anglos born in the 1980s.

Younger Houstonians are taking for granted and even celebrating what older area residents are still struggling to accept. Here's another indication of the ongoing change: Anglos were asked if they had ever been in a romantic relationship with someone who was not Anglo; 58 and 61 percent of the respondents who were under the age of 40 said, "Yes." The numbers dropped to 42 percent among Anglos in their 50s, to 29 percent for those in their 60s, and to just 18 percent of the respondents aged 70 and older.

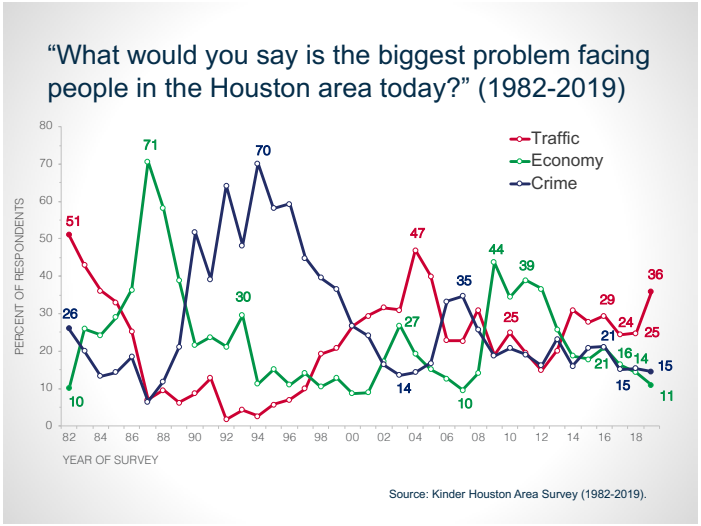
The earlier generations grew up in the America of the 1960s and 1970s; that was a different world from the 1990s and 2000s, when today's younger cohorts were coming of age. There's a basic law of human nature that says in essence, "What I am familiar with feels right and natural; what I'm unfamiliar with feels unnatural and somehow not quite right." The growing comfort with diversity among U.S.-born Anglos is a reflection in large part of the processes of cohort succession in a time of significant change, as each generation, having grown up in a distinct era, is



bringing different experiences and expectations into the public arena.

Meanwhile, the growth in the numbers of Asians and Hispanics in America today is no longer due primarily to the arrival of new immigrants. It is the result instead of the coming of age of the U.S.-born children of the immigrants who came here twenty-five or thirty years ago. That new reality has inevitably diminished the earlier anxieties: Will the new immigrants ever learn English? Will they ever come out of their co-ethnic enclaves? Will they ever become truly American? Those fears have faded in this new world of thriving interethnic friendships and mounting rates of intermarriage. The real challenge facing Houston and America today is not so much an ethnic divide, important as that is; it is increasingly a class divide: There are deepening inequalities in access to opportunity in all communities.

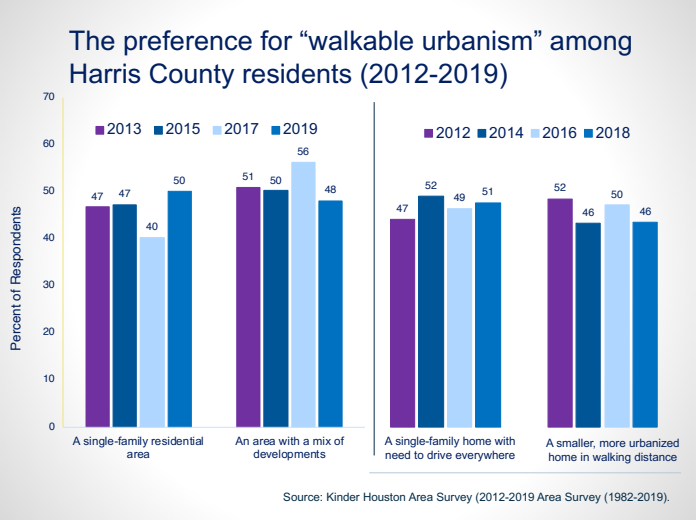
A 50-50 Preference for Walkable Urbanism.

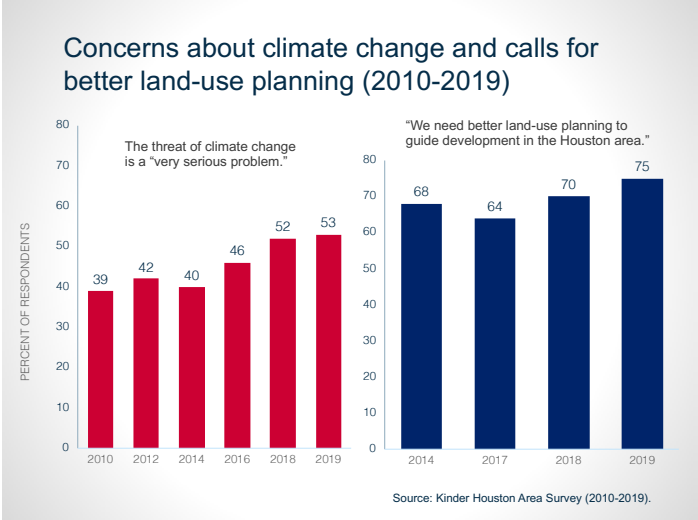


DH: Every year you ask about "the biggest problem facing people in the Houston area today."

SK: Right. The first question in each year's survey asks the respondents to name what they consider to be the biggest problem in Houston. In 1987, at the depths of the oil-boom collapse, 71 percent cited the economic crisis (poverty, unemployment, homelessness). In the mid-1990s, crime was the great preoccupation, mentioned spontaneously by 70 percent of area residents in 1995 during the crack-cocaine epidemic. In the more recent surveys, as economic concerns have lessened and crime has receded, traffic congestion has become the dominant preoccupation.

The growing traffic woes may also help to explain area residents' somewhat surprising preferences for how they would actually like to live in this sprawling, automobile-dependent metropolitan region. By 50 and 48 percent, the respondents in 2019 were evenly divided in their preference for living in a single-family residential area, or in an area with a mix of developments,





including homes, shops, and restaurants. In 2018, 51 percent said they preferred a single-family home with a big yard, "where you would need to drive almost everywhere you want to go"; but 46 percent would opt instead for a smaller home, in a more urbanized area, within walking distance of shops and workplaces.

The 50-50 preference reflects not only concerns about traffic congestion and long commutes, but also the changing life circumstances of area residents today. When Americans built the suburbs and fled the cities during the years after World War II, more than two-thirds of U.S. households (according to the 1970 census) had children living at home. In 2010 that was true for less than a third, and by 2020 the census projects that only about one-fourth of American households will have children at home; another one-fourth will consist of persons living alone; and the fastest growing segment of the overall population today consists of men and women over the age of eighty.

Families with three or more children are being replaced by empty nesters wanting shorter commutes, by young creatives postponing marriage and having fewer children, and by increasing numbers of single-person and elderly households. No wonder residents across the Houston region are calling for more walkable alternatives and for "complete streets," reconfigured to accommodate not only motorized vehicles, but also bikers and pedestrians. Real-estate developers are slowly responding to the new demands by building more transit-oriented communities, not only in Houston's downtown areas, but also in the urbanizing "town centers" throughout this far-flung multi-centered metropolitan region.

After Harvey.

DH: I drive in traffic every day; nevertheless, I was surprised that after the floods in 2015 and 2016 and Harvey in 2017—I was still surprised at the percentage naming flooding as the biggest problem: It went from just 1 percent in early 2017 to 15 percent in 2018 (six months after Harvey), and then in 2019 it dropped back down to 7 percent.

SK: It's not so surprising that the top-of-the-mind preoccupation with floods and storms was more apparent six months after Harvey than it was a year and a half later, but the continuing concerns about flooding and resilience are clearly evident when people are queried directly about these issues. When asked, for example, about the statement: "It is almost certain that the Houston region will experience more severe storms during the next ten years compared to the past ten years," 76 percent in 2018 agreed with that assertion; 75 percent agreed in 2019.

Back in 2010, only 39 percent thought that climate change was a very serious problem. That level of concern was expressed by 46 percent in 2016, 52 percent in 2018, and 53 percent in 2019. The respondents were also asked if they believed that we need better land-use planning to guide development in the Houston area, or if they agreed instead that people and businesses should be free to build wherever they want. The proportion calling for more effective land-use planning grew from 64 percent in 2017, to 70 percent in 2018, and to 75 percent in 2019. Area residents have recognized the region's deepening vulnerability to severe storms, and they increasingly acknowledge the need for new forms of public intervention, not only to improve the region's resiliency, but also to address the many other challenges facing this city in the years ahead.

Addressing the New Realities.

DH: So, is that basically how you would sum up the next thirty-eight years looking forward to future surveys?

SK: I think it's clear that Houston is changing in fundamental ways and facing major issues in its efforts to succeed in the twenty-first century.

The Kinder Houston Area Survey (1982-Present)

Thirty-eight years of systematic interviews with successive representative samples of Harris County residents have explored the way the general public is responding to three fundamental new realities:

- The Epic Demographic Transition
- The Rise of the Knowledge Economy
- The New Salience of Quality of Place

It will be interesting and important to be able to keep measuring, through quantitative survey research, the way the region and the views of its residents continue to evolve in the years ahead. The past thirty-eight years of systematic interviews with successive representative samples of Harris County residents have clarified the way the general public is responding to today's major urban challenges. To wit:

- ***The epic demographic transition.*** If this region is to flourish in the years ahead, it will need to evolve into a much more unified, equitable, and inclusive multiethnic society, one with real equality of opportunity for all area residents in all communities, and positioned to capitalize fully on its remarkable ethnic and cultural diversity.
- ***The rise of the knowledge economy.*** To prosper in the high-tech, global economy, Houston will need to make significant investments in new centers of industry and innovation; it will need to drastically improve its public schools and nurture a far more educated workforce; and it will need to find effective ways to reduce the inequalities that have resulted from the combined effects of world-wide competition, declining unionization, advances in computers and robotics, and concentrated political power.
- ***The new salience of quality of place.*** To attract the talent that will grow its economy, the city will need to develop into a more aesthetically and environmentally appealing urban destination, and continue making major improvements in its parks and bayous, its mobility and transit systems, its air and water quality, its venues for sports and the arts, and its resilience in the face of increasingly severe storms and rising sea-levels.

The surveys have documented significant change over the years in the attitudes and beliefs of the general public. Houston area residents are expressing much more support today than in earlier years for policies that can reduce the inequalities and address the needs of families living in poverty. They are calling for more spending on public education and for more stringent controls on development to enhance the region's quality of life and reduce its vulnerability to flooding. They are embracing Houston's diversity and feeling more comfortable in a world of thriving friendships across ethnic communities, religious beliefs, and sexual orientations. It remains to be seen whether the business and civic leaders of Houston can build on these attitude changes and make the sustained investments that will be needed to position the region for prosperity in this new era of economic, demographic, and technological transformation.

What happens in Houston will matter tremendously in the years ahead. This is where you can see the American future emerging. This is Houston's destiny, whether we would have chosen it or not, to be a "prophetic city," to be today where all the rest of the nation will be in the next twenty-five to thirty years. How Houston's residents and leaders address the critical issues and navigate the transitions will be of transcendent importance, not just for Houston's future, but for the American future as well.

Stephen L. Klineberg, Ph.D., is Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Rice University, director of the annual Kinder Houston Area Survey (1982-2020), and author of *Prophetic City: Houston on the Cusp of a Changing America* (Simon & Schuster, June 2020).

Debbie Z. Harwell, Ph.D., is the editor of *Houston History* and instructional assistant professor of history at the University of Houston.

Debbie Harwell and Stephen Klineberg at the Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University.

All in the Family: The Robinson Legacy

By Justin Thompson

"My brothers and I grew up with parents who were very active [politically]. It was normal and natural. It was like eating. It was what you did and what was expected of you."

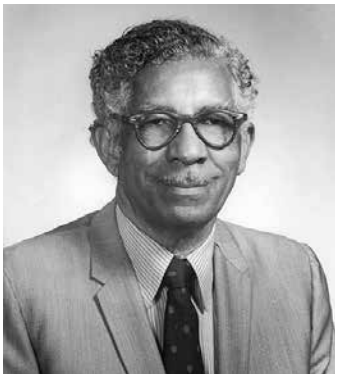
— Josie Robinson Johnson

Many African American activists, politicians, and businesspeople have risen out of the formerly segregated South, but few have sustained their influence across ten decades through multiple generations like the family of Judson W. Robinson Sr. in Houston, Texas. Robinson knew he was capable of much more than Jim Crow customs allowed, and he refused to surrender to laws that oppressed African Americans. He took action to improve the lives of those in the Black community and earned the respect of Houstonians overall. Robinson Sr. taught all his family members about the importance of civic engagement, and, today, that legacy continues to be visible in Houston through the organizations, programs, and policies established by him and his descendants, including his son Judson Robinson Jr. and his grandson Judson Robinson III.

Christmas 1985 brought the Robison family together from across the country for what was Judson Robison Sr.'s last Christmas. Photo courtesy of the Robinson family.

JUDSON W. ROBINSON SR.

Judson Wilbur Robinson was born in Crockett, Texas, on February 7, 1904. His parents believed in the importance of an education, which led him to attend nearby Prairie View State Normal School (now Prairie View A&M University) and graduated in 1926. His first choice was to study law, but no Texas law school admitted Black students, so Robinson obtained a business degree and returned to Houston. He met Josie Bell McCullough while they were students at Prairie View, and the couple married in 1929, the year she graduated. They had three children: Josie Robinson, now Josie R. Johnson; Judson W. Robinson Jr.; and James S. Robinson.[2] All three went on to emulate their father's life-long commitment to activism.



Judson Robinson Sr.'s work demanded respect. In a period when whites often showed little deference to Blacks, Robinson Sr. was not addressed informally by anyone who did not know him personally. Photo courtesy of the African American Library at the Gregory School, MSS0043.072.

Even with a college degree, African Americans discovered that employment opportunities were often limited. Thus, one of the first lines of employment available to Robinson Sr. was as a waiter for Southern Pacific Railroad. Given the inherently racist nature of rail car employment for African American men, Robinson sought to resolve or at least alleviate the injustices and mistreatment they encountered. In 1934 he worked under A. Philip Randolph to help organize a Houston chapter of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), a union that Randolph cofounded in Harlem in 1925.[3] Robinson's efforts reflected the brotherhood's focus on fair wages and ethical labor practices. In addition, he worked to overcome the limitations the poll tax placed on voter participation, particularly in low-income and minority communities. Josie Johnson recalled working the neighborhoods with her father "to make sure that people paid their poll tax so they could register and vote, and [then working] the precincts thoroughly before elections." They also went

Judson Robinson Sr. (center) and two other men check on construction at the YMCA in Southeast Houston. Photo courtesy of the African American Library at the Gregory School, MSS0316.010.

door to door gathering signatures on petitions to abolish the poll tax.[4]

Robinson Sr.'s experience with the BSCP evolved into a broader range of activist activities to advance people of color. He became involved with the Houston chapter of the National Negro Congress, serving as the acting chairman by 1938.[5] The National Negro Congress worked with the local branches of BSCP, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), and the Southern Conference for Human Welfare.[6]

In 1943, the Houston Housing Authority (HHA) selected Robinson Sr., with his extensive real estate and housing experience, as the first African American to manage Kelly Village, its subsidized housing project in Fifth Ward. Three years later, HHA promoted him to manager of Cuney Homes in Third Ward. As manager of both housing projects and, later, as an HHA board member, Robinson Sr. assisted in improving housing conditions for local Blacks, which were considered some of the nation's worst at the time.[7]

Building upon his experience, Robinson Sr. became actively involved in the local business community. He became the first African American realtor in Houston and the first to own an insurance agency there.[8] In 1950 he established the predominately Black National Real Estate Association.[9] This directly translated into his leadership roles with the Houston Citizens Chamber of Commerce (previously the Houston Negro Chamber of Commerce, and now the Greater Houston Black Chamber of Commerce). He began as director of the 1953 membership drive and was later elected president of the chamber. As president, Robinson maintained the chamber's goals to promote the welfare of Houstonians, increase the patronage of Black businesses, and improve race relations. This was to be achieved by advocating for trades and art education, encouraging the payment of poll taxes to vote, and promoting fair housing and employment practices.[10]

Robinson Sr. advanced fair housing practices with the founding of Judson W. Robinson & Sons Real Estate and Mortgage Company in 1962. Robinson's company was one of three Black real estate and mortgage companies approved by the Federal Housing Administration in Houston and the first Black company to join the Multiple Listing Service of the Houston Association of Realtors.[11]

Years after the death of his wife Josie, Robinson Sr. married Martha Frances Sneed Davis in 1973. She was the widow of dentist and Texas Southern University (TSU) regent Dr. John Whittaker Davis Jr., and had two children who expanded the Robinson family. Influenced by Robinson Sr.'s example, Davis's son, John W. Davis III, became an attorney and joined James Robinson to create the real estate law practice of Robinson and Davis, Attorneys-at-Law, which became certified Housing and Urban Development closing attorneys and worked to develop local housing projects.[12]

Judson Robinson Sr. exercised his influence in the Pleasantville community where the family lived and successfully ran for and served as chairman of the 259th Precinct. Author Attica Locke described Pleasantville, which was founded by two developers in 1949, as a planned community for "thousands of engaged, educated and monied black folk."[13] Segregation incubated this community of enabled African Americans, and their precinct consistently ranked among those with the highest voter turnout in Texas. During Robinson Sr.'s tenure as chairman, the increase in voter participation made the 259th one of the city's most powerful historically Black districts.

Judson Sr. worked on other civic projects as well. He earned a seat on the board of directors at Riverside General Hospital (formerly Houston Negro Hospital) serving from 1965 to 1975. In 1968, he founded the Houston branch of the National Urban League—Houston Area Urban League (HAUL)—an organization dedicated to uplifting African Americans and other minorities socially and economically. As a non-profit, through affiliation with United Way, HAUL continues to implement programs that benefit Greater Houston under the leadership of Judson Robinson III.[14]

Ten years after establishing HAUL and an even longer storied career of entrepreneurship and activism, Robinson Sr. retired from his real estate and mortgage company, handing the reigns of the presidency over to his son Judson Robinson Jr. in 1978. Respected both in and outside of the

Black community during his career, Robinson Sr. began a family heritage of political engagement and activism that has continued well beyond his passing in 1986.

JUDSON W. ROBINSON JR.

Born in Houston on November 21, 1932, Judson Robinson Jr. was the second child in the next generation of Robinsons. After graduating from Jack Yates High School in Third Ward in 1950, Judson Jr. followed his sister Josie in attending Fisk University, where he was a part of the football team that competed against other historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) such as Morehouse, Alabama State, and Xavier Universities. He graduated in 1954 with a degree in business administration, seemingly destined to continue the legacy set forth by his father. After graduation, Robinson Jr. returned to Houston and married Margarette Thompson in 1958. The couple went on to have three children, Judson Robinson III, Gerald Robinson, who died in infancy, and Pamela Robinson.

Robinson Jr. began his career with a handful of endeavors, one of which was R.M.P. Development Corporation, which owned and managed multiple Burger King franchises. He also invested in KCOH 1430 AM, the state's oldest, Black-owned and Black-formatted radio station, which went on air in 1953.[15] Both of these pursuits underscore how Judson Jr.'s business expertise was used in the African American community for the African American community. In the fast food industry, his stores provided jobs to minority youth and young professionals. His investment in KCOH, which was created around "public service for the community," was also in keeping with the family legacy.[16]

Judson Robinson Jr. entered politics in 1968, following his father as the second judge of the 259th Precinct in Pleasantville. Building on his father's rapport with the district, Robinson Jr. continued to foster a strong relationship with the residents. It was almost unimaginable that Judson Robinson Jr. would fail to carry that momentum with him in future political contests. Nevertheless, Robinson Jr. ran for city council in 1969 against A. L. Miller and lost in an upset after a campaign that cost about $29,000.[17] Two years later, Robinson Jr. defeated the same opponent for At-large Position 5, making him the first African American elected to city council, where he served five terms.

As unprecedented as his election was, he faced the lingering Jim Crow sentiments that opposed minorities in leadership positions. Robinson Jr. faced underlying racism in tackling issues related to education, law enforcement, housing, land use, and fair employment. In 1974 he noted, "The city has to [address] this thing of equal opportunities as far as employment, and all the people that do business with the city have to agree to the concept that they'll hire based on qualifications and not race."[18]

Solving such deep-seated problems proved challenging. With regard to housing and land use, for example, a near riot broke out in the Trinity Gardens neighborhood over the placement of a landfill, underlining the neglectful land use policies that Robinson Jr. wanted to counteract.[19] He also encountered a great deal of difficulty securing safe places for people to meet and enjoy recreational facilities in minority communities. Ironically he found an unlikely ally in conservative councilmember Frank Mann who gathered the necessary support to construct parks in communities such as Pleasantville and Denver Harbor.[20] When it came to law enforcement, on the one hand, Judson Jr. dealt with a biased police force; and on the other hand, he dealt with a Black community that felt HPD was untrustworthy, despite efforts to diversify its ranks. These feelings dated back to Robinson Jr.'s time on the Board of Regents at TSU when police responded to an alleged "riot" on campus in 1967. Working with political ally and supporter Mayor Fred Hofheinz, Robinson Jr. tried to foster a more accountable and transparent police force to reduce citizens' claims of police brutality.[21]

Along the same line Robinson Jr. created a social bridge between the Black and white communities through formal and informal means. When asked if his candidacy garnered a deeper understanding of the Black community, Robinson Jr. explained, "The people can see [the candidates] on a very informal basis and talk issues. I had them all out to my house on occasion, and I've been to theirs, so, yes, I think in that area I would like to think we've had some better understanding of each other." The late congressman Mickey Leland commended Robinson for his efforts, saying,

Judson Robinson Jr. waves at the crowd during a St. Patrick's Day parade.
Photo courtesy of the African American Library at the Gregory School, MSS 0043.001.

Local political leaders gather to show support for Judson Robinson Jr. and Anthony Hall's reelection campaigns. Left to right, Congressman Mickey Leland, Justice of the Peace Betty Brock Bell, Council Member Ernest McGowan Sr., Council Member (City Attorney and METRO Chair) Anthony Hall, Council Member Judson Robinson Jr., Harris County Constable A. B. Chambers, State Representative Ron Wilson, Precinct Judge Zollie Scales Sr.

Photo courtesy of the African American Library at the Gregory School, MSS0043.008.

"Almost every black organization owed something to Judson Robinson Jr. because he [had] helped them very quietly."[22]

During his twenty-plus-year political career, Robinson Jr. also served as a member of the Democratic State Executive Committee (1968-1971), and as mayor pro tem under former Houston mayors Louie Welch and Kathy Whitmire. Towards the beginning of Judson Jr.'s time on city council, his wife Margarette retired from a storied career in nursing to serve as vice president of Judson W. Robinson & Sons Realty and Mortgage in 1972, and Robinson Jr. took charge in 1978. That same year, he ran as a Democrat against Anthony Hall and Mickey Leland for the seat held by Barbara Jordan in the 18th U.S. Congressional District.[23] Despite Robinson Jr's support from his sister-in-law, attorney Algenita Davis, and his sister, educator Dr. Josie Johnson, Leland won the election.[24] Robinson Jr. continued working as president of the family real estate business while also serving on city council until he lost a long battle with cancer in 1990, cutting short a legacy of opening doors and bridging differences while remaining committed to uplifting the underserved and underprivileged.

JUDSON W. ROBINSON III

The third generation in the Robinson lineage marks the strength of the family in the post-1960s civil rights era. Judson W. Robinson III was raised in the Pleasantville neighborhood where his forefathers served as political leaders and role models. He learned the importance of punctuality and political involvement as early as age twelve, working in his father's restaurants and at the polls during his father's city council campaign.[25] Robinson III attended Pleasantville Elementary School, but he did not comprehend the true difference between segregated and integrated schools until he was in junior high school and came into contact with students of different ethnicities. He became the first in his family to experience school busing and to attend a young men's Catholic college preparatory school, St. Thomas High School in Houston. During this time, he came to realize the "power of legacy" and that he had to be the one to continue Robinson and Sons if it were going to survive.[26] Despite attending an integrated secondary school, Judson III followed in his father's footsteps, electing to attend Fisk University where he earned a bachelor's degree in business management in 1981.

After graduation Robinson III worked in sales with IBM until his father's unfortunate health problems forced him to take greater responsibilities in the family business and to enroll in real estate classes. To make matters worse, Robinson Jr.'s diagnosis coincided with the oil bust of the 1980s, which hit Houston hard. After the passing of Judson Robinson Jr., Judson Robinson III and his uncle James Robinson took over the real estate firm, but many of their clients were devastated by the oil bust, and the company survived only a few years. Robinson III describes this period as a "trial of fire" or "rite of passage" that helped him get to where he is today.[27]

After this difficult time, Robinson III's mother, Margarette Robinson, was appointed to fill his father's vacant At-large Position 5 city council seat. After roughly a year, in 1991, Robinson III was encouraged to run for the seat and continue his father's legacy advocating for civil rights. His victory made him one of the youngest African

A young Robinson III stands next to his father, Judson Robinson Jr.

Photo courtesy of the African American Library at the Gregory School, MSS0043.016.

Americans elected to city office.[28] That same year, a referendum set a limit of three two-year terms for city office, shrinking the time Robinson III had to make an impact to a maximum of six years in comparison to his father's nineteen.[29] Like his father, he served as vice mayor pro tem, appointed by then mayor Bob Lanier.

Regardless, Robinson III's time on the Houston City Council was arguably one of the most productive in the city's history, with members also including Sheila Jackson Lee, Gracie Saenz, and Eleanor Tinsley. The council undertook initiatives to improve Houston's downtown.[30] By doing this, they hoped to stimulate the economy by creating jobs and adding much needed vivacity to the environment, resulting in the creation of the Business and Tourism Committee, which Robinson chaired. One of the most notable projects from these initiatives was the development of Houston's Midtown, which began as an effort for more affordable residential development in downtown by making the area a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ).[31] While also chairing the Redevelopment and Revitalization Committee, Robinson III was involved in awarding the convention center hotel to Hilton Americas-Houston and approving the downtown baseball stadium, now Minute Maid Park.

After his time as a council member, Robinson III maintained leadership positions, serving as an area vice president for the engineering firm Professional Service Industries and as the co-chief-of-staff in Harris County Commissioner Sylvia Garcia's office, where he gained experience in operations and supervision. But like his father and grandfather, Robinson III gravitated towards aiding Houston's disadvantaged population, transferring the skills he gained while in office to communities akin to his own. After the Houston Urban League's president retired, Robinson III was encouraged to submit his resume; and, in 2007, he became CEO of the same chapter his grandfather had founded in 1968. Today HAUL pursues some of the same goals—yet in a more modern context—through the departments of Education, Workforce and Economic Development, Workforce Training, Housing, and Health and Wellness.

Judson W. Robinson III and his wife Cora have three children, one of whom is Judson Robinson IV. Although his father is not pressuring him to follow in his footsteps, Robinson IV is working in the non-profit sector, indicating the desire for service is still part of the family legacy.

THE ROBINSON LEGACY

Although historically the Robinson family lacked the visibility of political families like the Hofheinzs, for example, the Robinsons' impact remains evident citywide. Robinson Sr. got his "foot in the door," acting as the catalyst and initiating much of the work that has continued: Cuney Homes and Kelly Village still offer housing, HAUL is headed by his grandson, and the Greater Houston Black Chamber of Commerce continues to serve the business community.

Robinson Jr. built on the progress his father made and further advanced the fight for equality. Aside from being

Judson Robinson III speaks at the LINCS Supply Chain Management Certification Program sponsored by HAUL and San Jacinto College.
Photo courtesy of Houston Area Urban League.

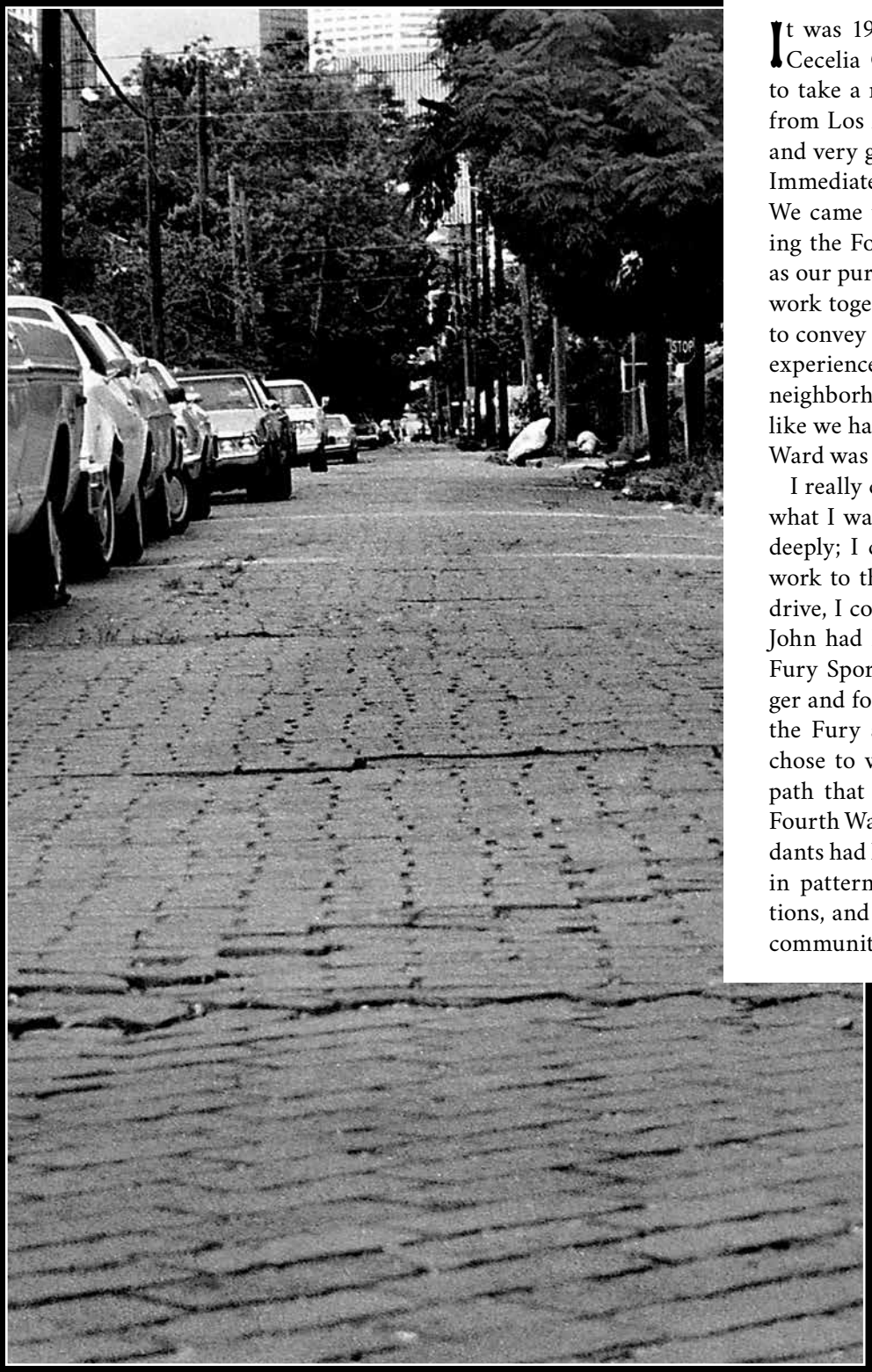
Houston's first African American city councilmember, he fought to overcome educational, political, social, and financial inequalities that remained even after the 1960s civil rights movement. He also tried to narrow the racial divide and worked through the political system to address the needs of underserved communities.

To show appreciation and acknowledge the Robinsons' civic work, the City of Houston named a community center and a park in honor of Judson Robinson Sr., and a library, community center, and elementary school for Judson Robinson Jr. However, the biggest legacy left by these two gentlemen was the example they set for their communities and their children and grandchildren. They proved that with education and determination, one can make a difference. Robinson III continues to impart these same values through programs at HAUL, such as the Urban League Young Professionals Program, which targets people age twenty to forty, offering them networking opportunities while building community awareness and accountability to prepare them as future leaders. The HAUL Guild focuses on enlightening older professionals on topics such as volunteerism, investment, and passing on generational wealth. These are only a sample of several HAUL programs that focus on youth, education, and health to better service the city and carry the Robinson legacy forward, making Houston a better place for generations to come.[32]

Justin B. Thompson is a 2017 graduate of the University of Houston's College of Technology with a B.S. in human resource development. A proud Houstonian, he interned at *Houston History* for two years. Justin is currently working as a training designer and spends his free time on music production and various kinds of writing.

A LOOK AT FOURTH WARD HOUSTON, TEXAS

By Roxanne Quezada Chartouni



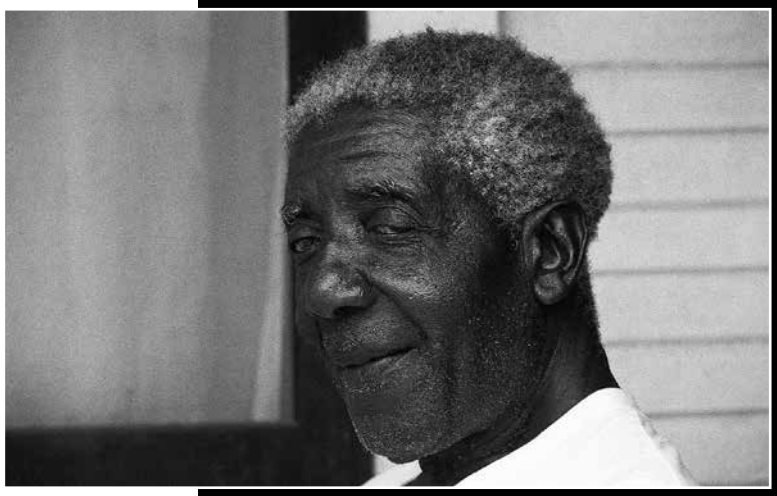
It was 1987 and my new best friend/sister, Cecelia Cook Drew asked me if I wanted to take a run with her and her daughter Jaz from Los Angeles to Houston. I was thrilled and very grateful for C's generous invitation. Immediately we began planning our visit. We came up with the concept of documenting the Fourth Ward in honor of Juneteenth as our purpose for collaborating on a body of work together. More than anything I wanted to convey the warmth and familiarity we had experienced immediately upon entering the neighborhood that was Fourth Ward. It felt like we had stepped back in time, and Fourth Ward was the town that time forgot.

I really could not believe nor communicate what I was feeling that day but it moved me deeply; I consider it a blessing and my best work to this day. After what seemed a short drive, I could see the Houston skyline. Uncle John had loaned us his 1976 gold Plymouth Fury Sport. We drove into Fourth Ward eager and focused on the job at hand. C parked the Fury and off we went. Instinctively we chose to walk down the beautiful red brick path that was Andrews Street. Denizens of Fourth Ward. Former slaves and their descendants had handcrafted the bricks, laying them in patterns that reflect West African traditions, and sometimes-secret messages for the community.

Roxanne Quezada Chartouni has worked as a photographer for over thirty years. Her nationally collected and exhibited work has focused on her passion for photojournalism, portraiture and still life. She was born in Sonsonate, El Salvador, and nurtured in both Northern and Southern California.
www.facebook.com/
Houstonalookat4thward/

Mrs. Mayola Baldwin instantly graced the Leica camera with her beauty. Her image was the very first frame I documented in Fourth Ward. I nervously asked if I could take a photo of her. To my surprise, she replied "yes" but would I please take it with her washing machine, as she was very proud to have purchased it with her own savings. Her smooth ebony skin against the crispy, white starched dress just sent me to the moon. As we chatted, she mentioned being unable to recall her birthday exactly but that she was well into her nineties. I thanked her for her time and felt very good about what the day had in store for us. After the experience of meeting Mrs. Baldwin and the privilege of photographing her, I prayed not to mess up exposures, film loading, or anything else for that matter. I knew this was my one and only chance to tell their story.

Mr. George Williams was the second person we encountered as we entered Fourth Ward. Sitting on his porch as cool as cool can be, he smiled and greeted us. I asked if I could take his portrait. He smiled and nodded yes. I put my camera up to my face and saw his handsome features in my viewfinder and wondered what his life had been like. Again, I felt this emotion wash over me. I set my exposure and sent it with everything I had into the shutter. Four frames later, I had my shot. We shook his hand and thanked him for his time. C and I were both on Cloud 9!

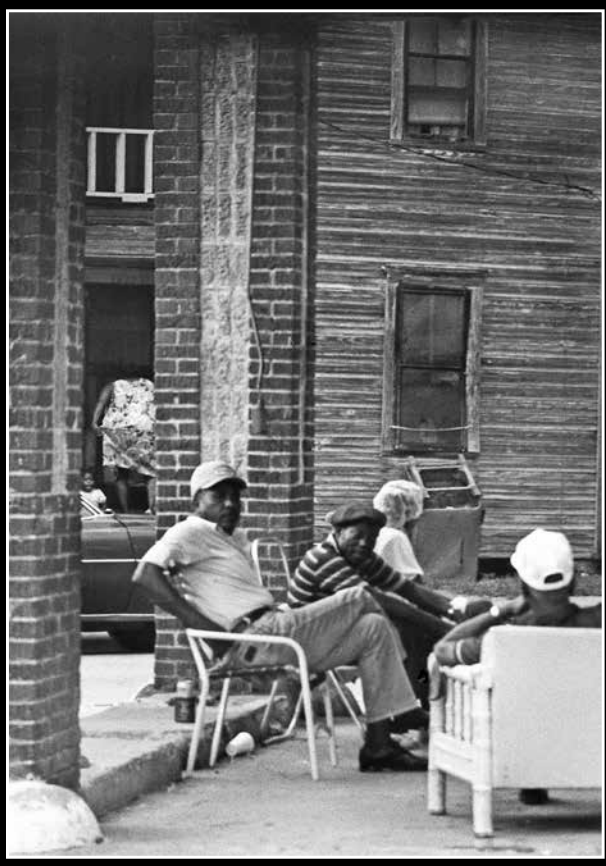


The Row on Victor Street, six wonderful examples of shotgun houses, were a surreal site in that they were quite small, skillfully made, and perfectly laid out. This angle was shot from a vacant lot across the street.

We met Monica (at right) and her sister Johnese at Wiley Park. Monica asked me if I would take their photograph, but first she had to change her little sister. I told her we would be walking down Andrews Street, so they met up with us after a while and I took this shot, which also shows an example of the historic Freedman's Town brick streets.

I had this idea that I might be able to conceptualize the extreme heat and humidity that was melting me with every minute by photographing Cecelia with her hanky waving in the wind, as if to fan herself. It didn't work because she looks beautifully cool!

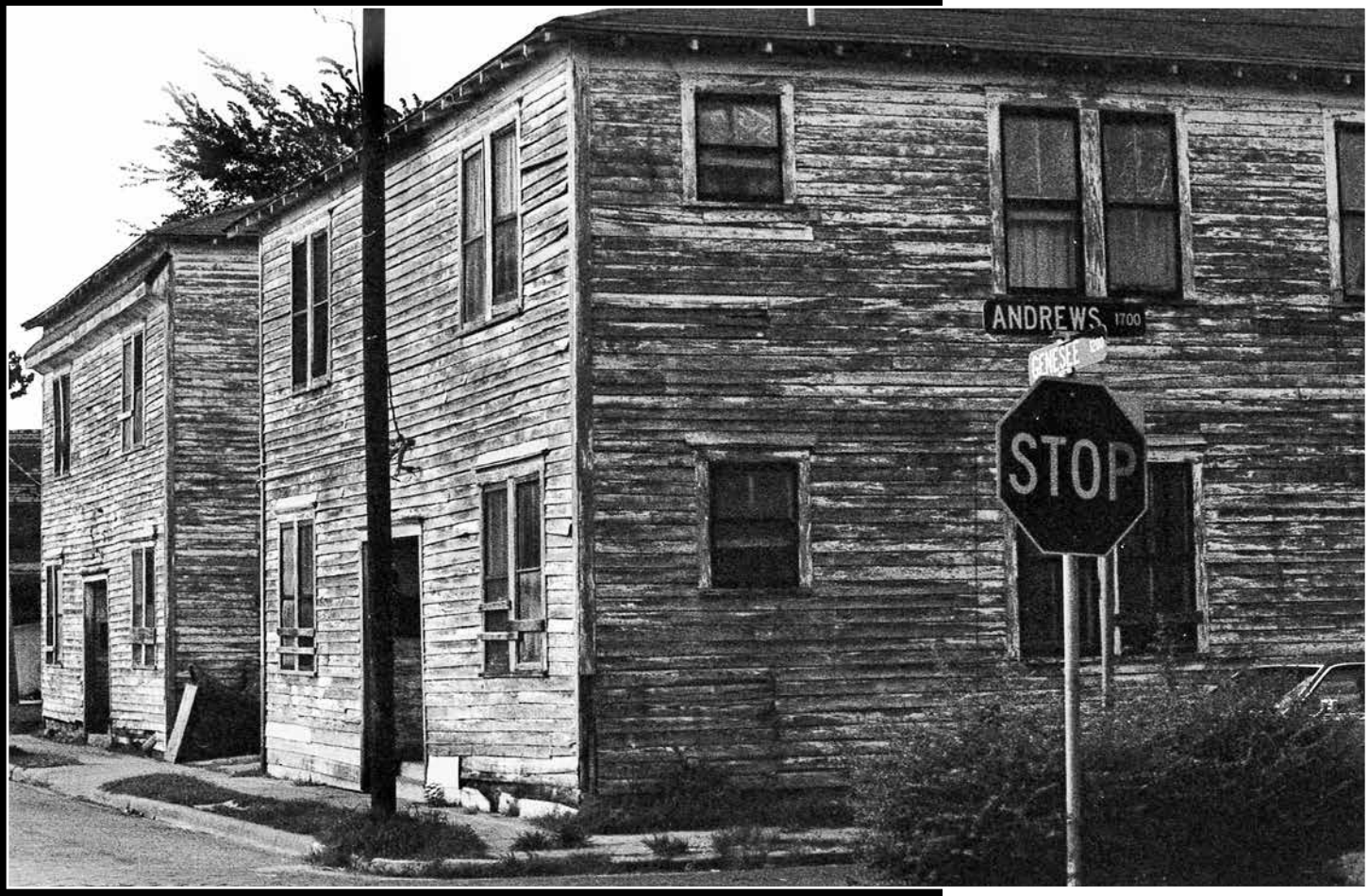
◀ This shot came about as we stood in the middle of the courtyard of identical buildings. The building to the right had tenants and utility meters hooked up, but the building to the left was just a shell with the only sign of life being this cat.



Mr. Charley's Auto Shop at Robin and Wilson Streets became a gathering place not long after the auto shop closed down in the late 1960s. Community members had gathered in the still of the afternoon to socialize and cool off a bit.

Two members of my Houston A Look At 4th Ward Facebook page identified this image, at Ruthven and Wilson, as Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church, one of the historic Freedman's Town congregations whose roots date back to the 1890s.

Motel on Gillette Street was such a wonderful juxtaposition of things, dogs, and signs. The house to the right of the frame was known as the Lion House for the lion statues that had once stood there.



We arrived at the end of our journey, Andrews and Genesee. The bricks had guided us through Fourth Ward from one end to the other. I took a few steps from the corner and shot this photograph all the while wondering just how much longer Fourth Ward would remain the vibrant community it once was.

New Hope Housing: Creating Communities for Those in Need

By Natalya Pomeroy

Evette, a twenty-six-year-old single mother who had fled a toxic relationship, struggled to support her family as she and her sons, Ryan, age nine, and Arian, age three, moved from one shelter to another. She found her way to The Star of Hope's Women and Family Development Center, where she began building her skills and learned about another organization that was also growing and building—New Hope Housing. Every day, she and her children watched New Hope Housing's Reed apartments under construction nearby and dreamed of living there.

Their dream came true in November of 2018 when they moved into their fully furnished apartment and began taking advantage of New Hope Housing's onsite supportive services and educational programs. With the help of Star of Hope and New Hope Housing, Evette saved enough money to buy a car. She enrolled in a GED program at Houston Community College and began working part-time as a health care provider. Evette's long-term goals include becoming a psychologist and—the big one—saving money to buy her own home.

For over a quarter century, the nonprofit New Hope Housing has provided low cost, single room occupancy (SRO) housing for single adults living on little to no income in Houston to help them realize their goals. Today, New Hope has expanded to assist vulnerable families like Evette's. It keeps residents' rent costs low to provide affordable housing options and support services by combining federal funding with private donations and effective budgeting and management, "Building Communities, Restoring Lives."[1]

New Hope Housing's Hamilton property stands in the foreground, adjacent to the construction site for the Houston Astros' playing field, now Minute Maid Park.

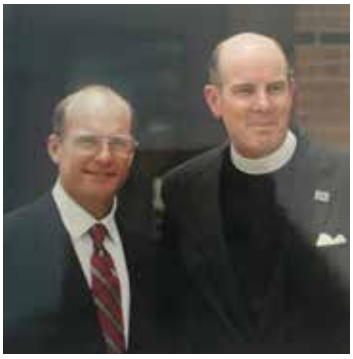
All photos courtesy of New Hope Housing.

ORIGINS OF NEW HOPE HOUSING

In the early 1990s, parishioners of downtown Houston's Christ Church Cathedral realized the area around the church was experiencing an increase in the number of homeless people and others who clearly lacked access to adequate housing. Christ Church members challenged themselves and their neighboring communities to take action to provide these people with a stable home environment so they could eventually support themselves.

In 1981, Christ Church Cathedral had founded COMPASS, a nonprofit corporation to help with case management for disadvantaged men and women, which began operation in 1982. Working with COMPASS, the church members noticed that the at-risk, homeless, and low-income community needed more than case management and employment services; they also needed a place to call home.

The church members began raising money as part of their effort to support their fellow Houstonians by providing them with a permanent place to live, rather than temporary shelters and transitional homes. The cathedral's dean at the time, The Very Reverend Walter H. Taylor, introduced the concept of SRO housing to Houston to achieve this goal.[2]



John Benzon, former board president of New Hope Housing, with The Very Reverend Walter Hamilton Taylor of Christ Church Cathedral at the grand opening of Hamilton Phase II.

Christ Church Cathedral initiated a fundraising campaign that stipulated for every dollar raised to restore the nearly century-old cathedral, one dollar would be allocated to address community issues. In the end, Christ Church raised $1.25 million to pave the way for a permanent solution to helping low-income and disadvantaged Houstonians get a foothold and start a new chapter in their lives. That new chapter began with New Hope Housing emerging as Houston's first organization providing SRO rental housing.[3]

The people at Christ Church Cathedral envisioned New Hope Housing and its first SRO project as "a breakaway" from the church. Nicole Cassier-Mason, New Hope's vice president of philanthropy and communications, explained, "Our founders had the foresight and wherewithal to understand the church's role in the development of affordable housing. Being connected to a church or another religious place of worship can sometimes bring limitations, particularly in accessing government funds, which can hamper growth and expansion. The church played a critical role in founding us, establishing our vision, attracting new donors, and eventually set us free."[4]

New Hope Housing faced challenges pioneering SRO housing. Other major cities already had thousands of SROs, but Houston had none. Rev. Taylor introduced the concept as a solution to the many needs identified through its nonprofit partners like COMPASS. Having a job addressed a facet of the overarching struggle for homeless persons and those at-risk by offering an income, but having a permanent stable home seemed to be the factor underlying their success moving forward.

In the beginning, New Hope Housing found it difficult to convince local housing director Margie Bingham that the city needed to build SRO housing. In 1993 the *Houston Chronicle* reported she countered this argument, saying, "[The housing department] has no empirical data to issue a letter declaring a specific need for new construction of affordable housing," and that the city was more focused on rehabilitating housing over new construction. However, rehabilitation cost more than constructing a new building by nearly $5,000 per unit.[5]

Ultimately, New Hope Housing did not receive the federal funding it needed to start building the first SRO. In its application seeking funds for construction, the organization's proposal reported "an annual $50,000 operating deficit" with no funding source to cover such a loss, making it a risky venture.[6] Working closely with Christ Church Cathedral, New Hope overcame the operating deficit before reapplying by using the $1.25 million raised by Christ Church for community solutions.

Those private funds enabled New Hope Housing to break ground on its first project, Hamilton Street Residence, in 1994 and build its first forty units of SROs. The funds were also used to hire New Hope's first employee, Joy Horak-Brown, as part-time executive director. The organization then broke away from the church and started operating as its own board-governed nonprofit, becoming Houston's first SRO housing developer.[7]

After demonstrating capacity with the first forty units at Hamilton Street Residence, New Hope Housing successfully

A resident and staff member of New Hope Housing Perry enjoy cooking in the community kitchen, where they have access to stovetops and ovens.

Preston Roe, president of the Greater OST-South Union Super Neighborhood and long-time Houston civic leader, was joined by Paulette Wagner, former division manager of the City of Houston Housing & Community Development Department, at the ground breaking for New Hope Housing Reed in 2016.

reapplied and received federal funding from the City of Houston. This helped New Hope expand Hamilton in 1997 and again in 1998, ultimately making it a 129-unit SRO. It was at this time that New Hope established its debt-free business model that has prevented the organization from going into debt, enabling it to keep rents low and manageable for modest- to low-income individuals and families. The nonprofit adopted this business model intentionally because, as Cassier-Mason explains, "If you're a nonprofit that doesn't earn much money, and your primary revenue-generating income source is through rent, the only way to pay off debt is to charge higher rents," which runs counter to New Hope's mission to provide affordable permanent housing. Thus, a sustainable model aimed at serving Houston's most vulnerable citizens requires the organization to remain debt-free.[8]

The debt-free model relies heavily on a combination of public and private partnerships, which includes tax credit financing and enables New Hope Housing to direct ninety cents of every dollar donated to housing plus services.[9] The majority of New Hope's developments also have secured the Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED) certification that ensures its buildings are environmentally conscious. This energy efficiency helps keep building operating costs low, which in turn helps the organization maintain its rents well below the market rate. The result of New Hope's multi-faceted approach allows the rental revenue stream of each of its properties to support its own operations in addition to a long-term maintenance reserve. Therefore, fundraising efforts can focus on new capital projects, resident services, and corporate office operations.

When the first forty SRO units at Hamilton Street Residence opened in April of 1995, then mayor Bob Lanier contended that in the next fifteen years, "Houston will be a national leader in helping homeless residents…get their lives back on track." The Hamilton property served over 1,800 people before New Hope Housing sold the land to the Houston Baseball Partners for Minute Maid Park in 2016. Leslie Friedman, New Hope's communications manager, pointed out, "With Hamilton, New Hope Housing established what has been recognized as Texas's model for supportive SRO housing."[10]

NEW HOPE HOUSING EXPANDS

The relationship between Christ Church Cathedral and New Hope Housing has remained strong over the years. Christ Church has donated money to the nonprofit, while church members have performed volunteer work and conducted Bible studies. Since its inception, New Hope has created more than 1,000 SRO units and 187 units for vulnerable families with children, serving over 9,500 people and shining a light on a sustainable solution to help those in need of adequate housing.[11]

During construction of the Hamilton Street Residence, the plight of those who lacked a stable home environment continued to grow. Although outside observers might ask why these people do not get a job, the situation is not that simple. Friedman indicated, "A lot of them come from a background where they have never worked or had any education. Or they've had drug problems, or they have mental health challenges, so they aren't able to function in a workplace environment." Other reasons may include family instability, domestic violence, emotional or physical abuse, or being cast out of their home. Once they have a permanent place to call home, however, a new chapter toward creating a stable, successful life can begin anew. "Housing is really just your foot in the door. It takes a lot more than a roof and four walls to help you address the issues that have gotten you into the situation you're in," Cassier-Mason explained.[12]

When called upon by the City of Houston in response to Hurricane Harvey, New Hope Housing transformed an abandoned homeless shelter into The Residences on Emancipation, temporary housing for hundreds displaced by the storm. Joy Horak-Brown personally welcomed many who sought shelter there.

HouTex Inn on the Gulf Freeway, I-45, prior to its development as New Hope Housing Brays Crossing.

The façade at New Hope Housing Brays Crossing incorporates an extensive public art display by Chicana artist Carmen Lomas Garza.

New Hope Housing stands out among residential options for the disadvantaged because its goal is to give people a permanent home in contrast to shelters that provide temporary or transitional spaces for a finite period of time. Rev. Taylor said in 1995, "It's absolutely crucial that as a community we find our way to a philosophy that says the end objective here is to get those homeless who are prepared to make that step into permanent or at least transitional or supportive housing so we're not just recycling people through the shelters and then through the streets."[13]

Over its twenty-seven-year history, New Hope Housing has expanded by constructing new buildings and renovating others. Its fully-furnished SRO apartment units include free utilities and access to cable TV, refrigerator, microwave, and a private bath. The majority of their properties' community areas offer internet, computer access, kitchens, libraries, and spaces to socialize. Creating spaces inside and outside the buildings that draw residents out of their rooms and encourage them to interact with each other is another key principle of New Hope's philosophy to help them reacclimate to society. In coordination with other community services, New Hope can assist with education, job preparedness skills, and accessing healthcare.[14]

Following the opening of its Hamilton Street Residence, New Hope Housing opened more locations in the downtown and near-downtown area. In the East End, just a block from the original Ninfa's Mexican restaurant, the Canal location opened with 134 units in 2005, the same year East End Chamber of Commerce gave the Amigo Award to New Hope for being a pioneer in SRO housing.[15]

In 2010 New Hope Housing opened two newly renovated properties to house more residents. The Brays Crossing location opened after architect Ernesto L. Maldonado, AIA, designed the renovation of the HouTex Inn on the Gulf Freeway. The inn originally housed NASA contractors before it changed hands several times and became a certified public nuisance. The city approached New Hope about repurposing the property. Seeing an opportunity to house more Houstonians, the organization converted the motel into a 149-unit SRO, which features a distinctive steel mural on the exterior by Chicana artist Carmen Lomas Garza.

Like Brays Crossing, New Hope Housing's Congress location reopened in 2010 with fifty-seven SRO units after architect Val Glitsch designed its renovation. The property was originally the Del May Hotel built in the 1920s until falling into disrepair in the 1990s. In 1998 the Downtown Management District purchased the building and turned it into SRO housing. New Hope assumed governance in 2002, operated it for a short time as SRO housing, and then closed it in 2008 for extensive redevelopment.

The newly constructed Sakowitz location, with its extensive outdoor space, also opened in 2010 and became the first LEED certified "green" affordable multi-unit housing development in Texas. With 166 units of SRO housing, Sakowitz is located in Houston's historic Fifth Ward.

The Perry location opened in 2012 with 160 SRO units.

At New Hope Housing Reed, Evette found a home that offers a safe community where her boys can play with other children their age.

Former New Hope Housing board chairman Mack Fowler, left, celebrates at the Harrisburg grand opening with Sheriff Ed Gonzalez, NHH board member and former Houston City Council member Melissa Noriega, East End civic leader Jessica Hulsey, and Commissioner Adrian Garcia.

Prior to the building's construction, two elms and signage on the property had to be removed, so architect Glitsch repurposed the trees as furniture and refurbished the metal signs to hang in the lobby. Incorporating the trees and the sign into the new homes reflects New Hope Housing's commitment to the community, responsible land use, and sustainability.

In 2014 the Rittenhouse location became home to 160 SRO units. Rittenhouse greets its residents and guests with a park atmosphere around the property, which has a stand of mature oak trees, prairie grasses, and a garden. In addition, the entry features stained glass panels by local artist Kim Clark Renteria.

While New Hope Housing had historically focused on serving individuals through SRO housing, most recently, it opened its Reed location. The Reed development includes 187 units on a seven-acre site. It is the organization's "first supportive housing property serving vulnerable families with children" offering furnished one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments with fully equipped kitchens. For families like Evette's this is critical. Research shows that children in low-income households who live in affordable housing score better on cognitive development tests than those in households with unaffordable rents. This is partly because parents in affordable housing can invest more in activities and materials that support their children's development.[16]

While the Hamilton Street Residence was a crucial cornerstone of New Hope Housing's model for SRO buildings, Houston's first SRO raised discussions about the costs of maintaining the Hamilton Street location. It was in dire need of renovation. At the end of the day, Friedman noted, "New Hope's general contractor advised it would be more cost-effective to demolish and build a new property." As a marvelous confluence of interests, at the same time the organization was considering a renovation, New Hope received an offer from the Houston Baseball Partners to purchase the Hamilton location and, in turn, to contribute toward constructing a new affordable housing property nearby. This led to New Hope's Harrisburg location, which opened in 2018 in the historic East End neighborhood. It offers 175 SRO units and is home to New Hope's corporate offices.[17]

THE NEXT CHAPTER

Today, those served by New Hope represent a broad spectrum of Houstonians: 80 percent have incomes under $10,000 a year, 70 percent have a disability, 65 percent have been homeless at some point in their lives, 25 percent are elderly, 20 percent are working poor, and 10 percent are veterans.[18]

New Hope Housing provides a steppingstone towards stability in people's lives. A stable home is more than just a place to call your own; it offers a place to build relationships and foster hope, where people are nurtured and grow in difficult times. New Hope found a way to create a sustainable financial model to be a pioneer for SRO housing in Texas, housing residents with compassion. In the fall of 2020, the nonprofit will open the 170-unit Dale Carnegie SRO development in Sharpstown. In the spring, it will break ground on the Avenue J property in the East End, which will have 100 one- and two-bedroom apartments to offer affordable housing to low-income working families. New Hope continues to provide a place to call home and a home-base community for its residents as part of the organization's commitment to sustainable, long-term solutions to the need for affordable housing.

Natalya Pomeroy recently graduated from the University of Houston with a bachelor's degree in English–Creative Writing. She has also written for the online magazine *Study Breaks* and worked with *Gulf Coast Literary Journal*.

Houston's Oldest House Gets a New Life

By Ginger Berni

The exterior of the newly renovated Kellum-Noble House in 2019.

All photos courtesy of The Heritage Society unless otherwise noted.

Those familiar with Houston history may be able to tell you that the oldest house in the city still standing on its original property is the 1847 Kellum-Noble House in Sam Houston Park. Although owned by the City of Houston, The Heritage Society (THS), a non-profit organization, has maintained the home for the past sixty-five years. Recently, THS completed phase two of an ambitious three-phased project to stabilize the building's foundation and address the significant cracks in the brick walls. Its story, however, goes much deeper than the bricks that make up the building.

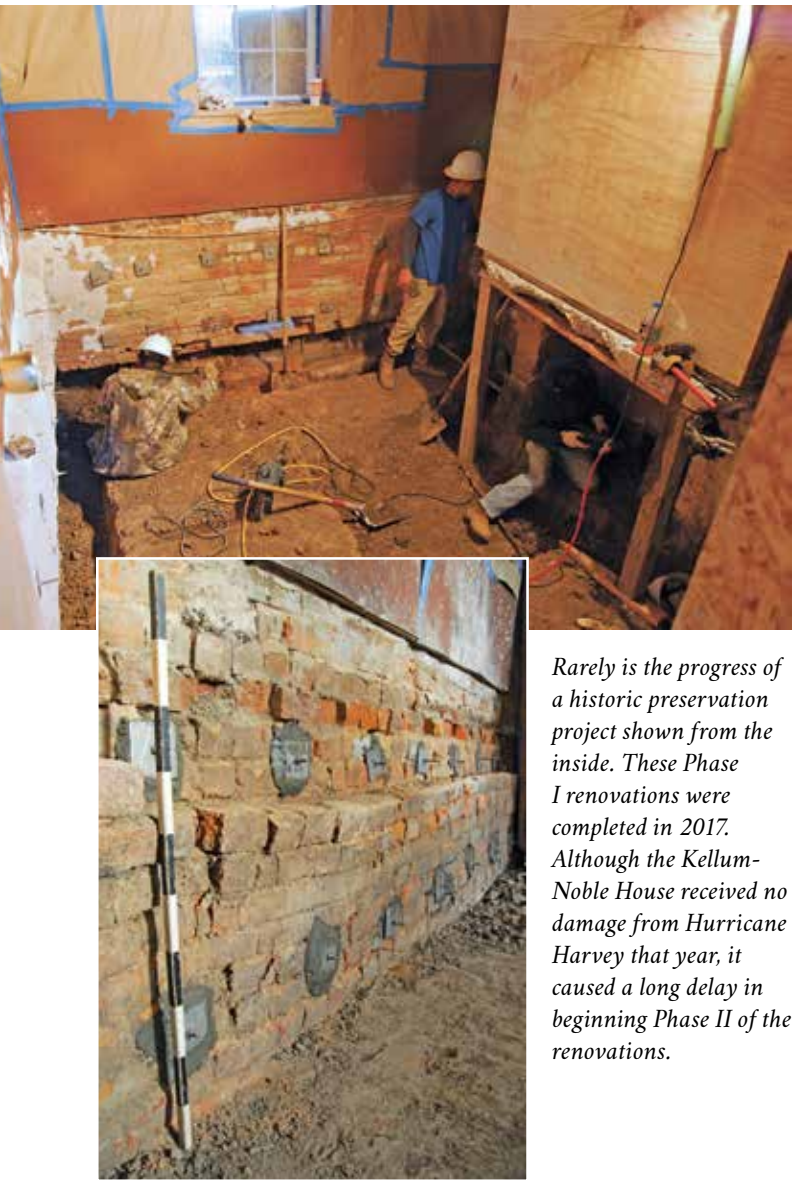
The restored parlor in the Kellum-Noble house, 2019.

The narratives used to interpret the house have changed over time, with certain details of its history emphasized, while others were largely ignored. Like many historic house museums, Kellum-Noble featured traditional antique furnishings for a parlor, dining room, office, and bedrooms, while a tour guide explained to visitors the significance of the building. Emphasis was often placed on discussing Sam Houston simply because he knew the original owner, Nathaniel Kellum, and Houston's descendants had donated some of the featured collections. Yet the importance of Zerviah Noble's efforts to educate local Houstonians, first using the house as a private school, then as one of its first public schools, was not communicated through the home's furnishings. Perhaps most importantly, any discussion of the enslaved African Americans owned by the Kellums and the Nobles was noticeably absent — a practice that is not uncommon in historic house museums throughout the country and particularly in the South.

In the twentieth century, both national and local trends had a direct impact on the Kellum-Noble House. Advocates of the City Beautiful Movement influenced the mayor to purchase the property to establish the city's first municipal park, Sam Houston Park, in 1899. Supporters like Emma Richardson Cherry pleaded with city leaders to keep the home as part of the park. As Houston grew, its freeways, skyscrapers, and parking lots began to surround and diminish the structure.

At the same time, the nation's preservation movement gained momentum, and a handful of Houstonians saw value in the city's aging historic structures and worked again to save the house from demolition. The Kellum-Noble House was initially preserved in 1954 because it was one of the city's last few "relics" of the mid-nineteenth century, but a deeper look into the home's long history tells a complex story. Thanks to The Heritage Society's nearly $1.8 million investment, the historic brick home is stabilized, and its story will continue to be told.

The story begins in May of 1837, when William N. Mock purchased an eight-acre tract of land from brothers John Kirby and Augustus Allen, founders of the city of Houston. Following several other transactions, the property was sold with improvements at public auction in March of 1843 to Thomas M. Bagby. Less than a year later, Bagby sold these premises for $500 to Nathaniel K. Kellum, who had been renting the property. Nathaniel Kellum was born in Virginia, raised in Mississippi, and moved to Houston in 1839 at the age of twenty-seven. An industrious man, he operated a brickyard, lime vats for making mortar and plaster, an iron foundry, a sawmill, and a tannery for leather. Kellum is credited with the construction of several commercial buildings in Houston. In 1843, he married fifteen-year-old Elmyra Cotton of Mississippi.



Rarely is the progress of a historic preservation project shown from the inside. These Phase I renovations were completed in 2017. Although the Kellum-Noble House received no damage from Hurricane Harvey that year, it caused a long delay in beginning Phase II of the renovations.

After expanding his property to thirteen acres, Kellum began building a spacious, two-story house for his growing family in March of 1847. The building, known today as the Kellum-Noble House, was made of bricks from his own brickyard with clay from nearby Buffalo Bayou. Kellum hired Francis McHugh to oversee construction of his house and paid him $150 for "brick labor" and $113 for "plastering same." Antebellum brick operations in Houston, such as Kellum's, commonly employed white brick layers who would oversee slave labor. Nathaniel Kellum himself likely owned some of the enslaved African American men who were filling molds and firing the kiln to create the 35,000 bricks that make up this home. It is difficult to know the names of those who had a hand in constructing Kellum's house due to the way records were kept at that time. He not only bought and sold slaves but also engaged in a common practice in urban areas of "hiring out" or renting slaves on a temporary basis to fulfill his need for labor.

After construction of the home was completed in March of 1848, Kellum and McHugh had a falling out, and McHugh filed a lawsuit against Kellum for unpaid work. Later the next year, Kellum and his family, which included three young sons, Robert, Nathaniel Jr., and Ruthven, moved to Grimes County to open a health resort. He divested himself of many of his assets in Houston, including a twenty-four-year-old slave named Benjamin, and left the property and home in the hands of Benjamin A. Shepherd, a local banker. Although Shepherd actually purchased the property himself on May 10, 1850, he did not live there.

Shepherd sold the Kellum house and land in 1851 to Abram W. Noble, who put up his slaves as collateral for a $2,000 loan. Their names and estimated ages were recorded as "Frank (36), Willis (26), 'Doc' or Ambrose (28), Mary (22) and her children, Sam (3) and Jake (2 months), and Harriet (14) also a child of Mary." It was not uncommon in business agreements between private individuals to use slaves as security against borrowed money. The details of the loan explain what would happen to the slaves if the Nobles were to default, including having Frank, Willis, and Doc work off some of the debt owed. Although Abram failed to make the agreed upon payments, his wife Zerviah, through her own means, made several payments to Shepherd. In 1860, the Nobles had nine slaves, and at least one separate slave house stood on the property. Five white male laborers also lived on the Noble property, likely providing additional income as boarders who also worked in the brickyard.

The Noble family included Abram's five children by his first marriage and his wife Zerviah's teenage daughter by her first marriage. For several weeks at the start of 1851, the local newspaper ran an advertisement for a new school to be run by "Mrs. Z. M. Noble" and her daughter, "Miss C. A. Kelley." They offered to teach young girls and boys in the

The Noble family in front of their home, circa 1890. Two features differ significantly from the house's twentieth-century appearance: The roof is clad in standing seam metal with a half-round gutter, and the columns are more numerous and configured differently than today. Closer inspection reveals a slightly different balustrade and a different pair of doors on the primary façade upstairs.

Photo courtesy of The Heritage Society Permanent Collection Gift of Barry Moore.

"large, airy and commodious house." Instruction included "various branches of an English education, with Drawing, Painting, Worsted Embroidery and Music, if required." Houston had not yet established a public-school system, so children often received their education from private teachers in private homes. Zerviah Noble had come from Connecticut to Texas with her first husband around 1841. Educated at Bacon Academy, she had been a teacher in her home state before moving away.

The Noble marriage was a rocky one. Zerviah filed a writ of injunction in 1862 to prohibit Abram from disposing of any of their community assets. She claimed that it was through her efforts and her widow's means that they acquired the property. Abram and Zerviah divorced in 1865 after she accused him of having two adulterous relationships. The divorce petition filed by Zerviah lists her separate property as "the Kellum place (valued at $4000), Negro boy George ($800), two drays ($120), a horse and buggy ($300), and six cows ($120)." The community property included "interest in the Baker and Thompson sawmill on the San Jacinto River ($6000), steamboat Experiment and furniture ($1000), Negro boy John ($800), furniture and utensils ($275), cattle stock ($500), and other personal property ($500)." Zerviah and her daughter Catherine Kelley retained the house and land, having paid off the debt owed to Shepherd. The final settlement awarded the community property to Abram. He then moved to Kaufman County, married his nephew's widow and had seven more children. Catherine Kelley married Alexander Szabo in 1860 and gave birth to a daughter, Eloise, in 1862. Sadly, Catherine died in childbirth in January of 1866 and her infant daughter Kate died about three months later. Zerviah once again took up parenting and raised Eloise herself.

The post-Civil War, Reconstruction government of Texas introduced statewide public education for the first time in 1871, and Zerviah, now divorced, brought her private school into the new system. In the fall of 1872, thirty-six students were enrolled in the school with classes held downstairs while the family lived upstairs. Those first public schools struggled financially and were eventually reorganized after a new state constitution adopted in 1876. Zerviah signed a contract with the superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of Texas to conduct a school in her home. On October 4, 1877, classes opened in fourteen different locations throughout the city, including Zerviah's residence, now called The Fourth Ward School. She provided first and second grade classes for sixty-three students and a newspaper article stated, "This school house is beautifully situated on Dallas Street with a large playground and other modern school conveniences." In order to accommodate the larger classes, there were indications that a separate building was erected on the Noble property during these years.

Meanwhile, at least one of the Noble's former slaves, Doc(k) Noble, continued to live in Houston after emancipation. He married a woman named Eliza, who worked as a domestic servant. By 1870, the couple, who both hailed from Maryland, had three children – Ambrose (6), Rebecca (3) and Benjamin (2). Over the next ten years, they had five additional children, Daniel, William, Ellen, Sarah, and Josephine, and also seemed to be reunited with an older daughter,

Mary, who was disabled, according to the 1880 Federal Census. Houston City Directories from the late 1870s and 1880s show Doc(k) and Ambrose with various employers, including a blacksmith shop and cotton press. Doc(k) and several members of his family are buried in College Memorial Park Cemetery.

Zerviah's only granddaughter, Eloise Szabo, continued in her grandmother's footsteps and became a school teacher and principal. After Zerviah's death in 1894, Eloise and her husband, Otto Witte, continued to live in the Kellum-Noble House. By this time, Houston's population had grown to around 40,000, and social reformers nationwide began to promote an idea known as the City Beautiful Movement. They believed society's problems would be solved by creating more beautified cities that would inspire civic loyalty and improve morality. Houstonians embraced the movement; and, in 1899, under the leadership of Mayor Sam Brashear, the city acquired the Kellum-Noble property to establish its first municipal park. The Wittes sold the property and the home, which was retained as the Parks Department headquarters, for $14,000.

While in the hands of the Parks Department, the home experienced numerous changes and was used for a variety of purposes. For a brief period, the immediate surroundings housed the city's first zoo. It started somewhat organically when Houstonians began donating animals to populate their new city park. Animals included a pair of wolves named King and Queen, numerous assorted birds and small mammals in cages, an alligator, a few jaguars, and even a bear cub. A zookeeper from the Bronx, Henry McLiver, was hired as the caretaker.

When J. B. Marmion took over as City Parks director, he could not justify the expense of a zoo and convinced Houston City Council to close it down in 1905. A handful

A bear cub at the zoo at Sam Houston Park, 1903.

This photograph, showing the enclosed balcony on the back of the house, and its architectural drawing were part of the Historic American Buildings Survey from 1936. During the time the Kellum-Noble House (called the "Shelter House") was surveyed, it served as the Parks Department headquarters.

Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, Shelter House, 1936, Houston, Texas.

of animals remained in the pond including swans, ducks, geese, and roughly 1,000 goldfish. According to the Report of the Park Superintendent in 1913, "The old mansion, used as an office, comfort-station, tool house and residence for the park keeper, was overhauled during the fall…the gallery repaired; a new concrete floor was put in the south room, the walls tinted, the woodwork painted and the outside was whitewashed. Flower beds have been made around the old mansion and vines will be used to cover the bare walls during the summer. A new electric lamp was placed on the front gallery where it was much needed."

In 1936, the home was documented for the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), a Depression-era program that put to work thousands of unemployed architects, draftsmen, and photographers documenting America's historic buildings. The architectural drawings of Kellum-Noble capture many of the changes made to the building in the early twentieth century. Perhaps most notably, the two-story porch on the back side of the home had been enclosed with clapboard wood siding, and several columns were removed. Only an exterior stair on this enclosed rear porch was recorded and no interior stairs were noted. Yet, according to Zerviah Noble's great-granddaughter, who was born in the house in 1893, there had indeed been a stairway inside the home in the entry hall.

The Kellum-Noble House continued to be used as a storage facility by the Parks Department for many years. As the park system expanded to include more and larger green spaces like Hermann and Memorial Parks, Sam Houston Park became less utilized. Then in 1951 the city developed plans for an elevated freeway loop to encircle the downtown area and further diminish the park. The neglected structure deteriorated, and in 1954 the city announced plans to demolish the Kellum-Noble House. A group of concerned

Dozens of HAS members worked in coordination with the Texas Historical Commission to uncover artifacts found below and around the Kellum-Noble House.

citizens, who realized its historic value, created the Harris County Heritage and Conservation Society to raise funds for its preservation and restoration. This work was made more difficult after a fire caused extensive damage to the roof and floors on the southwest side of the building. Still, noted architect Harvin Moore worked to return the home to its original state. With no photographs for reference, they used the Historic American Buildings survey drawings along with a basic understanding of nineteenth-century building construction to guide their decision making. Consequently, the stairs remained on the exterior.

Late in 2014, the organization, now called The Heritage Society, began its most significant and costly restoration project to date with the goal of stabilizing the building's foundation. Much of the work, which included masonry repair and replacement of cracked bricks, installation of a central HVAC system, electrical rerouting underground, interior plaster repair, attic insulation, a new roof, interior tie-rods for added support, and installation of ADA ramps, is complete. Long after the 1950s renovations, a photograph of the Kellum-Noble House taken in about 1890 was uncovered, which helped to guide the twenty-first century renovations.

During this project, the floors were carefully taken up and stored and twentieth-century subflooring was removed. With great surprise and delight, artifacts were found in the dirt underneath, and the Houston Archeological Society

Artifacts uncovered during the dig.

(HAS) was notified. Over a two-month period, dozens of HAS members, in coordination with the Texas Historical Commission, worked tirelessly to extract hundreds of items including marbles, porcelain dishware, buttons, bottles, slate tablet fragments, and even an intact inkwell. Many of these artifacts are now on display in the home, along with panels that tell the entire span of the home's history.

THS continues to raise funds to complete the restoration project. The remaining scope of work is based on a recommendation from the structural engineer to replace all existing columns, and the second-floor porch and stairs due to corrosion of the steel framing inside the columns as well as wood rot and termite damage. For now, the oldest house in Houston still on its original property looks better than ever, welcoming the public for tours and special events.[1]

Ginger Berni is a native Houstonian who works as the Collections Curator at The Heritage Society in downtown Houston. She holds a bachelor's degree in history from The University of Texas at Austin and a master's degree in public history from the University of South Carolina.

House tours are conducted at The Heritage Society on Tuesdays through Saturdays: 10:00, 11:30, 1:00 and 2:30; Sundays: 1:00, 2:30, and 4:00. Visit www.heritagesociety.org.

Sakowitz: A Legend in Houston Retail

By Johnny Zapata

This story begins in 1886, thousands of miles away in the Ukrainian town of Korostyshiv in the Russian Empire, when Leebe Shaikovich, like many others before and after him, left his family behind to immigrate to the United States. His arrival exemplified the changing immigration patterns at the end of the nineteenth century, when newcomers from Southern and Eastern Europe increased. Comprised mostly of Catholic and Jewish immigrants, this new wave followed the earlier one generally made up of Protestants from Northern Europe. Like many among the huddled masses that boarded ships in the Old World bound for the New World, Leebe's name was changed when officials processed him on arrival in New York City. Because the immigration officer could not read Cyrillic Russian, he invented the name Louis Sakowitz — the name Leebe would be known by in America.[1]

Before long, Louis was "proselyted" in New York by a group soliciting immigrants to come to Galveston, Texas. Not only was Galveston the "Pearl of the Gulf Coast" with a bustling economy, it also had a synagogue. Thus enthused, Louis boarded yet another ship, this time headed for Texas. Robert Sakowitz recalls his grandfather Tobias saying that his father and brother Samuel came to America first and worked as peddlers, before Louis sent for his wife, Leah, and their other children: Simon, Rebecca, and Tobias.[2] Upon landing at the Port of Galveston, the Sakowitz family could not imagine the impact that they and their descendants would have on their new home.

Tobias Sakowitz (seated) helped establish the family business. His son Bernard (left) and grandson Robert (right) carried on the retail legacy.

Photo courtesy of Robert Sakowitz.

Immigrants commonly recall the first years in a new place as extremely difficult. Many have unfavorable living arrangements that include living in multifamily households. They work odd jobs that they would have never done back home or depend on assistance from fellow immigrants to make ends meet. Others simply give up and return home, disillusioned by the empty promise of the American dream. The Sakowitz family initially followed a similar trajectory. For example, Louis peddled bananas for some time; in Galveston he worked in the city's cotton mills, but due to physical difficulties, he left the job and returned to peddling.[3] Later, hoping to settle in an area with other Jewish families, Louis used his family's savings to buy property on the mainland and relocated to a Jewish community in Dickinson, Texas. Yet due to financial issues, the commune failed; things were so bad that at one point all they had to eat were sweet potatoes. With money Leah obtained pawning her prized candlesticks, the family was able to return to Galveston.

In Galveston, Louis and his son Samuel opened a small store near the Galveston Wharves; Simon and Tobias worked in other stores around the city. While they worked, they lived at home and paid their mother room and board. Rather than using it to live on, Leah set aside this money until her sons were ready to go into business.[4] Finally, in 1902 they opened the first Sakowitz Brothers store in Galveston at 2113 Market Street, kick-starting what would be nearly nine decades of business. As the store prospered, Sakowitz Brothers expanded into a booming Houston, opening its first Houston store in 1911 at 308 Main Street, near the corner of Preston and Main.[5] While Simon tended to the smaller Houston store, Tobias ran the larger Galveston operation.

As the Sakowitz family established roots in their new country, they welcomed newborns and sadly lost other loved ones. In 1915 Leah passed away, followed by Louis a few

Sakowitz opened its first family-owned department store site in 1951. The Art Moderne store at Main and Dallas, designed by architect Alfred C. Finn, became an iconic landmark for upscale Houston shoppers until it closed in 1990. Today, the building remains as a parking garage.

Photo courtesy of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library, Alfred C. Finn Collection, MSS0019-1538.

Tobias Sakowitz (left) and Simon Sakowitz (right) operated the first Sakowitz Brothers store in Galveston from 1902 to 1915.

Photo courtesy of Robert Sakowitz.

years later in 1919. Both Sakowitz brothers married and began families of their own. Tobias married Matilda Littman of Galveston and had two sons, Alexander and Bernard. Simon married Clara Bowsky of New Orleans and had two daughters.[6] Their sister Rebecca married Max Henry Nathan, who was in the menswear business as well, and they too had two children. Additionally, Rebecca became involved in Houston civic life and helped found the Houston Humane Society. All three of them left Galveston and relocated to Houston. Their eldest brother, Samuel, also married but stayed in Galveston, where he passed away in 1926 at the age of fifty.

The 1900 Storm is seen as a turning point in the region's history as Galveston was decimated and the intense rebuilding process began. Houston, by comparison, survived the storm relatively unscathed. When the stronger 1915 Storm hit, Galveston was better prepared with a new seawall and a higher elevation. Nevertheless, this storm also caused the city extensive damage and reinforced the economic migration already happening from Galveston Island to its rapidly expanding neighbor on the mainland.

Feeling that Galveston was not going to reclaim its prominence, and that Houston's growth provided greater economic opportunity, the Sakowitz brothers closed the Galveston store after the 1915 Storm. Sakowitz consolidated the Galveston and Houston operations into a single, larger store in 1917, occupying three floors at a new location at the corner of Main and Preston in the Kiam Building, named for Ed Kiam, the building's former owner, who previously ran a men's clothing store at the location. Sakowitz Brothers remained there until 1929.[7] Though at this point Sakowitz Brothers still focused on selling men's apparel and had expanded into boys' clothing, it had several competitors around the city and had not yet grown into the large business most Houstonians remember. In 1927 they bought a piece of land on Main and Walker in hopes of building a new store at that location.

As Houston and its downtown area continued to boom, a battle emerged between civic leaders Jesse Jones and Ross Sterling as to how Houston should continue to develop — either north to south along Main Street or east to west following the bayou along Texas Avenue. To further his goals Jones decided to construct the Gulf Building on Main Street. Finished in 1929, it remained the tallest building in Houston for decades to come. Though Jones knew of the Sakowitz brothers' intention to build a new location on Main Street not far from his new building, he persuaded them to relocate to the Gulf Building instead by providing them with favorable leasing terms. The deal included five floors of space with furniture and fixtures included so that they could invest their money in inventory rather than furnishing the store. Even through the difficult economic times of the Great Depression, Sakowitz Brothers experienced considerable growth. It could be argued that the move to the Gulf Building, the favorable leasing terms that left them debt-free, and their new ability to extend credit lines to reputable clients going through hard times allowed Sakowitz Brothers to keep its doors open when many businesses around them closed permanently. Added to this was the fact that Houston was not affected by the Depression to the same extent as other cities, particularly those on the East Coast.

The new store with 60,000 square feet of space at Main and Rusk opened April 15, 1929, and kicked off with a grand fete that anticipated 25,000 in attendance. During this first day, no transactions were to be conducted; the sole purpose was to exhibit the new store to the city.[8] As guests walked into the store, they were welcomed by beautiful art deco chandeliers, tall columns, and glass showcases displaying the goods the store offered. A grand staircase led them from the main floor to the mezzanine and the other floors. The additional square footage featured new departments, many of

After closing the Galveston store, Sakowitz Brothers consolidated the Galveston and Houston operations, moving into the Kiam Building in 1917 and remaining there until 1929. Even though the store specialized in men's clothing, it also had a boys' department.

Photo courtesy of Robert Sakowitz.

Even though Sakowitz started as a men's clothing store, it expanded into a family store in 1929. The Main Street store that opened in 1951 dedicated a floor to women's needs in beautiful displays such as this one in the millinery department.

Photo courtesy of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library, Alfred C. Finn Collection, MSS0019-1578.

which were "leased operations" although they were all under the Sakowitz name. The store included a "shoe room" in the mezzanine, with the second floor dedicated to men's clothing, the third to women's apparel, and the fourth to boys'.[9]

Bernard Sakowitz remembered the retail space, saying, "It was a beautiful store, beautiful by design, so beautiful that even the articles in the newspapers…said it looked like a bank. It was so beautiful it didn't look like a store. People would be afraid to go into it because they would think the merchandise would have to be too expensive to support an institution that looked like that."[10] This image helped build Sakowitz's reputation as a store with high-end goods. Sakowitz Brothers continued to occupy the first five floors of the Gulf Building for more than two decades.[11]

Parallel to the store's growth and new-found recognition, a new generation of the Sakowitz family was born. Bernard, Tobias' son, married Ann Baum in 1933. Together they had two children, their daughter Lynn and their son Robert. As World War II broke out, Bernard enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Force and relocated the family to San Angelo, Texas, until the war ended, and they returned to Houston.

Both Robert and Lynn remember working at the Sakowitz store once they were old enough. Robert began working in the store from the age of nine and felt that being the boss's son he had to prove himself to other employees by giving 150% to everything he did.[12] In a *Vanity Fair* interview, Lynn recalled a memorable experience working as a salesgirl in the pre-teen department, "'How do you think it looks?' this girl asked me after she tried something on in the dressing room. I thought, 'Should I lie and make the sale, or tell her the truth?' I said, 'It doesn't do anything for you.' Then I brought out some things, and she loved them, and then people started to come and ask for me. I learned then that being honest and truthful was the way to go."[13] These early experiences gave the siblings an appreciation and sense of responsibility for the business they would later inherit.

In 1949 the Sakowitz family's decades-long dream of having their own department store building was consummated with the groundbreaking of their new downtown location. After two years of construction Sakowitz moved to its new building on the corner of Main and Dallas in February 1951. The spacious 225,000-square-foot Art Moderne style store became the symbol of high-end fashion in the city, and the Sakowitz organization took over the previously leased departments like shoes, millinery, and women's apparel. The five-story building was designed by Alfred C. Finn, the same man who designed the Gulf Building and many of Jesse Jones's projects. Its marble-clad exterior was only a teaser to what lay inside, "a shoe department with a mural depicting exuberant tropicals worthy of Palm Beach; an epicure counter brimming with delicacies, most notably boxes of luscious Sakowitz chocolates; the intimate apparel shop stocking lingerie and corsets; a bridal salon arrayed like a theater set; the accessory bar for mid-century Lucite and leather handbags; the Coronet Shop for fine ladies' sportswear; an oak-paneled Red Coach Room for gentlemen's accoutrements; a fabric shop boasting the latest textiles and Vogue and McCall's patterns; and a toy shop with its own Tom Thumb Theatre for screening kiddie films while parents shopped."[14]

These fresh and unique offerings reflected Bernard's new

The exterior of Sakowitz stores were impressive, but the interior ambiance and offerings drew customers there to shop. One of the most popular areas included the Tastemaker Shop, adorned with a soaring mural and offering items such as specialty chocolates.

Photo courtesy of Robert Sakowitz.

strategy of sending out questionnaires to charge account customers asking their opinion on what goods and experiences Sakowitz should provide at its new store.[15] The store with its open spaces, Gulf Coast colonial style Sky Terrace restaurant, and lavish decorations, yet with a minimalistic look, helped the shopper feel right at home. Clients did not just visit the store to buy but to live the Sakowitz shopping experience. As consumerism grew during the post-war decades, demand for higher end products increased with the growth of the city, and the 1111 Main Street location became the flagship store of a growing retail empire.

In 1956 Sakowitz opened its second location as one of the anchor stores at the newly built Gulfgate Mall in southeast Houston, the largest shopping center in the region at the time. The following year Bernard became president of the business, and under his leadership the store expanded to other locations around the city, including the colonial-style Sakowitz store at the corner of Westheimer and Post Oak. Opened in 1959, the store made Sakowitz the first retailer to open in an area that became the heart of Houston's retail industry with the addition of the Galleria a decade later. These new stores followed the long-standing tradition of top merchandise and a first-class customer experience. Given the city's rapid expansion, the new customers were increasingly suburban. This spurred the opening of additional stores in areas far from the Houston downtown, such as locations at Nasa Road 1, Town & Country Village, and Champions Road, with smaller shops in the Shamrock Hilton and Four Seasons Hotels.

The Sky Terrace dining room, designed with a Gulf Coast Colonial flair, treated diners to periodic fashion shows and popular menu items. Some of the restaurant's recipes, like the shrimp salad, can still be found online.

Photo courtesy of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library, Alfred C. Finn Collection, MSS0019-1606.

Many family members accompanied young brides to the Bridal Salon, hoping to find the perfect dress for the perfect day. The store could also fulfill the needs of the entire wedding party. Although Sakowitz was a high-end store, it offered some dresses suitable to a middle-income budget as well.
Photo courtesy of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library, Alfred C. Finn Collection, MSS0019-1583.

In 1968, Bernard's son, Robert Sakowitz, became executive vice president and general merchandise manager, having launched the first top European designers boutiques in America. Acquiring White & Kirk, Sakowitz began operating its first out-of-town store in Amarillo, Texas, in 1969 and opened another in Scottsdale, Arizona, in 1974. Elected president in 1975, Robert continued the company's expansion to Dallas, Texas, in 1981; Midland, Texas, in 1982; and Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1984. Sakowitz extended its offerings and experiences such as fine fabrics, a fine wine department, the first ready-to-wear French and Italian couture in-store boutiques, themed annual festivals with imported goods and visits from world-renowned figures. It had extravagant seasonal catalogues, which offered such items as "The Gift of Knowledge" from celebrities, "The Gift of Health," and even a "life size replica of Rome's Trevi Fountain…plus being bathed in diamonds."[16]

The Houston economy remained heavily dependent on oil, and the city fell on hard times with an oil bust in the mid-1980s. The effects were deep and reverberated across every sector of the Houston economy, leading to more than 225,000 lost jobs, wide-spread foreclosures, and bank failures.[17] Given that Sakowitz had expanded into cities linked to the oil industry, such as Tulsa, Midland, and Amarillo, Sakowitz's sales in those locations also declined due to the oil bust. Robert Sakowitz explained, "One of the strategies we employed [in our expansion] was to follow the natural resource industry…We would go to places we thought were recession proof."[18]

The hard economic times, coupled with growing competition from other department stores and the banking concerns and failures in Texas, led the store to file for bankruptcy in 1985. An investment from Australian developer L. J. Hooker helped Sakowitz reorganize and emerge in 1987, consolidating with New York's Bonwit Teller and B. Altmann, but Wall Street 1989 crises forced L. J. Hooker to liquidate its entire $2.5 billion portfolio, including all the Sakowitz stores, in the summer of 1990.

In the words of an August 1990 *Houston Chronicle* article, "Sakowitz as Houstonians knew it ended a long time ago, but it officially ended last Saturday night, when the store at Westheimer and Post Oak shuttered its doors after the last day of the last sale. Look for the Red Dots for Special Bargains, the signs had said, but exactly where are Houstonians to look for new memories? What will replace the tea room's shrimp, chicken and fruit salad plate? The spicy little cheese straws? The turkey Mornay? Where will their college students cut their retail teeth during Christmas vacations? Where will the next generation of brides choose their dresses? And as grandmas, the christening dresses? Melancholy. That's how one employee described the mood. Not bitter. Not sweet. Just melancholy." [19]

Sakowitz no longer graces our shopping areas or the sheets of Houston newspapers where since the early 1900s, they placed daily ads. The downtown location on Main is now a white-marble parking garage. Although younger Houstonians may not know the Sakowitz name or understand the deep significance the stores held for those who shopped there in its heyday, it was the place where the earlier generations purchased their first tuxedos, their wedding dresses, their first high-end garments, or where they enjoyed dining at the Sky Terrace. For those Houstonians, they still carry fond memories of the store as a national fashion innovator and local cultural icon.

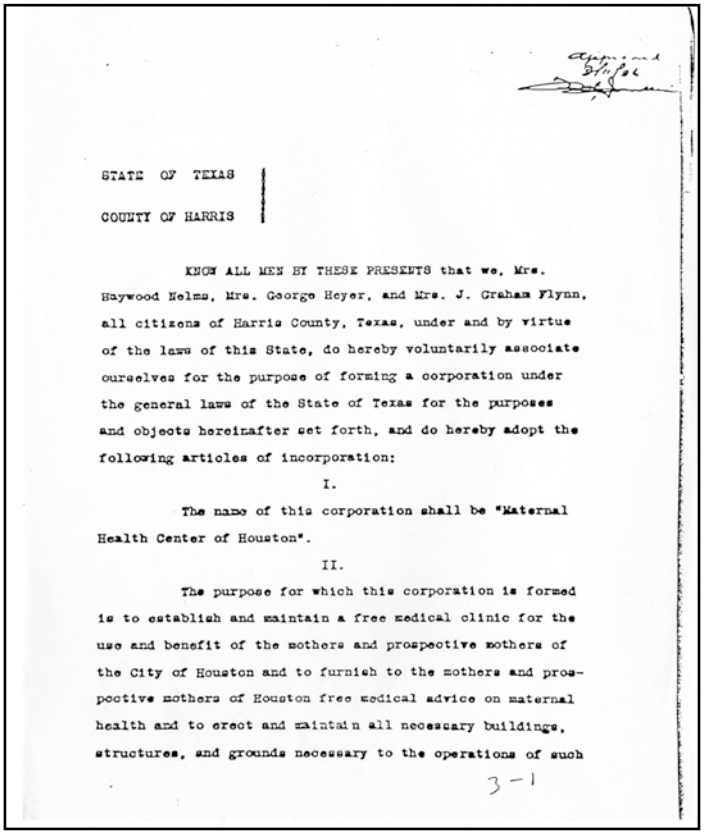
Johnny Zapata is a graduate of the University of Houston Honors College with degrees in political science, history, and Spanish. A former intern at *Houston History*, he was awarded a Fulbright to teach in Turkey for year and has received a Thomas R. Pickering Fellowship to attend graduate school upon his return.

Planned Parenthood of Houston and Southeast Texas: Providing Affordable Care and Education to the Houston Community

By Vince Lee

Little would the world, let alone the Houston community, know that life for Planned Parenthood of Houston and Southeast Texas would begin on February 20, 1936, as the Maternal Health Center of Houston. The organization's creation is recorded in a nondescript, brief, three-page Articles of Incorporation document issued by Harris County for the State of Texas, and archived in the Carey Shuart Women's Research Collection in Special Collections at the University of Houston Libraries. The name, Maternal Health Center of Houston, was chosen with intentional care to avoid arousing controversy or suspicion, whereas anything associated with the term "birth control" would have been deemed offensive and taboo. Interestingly, the signatories of the little-known document, Mrs. Haywood Nelms, Mrs. George Heyer, and Mrs. J. Graham Flynn, were all women, which was amazing for the time period.

Per Article II of the Articles of Incorporation, "the purpose for which this corporation is formed is to establish and maintain a free medical clinic for the use and benefit of the mothers and prospective mothers of the City of Houston and to furnish to the mothers and prospective mothers of Houston free medical advice on maternal health and to erect and maintain all necessary buildings, structures, and grounds necessary to the operations of such clinic, all of the corporation's activities to be of a charitable nature."[1] Even in the beginning, the language contained within the document showcased the hallmarks and attributes that defined the mission and vision of Planned Parenthood of Houston both locally and nationally in the coming years. Its initial board of directors consisted of twenty-six members, eighteen of whom were women from the Houston community. An impressive statistic as women comprised nearly 70 percent of the board.



STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF HARRIS

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS that we, Mrs. Haywood Nelms, Mrs. George Heyer, and Mrs. J. Graham Flynn, all citizens of Harris County, Texas, under and by virtue of the laws of this State, do hereby voluntarily associate ourselves for the purpose of forming a corporation under the general laws of the State of Texas for the purposes and objects hereinafter set forth, and do hereby adopt the following articles of incorporation:

I.

The name of this corporation shall be "Maternal Health Center of Houston".

II.

The purpose for which this corporation is formed is to establish and maintain a free medical clinic for the use and benefit of the mothers and prospective mothers of the City of Houston and to furnish to the mothers and prospective mothers of Houston free medical advice on maternal health and to erect and maintain all necessary buildings, structures, and grounds necessary to the operations of such

3-1

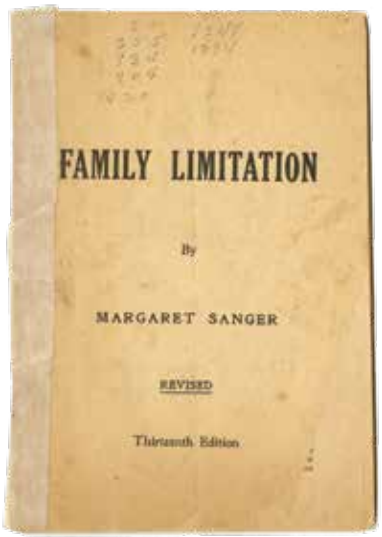
Articles of Incorporation for the Maternal Health Center of Houston, later to be known as Planned Parenthood of Houston, 1936.

Planned Parenthood pro-choice rally in Austin, Texas, 1989.
All photos courtesy of the Planned Parenthood of Houston and Southeast Texas Records, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.

Another interesting tidbit found in Article III of the Articles of Incorporation states that "The corporation shall exist for a period of fifty years from the date of filing of these articles of incorporation in the office of the Secretary of State of the State of Texas."[2] Whether fifty years was chosen as a nice round number that would ensure the organization's existence until something more permanent took hold in the future is debatable. What is not up for debate is that, since the organization's founding, it has persisted and con-

tinues to serve the Houston area thirty-four years beyond its stipulated time.

The history of Planned Parenthood of Houston cannot be discussed without including the history of Agnes Carter Nelms (1889-1967). Born in Barnum, Texas, she was the daughter of a wealthy East Texas lumberman, William Thomas Carter, who moved the family to Houston at the turn of the twentieth century. Although Agnes came from a family of wealth and privilege who ensured she was educated and well-traveled, as a young woman she performed social work in Houston communities, making her distinctly aware of the problems faced by poor women who could not afford the means of contraceptive choice and services available to the affluent.



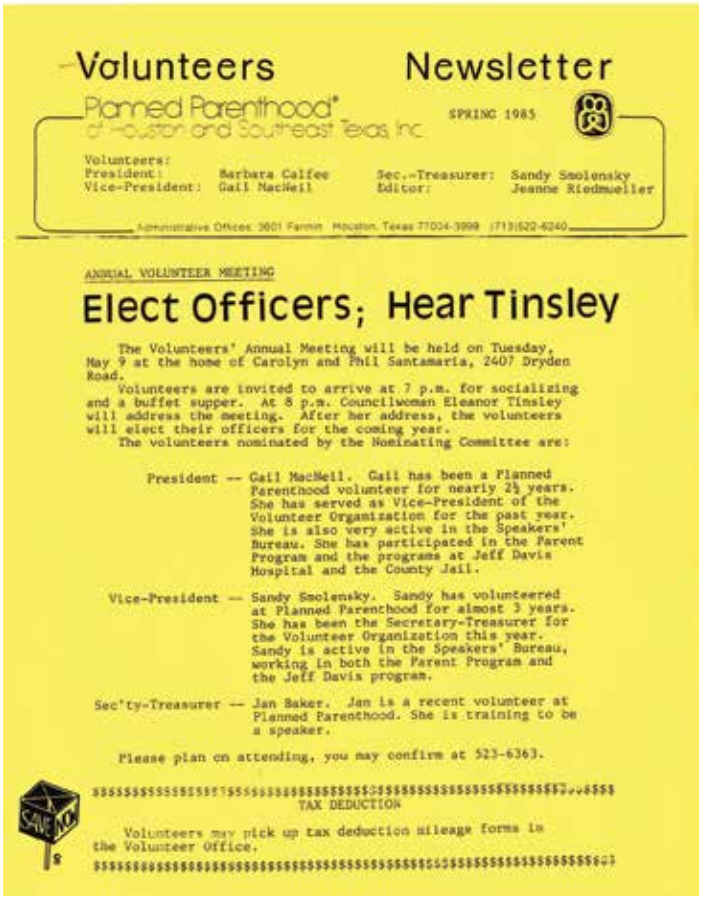
Family Limitation *pamphlet by Margaret Sanger, known as the "Mother of Birth Control," circa 1923.*

Well aware of the efforts and work of Margaret Sanger in the national birth control movement, Nelms wanted to bring that same advocacy to the local community. Serving as one of the first presidents of the Maternal Health Center of Houston from 1938 to 1941, she leveraged her connections with other prominent Houstonians (many of them women) to serve on the center's inaugural board of directors, while encouraging others to donate funds to underwrite many of the operating costs and services provided to women visiting the clinic.

As a result of her work, Agnes Carter Nelms became known as the "Margaret Sanger of Texas." She organized the Birth Control League of Texas, where eight additional Texas affiliates in Dallas, Fort Worth, Waco, Austin, San Antonio, San Angelo, El Paso, and Corpus Christi established their own Maternal Health Centers in addition to the one in Houston. Each affiliate operated autonomously but shared their information and best practices with each other. This network of affiliates formed the model later adopted by the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

In 1942 the Maternal Health Center of Houston became known as the Planned Parenthood Center of Houston following a name change by the National American Birth Control League to Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Indigent clients within Houston learned of the center and its services via word of mouth.

From a historical timeline created by Hanni Orton and Phyllis Van Kerrebrook, over a thirty-three-year span from 1935 to 1968, Planned Parenthood of Houston and Southeast Texas was the "only organization in Harris County that provided family planning services at low cost. Fees were 50 cents for service or supplies—if the patients could afford it, otherwise they were free."[3] Additional documents contained within the organization's archival collection include correspondence from the 1940s detailing Planned Parenthood's early fundraising drives to raise much-needed capital—with early targets of $47,000 and $50,000—to support the continued operations and services that Planned Parenthood of Houston provided to the community. In letters from the late 1970s and early 1980s, past president Phyllis Van Kerrebrook expressed growing concerns about the federal government cutting funding to entitlement programs such as Title XX (Family Planning) that would affect funds Planned Parenthood depended on to provide services to low-income individuals.


Volunteers Newsletter

Planned Parenthood® of Houston and Southeast Texas, Inc.

SPRING 1985

Volunteers:
President: Barbara Calfee
Vice-President: Gail MacNeil
Sec.-Treasurer: Sandy Smolensky
Editor: Jeanne Riedmueller

Administrative Offices: 3601 Fannin Houston, Texas 77004-3999 (713)522-6240

ANNUAL VOLUNTEER MEETING

Elect Officers; Hear Tinsley

The Volunteers' Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 9 at the home of Carolyn and Phil Santamaria, 2407 Dryden Road.

Volunteers are invited to arrive at 7 p.m. for socializing and a buffet supper. At 8 p.m. Councilwoman Eleanor Tinsley will address the meeting. After her address, the volunteers will elect their officers for the coming year.

The volunteers nominated by the Nominating Committee are:

President -- Gail MacNeil. Gail has been a Planned Parenthood volunteer for nearly 2½ years. She has served as Vice-President of the Volunteer Organization for the past year. She is also very active in the Speakers' Bureau. She has participated in the Parent Program and the programs at Jeff Davis Hospital and the County Jail.

Vice-President -- Sandy Smolensky. Sandy has volunteered at Planned Parenthood for almost 3 years. She has been the Secretary-Treasurer for the Volunteer Organization this year. Sandy is active in the Speakers' Bureau, working in both the Parent Program and the Jeff Davis program.

Sec'ty-Treasurer -- Jan Baker. Jan is a recent volunteer at Planned Parenthood. She is training to be a speaker.

Please plan on attending, you may confirm at 523-6363.

TAX DEDUCTION

Volunteers may pick up tax deduction mileage forms in the Volunteer Office.

Planned Parenthood of Houston volunteer newsletter, Spring 1985.

Other letters from the 1990s detail the prevalence of violence occurring at the clinics and expressed staff concerns about the media fueling the violence through miscommunication it spread about Planned Parenthood and its affiliated clinics. Finally, the collection contains letters of advocacy and support on behalf of the community for much-needed funds and for political lobbying within the U.S. Congress and the national Planned Parenthood organization itself.

In August of 1994, Planned Parenthood of Houston and Southeast Texas participated in a series of twenty-five oral history interviews to document its past. In many of these

Operation Rescue's blockade and demonstration outside the Planned Parenthood Center on Fannin, circa 1989.

interviews, the staff and administrators talked about the difficult and emotional experiences they went through with clients who came to Planned Parenthood and the traumatic experiences the clients shared with them.

What is interesting to note from one of the interviews is the fear that Planned Parenthood might go away in the future. However, the perception of one of the staff members, Kathleen Brown, during a 1995 interview indicated just the opposite for Planned Parenthood's future: "I mean, this is a place where we are always out on the front lines. As soon as a birth control method becomes available, we've got it. You know, you don't have to wait and get it . . . [I]n the future we may not be so regulated in terms of the fact that we only do GYN care. We may start doing a lot of stuff, and I think for us to be competitive, we'll have to do those sorts of things, and I see it growing and growing. I don't see Planned Parenthood ceasing to exist. I really don't."[4]

Planned Parenthood of Houston and Southeast Texas has benefitted from the spirit and activities of its organized volunteer corps in its education and outreach to the surrounding community. In a September 1979 letter from Phyllis Van Kerrebrook, for the volunteer newsletter of Planned Parenthood of Houston, she noted, "Many of the programs taken for granted today, speakers bureau, displays at certain functions, orientation, book sale, and many others, were initiated by the volunteer corps."[5]

Although volunteers remained an integral part of Planned Parenthood of Houston, assembling a team of professionals to supplement the work of the volunteers was equally important. In a June 1995 interview with Meryl Cohen, director of education for Planned Parenthood, she explained, "Between '87 and '95 the place really changed from a volunteer-based education to a real professional institution. We have a full-fledged training institute where we give continuing education credits for social workers, nurses, teachers, and therapists."[6] The systematic professionalization in how the organization operated during this period transformed not only its volunteer and educational programs but also how community members perceived the organization.

Today, Planned Parenthood of Houston and Southeast Texas is known as Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast. It operates seven health centers in Texas and two in Louisiana, serving clients in the Houston area and the entire state of Louisiana. Since its founding, Planned Parenthood of Houston has played a leading role in the movement and mission of contraception. Although the use of contraception and pregnancy prevention have remained highly controversial and charged topics throughout the years, Planned Parenthood has been successful from the vantage point of educating Houstonians who need assistance the most. As a result, they understand not only the options available to them for contraception but also the host of additional services that Planned Parenthood provides, including wellness visits, breast and cervical cancer screening, vasectomy, HIV and Rapid HIV testing, and primary care. The expanded treatment options go to the continued mission and work of the staff in treating each individual who comes to them with dignity, self-esteem, and hope for their current situation.

Vince Lee is the archivist for the Carey C. Shuart Women's Archive Collections, University of Houston Libraries.

Special Collections in the M. D. Anderson Library is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday, and on Saturdays from 12:00 to 4:00 except during the summer break. For information on how to view the Planned Parenthood of Houston and Southeast Texas Records or visit the archives, go to https://libraries.uh.edu/locations/special-collections/.

Houston's Suffrage Centennial Book Club

By Leandra Zarnow

On August 26, 1970, women across the United States staged a Women's Strike for Equality to honor the fiftieth anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment's ratification, which secured American women's constitutional right to vote. Organized by the National Organization for Women, this demonstration had three simple goals: universal childcare, free abortion on demand, and equal opportunity in workplaces. Reporters taking note saw the strike as the opening salvo of "new feminism." Fast forward to 2020, abortion is now legal, but access to reproductive health services is uneven in Texas and nationally. Likewise, the United States continues to lag behind most developed nations on family leave policies and subsidized childcare. And the #MeToo movement has called into question sexualized power dynamics at work in just about every industry.

The centennial of women's suffrage provides an occasion to take stock of women's status in U.S. society in the last one hundred years. We celebrate how far the ball has moved forward since 1920—and 1970—while acknowledging how precarious the goal of human rights for all American women remains. In Houston, one way we have decided to think reflexively about this paradox is to host a year-long Suffrage Centennial Book Club. This venture is a joint effort of the University of Houston Friends of Women's Studies, League of Women Voters of Houston, and Houston Public Library. Throughout 2020, in community centers, classrooms, living rooms, and library branches, Houstonians will meet to discuss books and films, in some months alongside authors and city leaders.

Why a book club? Foremost, a book club honors women as authors and thinkers, drawing focus to their voices and their ideas articulating the importance of civic engagement. Women's suffrage was accomplished through protest and pageantry, but also through moving speeches, biting editorials, formally lodged petitions, and persuasive letter-writing. Amazingly, the national ratification campaign victory in 1920 turned on one "yes" vote in Tennessee, which belonged to twenty-four-year-old Harry Burn. A persuasive writer, his mother Phoebe Ensminger Burn encouraged at the eleventh hour, "Don't forget to be a good boy, and help Mrs. 'Thomas [Carrie Chapman] Catt' with her 'Rats.' . . . put rat in ratification."[1]

Mary Ellen Ewing is one example of a local suffragist who received little attention in the national suffrage accounts or even those spotlighting Texas. An officer of the Harris County Equal Suffrage Association, she was an active advocate of child welfare and city beautification, so much so she held a patent for a dustless street-sweeping vacuum.

Photo courtesy of the Mary Ellen Ewing vs. Houston School Board Collection, Digital Library, University of Houston Libraries.

Reading a range of books together as Houstonians, we can talk through and expand our understanding of the heroic story of women's suffrage. This narrative typically begins in Seneca Falls, New York, where Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Frederick Douglass, and others gathered to discuss women's rights in 1848. Most accounts conclude in 1920, in the aftermath of wartime White House pickets and suffrage parades that helped turn the tide toward women's suffrage. Historians have taken this centennial moment to complicate this story, raising the point that the suffrage movement had many beginnings and many endings—most significantly, the 1965 Voting Rights Act. The books selected in this series draw attention to this complicated chronology and a wider vanguard of figures. For instance, historian Susan Ware highlights in *Why They Marched* mountaineers, cartoonists, sister-wives, race women, and men for suffrage previously overlooked. Equally so, historian Adele Logan Alexander traces the story of her grandmother, a black suffragist for whom she was named, reminding that the color line ran through the suffrage movement.

Disenfranchisement during the Jim Crow Era not only limited voting for Texas's women of color, it has centered historians' focus locally on white women's suffrage. Looking beyond electoral politics, for instance, Leonor Villegas de Magnón founded the relief organization La Cruz Blanca to provide aid in Laredo during the Mexican Revolution and recounted her political life in La Rebelde.

Photo courtesy of the Leonor Villegas de Magnón Papers, Digital Library, University of Houston Libraries.

The Suffrage Centennial Book Club reading list and film accompaniments were

selected to encourage conversation about women in politics and voting rights since 1920 as much as to reflect on the movement's development. For this reason, our late spring selections center on the questions: Why has it been difficult for women to crack the highest political glass ceiling? And why has the campaign for equal political power stretched on longer than that of voting power? Drawing attention to Cynthia Orozco's new work on Adela Sloss-Vento, and my book in part highlights the 1977 National Women's Conference in Houston, we also hope to make clear that Texas has a rich and varied history of women's political engagement. It expands beyond suffrage, across social movements, and in and out of traditional political venues.

Summer selections—a classic murder mystery set in Seneca Falls by Miriam Grace Monfredo and a moving historical fiction chronicling a young Sarah Grimke and her handmaiden Hetty Grimke by Sue Monk Kidd—offer a dose of whimsy as we prepare for a fall of big thinking on how to move forward after the August centennial. How should a shared suffrage past be remembered and invoked to forge ahead? What do women want at this hundred-year mark? Do women offer a distinct form of leadership in government? How can gender parity in electoral politics be achieved? And what actions can be taken to make voting more democratic in the twenty-first century? It is these questions, we hope that #SCBC participants will ponder in fall as they read selections by journalist Elaine Weiss, archivists at the Smithsonian, geographer Joni Seager, historian Carol Anderson, and politician Stacey Abrams. The result will be a vibrant 2020 that looks toward the future drawing on the lessons of the past.

Leandra Zarnow, Ph.D. is an assistant professor of history at the University of Houston where she teaches classes in US women's history, politics and society, historical methods, and interdisciplinary courses in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. She is the author of *Battling Bella: The Protest Politics of Bella Abzug* released in November 2019.

Suffrage Centennial Book Club Reading List and Film Pairings

JANUARY
Book: Susan Ware, *Why They Marched: Untold Stories of the Women Who Fought for the Right to Vote* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2019). 360 pp.
Film: *Seneca Falls* (2010, Louise Vance).

FEBRUARY
Book: Adele Logan Alexander, *Princess of the Hither Isles: A Black Suffragist's Story from the Jim Crow South* (Yale UP, 2019). 392 pp.
Film: *Thirteenth* (2016, Ava Duvernay).

MARCH
Book: Cynthia E. Orozco, *Agent of Change: Adela Sloss-Vento, Mexican American Civil Rights Activist and Texas Feminist* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2020). 272pp.
Film: *Dolores* (2018, Peter Bratt).

APRIL
Book: Leandra Ruth Zarnow, *Battling Bella: The Protest Politics of Bella Abzug* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019). 464 pp.
Film: *She's Beautiful When She's Angry* (2014, Mary Dore).

MAY
Book: Ellen Fitzpatrick, *The Highest Glass Ceiling: Women's Quest for the American Presidency* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016). 336 pp.
Film: *Chisholm '72: Unbought and Unbossed* (2004, Shola Lynch).

JUNE
Book, Fiction: Sue Kidd Monk, *The Invention of Wings* (NY: Penguin, 2015). 384 pp.
Film: *Rebel Hearts: The Grimke Sisters* (1995, Betsy Newman).

JULY
Book, Fiction: Miriam Grace Monfredo, *Seneca Falls Inheritance* (Create Space Independent Publishing, 2nd Ed, 2013). 332 pp.
Film: *Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice* (1989, William Greaves)

AUGUST
Book: Elaine Weiss, *The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote* (Penguin Press, 2018). 432 pp.
Film: *Iron-Jawed Angels* (2004, Katja von Garner; starring Hilary Swank).

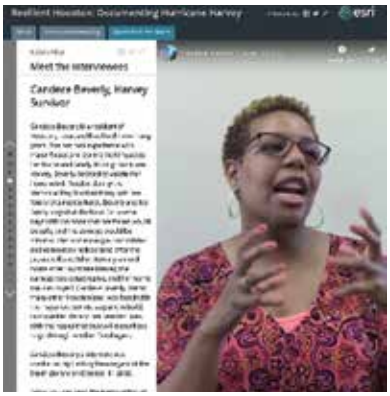
SEPTEMBER
Book: Stacey Abrams, *Lead from the Outside: How to Build Your Future and Make Real Change* (New York: Picador, 2019). 256 pp.
Film: *Councilwoman* (2018, Margo Guernsey).

OCTOBER
Book: *Smithsonian American Women: Remarkable Objects and Stories of Strength, Ingenuity, and Vision from the National Collection* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2019). 248 pp.
Film: *Wonder Women: The Untold Story of American Superheroines* (2012, Guevara-Flanagan & Edwards).

NOVEMBER
Book: Carol Anderson, *One Person, No Vote: How Voter Suppression Is Destroying Our Democracy* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019). 368 pp.
Film: *Selma* (2014, Ava Duvernay).

DECEMBER
Book: Joni Seager, *The Women's Atlas* (New York: Penguin Books, 2018). 208 pp.
Film: *Forbidden Voices* (2012, Barbara Miller).

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Resilient Houston: Documenting Hurricane Harvey: *Houston History*'s fall issue will report on the research conducted for the Resilient Houston project. The University of Houston Center for Public History has worked for two years to create an archive of oral histories and supporting materials from Hurricane Harvey. The project focuses on neighborhood narratives from survivors, responders, and volunteers to tell the storm's story. The website features interview clips, transcripts, and an easy-to-use story map. Visit https://uh.edu/class/documenting-hurricane-harvey/.

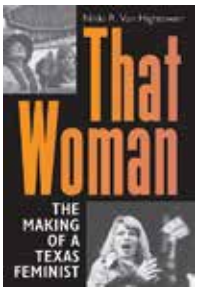
Mapping Houston History: Have you ever wanted a map showing where our articles take place? With our new website you can pinpoint where these events occurred, with stories separated by topic categories. The website maps articles from the last four years and is a work in progress, with the long-term goal of mapping all of our back issues. Visit www.houstonhistorymagazine.org and click "Mapping Houston History."

Latino cARTographies

Mapping the Past, Present and Future of Houston Latino Art

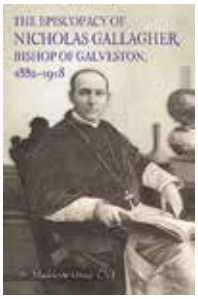
The Center for Mexican American Studies at the University of Houston is collaborating with the Gibson Group, an international and award-winning multimedia collective whose digital boards are known worldwide, to produce Houston's first portable interactive digital board featuring Latino visual art. An outgrowth of the Latino Art Now! city-wide event held last year, it will allow the public to explore artistic issues, identity, and the urban space through the lens of Latino contributions. The board will draw on images, archives, and artists' interpretations along with a timeline of key moments in the city's history. Added features will allow viewers to experience particular art spaces and participate in the creation of art. Latino cARTographies has the potential to ignite enthusiasm and engagement among artists, organizations and audiences in our community and beyond. CMAS is bringing the museum to the community and the community to the museum!

BOOKS



That Woman: The Making of a Texas Feminist by Nikki R. Van Hightower (Texas A&M University Press). As the founder and former executive director of the Houston Area Women's Center, Nikki R. Van Hightower recollects the tumultuous journey of being a feminist in Texas in the 1970s. After speaking at a women's rights rally, her salary as the women's advocate for the City of Houston was cut to just $1 a year. From that time on Van Hightower dedicated much of her time to fighting for women's rights in Houston, including establishing a rape and crisis shelter for women in Houston and hosting a radio program for discussing human rights issues. Her memoir is a telling story of the accomplishments of feminists in Texas in the 1970s.

Oil's Renaissance Man by Loren C. Steffy (Texas A&M University Press). Never before has there been a comprehensive biography of the trailblazing "father of fracking," George Mitchell. Not only was Mitchell charged with perfecting the art of fracking, but he also master-planned Houston's environmentally livable suburb, The Woodlands. Through his scientific, philanthropic, and business efforts, Mitchell's goals reflected a better and more sustainable world.



The Episcopacy of Nicholas Gallagher, Bishop of Galveston, 1882-1918 by Sr. Madeleine Grace, CVI (Texas A&M University Press). Coming from the North after the American Civil War, Gallagher sought to support missionary efforts for African American Catholics. He is well known for establishing the Holy Rosary Parish, one of the first black parishes in Texas, which launched many more in the Houston Area. Gallagher is also renowned for bringing hope to the survivors of the 1900 Storm in Galveston and

for rebuilding churches in the area. In this biographical account, Sr. Grace goes into tremendous detail on the life of the Catholic bishop who made significant contributions to Catholicism in Texas.

EVENTS

April 3 – December 31: ***Houston Women March On: Celebrating 100 Years of the Right to Vote*** is at The Heritage Society, 1100 Bagby Street. Done in partnership with the League of Women voters, this exhibit demonstrates 100 years of perseverance by women who fought for the right to vote. Visit www.heritagesociety.org.

May-December 3: ***Furnishing a Texas-Made Home in the Victorian Era.*** The Heritage Society is exhibiting Victorian era furniture with a Texas-pioneer spin. The residence, also known as the Kellum-Noble home, will feature cow-hide seats and German-influenced furniture that was important in maintaining daily Victorian life. Visit www.heritagesociety.org.

September 26: ***17th Annual Run in the Park.*** As a showcase for all of the hard work in improving the trails at Hermann Park, this annual run will have many family-friendly activities, including 10K, 5K, and Kid's runs. A post-race party will be held at Molly Ann Smith Plaza. The event runs from 8:00-11:00 a.m.

November 14, 2020: ***The Park to Port Bike Ride*** offers Houstonians a unique view of Houston while connecting them with Hermann Park, the Port of Houston, and the Brays Bayou Greenway Trails. The twenty-mile ride begins and ends in Hermann Park's Bayou Parkland. Bikers start at the Bill Coats Bridge, and travel along the Brays Bayou Greenway Trail to the port and back, from 7:30-11:30 a.m.

Thank you!

All of us at *Houston History* and the UH Center for Public History wish to thank everyone who made our two March 4th launch events possible. We especially appreciate the support of Dean Antonio D. Tillis, whose encouragement and backing enabled us to bring the idea for the panels to fruition. Thanks go out to our panelists Leslie Alexander, Amilcar Shabazz, and DoVeanna Fulton for their spectacular discussion and to the Houston Museum of African American Culture for partnering with us on the Lunch and Learn, especially John Guess, Davinia Reed, Sam Smoots, and Seba Suber.

AAS scholars (left to right): Dean DoVeanna Fulton, University of Houston-Downtown; Dr. Amilcar Shabazz, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; and Dr. Leslie Alexander, University of Oregon.

The University of Houston established one of the nation's first African American Studies (AAS) programs in 1969 in response to demands by Black students. For fifty years, AAS has contributed to intellectual diversity at UH and across the country to improve our understanding of the historic and cultural contributions of people of African descent. We hope that you enjoyed the feature stories about AAS in the magazine and our on-going effort to create educational programming such as these events to complement the *Houston History* magazine.

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KELLUM-NOBLE

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– Johnny Zapata, Fulbright Recipient,
UH Class of 2019

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