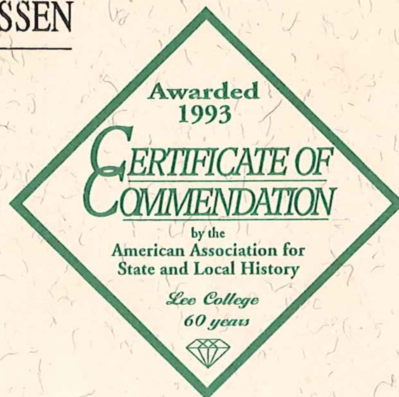
Baytown Vignettes

John Britt & Muriel Tyssen



ABOUT THE COVER:

The ancient live oak located in the center of Texas Avenue, once the principal commercial artery of the community, has become a symbol of Baytown's resilience and has recently been adopted by the city as its logo. Cover art by American Studies student Charles Rosser.

Baytown Vignettes

One Hundred and Fifty Years in the History of a Texas Gulf Coast Community

John Britt & Muriel Tyssen

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and
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To Jean Shepherd
and to those like her
who have never lost confidence
in Baytown

And, of course, to our students

Acknowledgements

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We want to express our appreciation to Dean John McCormick, whose support and encouragement have made the work easier.

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Introduction: Baytown Vignettes

John Britt
Muriel Tyssen

One can hardly pick up the daily newspaper without seeing at least one article on the miserable state of the American educational system. Parents, teachers, government officials, tax payers — all fret over the problems and offer numerous solutions, yet the general feeling remains one of frustration or discouragement because no solution seems the right one. Despite problems, America still has dedicated students who rise to challenges and produce admirable results; the central focus of this book is student accomplishment. Each article, written for the American Studies seminar at Lee College, explores segments of the history of Baytown, Texas, an industrial community located some twenty-five miles east of Houston, whose modern image reflects its colorful past. The papers explore Baytown's myths, its noteworthy or notorious personalities, and its development as a community.

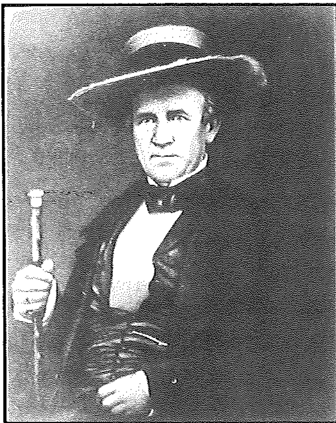
Despite the sometime fears of school administrators that nothing develops in the faculty lounge but rebellion or dissension, the concept for American Studies, a class which would combine several disciplines and would be team taught, hatched out of conversations over coffee in that iniquitous environment. Mary Sue Bloomfield, an English instructor, had long believed that such a course would benefit students who could gain a clearer understanding of the background of their culture through an interdisciplinary approach

to learning. Over many cups of coffee, Bloomfield convinced history teacher John Britt and Auther Davis, a government instructor, that such a course needed to be taught at Lee College. As a result of their discussions, American Studies began in the fall of 1974 with three teachers: Britt, Bloomfield, and Davis, who designed the original course to combine American history, literature, and government.

The years have brought some changes, and American Studies presently combines American history, literature, and humanities and is taught by Britt and Muriel Tyssen, who represents the English Division. The course presupposes that the literature, history, and philosophical ideals of American culture intertwine, with no part existing in a vacuum. Students examine not only their intellectual heritage, but also popular media—film, novels, and some television—through which ideas filter. As part of the honors program at Lee College, American Studies seeks to challenge students to understand their history, their literary heritage, their culture, and themselves, insights we believe are reflected in their essays.

As testimony to the accomplishment of these students, many of the articles anthologized in this volume have won prizes in the annual C. M. Caldwell competition for historical research and writing, sponsored jointly by the Texas State Historical Association and its student affiliate, the Walter Prescott Webb Society, named to honor the late Professor Walter Prescott Webb, who taught at the University of Texas and earned international respect as a historian of the American frontier. Since Webb believed that too little attention was paid to the preservation of local and regional history, he encouraged his students to research and write about their own neighborhoods and communities. In support of this ideal, the Lee College Webb chapter, organized in 1974—one of the oldest in the state—grew out of the American Studies program; in fact, membership in the Webb Society is part of the American Studies program. Students are not required to enter the contest; however, those who do submit their papers have proved successful. Because their topics are close to home and interest them, students achieve commendable results. As a result of their commitment and perseverance, Lee College American Studies/Webb Society students consistently have won top honors in the Caldwell competition and have garnered seven first place awards, seven second place, five third place, five fourth place, and one fifth place since 1980. Several of these essays provide the bulk of this book. The students learn research and writing skills from the projects while they enhance their appreciation for their city, seeing it not as an isolated town but as part of a national community. For example, Susan Estes, when queried about her

research, commented that her paper on local black educator Victoria Walker not only gave her a better understanding of Baytown's history, but "a better awareness of the educational development of this state, as well as the nation as a whole." June Begeman, who wrote about the ferries that served the local area for many years, stated that "as a newcomer to Texas, I learned . . . about local history. I also learned that, for me, the most interesting way to enjoy history is through the eyes and words of those who have lived it." Often students go well beyond what is required in simply fulfilling course requirements; Garnett Cleveland became so convinced that he had pinpointed the location of the Goose Creek boat yard important to the Confederate effort in Galveston Bay that he has applied to the state to have a marker set up to designate the spot. Students often earn more from the experience than just a grade; most importantly, they enjoy working on a research project that allows them to contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics of a community's development.



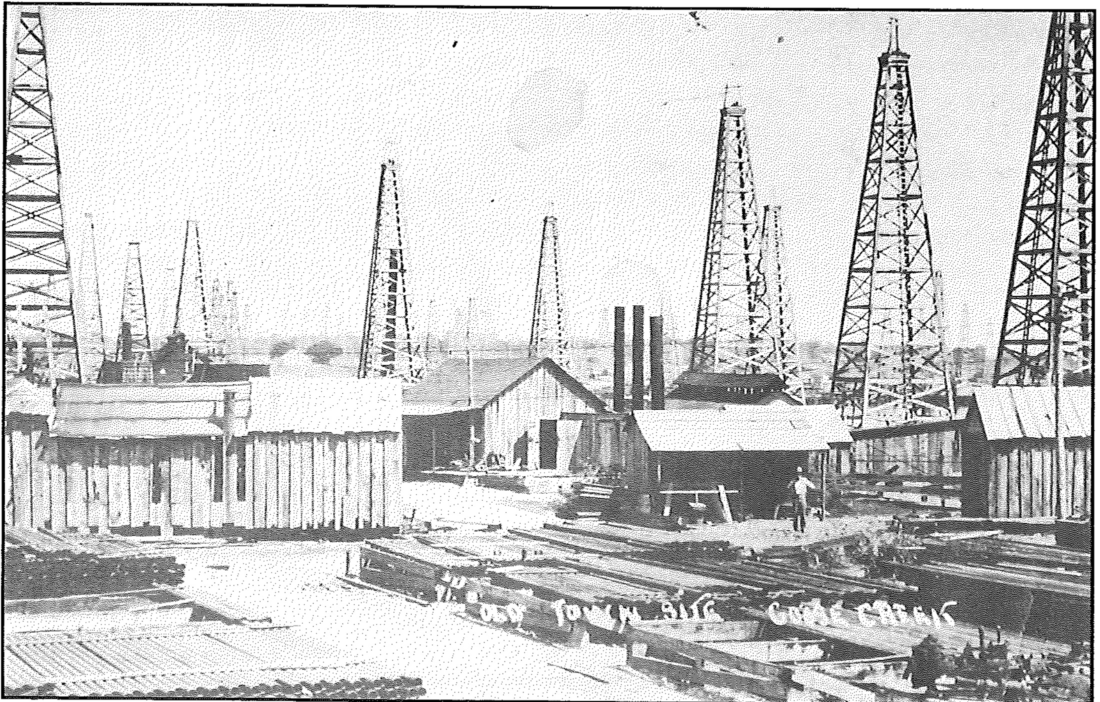
Baytown certainly has a claim on the controversial Sam Houston. Houston and his wife, Margret Lea, often sought shelter from political storms at their cabin at nearby Cedar Point.

In addition to winning in competition, Webb Society members have had articles published in every issue of *Touchstone* , the Webb Society journal started eleven years ago through the joint efforts of the Texas State Historical Association and the state Webb Society. Historical articles by club members have also been published in Lee College's magazine *Reflections*, San Jacinto College's *Southwest Texas Historian*, and the *Baytown Sun*. Because of the exceptional quality of their work, Lee College American Studies/Webb students have for the past several years received invitations to read their prize-winning essays at the annual conventions of both the Texas State Historical Association, Webb Society Session, and the East Texas Historical Association, and many local organizations have invited students to share their research. Some Lee College students have become recognized for the quality of their research, and at least one student, Steve Gouldman, will have an article on the area's notorious outlaw Red Goleman included in the soon-to-be-published *Handbook of Texas*. Such accolades are indeed significant for students just beginning their academic careers.

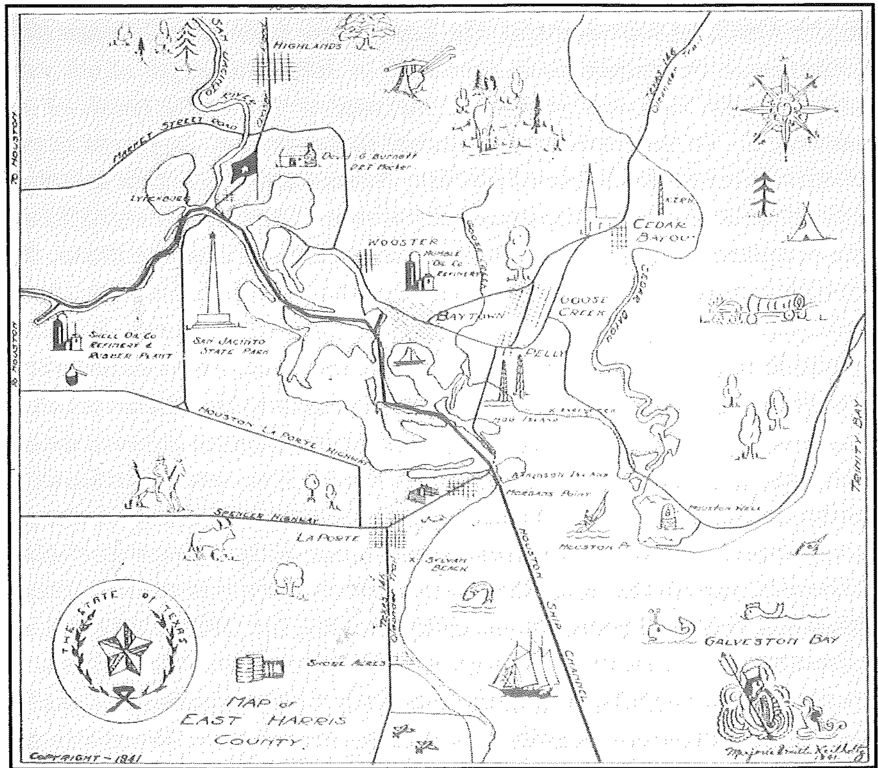
Such writing requires hard work and diligent research. As students begin their research, they often approach the history of Baytown within a potpourri of myths and preconceived ideas: the oak tree in the middle of Texas Avenue sheltered Sam Houston prior

to the battle of San Jacinto; the town grew from an oil boom; the community developed only recently; or Baytown is so small and unimportant that few people in the rest of the world know of its existence. To the contrary, students discover that Baytown is not insignificant in the national picture. What happens in this community reflects what has happened elsewhere. The fundamental ideas, the economic energies, the goals of the nation are also the ideas, the energies, and the goals of Baytown citizens. Events in Baytown have influenced changes which have affected the entire nation. Partially because of Baytown's problems with hurricanes, Americans everywhere benefit from a national insurance program, the thesis of Linda Jayne's paper; the efforts of the United States and its allies to defeat the Axis powers during the Second World War were significantly aided by the production of toluene at the Baytown Humble Refinery, a fact referred to in both Donna Bonin's and Ralph Fusco's articles. However, not all the attention to the community has been positive. Baytown received national notoriety during the 1920s through an ignominious incident involving the Ku Klux Klan, the subject of Suzanne Blankenship's paper; and Sally Coker discusses Charles Jones, the infamous murderer of William Marsh Rice; Jones was not

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM



The Goose Creek oil boom at its height in the nineteen teens



This 1941 map of the Baytown area shows the proximity of the Humble Oil Company refinery to the three communities of Baytown, Pelly and Goose Creek.

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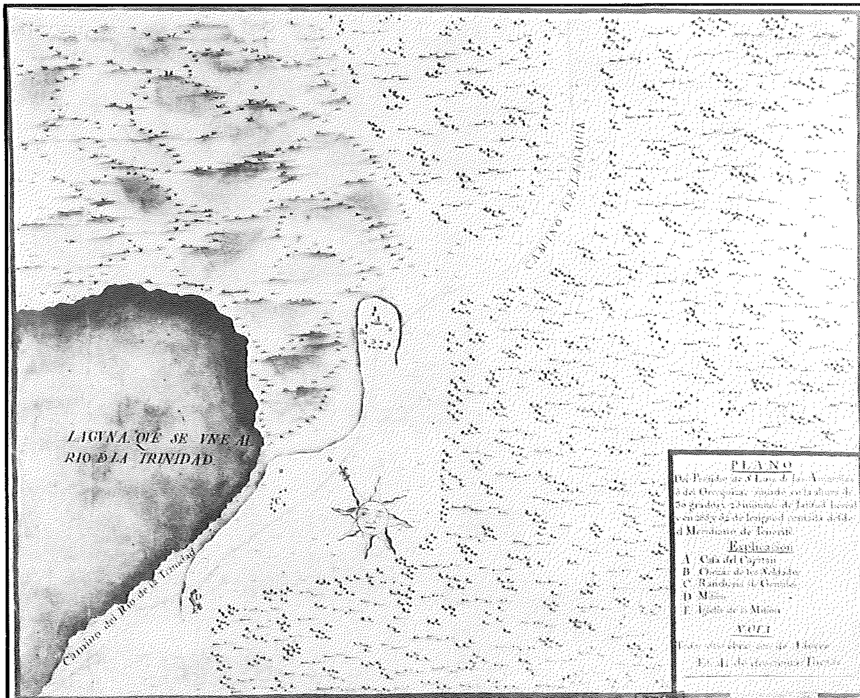


Early Spanish map shows location of the mission at El Orcoquisac on the Lower Trinity

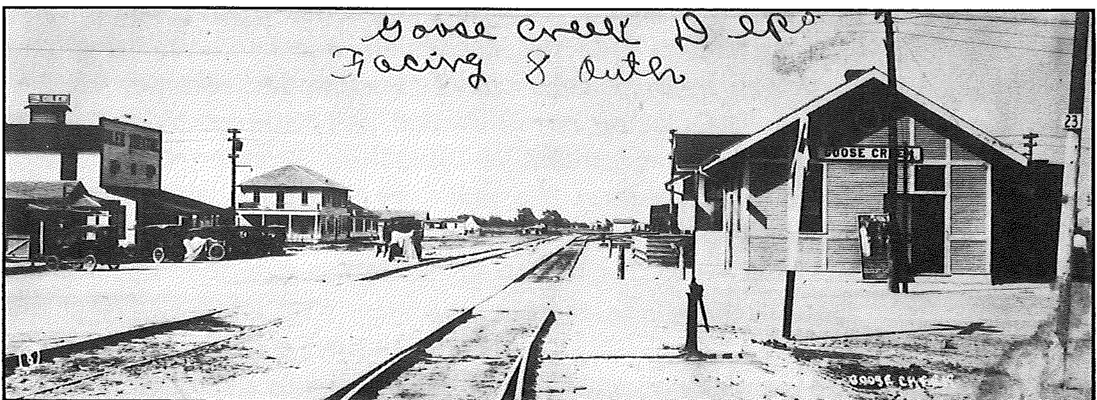
PHOTO COURTESY WALLISVILLE HERITAGE PARK

only born in Baytown but ended his life here. Baytown does not exist in isolation—its history is important. The essays in this volume explore a few of the significant events in the colorful and varied development of the community since the settlement of Texas.

Some of the myths harbored by students, however, do have bases in fact. There is little argument that the discovery of oil is a pivotal point in the economic history of the upper Galveston Bay area. But precisely because petroleum has played such a paramount role in the development of modern Texas, it is all too convenient to believe that Baytown had no significant history prior to the development of the Goose Creek oil field in the early part of this century. This somewhat myopic view of the past rather unfortunately ignores the vital role that the upper bay region between the San Jacinto and Trinity Rivers, with its bisecting and partially navigable streams of Goose Creek and Cedar Bayou, has played in the history of Texas. Several student essays explore the importance of these convenient waterways in the development of Baytown. A current almanac will show that Texas has more bridges today than any other state, but early Texans did not have bridges. They used ferries, and as June Begeman's research demonstrates, the early ferry stations played a prominent role in the development of the modern community.

To date the community only from the discovery of oil, a twentieth-century phenomenon, ignores the long history of the region. The upper bay has a surprising archeological history stretching back thousands of years. The convenient waterways in the area appealed to several Indian tribes. Although these early settlers left no written history, archeologists have long studied burial mounds and other artifacts to learn about these first settlers. Not

Photo courtesy Baytown Historical Museum



The Goose Creek depot and the Oiler Theater in the 1920s

until Europeans entered the area in the sixteenth century did written accounts appear. Strategically positioned on the frontier of Spanish and French ambitions in the New World, the area bore witness to the geopolitical struggle between those two nations for dominance in the Western Hemisphere. Intensification of this rivalry in the 1700s resulted in the establishment by Spain of a mission and presidio on the east bank of the lower Trinity. The continuing importance of the upper bay to the development of Texas is revealed by the fact that the first Anglo-American settlers in the Gulf area arrived as contemporaries of Stephen F. Austin and the other colonial empresarios. The interim president of the rebellious Republic of Texas, David G. Burnet, as well as the vice president, Lorenzo de Zavala, resided in the neighborhood on the banks of the San Jacinto River. Another local citizen, Dr. Ashbel Smith, is considered by many to have been the most effective diplomat in the service of an independent Texas. Sam Houston, around whose personality swirled the storms of early Texas politics, may not have sheltered under Baytown's famous oak, but he did seek escape from the trials of public life by retreating to his summer cottage near the mouth of Cedar Bayou. No student essays included in this volume discuss this period, but the era offers many opportunities for historical exploration.

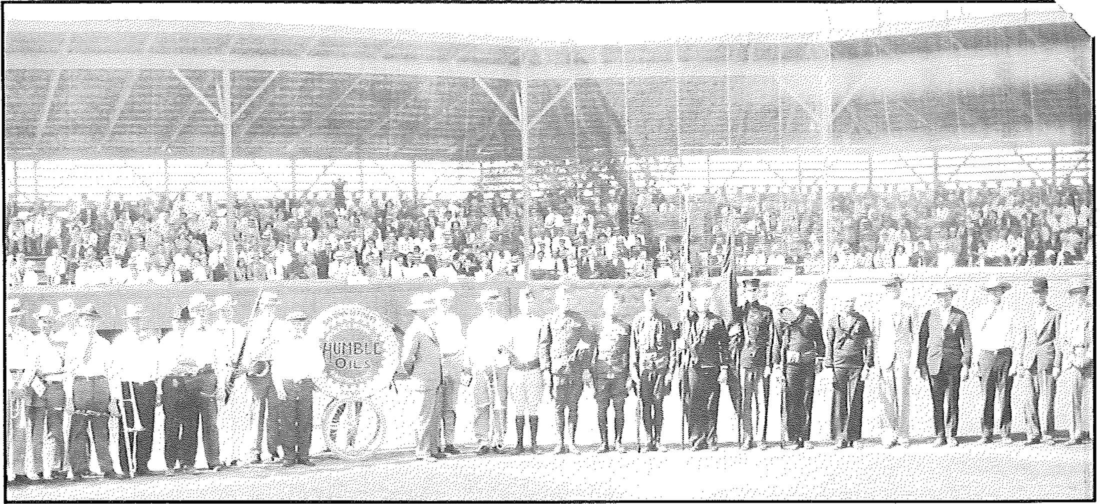
When America was split by conflict during the Civil War, most local residents supported the Confederacy although only eight local families were slave holders; Dr. Ashbel Smith held the most, thirty-two. The war years witnessed the construction of several blockade runners at the shipyard owned by Commodore Thomas Chubb, who also captained the rebel patrol schooner, *Royal Yacht*. Chubb's Goose Creek boat yard provides the focus for Garnett Cleveland's essay. In the meantime, the Bayland Guards, recruited by Ashbel Smith, found glory, and some found death, at Shiloh and Vicksburg. After the war, unlike other parts of Texas, the Baytown area felt little negative impact from Reconstruction, and by the late Victorian period the region boasted a modestly expanding economy based on brick manufacturing, rice cultivation, and cattle ranching. By 1900, the growing communities of Lynchburg, Wooster, Goose Creek, Cedar Bayou, Barbers Hill, and Cove were established in the area between the San Jacinto and Trinity Rivers.

While true that the upper bay region experienced a rich and vibrant history long before the discovery of oil, it is equally true that oil served as the catalyst that thrust the area even more dramatically into the mainstream of Texas'— as well as the nation's— economic destiny. The development of the Goose Creek Field in the early 1900s attracted thousands of itinerant workers to the area, creating a

boomtown atmosphere. This growth ultimately stabilized, however, with the chartering of Humble Oil and Refining Company and the subsequent construction of its massive Baytown refinery, one of the largest in the world. Partially as a consequence of fear generated by such rapid social change, the 1920s saw the emergence of a powerful Ku Klux Klan in the Baytown area. The Klan's stated purpose was to improve the morality of the community, and its actions brought about some undesirable national publicity; this conflict is the subject of Suzanne Blankenship's article. From the early twenties until well after World War II, the Baytown area, though technically comprised of several separate communities, was indeed the quintessential "company town." Humble Oil not only controlled jobs but served as the arbiter of community standards and dominated social life. By the late twenties, three distinct communities depended on Humble's Baytown plant for their very existence. Goose Creek and the newly named community of Pelly—which had sprung into being when the older settlers and oil field workers' families had fled north from the path of the expanding Goose Creek field—were incorporated cities, while Baytown, which grew up immediately outside Humble's gates, was not. Though the tri-cities, as locals now referred to the three towns, shared both a common economic dependency on the Humble Company and a school system in the all-encompassing Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District, not until 1948 did the three communities finally unify politically as the single incorporated city of Baytown.

Like the rest of America prior to World War II, the community endured and survived the Great Depression, which, while resulting in hardship, was not as severe in the tri-cities as in many other industrialized areas. Although some workers were indeed dismissed, Humble avoided widespread layoffs by drastically reducing the work week. Despite the economic downswing, local citizens proved capable of chartering and financially supporting a two-year college. In addition, the depression brought national attention to the area. Red Goleman, Steve Gouldman's topic, pursued a much publicized career in crime during this period. More positively, at the nearby farming community of Highlands, Franklin Roosevelt's "New Deal" launched the Sam Houston Farms Project, a controversial and ambitious effort by the Department of Agriculture to relocate displaced sharecroppers on government sponsored farmsteads. Terri Mullins discusses the impact of the Sam Houston Farms experiment on the entire Baytown area, a topic expanded in Gail Luckner's paper on the Elena Fig Farms. World War II was a transition point. Ralph Fusco in his article insists that the war brought more than economic

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL



What could better illustrate the role that Humble Oil and Refining Company played in the social life of the community than this 1930 photograph?

recovery; Humble Oil grew because of defense contracts, and the federal government constructed an ordnance plant in Baytown. Furthermore, as Donna Bonin points out in her essay, because of a labor shortage—and echoing a national trend—women entered the area's industrial work force in substantial numbers for the first time. The 1943 opening of a General Tire and Rubber Company facility adjacent to the refinery to produce tires from butadiene manufactured by Humble was considered so crucial to America's military effort that the governor of Texas insisted that the event was as "important as the victory at San Jacinto." As a consequence of this war-generated industrial expansion, the population continued to grow.

During the post-war period occurred changes deemed more drastic in the eyes of many local residents. Beginning in the late 1950s, the old Humble Company experienced a series of reorganizations and eventually evolved into the new Exxon Corporation, thereby losing its distinctive and, in the opinion of some, particularly paternalistic identity. Regardless of the many new opportunities available to citizens, not all changes were trouble free. Throughout the decade of the fifties, Baytown retained the pattern of rigid racial segregation that clearly marked it as essentially a Southern town. At the refinery, for example, blacks and Hispanics were still relegated to the most menial of jobs. Few questioned the necessity of a dual school system, and no blacks were permitted to attend the local community college. In her essay, Diane Fanning examines the

efforts of the Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District to desegregate the area's schools, a task that was not completely accomplished until the early 1970s.

In addition to social changes, Baytown has had to cope with the capriciousness of nature. The location of the city makes it vulnerable to severe gulf storms. Hurricane Carla in 1961 may have sent Houston television news personality Dan Rather to New York and CBS, but it also brought widespread destruction to Baytown — most tragically to the fashionable Brownwood subdivision — which focused national attention on the seriousness of the land subsidence problem along the upper Texas coast, the legacy of fifty years of careless and unrestrained extraction of oil and water from beneath the earth. Although the new flood insurance program may have eased apprehension concerning future storm threats, the town will never be the same. In a recent issue of *Texas Monthly*, William Broyles, Jr. recounted his childhood and teenage experiences centering on Burnet Drive in Baytown, a street which, as Broyles observed, "doesn't really end; past the last house it just disappears into the Bay." He recalls with obvious fondness the Brownwood subdivision — "the home to the girls I dated"—which could then be seen across the Bay from Burnet Drive. Today Brownwood is no more; this once desirable neighborhood is abandoned— a victim of subsidence and the all-too-frequent Gulf storms. In Broyles' words, "I look out from the end of Burnet today and . . . the San Jacinto Monument still stands sentinel over the battlefield, the ships still pass in the night . . .. But the scenes of my childhood, the homes and the very land itself, are gone beneath the waves, a civilization as

Downtown Goose Creek in the 1950s

vanished as the Toltecs." The same argument concerning a "vanished civilization" can be made, not just for Brownwood, but for much of the Baytown that many of us once knew.

Regardless of occasional setbacks, the city has enjoyed continued growth, and by the early 1970s its reliance on the largess of one company appeared forever at an end. Gulf and Mobay, two rapidly growing petrochemical companies, constructed plants in the area, and the United States Steel Corporation announced the opening of its giant Texas Works across Cedar Bayou from Baytown. The assumption was that U. S. Steel would provide hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of new jobs and usher in a brave new world of never-ending prosperity and economic expansion. These hopes proved illusory. Within a little more than a decade the steel plant closed. This shutdown, coupled with the rapid fall of oil prices in the mid-1980s, spelled a loss of jobs that reverberated throughout the Baytown area. Cindy Pentecost's essay examines the immediate impact of the shutting of the steel plant's gates on the workers and their families. The period also witnessed the relocation of the community's retail business center from Texas Avenue to an area north of town at the recently-opened San Jacinto Mall on Interstate 10. Photographs scattered among the collections lodged in Baytown's municipal library preserve dramatic images of the once bustling shopping districts of the old tri-cities; today these pictures dating back less than half a century appear to be not only of another time but of another place — little more than the curious artifacts of a not too distant past. As Woody Allen reminded us in *Radio Days*, what we often assume to be ultimate progress may indeed prove ephemeral. This community has always been characterized by rapid change, and if anything, the rapidity of that change appears to many to have accelerated in recent years. In a literary sense, the essays in this volume may be viewed almost as a foray into archeology — an attempt to unearth a past still within the scope of living memory but, nevertheless, vanished forever.

However, this work should not be interpreted as an attempt to produce a definitive history of the upper Galveston Bay area; Dr. Margaret Swett Henson's *History of Baytown* is, without question, the preeminent study. Rather, our book presents slices of history—glimpses into the past—authored by students with the hope of making the present state of our community more intelligible. Consequently, all of these articles have been written with more than just a passing antiquarian focus in mind. The central themes go beyond a simple vague and undefined nostalgic longing for a past that, in truth, may never have been. Each student author has a point to make; a position

is taken and, in the time-honored tradition of the academy, argued and defended. The writers raise some provocative and even occasionally disturbing questions. The preservation of local history is of little real value to the scholar or serious reader if its only intent is to tell a good story. If the telling is done well, however, historical writing at any level entertains as well as enlightens; it thus becomes one of the most noble forms of literary expression. To be truly meaningful, therefore, local history needs to be placed in the context of the universal, to illustrate, for example, how the nuances of the seemingly parochial reflect or perhaps contribute to the national life. Furthermore, as Dr. David De Boe, Director of Educational Services for the Texas State Historical Association, observed in a recent issue of *Touchstone*, "By examining the local community as a historical research laboratory to test textbook generalizations, students suddenly find history relevant to their own experiences." This is the approach we have asked our students to take in what for many is a first exercise in the art of historical research and interpretation. Such too is the basic premise around which the American Studies course itself is constructed—that the human experience, at all times and in all places, is best understood and appreciated if it is viewed within a more general cultural and historic context. One should remember that these are student efforts, and if such an approach appears to overreach the abilities of students who are in the early stages of their academic careers, so be it. We trust the essays in this collection will prove otherwise.

STRANGERS WHO VISIT Baytown are confronted by a huge oak tree which stands proudly in the center of Texas Avenue; community residents accept its presence as a matter of course: the tree has always been there. Over the years many myths have grown up about its history. When Mark Alford expressed an interest in writing about such a prominent landmark, we initially tried to discourage him, dismissing the topic as part of the urban folklore which proves difficult to "verify." Undaunted by our discouragement, Alford set out to discover the history of the tree. He searched city records, talked to the family who originally sold the property to the city, and tracked down participants in the various demonstrations concerning the controversies over eliminating the "eyesore." What he uncovered and discovered provides an interesting view of history. Baytown itself acknowledged the importance of the tree as a symbol of the community and adopted it as an official logo in 1986.

In 1983 Alford won second place for his essay, originally titled "Roots in the Past: Baytown's Big Oak Tree." He continued his studies at the University of Texas at Austin and has just recently accepted a position in Palm Beach, Florida, as a television news reporter.

Baytown's Big Oak Tree

MARK ALFORD

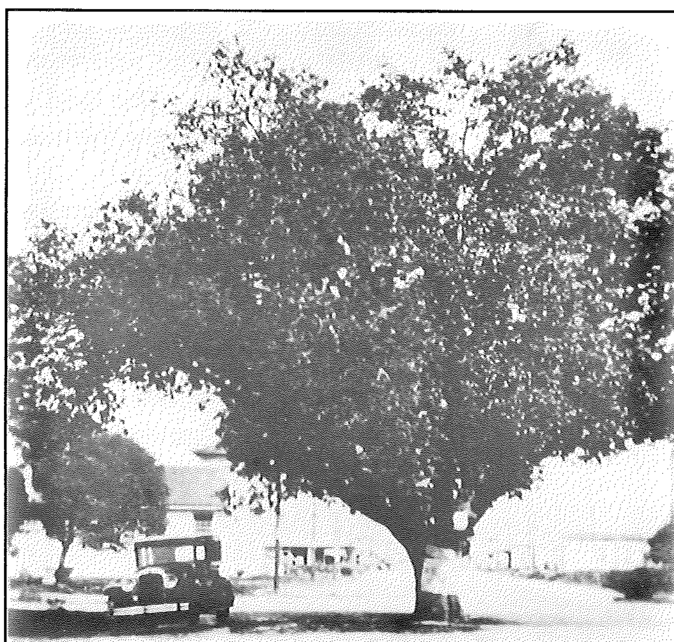
If you have ever walked down the cracked cement road named Texas Avenue in Baytown, Texas, you have undoubtedly come across a giant live oak tree growing in the middle of the road. No one knows the actual age of the oak. It is estimated to be anywhere from two hundred to two thousand years old. Ironically, the once thriving Texas Avenue business district witnessed the near-death of the tree on several occasions; now, the fertile green tree stands in the midst of a slowly dying Texas Avenue. The avenue and the town of Goose Creek grew up around the old oak, as did the folklore of the tree itself, and the tree still has an influence on Baytown today.

One of the earliest myths claims that General Sam Houston and his army spent the night under the big oak just before the attack on Santa Anna's army at San Jacinto—not more than five miles away (Webber). In more recent times, as the growth of the towns of Goose Creek and Baytown took place, new stories and verbal histories of the Big Oak developed and spread. However, despite the legends, the tree's history is as real as the leaves that fall from its branches every autumn. The citizens of Baytown admire the giant oak because it has survived time, disease, and several threats. To many, the tree stands as a monument of the past, a symbol of both good and bad times in "old" Goose Creek, now known as Baytown, Texas.

It is easy to understand why Baytonians, especially those who have "been around" quite awhile, are virtually "in love" with the fifty-foot tree. The memories of the old town and the tree are inseparable, especially for life-long Baytonian R. H. Pruett, known to the rest of Baytown as Red. Red is the son of the late Price Pruett who originally owned all of the land that the dying Texas Avenue and the flourishing oak tree now occupy (Pruett). The Pruett homestead, in 1902, was on 293 acres of land, most of which is now owned either by Harris County or the City of Baytown (Webber). The Pruetts' original house was located not far from the oak, which grew in their front yard. As children, Red, his brother, and his sister played under the shade of the tree. "I had a dog once when I was a little kid that would run up and jump on the tree and climb it. We would spend all day climbing on its branches," Red stated.

Not far from the peaceful home of the Pruetts, a company that would change and affect the lives of many was to be built. Oil was fast becoming the commodity of the day, and the Goose Creek area was rich with the "black gold." On June 12, 1908, the first oil well was brought in at the Goose Creek Oil Field. During the next eight years, oil activity continued, and in 1916 discovery of oil along Tabbs Bay and nearby Goose Creek Stream promoted population growth and community development in that area. However, in 1917 a "wild gusher" broke up the community and scattered the citizens. Later that year, Ross Shaw Sterling, one of the founders of Humble Oil and Refining Co., which had an interest in the Goose Creek Oil Field, purchased land near Black Duck Bay, adjacent to the Houston Ship Channel. He needed the land for the building of a refinery to be known later as the Baytown Refinery of the Humble Oil and Refining Company (Jones 1).

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM.



Baytown"s myth shrouded oak as it appeared in the 1920s

Intermittently, Sterling's company established settlements for the workers and their families. Sterling saw a distinct need

for a central community—a town. In 1917, he purchased three-fourths of a square mile from Price Pruett to build that town. Sterling and Pruett laid out the entire city and called it Goose Creek. As the oil business grew, so did the population of Goose Creek, and as the town grew, so did its transportation problems. Texas Avenue, a county road for many years, became a part of Sterling's Goose Creek. The county road, running from Cedar Bayou east of the town and through the new town, stopped directly in front of the old oak (Hartman). The refinery, west of Goose Creek, had no accessible road from the town. Since a roadway was needed between the two, for the first time the tree stood in jeopardy of its life. Because Texas Avenue was a county road, the county had the responsibility to provide for its maintenance. However, the land directly west of the big oak still belonged to Price Pruett, and he refused to see his tree cut down! Charles Massey, County Commissioner of Precinct 2 of Harris County, haggled with Pruett, and before the conflict was over, Pruett had given the right-of-way to the County with only one stipulation: that the tree be allowed to stand and die a natural death. This agreement would, in effect, save the tree's life on several occasions.

The truth generated a myth; related folklore arose in which Ross Sterling was riding by when he spotted engineers from Goose Creek Realty Co. and from Harris County, surveying the right-of-way on which the tree stood. They actually planned to cut the tree down and run the road over its rooted grave. Supposedly, Sterling stopped and commented: "It required many years for nature to produce a beautiful thing like that, and we must save it!" (Webber). In any case, the tree was spared. The road was bent south of the tree, and a roadway between the new town and the new refinery was completed (Webber).

The flourishing community of Goose Creek soon became one of the largest "boom towns" on the Gulf Coast. The many stores up and down Texas Avenue were as bricks stacked one next to another. There was T. C. Culpepper's Furniture Store, Guberman's Dry Goods, and the Texan Theatre, to name a few (Hartman). The tree harmonized with the community and was loved by most of the citizens of Goose Creek until it was blamed for a death. On October 28, 1929, at 10:30 p.m., Marion Epperson, a twenty-two-year-old machinist at the refinery was going to work in an open-air taxi. Driving the taxi was R. L. Fisher. As Fisher and Epperson approached the bend in the road around the big oak, Fisher was blinded by the lights of two on-coming cars. One of the cars was approaching Texas Avenue while the other was exiting at a root beer stand. Fisher, trying to avoid the two cars, headed off the road and hit the oak tree head on. Thrown out of the back

seat of the taxi, Epperson hit the five-foot diameter trunk of the tree. His skull was crushed, but he did not die until two hours later in a hospital, two blocks away (Webber). The tree was condemned as a traffic hazard. One story is that an axe-wielding mob formed by some of the townspeople intended to cut down the "awful hazard" but did not succeed (Hartman).

The townspeople soon forgot the incident, and the town returned to its usual routine. As always, the workers on Texas Avenue would take their sack lunches and picnic under the tree. Soon some enterprising fruit farmers set up shop underneath the old tree to pedal their green goods. One such individual was Joe H. Hall, my uncle. A farm boy from Willis, Texas, Joe found the shade of the tree an excellent place to sell his watermelons. During the summer of 1930, when Joe was nineteen years old and just out of high school, he and his father filled their horse-drawn wagon with the melons that Joe had raised, and the two men traveled down to Goose Creek to sell them underneath the big tree. They pulled their wagon up on the north side of the oak and nailed a sign to the trunk that read, "Willis Watermelons—25c." Joe sold a few melons, but not as many as he had expected. That night they stayed with some relatives in town and, the next morning, they returned to the shade of the oak. The traffic was beginning to pick up as the men traveled to the refinery. However, Joe's sales were not. One little old man pulled his car up behind Joe's wagon, got out, and looked the melons over. "Hey Sonny," the man said to Joe, "the sign said these melons were grown in Willis." "Yes, Sir," replied Joe, "some of the finest melons you'll ever eat." "Well, Sonny," the man explained, "I've eaten many a melon in my lifetime, and the best one I ever ate was a Hempstead melon. I wouldn't give you 10¢ for a melon that's grown anywhere else." The gray-haired gentleman walked over to his car, got in, and drove off to the refinery. He wasn't too far down the road before Joe had a new sign made and nailed to the tree. It read, "Hempstead Melons—30c." By the end of the day, Joe's wagon was empty and his pockets were full. My aunt, Sue Hall, tells me that Joe used the money to buy the only suit he would own through four years at college and which he wore to his graduation.

After 1930, the town grew more rapidly than ever before. New businesses formed, and old businesses left their original sites to move to more valuable property along the avenue. One such business helped preserve Baytown's living legend. The Home Lumber Co., now Woods Home Center at 800 E. Texas Avenue, was once located very near the tree, which was actually used as a landmark for the lumber company. Its letterhead contained the slogan, "By the Big Oak Tree."

The lumber company, in concern for the tree, hired tree experts to periodically treat the tree when it was damaged or ill. Traffic still ran to the south of the oak although tall trucks would frequently detour to its north side since the branches on the south side hung lower than those to the north. This way, the trucks avoided coming in contact with the spreading arms of the giant. For several years during this period, the Baytown Lions Club decorated the tree for Christmas. Today, the annual Baytown Christmas parade still begins at the tree (Webber).

In 1948, the communities of Goose Creek, Pelly, and Baytown, consolidated and formed the town of Baytown (Jones 1). On the newly formed city council was R. H. Red Pruett, Price Pruett's son. The tree, blamed for several more traffic accidents on Texas Avenue, was occasionally threatened. Yet, the council never seriously discussed cutting down the tree. The road around the tree had been paved, covering the tree's roots, and it became apparent that the tree might die "a natural death" (Webber), an "act of God" which reflected the original agreement between Pruett and Charles Massey.

On Monday, December 12, 1950, the Baytown City Council met as usual, with one council member absent—Red Pruett. The attending members were W. D. Reeves, E. W. Buelow, M. L. Campbell, Rufus Bergeron, and W. C. Williams; the mayor was J. A. Ward. Not far into the meeting, W.D. Reeves brought up the subject of the tree in a discussion of old business. "Just wondered if it wouldn't be a good idea to go ahead and get rid of it. What do you think?" Councilman E. W. Buelow remarked that it certainly was a traffic hazard. "I move that we cut it down and pave the area," Councilman M. L. Campbell said. Reeves seconded the motion and a vote was taken by Ward. The council voted in majority to cut down the old oak (Baytown Minutes). Red returned the next day and soon found out what his fellow concilmen had done. Yet, Pruett was not extremely upset by the vote. "I missed very few meetings as a council member. The vote was merely a routine deal. There was really nothing personal about it. They thought it was a hazard, and it was just routine."

Pruett quickly telephoned the other council members in an effort to change their minds. "I asked them to just give me a chance. It was almost dead. I urged them to let me try to save it. I promised to pay for all the expenses. I didn't think it was right for the city to pay for it."

On the following day, Tuesday, a prominent Baytonian, Fred Hartman, played a minor but humorous role in saving the tree. Hartman, owner of the *Baytown Sun* and several other Texas

newspapers, recalls the story of how the tree was saved from the axe in 1950:

> The tree just barely escaped this tragedy. The Baytown City Council passed a motion—adopted a resolution, which directed the City Street Director, W. M. "Red" Grantham, to cut down that tree—at a council meeting like on a Monday night. And "Red" was gonna' cut this tree down Wednesday morning. At that time, I was a stringer for the *Houston Post* while I worked for the *Tri-City Sun* (*Baytown Sun*) and I told them [*Houston Post*] that they [the city] were gonna' cut down that tree and that it might be worth a picture and if they wanted someone to try to get a picture, to let me know. They called me back and said that they wanted that picture now! Well, "Red" Grantham was a friend of mine, and I called him and told him the dilemma I was in, and I asked him if he could help me. "What do you want me to do?" he asked. Well, the first thing I want you to do is to get an axe and meet me up at the oak tree and we're gonna' fake you swinging the axe. Naturally, I don't imagine they would of used an axe, but it was symbolic. He said, "I'll meet you there in thirty minutes." Well, he showed up with some members of the City Council and that axe he had borrowed from the fire department, and I went up there to supervise it and I took a photographer along. We were taking a picture of "Red" cuttin' down this tree, and it attracted attention. It was about shift-change time at the refinery and in those times, the traffic on Texas Avenue was tremendous—fifty times as congested as today—and they were watching us as we took the picture, and lo and behold, a car came by. . . going west on Texas and . . . stopped. A lady, Mrs. R. L. Dial—Mrs. Dial was a wonderful lady, I've known her for years. Real fine lady. Had two boys that went to school and her husband was on the school board. She was just a fine lady. And if she didn't like what was in the paper—why—she didn't have any aversion to telling me about it in pretty eloquent language. And by the same token, if somebody else said something about the paper, she'd try to kill 'em. Just a true friend of mine and the paper's. She stopped and she said, "Fred Hartman,

> what in the world are you doing?" And I says, "Mrs. Dial," (She hadn't read the paper that afternoon. It had come out in the paper Tuesday afternoon covering Monday's City Council meeting) "apparently you haven't read the paper. We're gonna cut down the tree Wednesday morning, and we're just going to get some pictures ahead of time." She looked at me—I mean her eyes were glowin'—she didn't look at me. She looked through me! And she said, "Listen here, young man, that tree will never be cut down." And I said, "Oh, yes ma'am, we're gonna—I mean they're gonna cut it down in the morning." "No, sir, they ain't gonna cut it down!" She went home, called down to the city hall and got the names of the city council members she didn't know and I'll guarantee you by supper time, there wasn't gonna' be no tree cut down. And I mean it hasn't been cut down to this day! If she hadn't driven by there, it would be gone.

On the following Thursday, an article appeared in the *Baytown Sun* with the headline, "Oak Tree Solves City's Problem by Dying." The story went on to tell that the tree was starving to death since the roots were not getting enough nourishment. The last line of the article read, "Time marches on, even over the Big Oak" ("Oak Tree").

Pruett was committed to seeing the tree through its crisis. Again, he talked with the other members of the city council and pleaded his case. On December 19, 1950, Pruett was quoted by the *Sun* as saying that there was a definite agreement in writing that the tree would not be cut down as long as it lived. Consequently, if the tree were cut down, the land given by Pruett to the county would revert to the Pruett Estate. "I don't want to be in the way of progress," said Pruett, "and if most of the people feel like it should be cut down, I won't object." Pruett concluded by saying, "If it's got to be cut down, why that's the way it is. I'm afraid it's dying anyway" ("Old Pack").

Almost as though the tree was on death row, it desperately needed a stay of execution. Before long, the public became emotionally involved for the salvation of the oak. Citizens Bank (founded by Price Pruett) ran a full page advertisement in the *Baytown Sun* on December 23, 1950. A photograph of the oak tree was pictured behind the words of a popular poem by Joyce Kilmer: "I think that I shall never see/A poem as lovely as a tree." At the bottom of the advertisement, in bold print, was the statement: "This is an urgent appeal to our City Council for the preservation of the Big Oak Tree ("Trees").

The council met on December 26, 1950. R. H. Pruett stood as a defense attorney for the dying and already condemned tree. The

minutes of the meeting reflect his appeal that "for personal, sentimental reasons, the tree be allowed to stand (Baytown Minutes). Pruett vowed to erect a curb around the tree and put blinking lights and reflectors on the tree ("Trees"). Perhaps the action to cut down the tree might have been retracted that night; however, the council waited, and action was postponed until Mayor Ward, who was absent, could be present (Baytown Minutes). Over the Christmas holidays, Pruett did much lobbying. The council next met on January 5, 1951. All members, including the Mayor, were present. As the minutes state, "Rufus Bergeron moved to rescind action of the City Council—cutting down the oak tree. R. H. Pruett seconded the motion. A vote was called and all were in favor of retracting the previous motion, except for E.W. Buelow, who voted "'nay'" (Baytown Minutes).

Buelow, the last holdout, believed firmly that the tree presented a definite safety hazard. Mr. Buelow and all the other council members, except Red Pruett, have since deceased. Mrs. Corabell Buelow, wife of the late Mr. Buelow, recalls that she discussed the subject a great deal at home. "Bill was very safety conscious," she said. "He only wanted the best for the community." Nevertheless, Red and the tree won their case. Just about everyone was pleased with the verdict. Red stated, "The City Council was actually glad that the tree would stay—they were 'tickled pink.'"

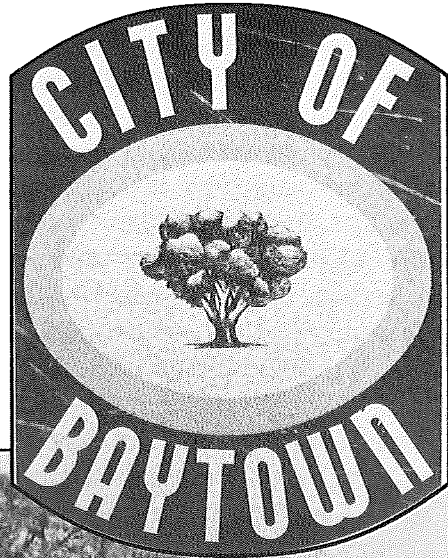
One person, not so pleased, wrote an editorial in the *Baytown Sun* on January 6, 1951, which read

> A random thought: It's comforting to find out we here in Baytown can still be moved to debate over a tree. There is more concern here for the fate of the old oak tree than there is over a human being in Communist China where life is so cheap. . . . Thousands of Chinese troops are being sent to their slaughter in Korea, apparently without a qualm on the part of the Red rulers.
>
> Even those of us who want the tree cut down as a traffic hazard will admit there would be sentimental feelings of loss at not seeing the gallant old oak standing in the middle of Texas Avenue anymore.
>
> It's not too late to take time out for one more New Year's resolution; not to lose our sense of values, our feelings for fair play, the individual rights of man and love of freedom.
>
> Without these values, we have lost the war, even though every Communist in China and Russia is dead.
>
> Doggone, if that random thought didn't turn out

to be an editorial.

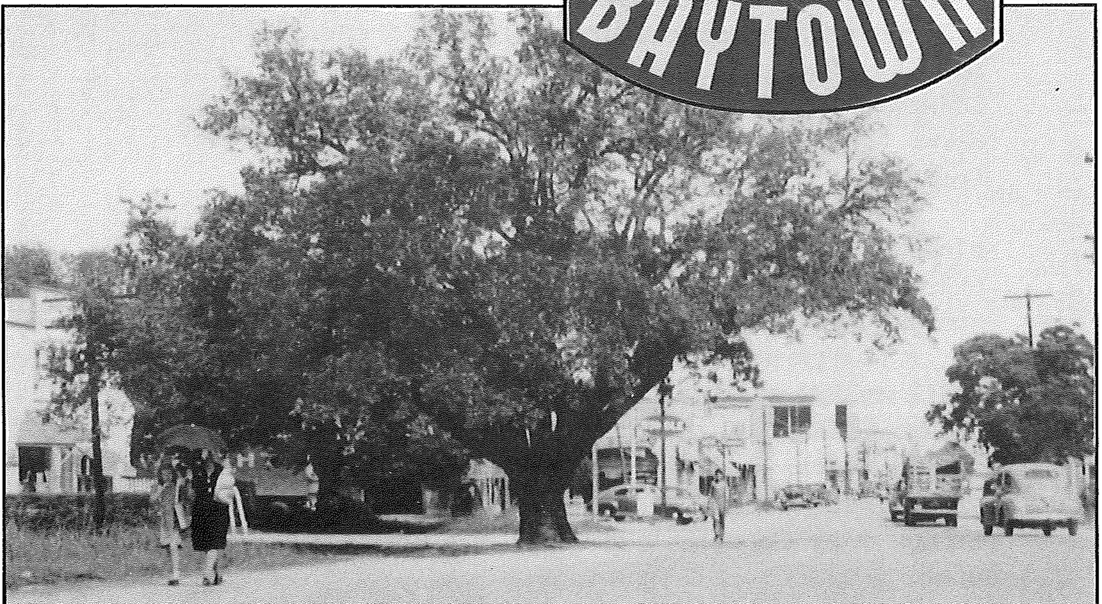
The concern over the fate of the oak tree remained on Red Pruett's mind. He had won the battle with the Council, but would he win the battle with nature? Over the next two years, Red spent over $1,000 of his own money to nurse the tree back to life. Both local tree surgeons and surgeons from the Beaumont area were called upon by Pruett to help save the tree. Pruett vividly remembers the struggle:

> We dug nearly twelve to fourteen yards of bad earth out from underneath the tree and put in some good, rich soil in its place. We axe trimmed all the dead limbs and leaves off of it and got gallons of termites out of it. We had to tear almost all the bark off of it and drilled into the tree to doctor it. People said I was going to kill it, but I told them it was gonna die anyway if I don't try to save it. I put curbs up



Seen on a city truck (right), the Texas Avenue oak now serves as a logo for the city of Baytown. Judging from the automobiles (below), this undated photograph of the Baytown Oak was apparently taken in the 1940s.

INSET PHOTO BY DON BOGGS
BOTTOM PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM



> around it and inset reflectors on the tree and fertilized the top soil. Within two years, it started to sprout out green.

Red and the tree had finally won the difficult battle against nature. According to Fred Hartman,

> There hasn't been much scuttlebutt about the tree since then: With the origination of all these shopping centers, and Texas Avenue becoming a graveyard—Hell! There ain't no traffic anymore. Very few people drive by there anymore. They've slowed the traffic down, put all the snake business in there, [In 1974, Texas Avenue was redesigned in a series of alternating curves.] except on the nights when those kids come over here and raise hell. It's not a problem; Texas Avenue has become "deader than an iron doornail." It doesn't create the hazard nor the congestion it once did. You might as well go out in the middle of the prairie somewhere and say, "Let's cut down that tree!"

Today, R. H. "Red" Pruett maintains a close proximity to his tree. His new house was built not more than two-hundred yards from the Big Oak and three-hundred yards from the site of the house he lived in as a youngster.

The oak tree has actually become the symbol of Baytown. To Red, it's much more than that. It is a monument to the agreement between his father and Charlie Massey and a reminder of the time and money Red spent to save the tree from death. Pruett says,"I pass by there almost every day. I make sure it's doing all right and that no one has nailed anything up on it. It's really never been a traffic hazard. I've always said if a person (drunk or sober) couldn't see a five-foot round, fifty-foot high tree in front of them, well, they have no business driving anyway."

Although Texas Avenue is now just about "dead," the tree is very much alive and so are the many memories held by those who were here in earlier times, who ate and played underneath the spreading branches of the tree and enjoyed the shade it provided. Presently, on Friday and Saturday nights, kids from all over the area come to Texas Avenue to ride up and down the street, starting at the tree, showing off their cars and "raising hell." They pass the tree, probably without realizing what an important role the Giant Oak has played in Baytown's rich history.*

If trees could only talk.

*Editor's Note: Even in the short time that has elapsed since the writing of this paper, this custom, too, has disappeared, further testimony to the rapidity of change.

SELDOM DOES A COLLEGE sophomore get an invitation to include her work in a scholarly journal; such was the case with June Begeman's paper on the ferries which played an important role in the early history of the area. *Southwestern Texas Quarterly* tentatively agreed to publish June's paper in its "Notes and Documents" section. Unfortunately, the journal's policy is to publish only those papers which had not previously been published. June's paper had already appeared in *Touchstone*. Despite her disappointment, the invitation, nevertheless, testifies to the quality of her research. Although few of the ferries she discusses still operate, at one time these boats were the area's links to its neighbors. Early Texans found little here in the way of roads, and they utilized the numerous waterways to move their products and themselves from one place to another, often setting up ferry systems at strategic spots on rivers. Some ferries were responsible for the start of a particular community, and each was an integral part of the social and economic growth of the area. Probably the most exciting moment of June's search for information occurred when the minutes for the County Commissioner's office for 1837 were uncovered, providing her with vital information about her topic. Certainly, the facts that she uncovered prove the vital role that such ferry systems played in the early history of Texas. To modern Texans, the ferries are reminders of the past and quaint tastes of earlier days; to the first Texans, the ferries were lifelines to the rest of the territory and to the United States. Perhaps as an aftermath of her interest in the history of this community, Begeman has decided to major in history with the ultimate hope of working with a museum.

In 1987 June Begeman won first place for her paper, originally titled "Lynchburg, Cedar Bayou and Morgan's Point Ferryboats: Historical Highlights." She has recently completed a degree in history at the University of St. Thomas in Houston. She is also the author of a brief official history of the Baytown Exxon Refinery.

Area Ferryboats: Historical Highlights

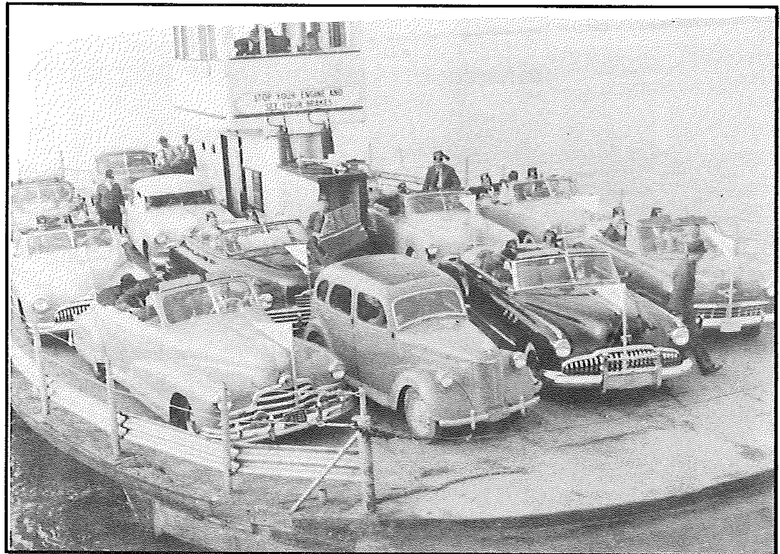
JUNE A. BEGEMAN

Nestled down against Galveston Bay in the southeast corner of Texas, a portion of Harris County is dotted with numerous waterways. As the land around these bays, rivers, and streams became settled in the nineteenth century, boat transportation became necessary. At well-traveled locations, ferryboat service soon began to spring up where there was a safe water crossing. Early residents were thus provided with a vital link between separated communities which gave them an opportunity to attend church, do their shopping, get to a job, go to school, conduct business, or simply socialize. Some of these ferries were short-lived, serving a specific purpose or being supplanted by more modern, streamlined methods of crossing the

waterways; others were longer-lived because of their location and the traffic volume.

One of the first men to realize the economic advantages of operating a ferry in this area was Nathanial Lynch, who with his wife and children emigrated to Texas from Missouri in the summer of 1822, at which time he "located his headright at the place known as Lynchburg" (Gulish 124). Lynch was one of Stephen F. Austin's "Old 300" colonists, and on August 19, 1824, he received a title to a league of land, the equivalent of 4,428 acres (Taylor 210). Soon after the Lynch family's arrival, Lynch established a ferry across the San Jacinto River just below its confluence with Buffalo Bayou which "was of great service to early settlers, and was long known as Lynch's Ferry" (Looscan 197). All water traffic passing up and down the San Jacinto River and Buffalo Bayou soon came to know Lynch as the keeper of the ferry. J. C. Clopper, an early traveler and resident of the area, noted as he reached the San Jacinto River that "at this place is kept a ferry by Mr. Lynch—very hospitable and kind Yankees" (Clopper 44). In 1830, Lynch received a license to operate his ferry from the local Mexican government (Henson).

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM



Shriners return (from a convention sometime in the early 1950s) via the Hogg Island-Morgans Point ferry, Charles D. Massey. *The* Massey *could carry twenty automobiles.*

The Lynchburg ferry crossing figured prominently in Texas' bid for independence from Mexico as it was on a principal land route from the settled part of southern Texas to the Mexican border. After their military victories at the Alamo in San Antonio and at Goliad, a triumphant Santa Anna and his army marched eastward to confront General Houston and his troops. At this news, thousands of terrified settlers began fleeing their homes, before the advancing Mexican Army, in what became known as the Runaway Scrape. Mrs. Lynch's account to a group of travelers a year later quoted her as saying

> . . . she had no knowledge of the approach of the Mexicans to that place until early in the morning when she was hailed by a number of them upon the opposite side of the river, and directed to send a boat across for their benefit. . . . As may be supposed she did not comply but gathering together some few necessaries took her immediate departure with her little ones across the country. ("Houston and Galveston" 19)

Thousands of fleeing settlers converged on the south banks of the San Jacinto River to cross Lynch's Ferry in their flight from the Mexican Army. Mrs. Dilue Harris and her family were among those who were fleeing, and she recalls in her journal that when they reached the ferry, 5,000 people were ahead of them, and that it took them three days of waiting before they could cross (Harris 163). Nathanial Lynch began taking advantage of the settlers during this time by charging much higher tolls than normal. President David Burnet, who lived in nearby Harrisburg, soon heard about it and immediately "galloped to the ferry and threatened to press the ferry

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

This 1913 photograph shows the motor driven ferry at Lynchburg, the first to be put into service in Harris County.

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Cars lined up at the Lynchburg Ferry in the mid 1920s as Humble workers go to the San Jacinto Battleground and to Sylvan Beach, near LaPorte, to picnic.

into government service if Lynch refused anyone passage because of inability to pay. Thereafter, ferry service across the San Jacinto River improved" (Tolbert 64). General Houston and his troops reached San Jacinto and "halted within 2 1/2 miles of Linches [sic] Ferry at sunrise on the 20th" of April (Swearingen, 23 Apr. 1836); when they found that Santa Anna and his troops were headed their way from New Washington in order to cross at Lynch's Ferry, Houston moved his troops "within half a mile of the ferry in some timber" and waited for Santa Anna (Houston 3). In the meantime they "seized the ferry Nathanial Lynch had used so profitably during the Runaway Scrape" (Tolbert 99). The ensuing battle between the Texans and the Mexicans ended in a decisive victory for Houston and his troops on April 21, 1836. After the battle was over, General Houston began to refer to it as the "Battle of Lynchburg before finding out San Jacinto was the correct name" (Orton "Lynchburg's Burnet" 8). The settlers soon began to return to their homes, retracing their journey back over Lynch's Ferry, which had been put back into operation by Nathanial Lynch (Tolbert 205).

Nathanial Lynch died on February 14, 1837 (Probate records A:42); in his will, he bequeathed to his eldest son, Benjamin Franklin Lynch, "the proceedes [sic] of the ferry and ground sufficient on each side of the river for a house and other ferry appendages [sic]," as well as 800 acres of land (Probate records E:215). The ferry thus stayed within the Lynch family, and they continued to operate it. During the April term of 1837, the newly-formed Harris County Commissioners Court set the Lynchburg ferry rates as follows: one person or living animal—12 1/2 cents each; each light wagon or carriage—25 cents each wheel; each loaded wagon—50 cents each wheel (Commissioners Court Minutes, Apr. 1837, A:a3). In 1844 and 1845, the proper running of the Lynchburg Ferry became a growing concern to the Commissioners Court, and in their meeting of January 7, 1845, they resolved to notify Lynch that "unless he keeps the ferry at Lynchburg in good repair with a sufficient number of boats they will proceed to rent the right of keeping the same to the highest bidder for one year; and the said committee are hereby authorized to advertise the same and rent it to the highest bidder unless the said Lynch keeps the ferry in such manner as they may approve" (Minutes 7 Jan. 1845, A:a124).

Perhaps this was enough warning to Lynch to improve his service, for there was nothing more in the minutes on the subject. On February 29, 1848, Benjamin Lynch died, intestate (Probate Records 1848, H:205) and apparently unmarried and childless, for the ferry came into the hands of his mother, who had now remarried; his mother's husband, Martin Hardin; his brother, John; and his sister, Elizabeth (Deed Records 23 Dec. 1850, N:526). On November 21, 1848, the County Commissioners Court granted I. C. May a license "for keeping a ferry at the San Jacinto and Lynchburg crossing . . . upon the said May paying . . . the sum of $20 as the amount of his service for one year from this date" (Minutes 21 Nov. A:3). A year later the Court granted J. Cellay a similar license for the same payment and the same length of time (Minutes 21 Nov. 1849, A: b 83). On September 23, 1850, the heirs of Benjamin Lynch's estate sold the land and ferry which he had inherited from his father to Hamilton Washington. The deed gave "all right and title to the ferry across the San Jacinto River at the town of San Jacinto which were originally granted by the authorities of Texas to Nathanial Lynch and by virtue of the ownership of the soil on either bank of said river, and which has been inherited by us; also the flat boat and skiff now used at said ferry and all the rights and privileges thereunto belonging . . ." (Deed 23 Sept. 1850, N:526, 7).

Washington owned the ferry until August 13, 1855, when he

sold it to Rufus K. Cage and Ferdinand Sims. The purchase price of $1,850.00 included "a certain block of lots on parcel of land situated in the town of Lynchburg" (Deed 13 Aug. 1855, N:544). Cage and Sims were granted a license by the county to "carry on a ferry at Lynchburg" on November 17, 1856 (Minutes 17 Nov. 1856, A: b 153). On April 11, 1857, Ferdinand Sims sold the ferry and the "ferry license now unexpired" to his partner, Rufus K. Cage (Deed 11 Apr. 1857, T:18, 19).

The next owner of record was I. J. Conrad Habermehl, who in turn deeded the ferry lots on both sides of the San Jacinto River as well as "all ferry boats and all rights to ferry," to his daughter, Caroline Habermehl, on December 13, 1860 (Deed 13 Dec. 1860, X:642, 3). A license was obtained from Harris County by Magnus T. Habermehl on October 12, 1865 (Minutes 12 Oct. 1865, C:6). In April of 1868, Caroline Habermehl received a similar license for keeping the ferry at Lynchburg from the County Commissioners (Minutes 6 Apr. 1868, C:85). On October 24, 1881, she sold "all my right, title and interest to the ferry across the San Jacinto River" as well as lots on both sides of the river on which the ferry landings were situated to F. C. Sandow for $250 (Deed 24 Oct. 1881, 24:247). A license was granted to Sandow to run the ferry on February 15, 1884, upon his executing a bond of $1,000. It was at this time that the county also set new rates for the ferry, as follows:

Foot Passenger 10 cents
1 horse vehicle 50 cents
2 horse vehicle $1.00
4 horse vehicle $1.25
Man and horse 25 cents
Cattle, horses, mules, jacks or jennies under 5 in number 10 cents
Each over 5 in number 7 1/2 cents each
Hogs, sheep and goats 2 cents per head. (Minutes 15 Feb. 1884, E:59)

The rates were changed slightly in 1889, with the interesting addition of "cattle, horses and mules in flatboat 10 cents a head; cattle, horses and mules swimming 3 cents a head" (Minutes 14 Feb. 1889, E:206).

On August 14, 1890, the ferry was for the first time made free of charge to persons, freight or animals. The County Commissioners entered into a contract with Earnest Sandow "for a good safe and substantial ferry boat and to maintain and operate the same at

Lynchburg." Sandow was to furnish the ferry boat, operate and maintain it across the San Jacinto River at Lynchburg, from Sandow's Store to San Jacinto "from sunrise in the morning to sunset in the evening." The County agreed to pay Sandow $60.00 a month for this service for one year. In addition, Sandow agreed "to maintain a private ferry at said point and . . . to maintain the same at prices now or formerly charged or not to exceed the same, for the same service" for passengers needing ferry transportation after sunset or before sunrise (Minutes 14 Aug. 1890, F:162). This contract, obviously a satisfactory one for both the county and for Mr. Sandow, was renewed at the end of each contract period, with occasional increases in salary, until April 16, 1903. At that time Jesse Higginbotham was hired to run the ferry for $65.00 a month (Minutes 16 Apr. 1903, K:193). He continued in this capacity until March of 1906, when Sandow was again hired to run the ferry (Minutes 15 Mar. 1906, K:636). On September 15, 1914, the County Commissioners agreed to hire an assistant for Sandow. They also ordered that there was to be no charge for the use of the ferry from 6 a.m. until 8 p.m.; from 8 p.m. until 10 p.m. the maximum charge was to be 50 cents; after 10 p.m. the maximum charge was set at $1.00 (Minutes 15 Sept. 1914, R:78). In August of 1915, Jeff Matthews was made ferryman in place of Sandow (Minutes 9 Aug. 1915, R:460); he was replaced one year later by Eugene McLain, at a salary of $100.00 a month (Minutes 27 Sept. 1916, S:322). In January of 1917, a contract for building a new ferry was awarded to Ernest Sandow for $6,989.00 (Minutes 8 Jan. 1917, S:501). Sometime during this period Ernest Sandow was also made Superintendent of Ferries at Lynchburg. He continued in this capacity until his retirement on July 15, 1922 (Minutes 3 Jul. 1922, V:122).

Today the Lynchburg ferry is owned and run by Harris County. The two ferry boats, the *Ross S. Sterling* and the *William P. Hobby* (both put into service in 1964) are powered by two 150-horsepower diesel engines, have a 40,000 pound capacity, hold twelve cars, and run 24 hours a day (Mayon). The ferries still do a brisk business, although the Baytown-LaPorte tunnel has siphoned off a great deal of their former traffic.

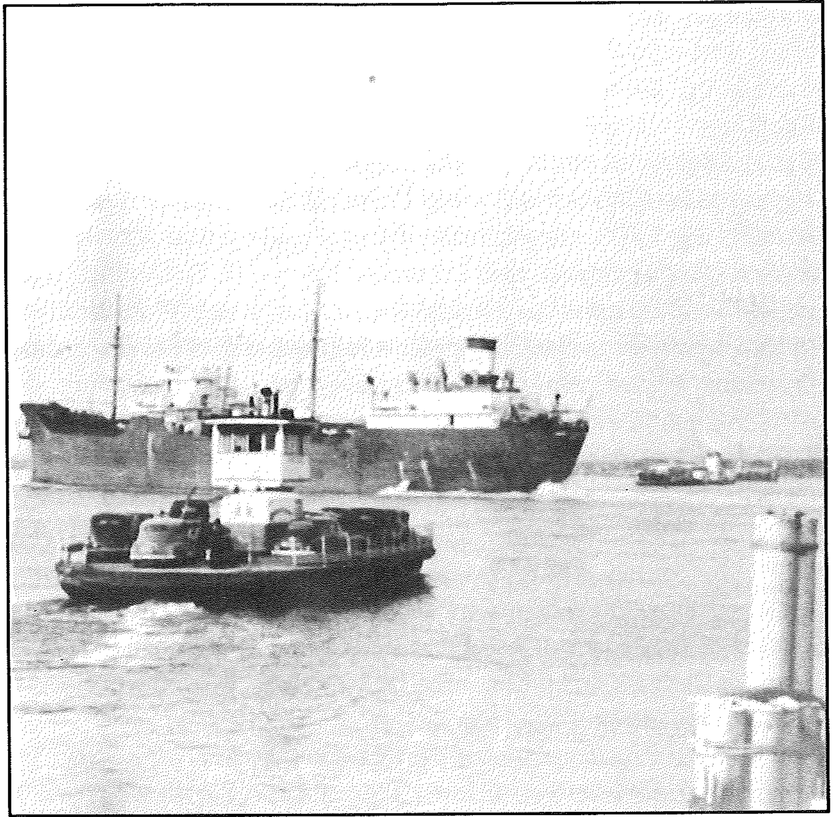
Cedar Bayou, with its mouth in Galveston Bay, attracted many early settlers coming into Texas in the early to mid-1800s, and they soon formed communities on either side of the bayou, which marked the boundary between Harris and Chambers Counties. At first farming was the main occupation of the settlers, but soon the clay which made up the banks of Cedar Bayou was found to make superior bricks, and brickyards began to spring up. Sawmill operations also

flourished, and "several shipyards were built along the bayou to build and repair the many boats using the bayou" as a result of this increasing commerce in the area (Rogers "Cedar Bayou"). In February of 1859, a petition by G. W. Ferrand to keep a ferry on Cedar Bayou "at the mail crossing from Lynchburg to Liberty" was approved by the Harris County Commissioners (Minutes Feb. 1859, B:223). By 1898, the citizens of Cedar Bayou saw a need for a free ferry on Cedar Bayou, and Commissioner J. H. G. Becker "upon the petition of citizens of Cedar Bayou for a ferry" submitted the following report to the County Commissioners: "I hereby submit the following report regarding free ferry on the county road near Ellison's Store on Cedar Bayou connecting Harris and Chambers Counties. I recommend that said ferry be granted provided Chambers County agrees to pay half of the expenses incurred thereby" (Minutes 12 Apr. 1898, H:390).

A few months later, on July 12, 1898, the County Commissioners instructed Commissioner McKinney "to confer with the Commissioner of Chambers County to construct a ferry boat at Ellison's Store at Cedar Bayou" (Minutes 12 Jul. 1898, H:454). It is not known if this ferry service was ever begun.

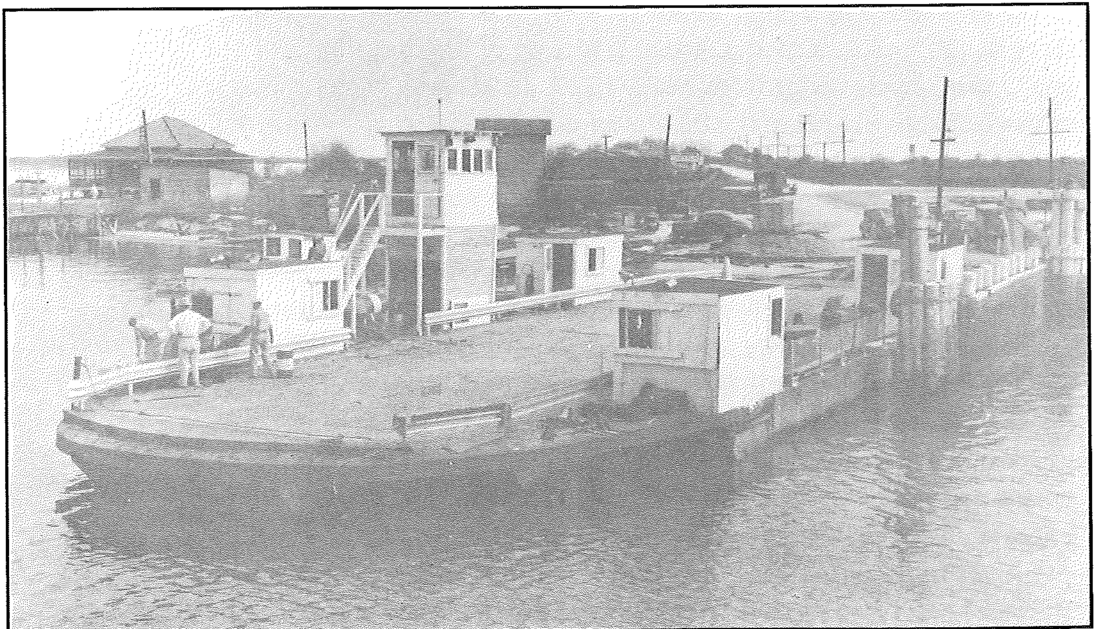
At least four ferries ran on Cedar Bayou in the early 1900's. Perhaps the most well-known was the ferry called Ilfrey's Ferry, which was located where Cedar Bayou Road runs to the bayou, makes a bend and becomes Ferry Road going northeast. The landing on the west side was located on the property of Edward Ilfrey, who also operated a general merchandise store and post office on this site in the late 1800s and early 1900s (Travis). It is not known when the ferry began, but it is mentioned in a history of the first fifty years of the Cedar Bayou Lodge from 1870-1920, as follows: "The Brethren who would have to cross the bayou usually gathered at Ilfrey's store, and would cross together, helping each other with the horses, some of which would go into the flatboat used for a ferry, while others, more wild, had to be towed across, swimming" (Sjolander 6).

The ferry, which was 45 feet long and had a 12-foot beam, was a cable and rope pulley type which had to be pulled from shore to shore by hand. It was shaped like a barge with rails on each side and chains on each end and held up to three cars ("Ferry Played" 4). Louise Travis, a lifelong resident of the Cedar Bayou area, remembers that the cars would drive down the bank right onto the ferry, which had hinged ramps lowered to the bank level. When boat traffic came up or down the bayou, boats would give a whistle at a certain point, and the operator of the ferry would drop the rope which pulled the ferry back and forth across the bayou into the water so that the



The Hogg Island-Morgan's Point ferry (right) often had to contend with the heavy ship traffic in the Houston Ship Channel. The Lynchburg ferry (below) awaits its next load of cars in the early 1950s.

Photos courtesy Baytown Historical Museum



boat could move by. Boat traffic always had right-of-way, and cars had to wait for it to go by. "You didn't dare get in a hurry if you had to cross the ferry!" A piece of carved wood which looked very much like a monkey wrench was put on the cable for leverage, and the operator would slide this wood down the cable the full length of the ferry, back and forth, and thus move the ferry across the bayou. When Mr. Ilfrey owned the ferry, each person riding on it did his own pulling (Travis). When the county took over the ferry in 1919, a ferryman was hired to run the ferry during daylight hours (Minutes 5 May 1919, T:436). There were several ferrymen over the early years, but J. F. Strickland was remembered as the skipper for many years until the ferry was discontinued ("Ferry Played" 4). At night, traffic could use the ferry, but as there was no ferryman, the driver had to pull the ferry across. This ferry was much used by residents on both sides of the bayou, for it saved about six miles of driving on poor roads (Travis). Among those who depended upon the ferry were members of Cedar Bayou Methodist Church who lived in Chambers County, as it was "a main connection for many members to travel to the church" ("Ferry Played" 4). It was a well-used ferry, for in 1930, it was crossed by 82,855 vehicles (Auditor's Report 1930, 189-91). Although Chambers County residents used the ferry more than residents in Harris County, they did not pay their share of the operating expenses of the ferry. They were not a wealthy county, as farming was the predominant occupation of its residents (Travis). For this reason and because of a general slackening of traffic, the ferry was closed down by the county in 1948. Cedar Bayou residents, concerned about the condition of the old hand-drawn ferry, had petitioned County Commissioner Hugh A. May to replace it. Their petition stated that the ferry "is old and rotten and the irons on the aprons are rusting off and it is unsafe for people to cross on, and sooner or later someone is going to be drowned while crossing there" ("Cedar Bayou Wants" 1). After conducting a survey of traffic crossing the ferry, it was determined that only nine to twenty cars a day used the ferry, and that the majority of these cars were Chambers County residents ("Cedar Bayou Ferry" 1). The ferry was permanently discontinued on October 1, 1948 ("Old Cedar Bayou" 1).

Another hand-pulled ferry on Cedar Bayou was further downstream, in the area known as Devil's Elbow. This ferry was called the McKinney Ferry "in reference to the Edward McKinney family" who had a home in Chambers County near the ferryboat crossing (Schlobohm D:5). In 1931, Harris County constructed a new road "known as the Lake Drive" at the end of which "a ferry, installed to

promote a means of crossing Cedar Bayou, will be in operation in a short time" (Rogers "Tabbs Bay" 7). This ferry crossing was in operation until October of 1942, when the County Commissioners authorized the Superintendent of Ferries "to discontinue use of Cedar Bayou Lake Drive Ferry #8959 and move same to Bascule Bridge to be tied and sunk, and it is further ordered that the ferryman be transferred to the Bascule Bridge as bridge tender" (Minutes 16 Oct. 1942, 11:741).

Local residents remember two other, smaller crossings on Cedar Bayou, which were probably short-lived and served a specific purpose. One ferry, near the mouth of the bayou, "was run by a man named Ingleman and ceased operation around 1910 or 1920, in deference to the ferry at Devil's Elbow" (Schlobohm). The second ferry was at Massey-Thompkins Road, where Highway 146 now crosses the bayou, and near a horseshoe-shaped bend in the stream. It was privately owned by a lumberyard located on the south side of the bayou and was run as a convenience for customers on either side. This one-car, barge-type ferry was replaced in about 1928, by a pontoon-type bridge which was located a little further upstream where the bayou was narrower (Travis).

Long before the Tabbs Bay Causeway and the Morgan's Point ferry became reality, they were a goal and dream of a group of leading citizens of Goose Creek, Pelly, Baytown and LaPorte. As early as 1919, these citizens began speculating on the advantages of connecting the north and south sides of the Houston Ship Channel. They foresaw that a direct route from the cities of Beaumont and Houston through the Tri-Cities and LaPorte and then south to Galveston would be a spur to new growth and increased business. It would also serve to link the loosely-knit communities into what would become known as the "Four Cities Area" ("Completion"). In 1928, County Commissioner C. D. Massey of Precinct 2 became interested in the project; at about the same time, Commissioner R. H. Spencer of Precinct 1 supported the idea on the south side of the channel. "It was one of the few times that these men, Massey and Spencer, agreed upon a project" ("Dream Realized" 6). An official proposal was made by Commissioner Spencer that such a project go forward, and it met with an enthusiastic response from the general public. In 1929, thirty-five interested citizens met with members of the Harris County Commissioners Court and the Houston Port Commission in an initial survey of the area in which the causeway and ferry would run ("Completion"). In 1930, a county election held to vote on bond issues included a proposal for the Tabbs Bay Causeway and ferry project, and it passed. The bonds began selling,

and the work started ("Dream Realized").

The first phase was the causeway built in 1931 across Tabbs Bay . It began at the end of Evergreen Road and went almost directly south one-half mile over Tabbs Bay onto Hog Island, where it became a concrete highway seven and one-half feet above sea level and continued south and then southeast to a point on the north side of the Houston Ship Channel. From there the ferry would transport the traffic across the narrow 1,500 foot strip of the Houston Ship Channel to the south side of Morgan's Point ("Tabbs Causeway" 1,8).

About the time of the completion of the causeway, money for the entire project ran out. The severe recession of the early 1930s caused a money shortage among would-be investors, and the county could not find anyone to buy the remainder of the bonds to complete the project ("Dream Realized"). In the meantime, the expensive causeway to Hog Island became known as a "$150,000 crabbing pier" because it led nowhere and its only use was as a fishing pier ("State to Take Over" 1,2). More than a year went by before a group of Houston businessmen came forward and purchased the bonds ("Dream Realized").

Work began in early 1933 on the ferry slips on Hog Island and Morgan's Point and on the ferryboat. The B. H. Elliott shipyard in Harrisburg built the ferry at a cost of $12,961.02. With timber furnished by South Texas Lumber Company, the wooden hull measured 94'6" long by 38' wide by 9' deep. The boat was powered by twin 4-cycle, 70-horsepower capacity Union Diesel crude oil burning engines which were purchased from the Peden Iron & Steel Company of Houston at a cost of $11,976.00. The ferryboat was named the *Charles D. Massey* in honor of the County Commissioner of Precinct 2 who had helped make this dream a reality.

In 1933, the causeway, paved road, ferry slips and ferry were all completed, for a total cost of $222,466 ("$222,466" B:5). A huge celebration was held to inaugurate the service, which began on July 29, 1933. The ferry had a 20-car capacity and ran 19 hours a day from 5 a.m. until 12 midnight. Its average speed was five miles per hour and its run was twelve to fifteen minutes long. ("Causeway Fete" 1). In 1934, service was extended to twenty-four hours a day ("Ferry to Go" 1).

In 1939, "Harris County asked the state to take over operation of the boat because of the great drain on the resources of the precincts involved," and on September 1 of that year the state began operating the ferry ("State to Take Over"). In 1947, the state added a second ferry, the *P. T. Lipscomb*, which was built of leftover World War II barge tanks. Never successful, it was taken out of operation

a few years later. Its replacement was the *Jefferson*, which was moved to Morgan's Point from Galveston. A short while later another ferry, the *Galveston*, was added as a standby ship (Boynton 1).

Over the years, several storms played havoc with the running of the ferries. In March of 1942, "a brisk norther of almost gale force" left most of the lowlands in the area dry, causing the ferry to go aground and temporarily disrupting service ("Morgan's Point Ferry"). In 1943, a hurricane again interrupted service for a short time ("Baytown Cleaning Up" 2). Then on December 5, 1950, another severe norther caused a forty-mile gale and generated tides approaching five feet below normal, and the *Jefferson* went aground "100 yards from Morgan's Point side of Houston Ship Channel." This time there was a full load of automobiles and 75 people aboard the ferry. Some of the passengers were taken off the ferry during the night, and the remainder the following morning ("Ferry Marooned" 1). The ferry was aground for two days ("Ferries Back" 1), and in the meantime traffic had to detour over the Market Street Road to the Lynchburg Ferry or through the Washburn Tunnel in Pasadena ("Ferry Still" 1).

Even as the new transportation system was being heralded and celebrated in 1933, citizens began planning ahead again—this time for the day when there would be a tunnel beneath the Houston Ship Channel. They foresaw that the causeway and ferry were merely a stopgap for the next ten or fifteen years, after which they predicted that these facilities would become hopelessly inadequate as vehicular traffic in the area increased. Their predictions were well-founded, for as early as 1941, the City Attorney of Pelly called the Morgan's Point Ferry "woefully inadequate" ("Inadequate"), and plans were subsequently laid for the building of what is now the Baytown-LaPorte Tunnel, which was completed and put into service on September 22, 1953.

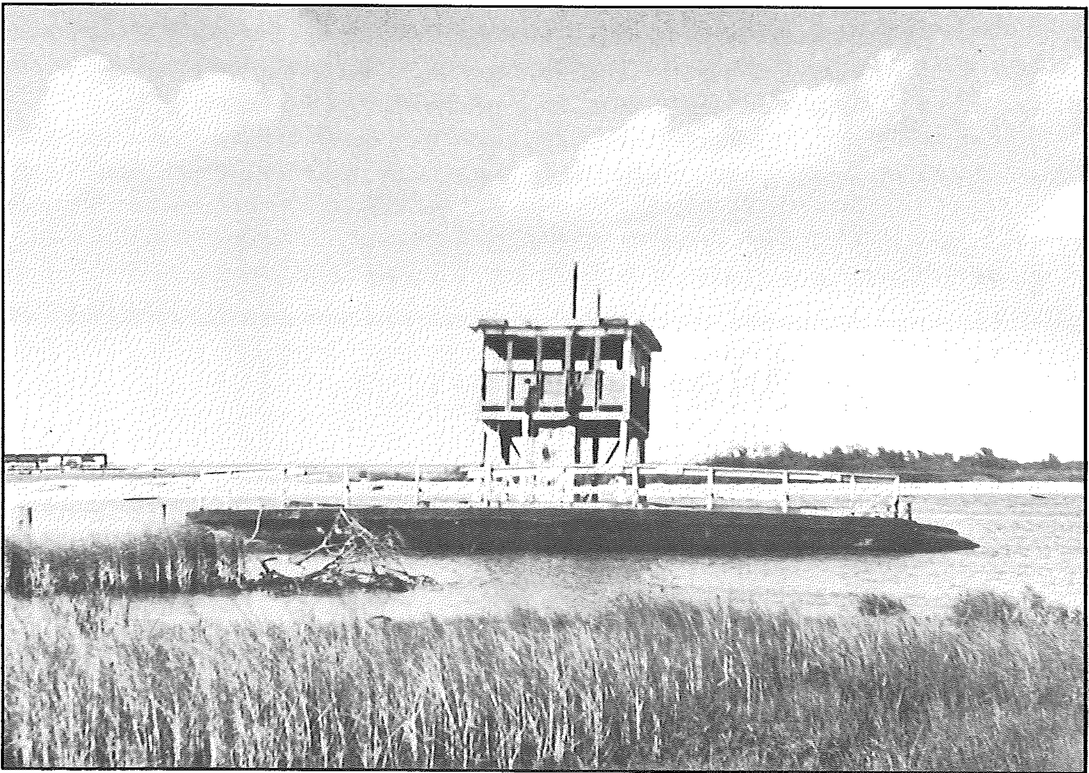
This tunnel marked the end of the twenty-year tenure of the causeway and ferry service. The causeway was destroyed by Hurricane Carla in 1961 (Orton "Causeway" 1), and the three ferryboats were "turned over to the county for use at Lynchburg ferry crossing" ("Ferries at Morgan's" 1). While short-lived, the causeway and ferries provided a first direct and vital link for the Tri-Cities and LaPorte. As the *Tri-Cities Sun* in its issue of July 28, 1933, extolled: "With the opening of the new direct route between communities on the north and south sides of the lower ship channel, Goose Creek, Baytown and Pelly extend friendly hands of welcome to LaPorte and the Bayshore communities. The people of LaPorte and the Bayshore respond in kind and a new community is created, East

Harris County" ("Goose Creek" A:1).

In joining these communities more closely together, the goal of those who had helped bring the Morgan's Point Ferry into being was fulfilled.

Although ferryboats as a means of public transportation have all but ended in this area, in their time they performed a valuable service to residents and visitors alike. Modern tunnels and bridges have now replaced most of the ferries, for time marches on and the increasing traffic needs of this area demand a more modern means of travel. Those of us who are far removed by years from relying upon this type of transportation can look back on it nostalgically and wish for that simpler time to return.

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM



Here seen as a sad derelict, the Hogg Island-Morgan's Point ferry, Charles P. Massey, *was taken out of service with the opening of the Baytown-LaPorte Tunnel in 1953.*

CERTAINLY ONE OF Baytown's most distinguished citizens was David G. Burnet, the ad interim President of the Republic of Texas. History, however, has made little note of Burnet's only son, William Ellis Burnet, born on the Burnet estate near present day Lynchburg, who was a witness to one of the most calamitous events in the history of the Indian tribes of central Texas—the attack of the so-called Texas Defense Forces in the Spring of 1859 on Indians living peacefully on the Lower Brazos Indian Reserve. This episode, one of the last of a series of similar incidents, helped convince Major Robert S. Neighbors, the federal government's supervising agent for Indians in Texas, that the only way peace could be maintained was to remove all Texas Indians to a safe haven in Indian territory north of the Red River. In her essay Susanne Rull challenges the traditional interpretation of what happened on that fateful day in May of 1959. Rull discovered that young William Burnet, recently commissioned a second lieutenant in the United States Army, was living in the Indian camp and witnessed what he considered the unwarranted and brutal assault by John R. Baylor's self-styled defense forces on the unsuspecting Indians. Burnet documented his account in a series of letters written to his father in Lynchburg—letters that have been overlooked by historians but are part of the Burnet family papers housed in the Rosenberg Library in Galveston. Drawing on this heretofore ignored source, Rull offers a fresh interpretation of what happened on the Marlin Ranch, an event that changed the history of the Indians of Texas.

Susanne Rull recently graduated from Lee College; her plans for the future include working on a law degree, specializing in the area of environmental concerns.

Battle at Marlin Ranch

Susanne Rull

There have been many accounts of what eventually became known as the Battle at the Marlin Ranch, a battle which has gone down in history as a clear cut fight between white men and hostile Indians. Unknown to authorities, Lieutenant William E. Burnet, a native Texan, born in the community of present day Lynchburg, was at the battle—but with the Indians, not the settlers. Burnet was stationed with the 1st. U.S. Infantry whose mission was to protect the Indians. The settlers, unaware of Burnet's presence with Indians, told their versions of the Marlin Ranch Battle, knowing that the Indians would not speak out. However, Burnet's letters home to

his father, David G. Burnet, first President of the Republic of Texas, reveal the true events of that infamous day.

The Marlin Ranch battle was only one of the many skirmishes on the Texas frontier that involved settlers and Indians. Frontier Texans, caught up in the turmoil of Indian raids, pressured the federal government to force Texas Indians onto reservations. In response to the pressure, the federal government placed two thousand Caddo, Anadarko, Kichai, Tawaconi, Tonkawa, and Waco Indians on the Brazos reservation. The Indians established villages and farmed the land (Estep). On the reservation known as the Brazos Agency or lower reserve, Indians lived under the protection of the United States Army. During the infancy of the reservation system, many frontier Texans hated the Indians, feeling that they were treated as "pampered wards" of the federal government (Simpson). Some Indian-hating settlers, calling themselves the Army of Defense, took it upon themselves to expedite the Indians' removal to Oklahoma Indian territory (Haley).

The leader of the Army of Defense was John R. Baylor. To accomplish the goal of removal, Baylor, along with two hundred fifty armed citizens, attacked the outer edges of the Brazos Agency on May 23, 1859, killing two Indians—a female who was then scalped and a male, a ninety-year-old Tonkawa chief (Burnet, 26 May 1859). The killing of the old chief enraged the reserve Indians (Burnet, 26 May 1859). Lieutenant William Estes Burnet wrote to his father several times giving details of the events of May 23, 1859. Burnet's letters reveal that Baylor was not a courageous Indian fighter as his Army of Defense accounts contend, but truly a brutal man.

William E. Burnet, a military officer, and John R. Baylor, the frontier Indian fighter, met on May 23, 1859. Burnet, born on July 7,1833, was the only living child of David G. and Hannah Burnet. William spent the first thirteen years of his life in present day Lynchburg. His parents felt that his educational needs would be better met if William were sent off to school in Cincinnati, Ohio. After he finished school, he attended Frankfort Military Institute in Kentucky and graduated in June 1855, receiving B.A. and C.E. degrees. On February 12, 1857, Burnet was commissioned a second lieutenant in the 1st. Infantry Regiment, thus beginning a military career that would continue for the eight years until his death. In 1861, Burnet resigned his commission with the U.S. Army to enlist in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. Shot in the head, he

died in Mobile, Alabama, one week before General Robert E. Lee surrendered (Clarke 238). The leader of the Army of Defense, John R. Baylor, born July 20, 1822, and reared in Kentucky (*Handbook of Texas*, 1952, Vol.1,124), moved to Texas in 1839 specifically to fight Indians. Baylor served for a short time in the Texas legislature in 1853 and shortly thereafter was appointed as an Indian agent for the Comanche Indians. After eighteen months, Robert S. Neighbors,[1] superintendent of the Texas Indians, terminated Baylor's appointment (Simpson 132). In his letters, Burnet speculated that Baylor was fired for stealing public monies. Burnet further believed that Baylor's firing by Neighbors was the underlying motivation for Baylor's hostility toward the reserve Indians. Burnet suggests that Baylor's hostility was unfounded since the Indian attacks that enraged the settlers had been carried out by hostile Comanche Indians. However, Baylor maintained the reserve indians were responsible for the rampages (Burnet, 23 May 1859).

During the late 1850s Texas settlements were being ravaged and burned by hostile Indians; some settlers were killed. Many Texans became convinced the reservation Indians were responsible for the attacks. Burnet commented on the settlers' accusations in a letter to his father on May 9, 1859:

> The people in the border counties have lost some horses in the last year, and one or two persons have been killed by Indians. These people profess to believe it was done by the Indians of this Reserve, and without a shadow of proof that this is the case, they are threatening the destruction of all the Indians. The people say they have lost a thousand head of horses in the last year. . . . It would be easy to find some of them within so small a space, if there were any there; but none have ever been found. These are the facts to show that these Indians have not been guilty of the charges made against them. . . . The Shawnees, Caddos, Delawares and one or two remnants of tribes are of great service as guides in the war

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1.Major Neighbors was killed on September 3, 1859, by Edward Cornet. William Burnet wrote of the incident. "The Baylor army has killed Major Neighbors. . . . Three men met him armed with double barrel shot guns: [sic] and while two of them were talking to him, the other put his gun at Neighbors [sic] back and fired—so close that the flash burnt a large hole in his coat—he died instantly."

> against the Comanches. In fact, it would almost be useless to go out without some of them. (Burnet, 9 May 1959)

Burnet had a great trust in the Indians at the Brazos Agency.

Baylor, on the other hand, had no trust. In an effort to force the government to remove the reservation Indians to Oklahoma Indian territory, he and his men had been on a rampage in the Brazos area during the month of May 1859.[2] On May 13, they stationed themselves eight miles outside of the reservation. By May 23, the tension between the Army of Defense and the inhabitants of the Indian Reservation, including their protectors, the U.S. Army, began to fester after a ten-day stand off. In a May 23 letter, Burnet tells his father, "We learned that there were about five hundred men camped about eight miles below us and they were going to attack us. . . . They are led by a man named Baylor." Stationed outside the reservation for ten days, the Army of Defense had attacked covered wagons carrying supplies for the Brazos Agency. With the reservation blocked off from getting supplies and the temperature reaching one hundred degrees, the conditions in the closed confines of the reservation bred disease from which forty Indians died; although no soldiers died, many were very sick (Burnet, 12 June 1859). The conditions inside the reservation were so bad that the officers decided to talk with Baylor. Captain Plummer and Captain Gilbert took fifty men and rode eight miles to the mission where Baylor's Army of Defense was staying; Lieutenant Burnet went along. He was in charge while Captain Gilbert went to face Baylor (Burnet, 26 May 1859). Burnet described the meeting to his father in a letter dated May 29,1859:

"Captain Gilbert went to demand why Mr. Baylor was in the Government Reserve with an armed force. Baylor replied that he was there for the purpose of attacking & destroying certain bands of Indians, but he did not wish to come in collison with United States troops — & that if Captain Plummer would draw off his men, none of them should be hurt! When this message was delivered to Capt.

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2. Without William Burnet's permission, David G. Burnet had had a few of William's letters published in the GalvestonWeekly News. One such letter included details of an incident which happened on May 12, 1859. A small group of reserve Indians were killed. Burnet and a few Indians took chase. They did not catch the killers and never knew their identity. Baylor, reading the letter in the News, took exception and wrote a rebuttal. He gave every detail of the event. Baylor incriminated himself, but nothing ever came of the confession.

Plummer, he sent me back to tell Mr. Baylor that he had been sent there with the troops under his command to protect the Indians on the Reserve . . . . Baylor replied that his message did not alter his determination."

Burnet wrote that if the Army of Defense accomplished its goal of killing all of the reservation Indians, then Baylor's men would be left to fight the Comanches on their own, and "the fools in the country [will] have opened a sore that will bleed for years" (Burnet, 26 May 1859).

The myth of the Marlin Ranch fight begins with John Elkins' account. Elkins, at the time only fourteen years old, was an Indian fighter with Baylor's Army of Defense. Seventy years later in his book *Indian Fighting on the Texas Frontier*, he recalls the events of May 23, 1859, Elkins remembers Baylor as a man of "prominence" (Elkins 15). In his book, Elkins remains convinced that the reserve Indians had been pillaging and murdering settlers on the plains. Baylor's men, along with Elkins, had taken refuge at Fort Belknap. Abandoned by Federal troops since 1857, the Fort was a perfect place for the Army of Defense (Haley 68). Elkins writes that while the Army of Defense was stationed away from Fort Belknap eight miles from the reserve, an old Indian tried to shoot a man named Hammer, thinking Hammer was Baylor. As Hammer and the old Indian struggled, the Indian's gun fell to the ground, and Hammer shot the Indian in the neck (Elkins 20-21). Elkins fails to mention that the Baylor party also killed and scalped an Indian woman (Burnet, 26 May 1859). In addition, Elkins recalls that the Army of Defense chased a group of Indians who had seen the incident from a hill (Elkins 21). Burnet mantains that the Indians, who numbered sixty or seventy, actually chased the Army of Defense to the Marlin Ranch (Burnet, 26 May 1859). Elkin's story is not consistent with Burnet's or with that of Mrs. Marlin, who also witnessed the battle. Mrs. Marlin was at the ranch alone because her husband had fled for his life as soon as he saw Baylor and his men coming to the ranch. A few years prior to the Marlin affair, Baylor had threatened to hang Mr. Marlin for reasons that are unknown (Burnet, 26 May 1859). Elkins remembers many years after the battle that Mr. Marlin had asked him to thank Baylor for treating his family well in his absence (Elkins 26). Mr. Marlin may have extended thanks, but probably not out of friendship, more from relief. The Army of Defense sought refuge in the ranch houses, and Mrs. Marlin later told Burnet that Baylor's men were frightened and would not leave the house. Elkins recalls that they ran the Indians back up the hill after the battle. However, Elkins' account of the battle was that of a fourteen-year-old, very

frightened boy; at the time he recorded his experience he was eighty-four-years old. Elkins felt Baylor's soul portrayed the "noble, self-sacrificing spirit of courage and fearlessness that dwelled within him" (Elkins 24). Like many fourteen-year-olds, Elkins had a hero, Baylor. This is not to say Elkins was lying. His view was, however, distorted first by youth and then by the passing of many years.

Another prominent Texas pioneer, Charles Goodnight also served as a member of the Army of Defense. Goodnight's version of the Marlin Ranch fight is included in historian J. Evetts Haley's *Charles Goodnight Cowman and Plainsman.* Even Haley implies that Goodnight's personal view is superficial since Goodnight leaves out why the battle occurred and who chased whom. Haley, to remedy the oversight, inserts helpful footnotes to support the idea that Baylor's men were at fault. He documents that an agent at the reserve recalled that Baylor's men had "induced an old Indian to join them, then treacherously killed him" (Noel 138-42).

Baylor meanwhile offered a different version of the battle. Although Baylor's view is not available in print, Burnet had obtained a copy of the *Galveston Weekly News* which had published Baylor's view. Burnet does refer in his letters to Baylor's view. Baylor wrote that the Indians had fired upon his party first. However, Burnet, who knew about the battle from beginning to end, disputes Baylor, maintaining that Baylor's men were neither chased nor fired upon until after they had killed the old Indian (Burnet, 30 June 1859). Burnet details the events to his father in a letter written May 26, 1859. The letter begins with the return of Captain Plummer from confronting Baylor:

> We waited some time expecting him to make his attack but he did not come. We had Indians watching his movements & some of them came in & said Baylor had taken an Old Indian & was moving off. At this all the Indians who were mounted, started after him & the others began to get their horses. In a short time another came in & reported that Baylor had killed the Indian & scalped him & that a woman was found killed & scalped. This made the Indians furious & away they went. The Indians who were watching Baylor & saw them kill the old man, began the attack by firing on them from every available point, & as others joined, they continued the attack with more effect. Baylor retreated for 6 or 7 miles keeping up a running fight until he came to the place of Mr. Marlin, a very worthy man, whom Baylor had threatened to

> hang some time ago. When Marlin saw Baylor's party coming, he mounted his horse & took to flight leaving the family to take care of the house. Baylor took possession of the house, out-houses & pens & a deep ravine near by & there made a stand. He had near 300 men, & I don't think more than 60 or 70 Indians went out from here. . . . The Indians annoyed Baylor until night & then returned to this place (Burnet, 26 May 1859).

Burnet's first full letter home recounting the events failed to disclose he had gone with the Indians to the Marlin Ranch. The elder Burnet wrote William and let him know that he had read Baylor's view in *Galveston Weekly News* . David Burnet sent the paper to William. Afraid his father would believe Baylor's version, William finally confided to his father that he had been at the battle with the Indians. On June 13, 1859, he wrote:

> All that I said (before) was so; but fortunately, I did not tell all in that letter. After Baylor had sent his reply, by me, to Capt[.] Plummer's message; we all expected a fight immediately. It was a very hot day & we were obliged to be out in the Sun, under arms, for some time: this rather warmed up my blood. . . . These things, with many insulting messages he had from time to time sent us, made me wish for a chance to bring him to an account: and when I heard he had taken and killed the old Indian: I concluded that he should not get off so easy, to brag that he had come in and taken an Indian from under our very noses and killed him: and went off unhurt; so I mounted my Horse and, with Capt. Ross' son, led the Indians to the attack. . . . When we got up, Baylor had Camped [sic] his men and they were making fires to cook thinking they had got off. When they saw us, instead of charging us, they ran: and some got in a deep ravine and the others took Mr Marlins [sic] houses and out houses. There was never a more cowardly thing done, by any set of men, to run from less than fifty Indians, when they numbered nearly three hundred. But they had been engaged in dirty work and concluded their time had come. . . . Fortunately, for them, they got into Marlins [sic] houses—we did not know which House his family were in: and therefore did not fire on the houses or attack those in them.

> Some of them, braver than the others, took a position along a fence, where they stayed some time and from which they shot the Indians who were hit: but they could not stand the fire long and all took refuge in the houses: There was nothing left for us to practice on but a few horses they had not time to get into the ravine and it was sun down, so we left them— Mrs. Marlin said they were badly scared: some were praying & one fellow took up the boards and got under the floor: They were up all night and did not dare to go out of the houses: and even the next morning, they would not go out to a little grave yard to bury their dead, but put them in the yard, close to the house. . . . I did not remember how much of this I had written but there is much of it. I would not like to see published: it is not a popular side but I know it is the right side & I will not hesitate to take a hand against Mr. Baylor's party any time they come- I do not regret any part I have taken in it, only that we did not kill more of them. (Burnet, 13 June 1859)

Burnet's letters give a conflicting view of the events surrounding the Battle at the Marlin Ranch. Knowing that public opinion supported Baylor's attacks, Burnet wrote his father cautioning that the letters were not for publishing or profit.[3] In a letter dated June 30, 1859, Burnet tells his father "There have been several reports of this affair published but none that I have seen which give anything like a true statement. It seems a little hard to believe that 50 Indians should whip 250 white men who had come with the avowed intention of fighting: But it is nonetheless true" (Burnet, 30 June 1859). Baylor's Army of Defense thought they were fighting only Indians and history recorded only their version of the battle. Burnet saw the battle from the onset to the end. The Army of Defense neither knew Burnet was at the battle from beginning nor that his story would surface in defense of the Indians. Now one hundred and thirty years later, the Burnet letters challenge the accepted historical version of the Battle at the Marlin Ranch on May 23, 1859.

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3. William Burnet asked his father to destroy the letters after reading them.

DURING THE EARLY YEARS of the Civil War, the powerful Union navy mounted an effective blockade of the major seaports of the Confederacy, thus greatly hampering the ability of a non-industrial, agrarian South to obtain the manufactured goods it so desperately needed to fight a modern war. Since Galveston had long served as a principal conduit for the commerce of Texas with the rest of the world, it was a foregone conclusion that the city would be the target of a Union campaign. The island fell to Northern troops in October of 1862, only to be retaken by the Confederacy in early January of the following year. However, despite the fact that the city and its once thriving harbor were again in Southern hands, a blockade of Galveston Bay, which the United States Navy had instituted as early as July of 1861, not only continued but proved highly effective in inhibiting shipping in the area. Interestingly, the very success of the Union effort inspired audacious measures on the part of one of Baytown's most intriguing citizens, Commodore Thomas S. Chubb. A native of Massachusetts, Chubb had earlier settled on the upper bay, and when the war broke out, he converted his schooner, *Royal Yacht*, into a Confederate patrol vessel. Captured and nearly hanged, Chubb convinced his captors to release him, and he returned to his home on Goose Creek to rebuild the damaged *Royal Yacht* to serve as a blockade runner. Shortly afterward he also launched at Goose Creek another small schooner designed to elude Yankee patrols, the *Bagdad*. The knowledge that these two ships were constructed at a yard on Goose Creek owned by Chubb and his brother convinced Baytown native Garnett Cleveland, Jr., that other ships designed for the Confederate service may have been built in the area. A thorough, and often frustrating, search of the maritime records at the Rosenberg Library in Galveston eventually resulted in the discovery of the registration papers of several other Civil War vintage ships whose keels were apparently laid along the banks of Baytown's Goose Creek stream. As a consequence of his research, Cleveland became convinced that the efforts of the Chubb brothers at their modest shipyard on the upper Bay represent a major factor in the subsequent development of a ship building industry in Texas.

Cleveland, who won third place in the Caldwell Competition in 1989, is finishing his course work at Lee College. His goal is a career in writing. He will soon have a short story published in *Redbook*, and he is presently working on a children's book.

Confederate Naval Works of Goose Creek

GARNETT CLEVELAND, JR.

"From a casual glance at the map of Texas, a stranger might assume that the state was blessed with navigable streams. Such, of course, is not the case. Even though a number of southerly flowing rivers virtually span the state, none are navigable, except for short distances. The streams of North Texas have never influenced either transportation or development, nor have these watercourses been

followed by immigrants or settlers" (Thrall 241). Furthermore, the long coastline of the state lacks a good natural harbor. Galveston and other towns, located along coastal waters too shallow to accommodate ocean-going vessels, saw no change until vast sums were spent for the dredging of channels and removal of sand bars. Even then, most ports served local territories only. Overcoming these combined negative elements, the Confederate States Naval Works at Goose Creek, Texas, and its owners, Thomas and John Chubb, proved significant in their support of the Confederate States Naval war effort and became the embryo of the present day Texas shipping industry (Spratt).

Until completion of an adequate railroad system, the great majority of Texas settlements remained isolated, and necessity compelled them to satisfy needs locally or do without. The shipbuilding industry in Texas made its appearance due, in part, to the immediate problems of insufficient supply lines to early towns and settlements. Records do exist of a firm's having built craft for river navigation as early as 1845. In 1850, the Galveston and Brazos Navigation Company, among other companies of the same nature, became chartered for the primary purpose of opening canals and inland waterways from Galveston Bay eastward to Sabine Pass and westward to Matagorda Bay. On August 13, 1856, the Texas Legislature passed the "River and Loan Bill" for the purpose of removing obstructions in navigable streams. "A total of $300,000 was provided for improvement of the rivers and bays of Texas, and an engineer was assigned to assess the work and to receive bids from the contractors. The state was committed to a program of inland navigation . . ." (Winfield 20).

After these early starts, the Texas shipping industry remained quite modest. However, during the Civil War, the Confederate government encouraged Texans to engage in any kind of manufacturing venture that would contribute to military needs. This encouragement accounts for the increase in the number of industrial establishments and the rise in shipbuilding as an industry. Directly consequential to this new emphasis on industry, and the potential profits available to the astute entrepreneur, various shipyards began to develop in the northern Galveston Bay area. Out of these yards grew the Goose Creek operation, known as the Confederate Naval Works.

In the early 1850s, two brothers named Chubb purchased approximately 56 acres on the east bank at the mouth of Goose Creek from Mary Jones, wife of President Anson Jones. Jones' widow had received ownership upon her husband's death, following a long line of transactions dating back to the original Spanish land grants of William Scott (Deed Records; Harris County, Texas). Although none of the original or early documents of this facility have surfaced to

date, evidence reveals that the Chubbs owned the property and built the shipyard during this period, following a natural progression of events in support of the Chubbs' investments in local marine businesses.

Originally from Charlestown, Massachusetts, Captain Thomas Henry Chubb and his brother John Chubb were pioneer residents of Galveston and early mariners of the Gulf Coast. The two brothers not only owned, built, and operated the Goose Creek yard, but probably impacted the young maritime history of Texas more than any other individuals. Second mate Thomas Chubb, of the federal brig *Silicia*, made his first appearance in the state in 1830, landing in Galveston at age nineteen. John Chubb arrived in 1839. Satisfied enough with Galveston to make it his home, Thomas Chubb quickly identified himself with the shipping interests of the city, and for a period of more than fifty years, built, owned, or commanded various small craft and engaged in coastal trade in this vicinity.

Captain Thomas Chubb breathed life into the early years of local and state shipping. Chubb, obtaining the rank of Commodore prior to his death in 1890, lived a very colorful and eventful life. At a very early age and against his father's wishes, Thomas rejected succession to his father's rope making trade, instead opting for a sailor's life. After running away from home, Thomas enlisted in the marine service, serving on the United States cruiser *Constitution*, embarking upon a career destined with honor and wealth for him. He also served in the United States Navy in 1827 as coxswain on the *USS Java*. Sailing around most of the world, Chubb ran slaves from the African gold coast to the West Indies, Boston, and New York, gaining great personal wealth in the process. At one time in his career, he even owned and managed the largest road circus of his time. Chubb built the Federal Street Theatre in Boston, opening with Fannie Esler (then a world famous dancer), whom he personally brought over from London. He also built an elegant church edifice and presented it to the Baptist denomination of his native city (*History of Texas*).

Chubb's exploits on the "high seas" during his war years brought greater recognition to the fledgling Texas shipping industry. Fighting in the Texas Revolution, Chubb became a close friend of General Sam Houston, who later appointed Thomas as Admiral of the Texas Navy. Thomas reciprocated by building a ship for the Confederacy and naming it the *Sam Houston* in honor of his friend. He enlisted in the Confederate States Army, Texas Marine Division, and received appointment in September of 1861 as Assistant Superintendent of Coastal Defenses of Texas. During the Civil War, Captain Thomas Chubb first commanded the Confederate gunboat *Liverpool*, which, armed with small mounted guns and carrying a crew of nine men, effectively worked in local harbor defense. Captured by the Union after a gallant battle involving his second

command, the *Royal Yacht,* Captain Chubb, condemned to be executed, was saved from this fate only by the intervention of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, who notified Federal authorities that he would "retaliate ten fold if the judgment was carried into execution." Later, Captain Chubb returned to Texas and became superintendent of the Confederate Naval Works at Goose Creek, Harris County, where he served until the close of the war (*History of Texas*).

The Goose Creek yards grew as a response to the war effort. As the southern states seceded, they confiscated northern ships in their harbors and, in some cases, bought and paid for ships belonging to northern as well as southern owners. A few guns were put aboard them, and with these makeshift vessels a southern fleet readied for action even before the Confederate Navy began operating. Some of the states encouraged privateering for a short while (the cause for which Captain Thomas Chubb was nearly hanged), but state-owned ships should not be confused with privateers, which were privately owned vessels cruising under national authorization. The story of the state naval ships which operated for a short time early in 1861 remains an unwritten chapter in Confederate history. No complete list of them exists, for they had such brief careers and changed name and ownership so often that they are difficult to trace. Soon after the start of the Civil War a Confederate purchasing agent, dispatched to the Galveston Bay area for the purpose of funding and supporting the construction of new naval facilities and war ships, also incorporated existing shipyards into service for "the cause."

Records indicate that at least seventeen vessels were constructed in the northern Galveston Bay area for the Confederate States Navy. Although originally built in Leonville, Maryland, in the year 1855, the *Royal Yacht* also deserves inclusion in these papers due to the rebuilding and refitting of this vessel at Goose Creek. Although not nearly all inclusive, this evidence begins to suggest the significance of these shipbuilding facilities (Confederate States of America, Register of Vessels). All these ships and shipyards warrant individual investigation and recognition; however, of the known ships involved at the Goose Creek location, the *Royal Yacht, Henrietta, Marguereta,* and finally the *Bagdad,* no record of registration exists to date. Two additional schooners built by Thomas Chubb prior to the start of the Civil War, the *Altha Brooks* and the *Phoebe* (named after his first wife), received registration in the Confederate States Navy on March 28, 1863, and November 28, 1864, respectively (Confederate Register). Although these last two vessels were recorded as built in Galveston Bay, Harris County, the assumption of construction at Goose Creek seems valid since no records appear of the Chubbs' involvement in any other shipbuilding facilities (Official Records).

Variously referred to as patrol boats, shallow-draught schooners, cotton-clad gun boats, or sloops, these vessels played an important part of the defense of coastal waterways and figured heavily in the Confederate strategy of blockade running. Captain Samuel F. Dupont, U.S.N., Union Blockade Strategy Board Chairman, later promoted to rank of Rear Admiral, commented: "They [the Confederates] seem to forget, so far as their rights and international interests are concerned, we have only to blockade the ports of entry, from the Chesapeake to Galveston . . ." (*Civil War Naval Chronology*). Obviously, he grossly underestimated the success of the blockade runners due, in part, to the incredible bravery exhibited by the ill-equipped, outnumbered Texas Marines. The ships ". . . were manned by adventurous skippers and crews who drove their little craft with cheerful recklessness" (Cochran 202).

The history of the Texas Marine Department during the Civil War is a colorful episode involving the combination of talent and improvisation to meet unrealistic demands. As President Lincoln dispatched a consort of blockaders to the Texas coast in 1861, a handful of engineers and carpenters huddled over drawing boards to discuss the outfitting of a Texas Navy. Preparations began to meet the heavily armed Union convoys that hovered at prominent ports along the Texas coast. The Texas Marine Department accepted a key role in the defense of the state during the war. Even though registered in the Confederate States Navy, all ships constructed in Texas during the Civil War, and those bought, confiscated or obtained through various other means, became inducted into and fell under the command of the Marines. The Marine Department, a division of the Confederate States Army, acting and operating independently of the Confederate States Navy, received their orders solely from the Secretary of the Navy, who, in turn, received instructions directly from Confederate President Jefferson Davis.

Approximately 385 miles of coastline, extending southward from the Louisiana border to the mouth of the Rio Grande, presented a maze of obstacles for the officers and men of the department. In the summer of 1861 Commander William W. Hunter, after reporting to the War Department on orders of the Secretary of the Navy, went to Texas to take charge of the naval defenses of Galveston under Brigadier General Paul O. Hebert, commander of the Military Department of Texas. For more than a year Hunter worked with the army in building up the fortifications of Galveston, establishing and training Texas marines, and forming the Texas Navy (W. W. Hunter papers).

The design and structure of the vessels constructed at Goose Creek and other local shipyards were an integral part of the Texas Navy's effectiveness. Engineers and laborers toiled day and night at these local shipyards to provide a motley fleet of tramp vessels. The

following description is typical of the vessels produced in these shipyards during the Civil War era:

> Aside from their shallow draught, centerboard schooners had other advantages that made them suitable for blockade running in Gulf waters. They were generally very weatherly, and were good sailers to windward, for they could come about quickly and in a small circle, having so little keel. The short centerboard acted as a pivot on which they turned. When they were sailing free or off the wind, the centerboard was partly drawn up which lessened the friction. But the principal utility of the small craft was in crossing shallow areas where a deep draught vessel could not go. When the centerboard was drawn up, the draught of the schooner was reduced to suit the depth of the water and then let down again when the water deepened. (Cochran 202)

These fast, centerboard schooners, because of their shallow draught, could easily pass over the bars and shoals that lay at the entrances of many inlets and rivers of the Gulf states. Union cruisers, mostly deep-water vessels, could not get close enough to prevent the entrance or exit of light sailing craft. Once in open waters, these small ships, if sighted, faced the ever-present dangers of severe weather and overhauling by a Union man-of-war.

Two of the known ships recorded at Goose Creek, the *Royal Yacht* and the *Henrietta*, engaged in battles with superior Union naval forces. The most famous of these battles involved the *CSS Royal Yacht*, the US frigate *Santee*, and the US bark *William G. Anderson*. On November 8, 1861, about 2:30 a.m., the *Yacht*, surprised at anchor outside the Bolivar Point Lighthouse, was set afire by two launches from the *USS Santee* "after a desperate encounter." Total casualties listed two Union dead and seven wounded, two Confederate dead or missing, and thirteen Confederate prisoners. Thomas Chubb and John Davidson (who later became Captain of the ship *Henrietta*, also built at Goose Creek) were both among the prisoners captured. Union officials thought the *Royal Yacht* totally destroyed; however, the *CSS Bayou City* had rescued the vessel, extinguishing the flames "minutes before the magazine would certainly have exploded" (*Civil War Chronology*). The *Yacht*, immediately taken to the Goose Creek shipyard, remained there from November 11, 1861, until the the end of October 1862, receiving as many arms and as much equipment as necessary to refit the schooner for harbor service. Acting as a blockade runner, the *Royal Yacht*, on April 15, 1863, fought and overhauled by the US bark *William G. Anderson* once again, was finally confiscated by the Key West prize court, along with 97 bales of "her best cotton." The

original log of the *Royal Yacht* survived and remains intact today (Official Records).

Few records exist of the sloop CSS *Henrietta* after its construction at Goose Creek and registration in Galveston; however, this vessel became involved in a skirmish on July 1, 1864. The *USS Merrimac* with Acting Lieutenant W. Budd, captured the blockade runner at sea, west of Tampa, Florida, with a cargo of cotton. All six crew members, including Captain John Davidson, were taken prisoner.

The schooners *Marguereta, Bagdad, Altha Brooks*, and *Phoebe* participated in the struggle against the Union Navy in much the same way as the *Royal Yacht* and the *Henrietta*. Additional significant records regarding these vessels do not appear, except for the accounts of their construction at Goose Creek. Since no other record of a ship under the same name surfaced during research, a report on what seems the *Bagdad* of Goose Creek, left Liverpool, England, for Matamoras, Mexico, on February 3, 1864. The precise purpose of this vessel on such a voyage remains a mystery because these non-ocean-going vessels would have encountered many problems while crossing the Atlantic Ocean (Official Records).

No listing of Confederate ships or shipbuilding facilities can be considered definitive because the histories of many remain incomplete statistically and operationally. Exhaustive research produces meager returns or at best conflicting data. Great difficulties arise in attempts to find totally reliable information; records have been destroyed or often distort and hide crucial facts.

After the War Between the States, Thomas Chubb returned to Galveston and served as Harbor Master until shortly before his death. He continued operations at the Goose Creek shipyard with his brother John, building ships for the Federal government and private marine industry until 1869. Thomas Chubb married Mrs. Martha Sturgis in 1869. Apparently, his wedding led him to decide to concentrate his energies on the duties of Harbor Master at Galveston, foregoing the business at the Goose Creek shipyard. One example of problems often encountered in historical research surfaced here when conflicting documents reported Chubb building his last vessel in 1891; his obituary appeared in 1890. The last ship built by the Chubbs, the *Coquette* in 1891, was probably built by John Chubb since evidence indicates that Thomas disassociated himself from the shipbuilding industry around the year 1869 (construction of the *Coquette*, at Goose Creek, remains unverifiable). The *Galveston Daily News* interviewed an aging master carpenter near the turn of the century, supplying an interesting account of life and work at the Goose Creek shipyard at that time (Ben Stewart's *Scrapbook*).

Details seem extremely sketchy concerning the eventual demise of the Goose Creek shipyard; nonetheless, evidence of compe-

tition in the shipping industry, along with continually rising expenses in keeping inland waterways navigable, created a need for deeper draught vessels to carry increasingly heavier payloads. Record depths of vessels passing over the sand bars of Galveston Bay, reported almost daily by the *Galveston Daily News*, helped create a fervor in Galveston residents after the war that ultimately aided the Port of Galveston in becoming a major deep water port. Apparently, these combined factors contributed to the downfall of all local inland shipping.

Following the gradual termination of operations at the Goose Creek shipyard beginning in 1869, "the Gaillard family settled on the east bank of Goose Creek, near its mouth, and began acquiring considerable land holdings." These purchases included the property of the shipyard location. "A shipping point, known as Gaillard's Landing, established at this point, served the shipping industry for many years. The Gaillard homesite was only a short distance east of the Landing" (Historical Sites and Markers). The Gaillard property eventually became the center of oil activity in the area, later known as the Goose Creek Oil Field. The Busch Landing later appeared on the east bank of Goose Creek, approximately one mile north of the Gaillard Landing. Until the abandonment of these sites upon the completion of a bridge on West Main which spanned the creek, a ferry operated, carrying people, equipment, and traffic between the oil field and the Humble Refinery site.

Confusion, discrepancies, incongruities and contradictions raise numerous questions and leave them disappointingly unanswered or unanswerable. Although a wealth of information on this particular subject has surfaced, necessity dictates speculations, conclusions, and the "piecemealing" of scattered materials, due directly to regrettable shortages of historical details and documentation. Valuable lessons learned here are much more than history instruction. The need for frequent recordings, especially accurate and unbiased (if possible), becomes "heir" apparent should people ever begin to experience themselves as part of their heritage rather than as partially interested observers. The responsibility of preserving history should not rest solely with the scholarly few, but falls upon the shoulders of the individual who helps recreate that history, lending superior aid to future generations of historically inquisitive minds.

APPARENTLY SOMETHING ABOUT the human psyche causes all of us to be intrigued by a good murder mystery—and we are often even more mesmerized by the personality of the murderer. No doubt many Baytonians were shocked, and probably even a little fascinated, when they learned in November of 1954 that a notorious killer, a man responsible for what was once characterized as the "crime of the century," had been unobtrusively residing in their peaceful community. Charles Freeman Jones, the self-confessed executioner of William Marsh Rice—the namesake and benefactor of today's Rice University—died in Baytown that month and is the subject of Sally Coker's essay, "Baytown's Madison Avenue Murderer." Coker does not seek to reexamine all of the circumstances surrounding the Rice murder; that has been done many times and is even the subject of a recent play by Houston author Doug Killgore. Rather, she is more concerned with the character of Jones himself and particularly the Baytown connection. As Coker puts it, "My interest in law (criminology) stirred my curiosity to research the Rice murder. During the course of my research, I attempted to gain an understanding of the motivations of the murderer, Charles Jones. Although recreating psychological motives from a historical perspective is extremely difficult, I felt that I began to know Charles Jones more as a fellow human being than as a historical figure. I found myself beginning to like Charles Jones and had to work to maintain my perspective of him as a confessed murderer." Coker does not claim to have solved all of the mysteries surrounding this dignified, mild mannered citizen of Baytown who at one time was regarded as among the country's most notorious criminals; she does, however, offer some interesting insights into the enigma that was Charles Jones.

In 1989, Sally Coker's essay won second place honors in the Caldwell competition. Her future plans entail finishing a degree in sociology at the University of Houston at Clear Lake.

Baytown's Madison Avenue Murderer

SALLY COKER

At approximately nine o'clock on the evening of Tuesday, November 16, 1954, local police found Charles Freeman Jones shot to death in his Travis Street home in Baytown, Texas (Death Cert.). Confessed murderer in the September 23, 1900, poisoning death of his employer, William Marsh Rice, founder of Houston's Rice University, Jones was discovered by police lying in bed in a pool of blood with a .38 caliber bullet wound to the left temple, the victim of an apparent suicide (Slagle). After Baytown police officers identified the 79 year old man, the notorious past which he had endeavored to conceal for more than half a century once again became headline news. Although Jones' role in one of the most celebrated murder trials in New York's history had been publicized in newspapers all

over the world (Rice Papers), at the time of his death, his identity as Rice's murderer was virtually unknown. Newspaper accounts after the suicide linking Jones to the murder of William Rice shocked most of the area residents who had little knowledge that an infamous murderer had been living quietly in their small community just thirty miles east of the city of Houston (Orton 8). Jones had appeared to his neighbors as nothing more than a kind, elderly gentleman who lived alone and cultivated few close relationships (Chandler). Yet Charles Freeman Jones was an enigmatic individual, an unsolved puzzle, a killer whose silence leaves only conflicting accounts from which to recreate his motives in the murder of one of America's wealthiest men.

An artist's sketch of Charles Jones on the witness stand during the trial of Albert Patrick, the accused murderer of William Marsh Rice (Taken from the New York World, *April 8, 1901)*

Although labeled the "criminal of the century," Jones had not acted alone in the crime; he had entered into a conspiracy to defraud the millionaire Rice of his fortune with an attorney named Albert T. Patrick who, like Jones, was a native Texan living and working in New York City. Ironically, for several weeks following their arrest, reporters identified Patrick as Rice's attorney when, in fact, the attorney had never met the late William Marsh Rice (Muir "Murder" 1). Even though court testimony revealed that Charles Jones had actually committed the murder, he became the state's key witness and aided the prosecution in convicting Patrick for his role as the mastermind of the scheme to kill the elderly millionaire (Rice Papers).

Jones became acquainted with the man he would later murder while working in the Capitol Hotel in Houston in April 1897; the hotel's owner, William Rice, offered Jones a position as valet and personal secretary. Rice had been entangled in lengthy will litigation involving the relatives of his late wife, Elizabeth, since her death in August 1896 and, consequently, had decided to return to the home he kept in New York City. Therefore, on May 7, 1897, Jones

accompanied his new employer to the fifth floor suite of the Berkshire Apartments on Madison Avenue where they spent the last three years of Rice's life (Muir 77). As an aging man of 78, Rice was often difficult to care for, but the evidence suggests that Jones executed his duties to the millionaire's satisfaction. In a letter to a friend, Mary C. Brewster, dated January 8, 1899, Rice wrote, "I lead a very quiet life—go out when I wish—taking my man with me. I do not worry—attend to my business and read when not otherwise engaged—and am contented here probably more than I would be anywhere else" (Muir *Rice* 82).

As a native of Massachusetts, Rice felt accustomed to the East, but Madison Avenue society differed greatly from Charles Jones' early life along the Texas Gulf Coast. Called Charlie by family and friends, Jones was born on February 3, 1875 (Death Cert.), just across the bay from Houston in Cedar Bayou, the tiny community which would later become part of Baytown. Former Mississippi tenant farmers, his parents, L.W. and Onelia Jones, were among the early settlers to the area (Ashworth). According to records at the Baytown Historical Museum, L.W. Jones voted along with just 92 residents in the February 15, 1876, election held at Ilfrey's Store in Cedar Bayou (Henson 60). Just south of Ilfrey's stood the Cedar Bayou Masonic Lodge which housed the one-room school where area children like Charlie attended class a few months out of the year (Henson 70). As a teenager, Jones went to work for his brother on a schooner which ran from the local port at Lynchburg to the major port city of nearby Galveston. Charles later found employment in Galveston's Star Flour Mill where he met a young man named Joseph Stanberry who, in 1896, offered Charlie a bellman's job at the Capitol Hotel in Houston (Muir *Rice* 77). From these modest beginnings, Charlie found himself at age 22 living among wealth and privilege in one of the most prestigious neighborhoods in America's largest city where gentlemen escorted ladies to elegant restaurants, the theater, and to concerts in Central Park (Metropolis 37). Charles Jones quickly became a part of New York society. His "rugged good looks won his success with the ladies" (Muir *Rice* 86), and sometime during his three years on Madison Avenue, Jones became involved with Miss Mabel Whitney, an attractive young woman from New York's fashionable Astoria ("Jones to Wed").

Yet Jones' involvement with the attorney Albert Patrick altered the course of the valet's life more than any other event. Patrick also aspired to the prestige of Madison Avenue's elite, but in his climb to success, the attorney was perhaps more influenced by the tactics of men like New York's Tammany Hall city bosses who, in their passion

for wealth and power, ran the city through graft and corruption (Metropolis 37). Patrick epitomized this desire for success and set about to present himself as a gentleman of means. He dressed with impeccable taste and attended the Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, or as he called it, "John D. Rockefeller's church" (Muir *Rice* 85). Patrick's ambitions to achieve the stature of men such as Rockefeller no doubt motivated him in his design of the conspiracy to defraud Rice of his fortune.

Hired by Orren Holt, the attorney representing the heirs of the late Mrs. Rice in the will litigation, Patrick's job involved gathering evidence in New York which would establish the legal residency of the wealthy couple. During his investigation, Patrick became aware of Rice's fortune, and in an effort to gain access to the millionaire's affairs, the voracious attorney went to great lengths during November 1899 to acquaint himself with valet Charles Jones. During their first meeting, Patrick offered half of his $500 fee to Jones for information concerning Rice's business affairs which would assist the attorney in securing financial justice for Elizabeth Rice's relatives (Killgore 33). From this meeting, a conspiracy grew, and in the spring of 1900, Patrick began handling much of Rice's business correspondence on stationery which Jones had provided. Ultimately, on June 30, 1900, Jones slipped a fraudulent document among a stack of legitimate contracts which Rice unknowingly signed before witnesses. Drawn up by Albert Patrick, this document would later become known as the "Patrick Will," and its contents named the attorney executor and heir to the estate of a man whom he had never actually met (Rice Papers).

With a vast estate to inherit, Patrick quickly tired of waiting for the elderly millionaire to die a natural death, and during the first week of August 1900, the unethical attorney asked his accomplice the inevitable question: "Don't you think Rice is living too long for our purposes?" (Muir *Rice* 93). Acting on Patrick's instructions, Jones began to slowly poison his employer by orally administering mercury pills which had been prescribed for dilution into an antiseptic wash for Rice's face where tumors had recently been removed ("Jones Confesses"). Patrick changed his plans after the September 3, 1900, Great Galveston Hurricane which destroyed many of Rice's Texas holdings, including his Merchants and Planters Oil Company which had burned in Houston's fires following the storm. When Rice received news of the damages, he wrote out a bank draft in the amount of $2500 to begin reconstruction of the Houston oil company (Muir "Murder" 1). But Patrick worried that in rebuilding the property, Rice would deplete the $25,000 New York bank account

which represented his most liquid asset, the funds which Patrick would most easily acquire after the millionaire's death (Killgore 58). Determined to see that the draft never reached Houston, Patrick convinced Jones to murder William Rice. Despite some misgivings on the part of the young valet, on the evening of September 23, 1900, Charles Jones placed a chloroform soaked towel over the face of the 81 year old gentleman, who quickly and quietly died in his sleep (Rice Papers).

The plot aroused suspicion on the following Monday morning when Patrick attempted to cash the draft at Rice's bank, and the teller noted that, in signing the draft over to Patrick, Albert had been incorrectly spelled "Abert." It appears that Jones, in his anxiety after the murder, had misspelled the name, leaving out the letter "l." When the teller called the Berkshire Apartments demanding to speak to Mr. Rice before cashing the check, Jones lost his composure and revealed that the millionaire William Marsh Rice was, in fact, dead. Their plot had failed because of Jones' apparent lack of criminal prowess, and on October 4, 1900, New York police arrested the pair on forgery charges and took them into custody in Manhattan's dismal Tombs Jail (Texas file).

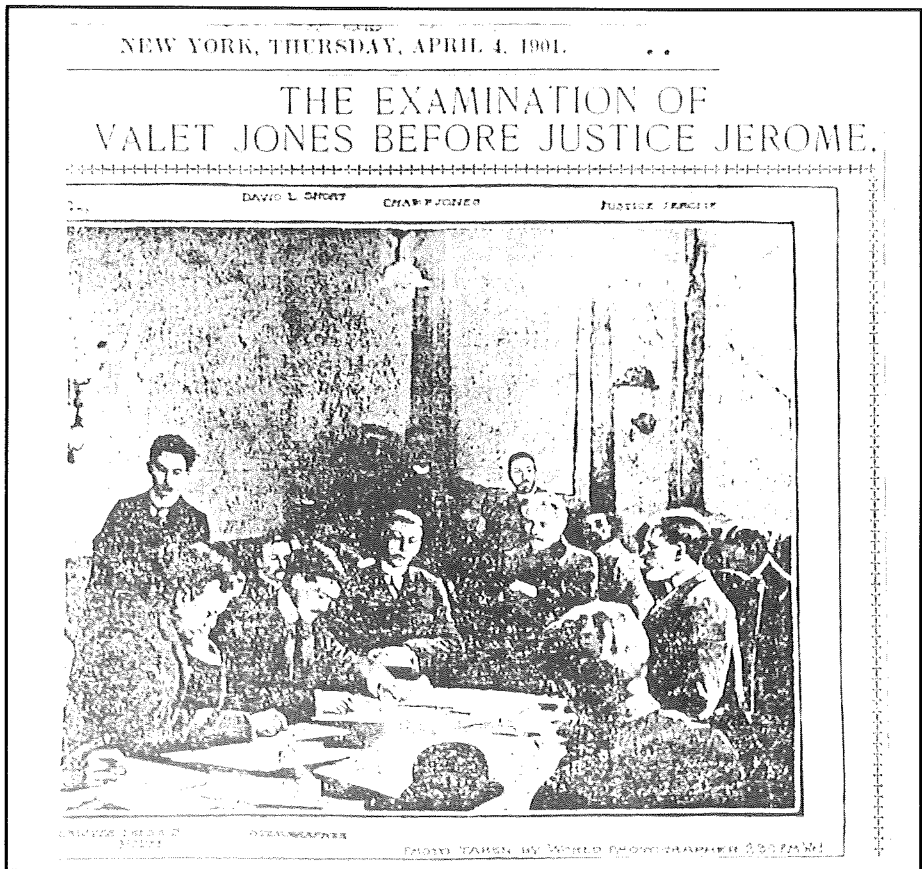
Patrick had no doubt offered Jones wealth beyond his dreams, but whether Jones had any actual proof that he would receive a part of Rice's estate is unclear. After their arrest, Jones learned that he had not been mentioned in either William Rice's legitimate will or in the infamous Patrick Will (Rice Papers). The evidence indicates that while Rice paid Jones a handsome of salary of $100 a month, later court testimony revealed that Jones felt concern over the longevity of his boss. Realizing that Mr. Rice was getting on in years, Jones had set about to establish another career for himself and in 1899 had entered night school in the pursuit of a career as a New York City police officer. His teacher, Mr. Gould, later testified that he had suggested that Jones look to his wealthy employer for security, adding that, "I don't think Jones had ever thought of inheriting any of his [Rice's] money until I suggested it to him" (Muir *Rice* 86).

A month after their arrest, Jones apparently realized that he would become Patrick's scapegoat for the crime and, consequently, made a full 550 page confession to New York District Attorney Osborne on November 2, 1900 (Thompson). Following Jones' confession, the guard returned the highly distressed valet to Cell 87 where he attempted to commit suicide by slashing his throat with a penknife provided him by the inmate in the next cell—none other than Albert T. Patrick. Sensational newspaper coverage especially by the *New York Journal* detailed the confessed murderer's suicide

attempt using front page illustrations of Jones on his jail cell cot in the throes of despair ("Jones Confesses") and headlines which read, "I Was Haunted, I Had To Confess." But in a later statement to the press, the New York District Attorney's Office explained that, rather than overwhelming guilt, Jones' motive for the attempt upon his own life had actually been Patrick's alleged threats to kill the valet if he did not take his own life first (Rice Papers). It would appear that Patrick's ability to manipulate Jones had gone beyond simple persuasion.

During his stay in New York City's Bellevue Hospital, Jones' presence drew crowds of spectators hoping to get a glimpse of the infamous "Valet Jones" and created such a nuisance that officials partitioned his bed from view. This quiet young man from rural Texas had been thrown into New York City notoriety, his every move recounted on the front pages of every paper in the city for weeks following his arrest (Rice Papers), yet amid the sensationalism, none of these reports offered logical explanations for his actions.

In spite of his quick recovery in the hospital following the suicide


NEW YORK, THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 1901.

THE EXAMINATION OF VALET JONES BEFORE JUSTICE JEROME.

Photograph of Charles Jones and several other principals in the Rice murder trial (From the New York World*)*

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

PHOTO BY DON BOGGS

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS
STATE OF TEXAS
CERTIFICATE OF DEATH
STATE FILE NO

1. PLACE OF DEATH
a. COUNTY: Harris
b. CITY OR TOWN: Baytown Texas
c. LENGTH OF STAY: 17 yrs
d. FULL NAME OF HOSPITAL OR INSTITUTION: 206 Travis

2. USUAL RESIDENCE
a. STATE: Texas
b. COUNTY: Harris
c. CITY OR TOWN: Baytown
d. STREET ADDRESS: 206 Travis

3. NAME OF DECEASED (Type or Print): a. (First) Charles b. (Middle) F c. (Last) Jones
4. DATE OF DEATH: Nov 16 1954
5. SEX: Male
6. COLOR OR RACE: White
7. MARRIED, NEVER MARRIED, WIDOWED, DIVORCED: Widowed
8. DATE OF BIRTH: Feb 3 1875
9. AGE: 79 years, 9 months, 13 days
10a. USUAL OCCUPATION
10b. KIND OF BUSINESS OR INDUSTRY: Retired
11. BIRTHPLACE: Baytown Texas
12. FATHER'S NAME: L W Jones — BIRTHPLACE: Mississippi
13. MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME: Noella Smith — BIRTHPLACE: Mississippi
14. WAS DECEASED EVER IN U.S. ARMED FORCES?
15. SOCIAL SECURITY NO.
16. INFORMANT'S SIGNATURE: W F Jones

MEDICAL CERTIFICATION
17. CAUSE OF DEATH
I. DISEASE OR CONDITION DIRECTLY LEADING TO DEATH (a): Pistol shot wound in head
ANTECEDENT CAUSES
DUE TO (b)
DUE TO (c)
II. OTHER SIGNIFICANT CONDITIONS
18a. DATE OF OPERATION
18b. MAJOR FINDINGS OF OPERATION
19. AUTOPSY? YES ☐ NO ☐

20a. ACCIDENT, SUICIDE, HOMICIDE: Suicide
20b. PLACE OF INJURY: Home
20c. (CITY, TOWN, OR PRECINCT NO.) (COUNTY) (STATE): Pct #3 Harris Texas
20d. TIME OF INJURY: 11 16 54 10 P.m.
20e. INJURY OCCURRED: WHILE AT WORK ☐ NOT WHILE AT WORK ☒
20f. HOW DID INJURY OCCUR? Pistol shot, suicide

21. I hereby certify that I attended the deceased from ______, 19__, to ______, 19__, that I last saw the deceased alive on ______, 19__, and that death occurred at 9:00 p.m., from the causes and on the date stated above.
22a. SIGNATURE: Walter [illegible]
22b. ADDRESS: Baytown Texas
22c. DATE SIGNED: 11-18-54

23a. BURIAL, CREMATION, REMOVAL: Removal
23b. DATE: Nov 17 1954
23c. NAME OF CEMETERY OR CREMATORY: Forest Park Cemetery
23d. LOCATION: Houston Texas
24. FUNERAL DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE: Earthman Funeral Home - Joe Speck #2813 [signature]
25a. REGISTRAR'S FILE NO.: 176 88
25b. DATE REC'D BY LOCAL REGISTRAR: 11-18-54
25c. REGISTRAR'S SIGNATURE: [signature]

NOTE THE INFORMATION CALLED FOR ON THE REVERSE SIDE

In the later years of his life Jones often visited municipal employees at the City Hall (above). The man the press once insisted was responsible for the "crime of the century," died by his own hand in Baytown in 1954. Few local citizens were aware of Jones' infamous past.

attempt, Jones' irrational behavior continued ("Jones Confesses"). He did not return to the Tombs, in part because of Patrick's alleged threats upon Jones' life and because officials felt that the unstable prisoner would no doubt try to kill himself again. Reportedly, while in the House of Detention, Jones did make another attempt and therefore spent the next two years before the end of the trial in a private boarding house under the guard of police detectives. In keeping Jones alive to testify against Patrick, the city of New York spent over $7000 for his upkeep, and newspapers wrote with disdain of the grand treatment that this notorious murderer received ("Jones Released").

Even though both Jones and Patrick had been indicted for forgery and murder, in turning state's evidence, Jones secured his freedom while Patrick was sentenced to death by hanging on April 7, 1902 (Texas File). Little corroborating evidence existed as Jones had been the only material witness to the plan to murder William Rice, and while the coroner's report did show that a murder had been committed, the state needed Jones' testimony to convict Patrick for his role in masterminding the conspiracy and murder. New York State Court of Appeal records explained that while greed and desire for social prominence had clearly motivated Patrick, Jones "seemed to have had little initiative of his own, being susceptible instead to whatever stronger personality went to work on him" (Muir *Rice* 103).

In the ten years following the trial, Patrick avoided execution through motions for appeals which, though never granted, gave him time to compile new evidence. Through the help of the newly formed Medico-Legal Foundation, Patrick proved that Rice's death had resulted from the mercury administered by Jones, not the chloroform which Patrick had persuaded Jones to administer (Muir "Murder" 1). No doubt Jones' release at the end of the trial ten years earlier helped to sway public opinion in Patrick's favor, and on November 27, 1912, he received a full pardon from New York Governor John A. Dix. Patrick's release from Sing Sing Prison came just two months after the long awaited opening of Rice University on the twelfth anniversary of the founder's death, its construction forestalled by the forged will and subsequent trial (Muir *Rice* 106).

Newspapers gave considerable attention to Jones' release in August of 1902, creating a stir both in New York and in the Houston area (Rice Papers). Followed constantly by reporters for months after he returned to his home in Cedar Bayou, Jones was reportedly "shadowed" by Houston detectives who claimed that they wanted to insure that Jones would be available to testify should a second trial occur ("Jones Denies"). In poor health after the long trial, Jones

stated to reporters, "I have not known what refreshing sleep is for years, and the dreadful insomnia is constantly growing worse. What little respose I do get is caused by chloral and morphine. The only thing that has saved my life is the change to this mild and balmy climate" ("Jones May Die"). Yet the local social climate created problems for Jones when he could not secure employment because everyone seemed to know his name and would have nothing to do with him. At last he went to work on the schooner, *Rapella*, owned by his brother-in-law, Captain Walter Tabbs, where reporters claimed that Tabbs guarded Charles "as if he were some rare treasure" ("Closely Guarded"). When Charles took a trip to New Orleans, Louisiana, in the summer of 1903, newspapers from Houston to New York reported Jones missing and feared dead. Within days, wire service reports from Galveston verified that Jones had been spotted in the city on July 21, 1903, and even though it had been over a year since the end of the trial, every major New York City newspaper carried the story of his reappearance (Rice Papers).

After he had allegedly vanished in 1903, Jones did in fact disappear without a trace for some thirty to thirty-five years before returning to the Cedar Bayou area (Meyer 1). No one has ever discovered the whereabouts of Charles Jones during those missing years because he remained so elusive about his past that those who knew him did not even know that he was a native of the area. When he reappeared, he made his home in the small town of Pelly which consolidated into Baytown shortly before his death. Area residents saw little of Jones except when he walked the four blocks from his home at 206 Travis to downtown Pelly, where he frequently visited with the employees at City Hall and sometimes had coffee at a neighborhood drugstore with the city attorney, George Chandler. Even though Chandler knew Charlie better than most of the townspeople, Charlie never discussed his past with Chandler, who only learned about Jones' infamous background from the occasional whispering about the elderly man (Chandler). After becoming ill in late 1954, Jones refused to hire anyone to care for him, and in fulfilling his vow to remain totally independent, he shot himself to death on November 16, 1954 (Meyer 1). Buried in Houston's Lawndale-Forest Park Cemetery in an unmarked grave, Jones secured his anonymity at last (Lawndale).

Whether driven by his own greed or persuaded to commit murder by his accomplice, Jones' refusal to fully explain his role in the sensational case leaves only speculation on his reasons for killing William Marsh Rice. Although the courts credited Jones' lack of polish and intelligence as the flaws which made him the perfect dupe

for Patrick's scheme, from a criminologist's point of view, Jones does not appear as unsophisticated as the court's decision suggests. As Rice's valet, Jones assimilated into Madison Avenue society and held a respectable position working for one of the country's wealthiest men, a man who apparently trusted Jones implicitly (Grimsley). A close inspection of the historical facts of this case leads to puzzling questions concerning the psychological motivations of this quiet, unassuming valet who quickly became known as one of the most notorious criminals of the nineteenth century. Jones himself said after the 1902 trial, "it has always been a mystery to me that he should have exerted such a malign influence over me. Many a time before killing Rice I tried to shake off Patrick's influence, but it was in vain. I am paying for my sins now" ("Valet Jones May Die"). The isolation in which he spent the next fifty years of his life reveals that Valet Jones was never truly free of his crime. ". . .It is rash to say that he himself escapes punishment. On the rack of memory, who shall commute his sufferings?" (*New York World*).

ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING artifacts relating to the development of family medicine in Texas is the turn-of-the-century office of Dr. Nicolas T. Schilling, who practiced medicine in the Baytown-Cedar Bayou area from the 1870s until his death in 1919. In the mid-1960s Schilling's heirs donated his perfectly preserved office, which included his medical records and instruments, as well as an intact and well-stocked apothecary, to Chambers County, and today it is located in a park in the town of Anahuac. Lee College nursing student Virginia Thiel recognized the importance of Dr. Schilling's records in documenting the evolution of the medical arts in early twentieth-century Texas. By carefully examining the daily entry made by Schilling in his medical ledgers in December of 1899 and again in January and May of 1900, Thiel was able to reconstruct in detail the medical practice of a country doctor in a rural Texas community—the patients he saw, their complaints and symptoms, and the treatment he prescribed. Thiel's training as a nursing student and her knowledge of pharmacology certainly give her particular insights into the problems faced by Dr. Schilling in his desire to offer the best possible care to his patients.

Virginia Thiel completed her degree at the University of Texas and is presently pursuing a career in nursing in the Austin area. Her essay won second place in the 198l Caldwell Competition.

A Life, A Lesson: Dr. Nicholas T. Schilling

VIRGINIA THIEL

In this age of rampant biotechnological research and discovery, millions who seek relief from their physical and psychological ailments have the disconcerting experience of being regarded "as a clinic number with an interesting pathological condition instead of a suffering human being" (Major 2:1025). Health care has not always been as impersonal and scientific as it is rapidly becoming in recent times.

A century ago medicine was a more personal profession. There was a one-to-one doctor-patient relationship. The family physician knew the family and its problems intimately and all these factors left their imprint on health care. He was, of necessity and choice, physician of the psyche as well as the body. The horse and buggy doctor may have been short on knowledge and techniques, but he was long on understanding and on sympathy (Marks 1349).

A man by the name of Nicholas T. Schilling practiced this personalized sort of medicine from 1874 to 1919 at Cedar Bayou, Texas, an isolated, rural community near Houston. Dr. Schilling was born on November 28, 1845, in Bavaria, Germany (Schilling Pension Application). Twenty-five years later, after migrating with his parents to the United States and having fought for the Union in the

Civil War, he earned his medical degree, graduating from the Chicago Medical College in 1872 (Historical Marker Application 2). Dr. Schilling moved to Cedar Bayou in 1874, hoping to set himself up in private practice; but, lacking sufficient funds to purchase instruments and medications, he was forced to work at a brick factory. He continued there until his professional skill and training were discovered when he saved someone's life after an accident. Schilling then "began his practice of medicine from a lean-to in the back of a general store along Cedar Bayou." Eventually he married, built a house, and fathered two children. His home served as an office until he erected a separate building near his residence in 1890.[1] This separate office was built to provide him with a place from which he could practice medicine and store medical supplies. It would also protect his family from exposure to the diseases that plagued his clients (Historical Marker Application 3). Dr. Schilling practiced medicine out of his Cedar Bayou office until his death on September 20, 1919.[2]

Dr. Schilling's practice was diversified according to the needs of his patients. Besides the usual internal medicine and surgery, Dr. Schilling also performed dentistry, fitted eyeglasses, and occasionally practiced a little veterinary medicine (Historical Marker Application 6). Throughout his career he frequently traveled for miles by horse to see his patients as well as treating them in his office, knowing that he might receive only a meal or some other type of small payment in the form of vegetables or fruit in return for his services (Historical Marker Application 6; *Baytown Sun* 8). As a dedicated physician and respected member of his community, Dr. Schilling provided his neighbors for miles around with a higher quality of personalized health care than had formerly been available (Schilling Records).

Although Dr. Schilling has been dead for over sixty years, many of his patient records are preserved in the Chambers County Archives. His records suggest that he treated between three and twelve patients daily. These records reveal a fascinating account of the pharmacology and the medical procedures common among country doctors at the turn of the century, along with the stories of men, women and children's fights against pain and disease. Each

1. Dr. Schilling's office was a three room, one story building with an attic. The main level consisted of a small waiting room, an apothecary with an attached cistern, and an examination-treatment room that occupied the right half of the building. The attic served as a storage area and was occasionally used to house patients who needed to remain under the doctor's care overnight.

2. After Dr. Schilling's death, his son John Schilling continued the medical practice at the Schilling office a few years and then left it for a practice in Houston. In 1966 the heirs of his daughter Annie Schilling donated the Schilling office and its contents to Chambers County. The Application for Official Texas Historical Marker states, "The office building and its contents are preserved so well . . . seldom can such a demonstration of how and with what a country doctor practiced medicine at the turn of the century be found (10).

case seems to have held a special interest for Dr. Schilling. From December 15, 1899, to January 15, 1900, he treated twenty different persons and, interestingly, one horse.[3] His practice indeed was not over-specialized! Eight of these cases (excluding the horse) may be considered as representative of, though not identical to, the other cases he treated during the rest of the year.

At the turn of the century, just as today, people, especially children, frequently found themselves victims of injuries requiring the care of a physician. Such was the plight of Case One,[4] a little boy who had burned both of his feet during some unexplained circumstance. When Dr. Schilling arrived, the boy had calmed down some from the initial pain and fright of the incident. His "feet (were) burned more on the outsides" and some small blisters "about the size of a pea" appeared on the superior and inferior portions of his feet. Dr. Schilling applied Sweet Oil Laudanum[5] and lime water with absorbent cotton to the burned areas. He also left some "mu all [sic] powders of morphine gr. 1/2" to relieve his pain and a "tincture of Iron Nilh" to be given three times daily, "Acinite Echeuicea Syrup" and "Quinine Licorice Root 12 doses." During the week following the injury, Dr. Schilling prescribed Calomel Sugar Milk (four doses), turpentine (oz. 2), Bismuth Cascaria, Bismuth and Carbon Oil at various times all presumably to be applied externally to the burned areas. This young man remained under the medical care of Dr. Schilling from December 15, 1899 until December 21, 1899.

Little boys and their injuries kept the doctor quite busy that December. Just a few days after finishing the treatment of the burned child, he was summoned from his home on Christmas Day to see Case Two, a young boy who while playing "had a toy pistol shoot him in the hand with a blank cartridge" which entered the medial side of his index finger traveling down toward the joint "causing a very painful wound." Unable to see anything in the wound, Dr. Schilling injected a "solution of Cocaine as an anesthetic into the wound and cut the skin to make a free opening, stuffed it with absorbent cotton and sprinkled it with Boric Acid [an antiseptic] and then vaseline on cotton" and then applied a bandage. Dr.

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3. During my research I examined Dr. Schilling's medical record books for December, 1889, January and May 1890, in detail. The structure of these records seemed to indicate a daily record of his practice with a notation about each patient he saw. It is noteworthy that during the three months examined, only one pregnancy was noted and not a single broken bone or death was mentioned.

4. Dr. Schilling did not refer to his patients by case number in his medical records but identified each by the head of household's name and other identifying information which will not be presented here in an effort to insure the privacy of his patients' descendants.

5. This and other pharmacological terms are defined in a glossary following this article.

Schilling apparently saw the child only one time as he is not noted in Schilling's medical records after the initial treatment on Christmas Day. It is interesting to note that the need for antiseptics was not discovered until around 1865 by Joseph Lister and even then was not a common practice in Europe until after 1870 (Major 824-25). It is remarkable that Dr. Schilling employed antiseptics in his treatments, considering the relative isolation of the country doctor from the scientists of his day and their new discoveries.[6]

Besides treating the many injuries that occurred so frequently, he often found himself in a position to practice a little dentistry. His dental load for the month of December consisted of two clients. One person had five teeth removed, including two wisdom teeth. The patient endured this with no more anesthesia or medication than a few drops of Tincture of Iron Glycerine Water (Schilling 16 Dec. 1899). Case Four, a young man, had his left lower second molar extracted without any medication (13 Dec. 1899). Apparently the major

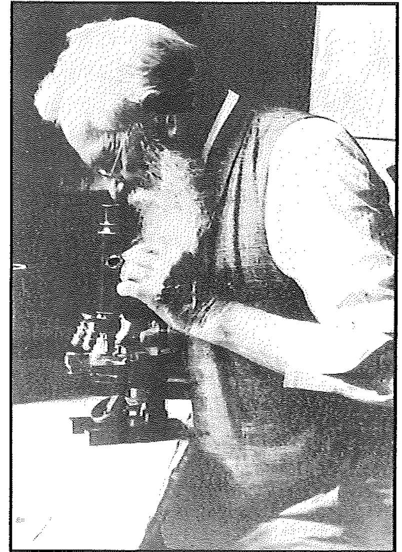

Photo courtesy Wallisville Heritage Park

6. The attic of Dr. Schilling's office contained stacks of medical journals, newspapers, and other periodicals. I did not make any close examination of them because of their extremely fragile condition, but their presence may indicate that Dr. Schilling continued updating his knowledge and procedures in his relatively isolated location by reading current medical publications.

Photo by Beverly Meyer

Dr. Schilling's medical office was originally situated across Cedar Bayou from Baytown near the present location of the Houston Light and Power company generating plant. The office has since been moved to a park in Anahuac.

treatment in dentistry at the turn of the century was extraction of the faulty tooth. However, it is reasonable to speculate that people probably did not come to see a doctor until the tooth was beyond saving. If this reason for neglect is true, it indicates either a lack of fiscal resources with which to pay the physician or a lack of understanding of consequences of dental and other types of self and family neglect.

Dr. Schilling's neighbors often found themselves in an altogether unacceptable state of health and in need of his services because of neglect, excessive emotional or physical stress, or any one of the numerous other factors that reduce the body's ability to ward off disease. It was Dr. Schilling's task to use his limited resources in a creative and innovative manner, hopefully restoring his clients to a healthier and happier state of existence. The diversity of maladies that were presented to him provided him with ample room for innovation and creativity. Although weather may have been a factor, four of the clients (cases 5-8) who came to him between December 15, 1899, and January 15, 1900, are representative of his other medical cases throughout the year (13 Dec. 1899-30 June 1900).

Case Five was a female patient complaining of an ovarian abscess, severe cutting pains, aching in her head and back, chills and fever. Dr. Schilling gave her "Dovers Powder Camphor" and Quinine every hour until her pain eased. He also gave her "three doses of hepatic tablets and Calomel two of each in capsules." Besides the above mentioned medications he prescribed two other medications whose names were not legible (28 Dec. 1899).

Case Six, after examination, was found to have a strong pulse of 80, a coating on her tongue, loose bowels, and a poor appetite. Dr. Schilling gave her Calomel grains two, Morphine one twelfth of a grain, and Bismuth Sugar Mild until she began to feel better. He also prescribed an Aconite Water solution two hours apart (solution percentage was not legible), Rhubarb and Dovers of Powdered Quinine to be taken six hours apart (31 Dec. 1899).

Case Seven suffered from an ailment very common during the winter months, tonsillitis. Dr. Schilling gave the patient a solution of hydrogen peroxide and Golden Seal Glycerine Water to rinse the tonsils. He also gave her Citrate Potash Nitre Syrup Water and Quinine caps (1 Jan. 1900).

Dr. Schilling was called to the bedside of Case Eight and found him with a pulse of 100, a respiratory rate of thirty, and a temperature of one hundred three and four tenths degrees. His tongue was coated, expectoration was bloody, and there were moist rales.[7] He

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7. *Tabor's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary* defines rales as abnormal sounds in the chest caused by the passage of air through bronchi that are congested or which are constricted by spasm or a thickening of their walls.

was also suffering severe pain in his right side. He was given "Aconite, a Caromel and Ipecac compound in a few doses." The following day Case Eight's temperature had dropped to one hundred and his skin was moist with perspiration (frequently a sign of a falling temperature). His tongue, however, was still coated white and expectoration was difficult since the mucus was thick and rather hard to cough up. Schilling's records state that "the upper part of [his] left lung [had] harsh dry rales, the right lung [had] moist and crackling rales." Dr. Schilling gave him Dovers Powder, a full dose of Calomel, "an Aconite-Veratruim Digitalis Mixture, a Vormica and Iodine Potash Mixture grains four every three hours, Sulphate Magnesic" and four ounces of turpentine. By Saturday, the fourth of January, the patient's tongue had cleared some and his cough was not so severe, "but the bowels had moved quite freely with blood in the actions so he passed quite a quantity — probably four to six ounces." The Vormica Iodide Potash Mixture was then discontinued, and Dr. Schilling added an order for more free consumption of nourishment and Bismuth to ease the bowels. On Monday, Case Eight's vital signs were near normal; his tongue was cleared except for a small portion and the mucus was only white. Case Eight seemed well on the road to recovery; however, on the twenty-fifth of January, he had fallen prey once more to whatever had previously caused his ailments (2 Jan.-19 Feb. 1900).

In each of the preceding cases, because of the absence of twentieth century medical technology and information, Dr. Schilling was forced to focus most of his treatments on the symptoms rather than on the etiology of the diseases. At the time his treatments may have been concocted from simple trial and error. Sometimes they failed, but somehow patients of his who could have died recovered, at least for a time (13 Dec. 1899-30 June 1900). At the turn of the century, medical research and discovery had just begun to take giant steps, enlarging the sphere of knowledge accessible to those who attempt to restore good health to the sick and infirm. Medical and biotechnology have increased to such a great extent that no one man can hope to place even half of it within the realm of his conscious memory. Antibiotics kill disease-causing bacteria that once cost the lives of millions. Insulin supplements the diabetic person's deficient production of this vital hormone, extending his life for years. Diseases are turned against themselves and made into vaccines that prevent disastrous epidemics. In this world of incredible discoveries, human beings, seeing that they are unable to acquire knowledge as a whole, turn to specialization, hoping to become experts in at least one area. There is a proliferation of every type of medical specialist imaginable. There are dentists, opthomologists, radiologists, podia-

trists, cardiologists, pathologists, otorhinolaryngologists, urologists, orthodontists, and a host of others. If one does go to see a general practitioner for his ill health, he may find himself ushered along in a conveyor belt fashion from the examination room to the laboratory to radiology to a treatment room and back again, seeing about a dozen care givers along the way—each with his specific function. Eventually the patient will see one or more doctors, and, if one is really lucky, he may have the honor of becoming a fascinating disease in the educated discussion of a dozen physicians.

Perhaps along this path of rapid biotechnological advance, something is being obliterated and forgotten in the midst of these life-improving, death-delaying discoveries. Perhaps Dr. Schilling's lack of information, modern equipment, and his lack of specialization kept him from curing many of his clients' diseases, but it may also have left him freer to see and treat his patients as whole beings. Perhaps he made up a little for his lack of etiological information by providing his patients with the emotional support and reassurance so vital to a diseased person's struggle toward restoration to good health (Garfield 3). Those who would cure the ills of man must look to the future for unimagined accomplishments and explore the present for some grain of knowledge not yet fully developed, but they must not forget to search through the remembrances of years gone by for vitalizing ideas and truths obscured by the wonder and novelty of recent acquisitions and the expectations of future accomplishments.

Pharmacologic Terminology:

Aconite—a poisonous and very powerful alkaloid.

Bismuth—a white metallic element; used externally as a protecting coat over an inflamed area. Its salts are used in antiseptics, as sedatives, and in the treatment of diarrhea.

Calomel-Mercurous Oxide—a heavy white powder used in small doses as a laxative.

Cascara Segrada—the dried bark of a small tree grown on western U.S. Coast and in parts of South America. The main ingredient in aromatic cascaria sagrada fluid extract is a cathartic.

Cathartic—an active purgative usually producing several evacuations which may or may not be accompanied by pain.

Citrate—a compound of citric acid and a base in a solution, sometimes used to prevent clotting of blood.

Diaphoretic—a sudorific or an agent which increases perspiration.

Digitalis—the dried leaves of Digitalis Purpurea used in powdered form as tablets or capsules. It is a heart stimulant and indirectly a diuretic.

Emetic—medication that produces vomiting.

Expectorant—an agent that facilitates the removal of secretions of the bronchopulmonary mucus membrane.

Hepatic—pills given for liver problems.

Ipecac—a dried root of a plant grown in Brazil. Specific against amebic dysentery. Also an expectorant, emetic and diaphoretic.

Laudanum—tincture of opium.

Nitre—sodium nitrate.

Potash—potassium carbonate.

Syrup—concentrated solution of sugar in water.

Tincture—diluted alcoholic solution of non-volatile substances, 10% being standard strength for powerful drugs and 20% for weaker ones.

Turpentine—a mixture of terpens and other hydrocarbons from pine trees, used externally in liniments and counter-irritants.

A CHERISHED FOLK TRADITION of the upper Texas coast is the old tale (which could conceivably be true) that civil servants posted to the British consulate in Houston received hardship pay because of the region's harsh, tropical climate. Today's air-conditioned comfort makes it easy to laugh at this myth concerning the discomfiture of His Majesty's representatives in this little corner of the New World. What is often overlooked, however, is that the upper bay area does indeed offer a near subtropical climate infamous, even among its more boastful natives, for its extremes. Fierce, bone chilling winter rains are replaced in the summer months by a near insufferable heat and humidity; furthermore, there was a time when malaria and other tropical diseases posed a perennial threat to the well-being of both man and beast. Such were the conditions faced in the early nineteen twenties by the men who constructed and worked at Humble Oil's Baytown refinery. Beginning with the initial stages of construction in 1919, Humble recognized the threat to employee efficiency posed by health problems—a direct consequence of the swampy, subtropical location of the new refinery. Diane Krizak examines the early efforts of Humble to meet these challenges to public health and at the same time to reduce the man-hour loss resulting from an inordinately high accident rate. While these pioneer experiences might seem primitive by today's standards, she argues that they represented the beginning of over sixty years of continuous improvements by Humble, later Exxon, in the field of industrial health and safety.

Diane Krizak won second place in the Caldwell Competition for her paper in 1985.

You've Come a Long Way, Baby!

DIANE KRIZAK

A casual view of the 2,200 acre property adjacent to the San Jacinto Ship Channel does not fully attest to the value and the influence that the Exxon Refinery possesses for its Baytown neighbors. The refinery has undergone significant changes to achieve its present status as one of the largest and most productive refineries in the world. What was once "a great rice field shimmering in the sun with nothing but sena beans, man-high, making a sea of green as far as the eye could reach" is now a zenith of industrial excellence ("Baytown"). Through continuous growth, modification, and improvement, the Exxon plant evolved from an idea to a primitive operation and then finally to the sophisticated operation that it is today.

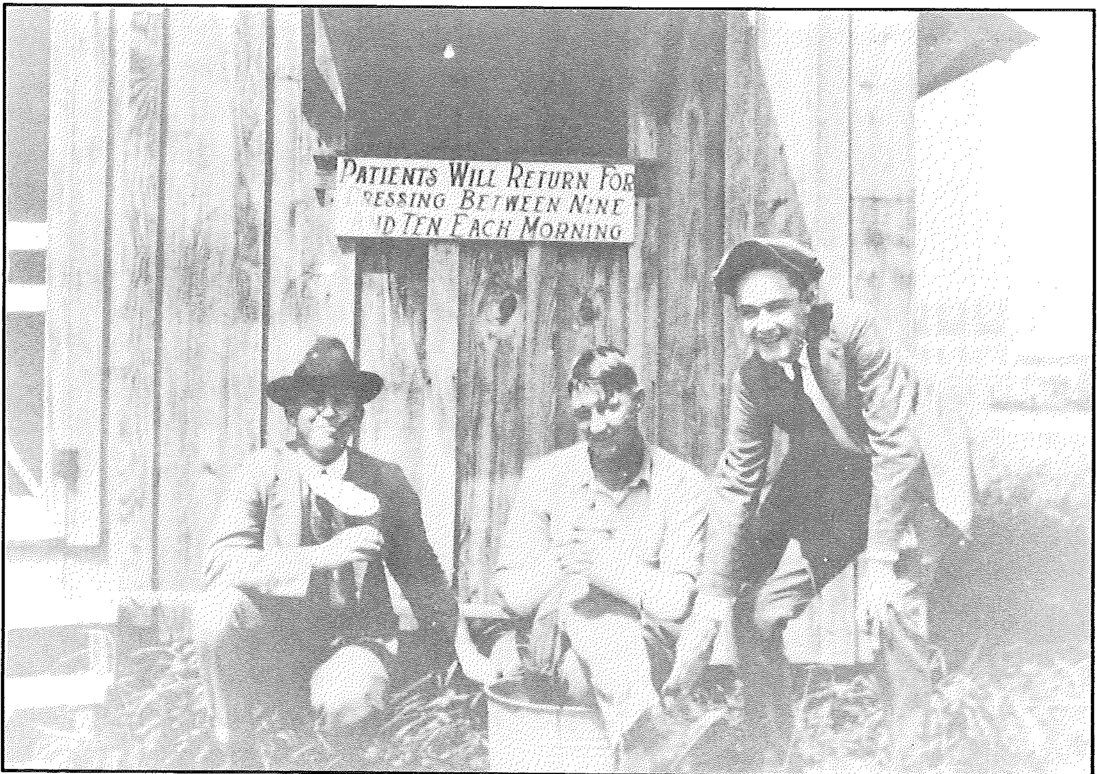
The Exxon Company began as the Humble Oil and Refining Company which was officially chartered on June 21, 1917. The Board of Directors included Ross S. Sterling as President and W.S.

Farish, R.L. Blaffer, and H.C. Weiss as vice presidents (Culver scrapbook). On April 16, 1919, the blueprints for the refinery were laid out by a small group of engineers on the porch of an old farmhouse (Larson 96). At that time, the lonely farmhouse was the only building on the property, which was mainly forest and swampland, "almost impenetrable" ("Baytown").

A large number of workers were hired at the then generous wage of 40¢ an hour. Despite the high wages, however, labor turnover was high (Culver tapes). This fluctuation in the labor force resulted from the severe environmental conditions under which the men had to work. Located on the upper end of Galveston Bay, the site of the new refinery was infested with flies, malaria-carrying mosquitoes, grasshoppers, and a variety of poisonous snakes. Also, construction workers faced almost intolerable weather conditions. As reported by one source,

> it rained for one hundred days straight, and storms in May harassed workers and wrecked buildings and equipment. The earth, when dry, was

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM



Three early Humble Company employees clowning around in front of the refinery's somewhat primitive medical office

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Dr. R. E. Malesh, one of the original Humble Refinery physicians to work in Baytown, tries smallpox vaccine. Note the early refinery construction in the background.

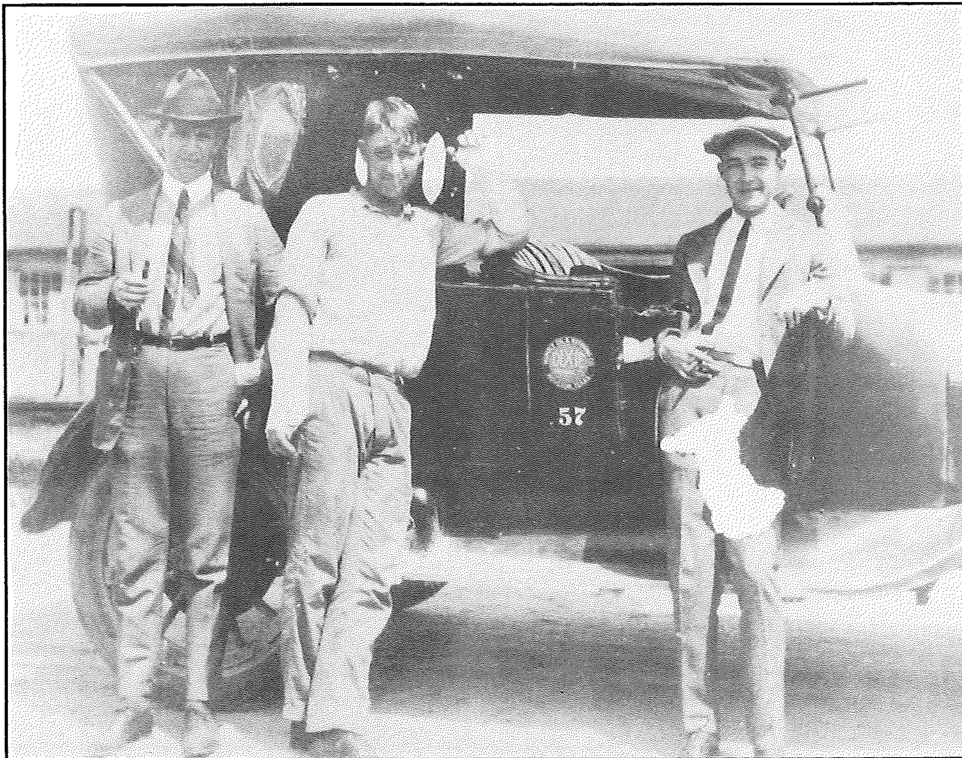


PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Unidentified first aid man, bandaged patient Jack Shock, and company doctor Walter Campbell pose in front of a company car.

> as hard as cement, but when the rains commenced, it grew slippery and sticky. It balled up on the feet and shovels of workers and clogged ditching machines until they racked themselves to pieces. (Culver scrapbook)

A significant inconvenience and example of the primitive conditions at the Humble compound lay with the laundry. Because of warm temperatures, high humidity, and constant rain, dirty clothes became more soiled with mold and mildew. With no laundry facilities on the premises, the men had to send their clothes by boat to be cleaned. Often it would take weeks for the clean laundry to be returned (Culver tape 1).

With these conditions, it is not surprising that Dr. Charles M. Aves was soon called to duty in August 1919 as Humble's first company physician (Larson 97). Shortly after reporting for work, Dr. Aves, realizing the overwhelming work load and the need for additional help, wrote a letter to a former soldier, who had served under Aves' command, asking for his assistance. Norman Brooks Culver, "Doc" to his friends, received the letter with enthusiasm and readily accepted the position offered. Much of our insight into the very primitive conditions of Humble at its start comes from"Doc" Culver's memoirs. His appointment as "overseer" to the small company hospital paid $125 per month, a modest sum by today's standards. The wage did not include room and board which totaled $8.50 per week (Culver scrapbook). Following Mr. Culver's arrival, and as a progressive move, the company sent Dr. Aves to Houston to organize a medical department for the entire Humble company (Larson 97).

The temporary hospital served as a microcosm of the primitive conditions existing all over the refinery grounds. Aves described the hospital as being similar to "an army regimental hospital . . . with eight beds for white men and tents for negroes [sic] and Mexicans." No nurses were on the premises "because we [had] no place to keep them, and on account of the mud" (Culver scrapbook). The wood frame building was relatively small, with one door, "some eight or ten small windows" maybe five feet from the floor, and screened. A wooden canopy in front of the establishment acted as its only source of shade. A wood burning stove in the center of the "waiting room" with a tea kettle full of water served as its only source of heat and hot water (Culver tapes 2). All of the washbasins drained onto the ground under the structure, only adding to the already enormous problem with mud.

Cases observed in the small, wood frame hospital ranged from something as minor as a hangover to something as major as a

severely fractured skull or severe burns. One of the cooks, known as "Frank," in mess hall number 4, made a concoction from dried fruit that evidently turned out very tasty and "extremely intoxicating." The name given to this inebriating beverage was "prune juice." It was not uncommon, following a wild night of "prune juice parties," for the hospital to treat many a case of acute headache. Lined up on iron cots along the wall, the patients bore witness to an assortment of afflictions. In one bed might be a patient with a knife or bullet wound, in the next someone with a snake or spider bite. Sufferers with infections and/or severe eye irritation might fill the next few beds. Patients with broken or even amputated limbs, not uncommon infirmities, shared quarters with patients who suffered high fever from sunburn or malaria carrying mosquitoes. Outside would be tents filled with victims of smallpox, typhoid, influenza, and pneumonia.

The small hospital often overflowed with illness, and extra tents had to be set up to house the infirm (Culver tape 1). At times, hundreds of injections would be given in a single day. Many medications came in tablet form and had to be dissolved in a teaspoon of water and boiled over an alcohol lamp before being drawn into a syringe and injected into the injured, a lengthy, painstaking process (Culver tape 2).

Food poisoning from the company mess halls was a continuous problem both for the employees and for the doctors. With no mechanical refrigeration, food spoiled easily (Culver tape 1). Home canned items such as oysters were a frequent source of the poison (Webber 6). Vomiting and diarrhea were common ailments to the men on the compound. There were "not near enough toilets to accommodate the sick. . . . In the moonlight night, one could look over the rice fields and see men squatting down by the dozens, like some animal" (Culver tape 1).

"Doc" remembered that the refinery provided an old army tent for its employees with one light bulb in the center and a steel cot for each man. "Bathrooms" were set up at the end of each row of tents. A friendly Negro, "Honey Boy," disposed of the contents in the five gallon cans. Separate camps served blacks and Mexicans. The white collar workers (clerical help, engineers, etc.) had their camp complete with private mess halls while top management enjoyed wood frame houses. All of the facilities were color coded for the different races (Culver tape 1).

Even considering the severe weather conditions and the extraordinary illness record, according to the *History of Humble Oil and Refining Company*, "the weakest point in Humble's employee situation

in the 1920s was the continued high accident rate." In 1921, the hospital report for 1920 showed that out of 1,000 employees, 2,266 accident cases occurred. "Out of the 2,266 accident cases, 506 (almost one fourth of the cases) were injuries to the eyes, which in most instances could have been avoided had the men worn glasses" ("Hospital Report 1920").

In an effort to reduce the accident rate, the company initiated health and safety committees. Men were soon ordered to wear "metal helmets, safety shoes and goggles, gloves, and gas masks when handling noxious crudes" (Rundell 122). The Committee on Health and Sanitation was set up in March 1921 to oversee the "water supply, sanitation, locker and washroom equipment, occupational diseases, elimination of unhealthful working conditions, hospitals, first aid, etc." (*Humble Bee* 17 Mar. 1921). One interesting contrast to this great concern for safety comes from the same issue of the company's publication, the *Humble Bee*, that boasted of the soon-to-come Acid Recovery Plant that would "help in eliminating the mosquito nuisance as we will have plenty of fumes to spare. Might be well to warn the men when they are visiting this plant or working there not to wear any jewelry or carry any metallic objects which they do not want corroded!" For what was considered a modern industrial operation at the time, it is obvious the company still had much to learn. We can laugh today at their outward ignorance but be glad that, fortunately, times did change and such a blatant violation of personnel safety would not go unchecked today.

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Labor foreman W. B. Dumas models "refinery finery," typical wet weather dress at the Baytown plant.

A serious violation of the new safety rules was smoking on the job. Employees were instructed not to smoke and to carry only safety

matches on refinery grounds ("Once Again"). The company boasted of its fine fire protection squad but protested at having to put out fires started by careless employees ("Fire Protection"). Men were warned "once again" in the May issue of the *Humble Bee* to abide by the company's rules or be discharged. By the June issue "several men [had] sacrificed their jobs by deliberately SMOKING!!" (2 June 1921).

Steady improvement of the company's injury record was soon testimony to the progress being made. During the decade from 1934 to 1944, Humble had reported 341 disabling injuries and four fatalities. The accident report from 1954 to 1964 was a vast improvement—disabling injuries totaling 142, fatalities remaining at four. Over the last ten years, Exxon has had only a reported 21 disabling injuries and no fatalities. Today, eight Exxon employees devote their time entirely to the promotion of safety at the Exxon Baytown Refinery, and millions of dollars are spent each year on various incentive programs and safety measures (Bonczynski).

Other matters urgently requiring attention were the length of the work week and the growing need for a stable working force of high quality (Larson 98). Management clearly understood that satisfied employees worked better than dissatisfied employees and that such satisfaction would lead to greater profits. As early as May 12, 1921, the *Humble Bee* reported that Humble had established a program for a 48-hour week, a considerable improvement from the previous 60-hour week. Humble employees now worked only five full days with Saturday being a half day.

One more step to betterment was taken in 1930 with the formation of the Mutual Benefit Association. The MBA was, and still is, "strictly an employee-owned and operated institution. The association has provided competent, low cost medical service through diagnosis and treatment of ailments in their early stages." The monthly dues of $1.00 covered all outpatient medical expenses. The MBA still operates today with monthly dues of $6.00, but with the option of including spouses of employees for a minor additional charge. MBA officials soon hope to include the children of the Exxon employees (Sherron).

By 1935, nearly every issue of the *Humble Bee* carried news of sickness benefits plans, industrial accident benefits, and low cost protection to the majority of employees for group life insurance. Also in 1935, Humble allowed for the renovation of its medical facilities and extended their service to include such privileges as periodic medical examinations for all employees without cost ("Baytown Medical Dept.").

In 1945 the fight for better conditions continued. The company

"wage[d] extensive war on disease-carrying pests in [the] refinery. Residents [were] urged to use similar measures in homes to improve community health standards" ("Refinery Health"). As still one more example of Humble's modification and improvement, the refinery hospital was enlarged and "air-conditioned throughout" ("Refinery Hospital"). The air-conditioning was an especially innovative move for 1945.

Under the heading of "community service," Humble shared its substantial wealth with the people of Baytown. In 1946, Humble Company donated $500,000 to the construction of the San Jacinto Memorial Hospital, a new community hospital, which is still in full operation (*Humble Bee* Dec. 1945). Between the years 1947 and 1953, Humble spent three million dollars on a pollution control program ("3 Million Program"), an amount ostensibly increased by three million more over 1953 and 1954. These two gestures are representative of the value and influence the Baytown Exxon Refinery possesses.

In 1983, Exxon was awarded one of the highest safety honors in the industry. The coveted "President's Award" acknowledged it as being the safest refinery in the country (Bonczynski). Once nothing more than "a great rice field," today's Exxon employs over 3,000 employees and has the capacity to refine over 350,000 barrels of crude per day (Baytown, Texas, City Directory 159). The benefits offered to its employees are both generous and extensive, and conditions at the Baytown refinery are nothing if not optimum. Had Humble not set up operations on that 2,200-acre tract across from the ship channel, there would have been no Baytown. Exxon did not come to Baytown, rather Baytown came from Exxon. It brought with it people, jobs, and opportunity.

IN JANUARY OF 1923 Goose Creek received some undesirable—and certainly unwanted—national attention when the New York *Times* published an article entitled "Masked Men Flog Woman and Caller." According to the *Times* a young woman and a male companion had been kidnaped and brutally beaten for alleged sexual improprieties. The woman later identified the kidnappers as members of the Goose Creek chapter of the Ku Klux Klan. The incident, with its attendant negative publicity, would tear asunder the community of Goose Creek—in fact all of the Baytown area—as residents lined up on one side or the other of the Klan issue. Reveling in a new found sense of economic stability (a consequence of the recent construction of the Humble Oil Company refinery), the tri-cities did not desire such notoriety. And yet, as the incident clearly demonstrated, the Klan, while condemned by many local citizens, enjoyed a considerable following in Goose Creek. At issue, of course, is the question of why an organization as infamous as the Klan would find any support in this essentially conservative community? Recent scholarship suggests that a resurgent Ku Klux Klan in the American South and Mid-west in the 1920s represented an extreme response to a society that was simply changing too rapidly. In the view of one historian "the Ku Klux Klan, in short, was fighting . . . to defend a traditional culture against the values and morals of modernity." Essentially, this argument is put forth by Suzanne Blankenship. Given the recent boom town atmosphere with all of its associated problems and considering the appeal of the Klan throughout the South and Midwest, it is little wonder that the Klan would be regarded by many in Goose Creek as a welcome alternative to what they feared to be a growing atmosphere of immorality and lawlessness in their community.

Suzanne Blankenship won fourth place in the Caldwell competition for her paper in 1988; because of the quality of her work, she was invited to read her paper, originally titled "Oil and Morals: The Ku Klux Klan in Goose Creek, Texas, in the 1920s," at the fall conference of the East Texas Historical Association. Working toward a degree in English and history with the objective of teaching in high school, she will continue her studies at the University of Houston at Clear Lake.

Oil and Morals: The Klan in Goose Creek

SUZANNE BLANKENSHIP

The 1920s, a period of change from an agrarian society to an industrial society, while providing economic benefits, also provoked changes which challenged the traditional moral values of American society. The economic benefits were greeted with enthusiasm; however, changes in moral values were often met with an intolerance that caused some to unite in an effort to halt these changes. One such organized effort was the Ku Klux Klan, which always conjures an image of a racially biased organization. Although the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s did reflect this stereotyped white supremacist image, it had an added dimension of moral rectitude. Charles C. Alexander, author of *The Ku Klux Klan of the Southwest*, states that the Klan's "earthier component" emphasized the "moral status quo" and strived

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

A Ku Klux Klan rally allegedly in Goose Creek during the early 1920s. This photograph originally appeared in the Houston Chronicle.

to maintain "law and order" in an effort to preserve "crumbling Victorian standards" (19). The Ku Klux Klan in Goose Creek, in the 1920s reflects Alexander's thesis as it fought for the preservation of the moral order in a small oil field and refining community on the industrialized Texas Gulf Coast.

Goose Creek, later incorporated into the larger community of Baytown, lies thirty-five miles southeast of Houston. Prior to 1916, it was a provincial agrarian community covered with fields of rice, which was the major source of income for most of its residents (Henson 76). Three successive oil gushers, however, changed the face of Goose Creek, since fields which lay in solitude were suddenly lined with pipes and cluttered with a forest of wooden derricks (Nicholson 215). An air of excitement permeated the little town. Local residents, like the Pelly family, anticipated an economic boost and hoped for a discovery of oil on their land. Mrs. Leona Pelly Ashworth, who was fifteen years old at the time, recalled the enthusiasm in a later taped interview. Her family had decided that if oil had been discovered on their land, their family would have taken a trip to England, and the children would have been privileged to attend a

private school.

As word of an oil boom spread, people rushed to Goose Creek from "all parts of the state and many of the old oil fields" (Anderson 294). Goose Creek began to visibly change as new businesses opened to accommodate the growing community. While some welcomed this growth, others saw Goose Creek as losing its accustomed hometown characteristics. Shacks and tent settlements, known as rag towns, sprang up around the community (Henson 85). Bars set up in tents served "Ginger Jake," a potent whiskey, to thirsty oil workers who desired a nip after a twelve hour shift (Olien and Olien 199). And "hot on the heels of the first rough necks and roustabouts," prostitutes arrived with jitney drivers—more commonly known as pimps (Olien and Olien 213). By 1921 more concrete reminders of a changing community were erected: ten houses of prostitution. One such establishment was the Montana Hotel, located just outside the Humble refinery, which offered girls, gambling, and drinks for sailors coming into port or oil workers coming out of the field. And just one mile from this new red-light district stood the homes of Goose Creek's more respectable citizens (Fulkerson). As stories of street fights, along with other acts of indiscretion, circulated among the town's Victorian schooled, some of the citizens sought desperate measures to re-establish what they felt to be moral law and order in Goose Creek. Ku Klux Klan recruiters, or Kleagles, offered a solution: establish a Klan organization in Goose Creek to clean up the town.

William Joseph Simmons had resurrected the Ku Klux Klan on December 4, 1915, in Atlanta, Georgia, as a fraternal order to represent the "epitome of heroism, the savior of white supremacy and southern womanhood" (Alexander 3). Simmon's Invisible Empire did not gain strength, however, until he hired recruiters, or Kleagles, to "play upon whatever prejudices were most acute in the particular area" they were working (Alexander 7). In the fall of 1920, a Kleagle arrived in Houston on a recruiting mission which coincided with a reunion of Confederate Veterans (Lay 52). He recruited over a hundred men, primarily blue collar workers, and established the Sam Houston Klan No. 1. To the southeast, Goose Creek Klan No. 4 was organized (Alexander 39).

The newly inducted Goose Creek Klan announced their presence in the community by holding a parade. Gathering at Pruett Park on Friday night May 28, 1921, Klansmen donned white robes and hoods which concealed their identity (*The Democrat* 23 Dec. 1921). "Old Sol," a black man, saddled horses for the masked men who led out in the parade. The horses were followed by black cadillacs and men on foot carrying fiery crosses (Webber). Banners carried by the Klansmen bore the following messages, "Gamblers and Bootleggers Must Leave" and " God Pity the Soul That Commits a Crime in the Name of the Ku Klux" (*The Democrat* 23 Dec. 1921). Solemnly, they

marched down Main Street and Texas Avenue as a crowd of curious spectators looked on. Among the onlookers, two young sisters watched with wide-eyed wonder as the parade passed by. Suddenly one of the parade members, dressed in a "long white robe and peeked hat," stepped out of formation and affectionately "patted" the little girls on the head. The action stirred the oldest girl to think, "Oh gosh, my father is a member of the Klan" (Fulkerson). The parade proceeded back to Pruett Park with their mission accomplished: to let the people know they were in town. The masquerades became a weekly event and served to reaffirm Klan presence in the community.

Another visible re-enforcement of the Ku Klux Klan was *Col. Mayfield's Journal*, a Klan newspaper. It was supported by many businesses and appeared on the porches and lawns of the local citizens. The paper featured articles about Klan activities, such as parades, and the Klan's role in national politics. However, most of the articles were anti-Catholic and fed prejudices against the Catholic church. Ironically, while condemning the Catholic church, the paper in a promotion of morality, urged its members "To Church, Klansmen, To Church" (*Col. Mayfield's Journal* 28 Jul. 1926). Local Goose Creek citizens had varied responses: Mrs. Ashworth recalled throwing the "trashy" paper away. On the other side, an oil field "roughneck" reader wrote the paper expressing his appreciation: "Your paper has done wonders for Goose Creek. I see the biggest part of the ladies have lengthened their dresses both ways" (*Col. Mayfield's Journal* 17 Dec. 1921). The paper also served as a form of advertisement urging the men to join the ranks of those who stood for the "betterment of social and moral support" (*Col. Mayfield's Journal* 14 Mar. 1922).

Klan meetings in Goose Creek took place in the Oddfellows Hall every Friday. The members consisted of many of the prominent citizens of Goose Creek, and it has been rumored to have had the support of Ross Sterling, President of the first Board of Directors for Humble Oil and Refining Company (Haenel 32). Also present were many of the officers of the Humble Oil Company who exerted pressure on their men to join, some of whom would have "rather used their funds for their wives and children" (*Houston Chronicle* 17 Jan. 1923). Notes in watch cases or billfolds advised them to reconsider (Haenel 37). Presiding over the Klan meeting was the Cyclops, a local minister. During meetings, the Klan made decisions that affected the local community members. These decisions could be whom to tar and feather or which church would receive a donation.

Church support was vital to the Ku Klux Klan since it lent sanctity to even the most severe chastisement issued by the Klan. To solicit church support, the Klan made a ceremony of the donation. When the Klan visited the Baptist church in Goose Creek, they marched into the sanctuary, dressed in full regalia, carrying bouquets of flowers, a Bible, and a letter containing fifty dollars. The

letter stated that the gift was "given in honor of the Protestant church" (*Col. Mayfield's Journal* 15 Jul. 1922).

The local black church also received a donation, according to Mrs. Ashworth, but the motive was far different. This donation was served with a warning to behave themselves or they would be whipped and named in *Col. Mayfield's Journal*. As a further incentive for the blacks to behave, the tar barrel used for tar and feathering, as remembered by one local black resident, was kept "near the Davis Quarter on South Main," the black side of town (Webber 4). Clearly racial biases existed in Goose Creek; however, most of the acts of violence involved white against white. The black of the 1920s had been beaten down by a lack of even the most basic civil rights—he was in his place and did not present much of a problem. The Ku Klux Klan's mission in regard to blacks was simply to keep them in their place through intimidation.

Blacks were not the only minority in Goose Creek to feel intimidation by the Klan. Catholics were said to be as popular as an "old rat at an old maids' ball" (Webber 5). The Klan saw the Catholic church as part of the Pope's plot to replace the government with a theocracy (Alexander 14). This sentiment, further strengthened by articles in *Col. Mayfield's Journal*, biased the Protestants and struck fear into the Catholics. Mrs. Ashworth recalled that the Catholics went to work in groups for protection. Jimmy Carroll, Catholic employee of Humble Oil, remembered that when the Klan threatened to whip him because he "talked too much," it was "always the religion that caused the trouble." Carroll went on to say that he "never did get that whipping" (Webber 5). There are not many accounts of whippings or tar and featherings involving minority differences on record. Klan chastisements nearly always involved an infraction of the moral code of the Klan.

An infraction of the moral code of the Klan was dealt with swiftly and harshly. Warnings were issued verbally or in the form of notes signed by the Ku Klux Klan. An unheeded warning earned a surprise visit from the "flogging squad," who would take the victim to an unknown location for punishment. There he would be prayed over, beaten until wounds appeared, and covered with tar. As an added humiliation, a necklace of feathers was stuck around his neck before he was dumped off close to home. Episodes following this pattern became a common occurrence and became the topic of hushed conversations. The success of the flogging squad was due to the cooperation of the local law enforcement and the fears of Klan reprisals if anyone dared to speak out against them (*Houston Press* 5 May 1923). Mrs. Ashworth remembers that the community "felt like a plague" had come over the town as people feared even their neighbor to be one of the masked riders. It was a fear that prompted her father and brother to risk carrying an illegal weapon when they

went into town. Stemming from these fears, some of the citizens banded together to form a group that openly opposed the Klan: the anti-Klan. The anti-Klan held meetings and parades just as the Ku Klux Klan did. However, beyond offering group support, the anti-Klan was largely unsuccessful because it tried to solve a problem within the framework of the organization. Goose Creek would require the power of the judicial branch of government.

Armed with the fear of the local citizens and the cooperation of local law, the Klan became bolder in its attempt to revive "crumbling Victorian standards" in Goose Creek (Alexander 19). At first the masked men focused their attentions on those who had committed what they considered to be moral offenses: jitney drivers or pimps, bootleggers, and prostitutes. Later the Klan broadened their scope to include those who committed personal offenses against members of the community such as the flogging of a man who had many debts or a couple accused of adultery. Finally, the Klan's own members were not exempt as revealed by the attempted whipping of the postmaster, Mr. Slaughter, whom the Klan considered guilty for his part in the moving of the post office from the east to the west side of town. On another occasion the Klan went so far as to hold a mock trial of four of their own members for such petty offenses as calling a fellow Klansman a "bad name" (*Chronicle* 24 Jul. 1923).

These Klan activities went unhindered by local authorities from 1921 until January of 1923 when Audrey Harrison, whom the Klan accused of adultery and consequently flogged, dared to step forward and expose the Klan by taking her story to the *Houston Chronicle*. Her actions attracted national attention as a grand jury investigation into the Goose Creek Klan resulted in seventeen grand jury indictments. More significant, the incident served as the catalyst that brought an end to the reign of the masked riders in Goose Creek.

On the night of January 5, 1923, Audrey Harrison lay in bed recuperating from an illness as a visiting friend, R. A. Armand, sat by her side. A knock on the door prompted her young daughter to go to the door. Opening the door, the girl was surprised by an armed mob of men, some of whom were dressed "all in white," while others looked like "clowns" (*New York Times* 14 Jan. 1923). The masked mob threatened the frightened child and proceeded back to the bedroom where they grabbed the surprised couple and forcibly took them from the house. They drove to a pasture about five miles from Goose Creek. There the two were forced to the ground as the ritualistic prayer was said over them. Mrs. Harrison later recalled that the voice was that of a local minister. Feeling sanctified, the men began to whip the couple with a belt as they discussed whether to kill them or let them live. The members decided to let them live, but not before they had laid stripes ten inches long and four inches wide (*Houston Chronicle* 14 Jan. 1923). As a last act of humiliation and

to show her a marked woman, they took hold of Mrs. Harrison's long brown hair and cut it to the nape of her neck. The severely beaten couple was then driven close to home and dumped out. The assailants then hung Mrs. Harrison's long tresses in front of a gas station in the heart of town as a reminder of the consequences of what they considered immoral conduct. The couple wandered back to the house where they nursed their wounds (*New York Times* 14 Jan. 1923).

Mrs. Harrison, not only afraid, was enraged as well. Taking a bold step forward, she called the *Houston Chronicle* for protection and support. The newspaper promptly responded by providing medical assistance, printing her story, and offering a two thousand dollar reward for the "capture and conviction of the criminals" (*Chronicle* 14 Jan. 1923). Three days after the flogging, people who had been reading the papers gathered in front of the filling station where they stared at Mrs. Harrison's tresses until a local doctor took it down, admonishing the crowd for their morbid curiosity. News of the floggings had already prompted federal authorities to initiate an investigation. While "whispers and gossipings seethed from home to home," no one was willing to tell who might be involved in the beatings. Goose Creek was under a "seal of silence" (*Houston Press* 13 Jan. 1923). Members of the Ku Klux Klan publicly denounced the beatings and in a letter to *Col Mayfield's Journal* denied Klan involvement. The letter was signed by the Grand Cyclops, who was Rev. Houck of the Methodist Church in Goose Creek (20 Jan. 1923). Furthermore, when the Goose Creek law enforcement was ordered to check into the matter, the local deputy initially checked into the character of Mrs. Harrison before focusing on the men who had whipped the couple (*Houston Press* 5 Feb. 1923). The masked mob, however, had been careless in carrying out their punishment of the couple. Not all had worn masks. One had painted his face red and powdered his hair white: the clown Mrs. Harrison's daughter had referred to. Bonnie Harrison, Mrs. Harrison's daughter, identified C. Buckley and M. Rogers, as members of the group that had taken away her mother. The identified men were subsequently arrested, charged with attempted manslaughter, and jailed on a five hundred dollar bond (*Houston Post* 18 Jan. 1923).

When the men appeared before Judge C. W. Robinson, they pleaded guilty as charged and suffered a one hundred dollar slap on the wrist. However, Robinson, citing the "protection of human liberty," issued a vitriolic statement to the grand jury revealing his contempt for the Klan. The jury was instructed to continue the investigation into the Goose Creek floggings until all of the "members of the masked mob" were found—even if they had to investigate every "organization" and every "man, woman, and child" (*Houston Press* 5 Feb. 1923). Further probes revealed more suspects and an insight

into the extent of Klan activities. As more arrests were made, the community of Goose Creek became a city that was divided, as some supported arrested Klan members and others did not. Klan support in Goose Creek was evident when the town rallied behind another three men, arrested as suspects in other floggings, who refused to talk when questioned by authorities. Six hundred supporters of the Klan marched around the jail house. The "prisoners were serenaded by a band, furnished with feather beds, electric fans, fried chicken, and various other comforts" (*Houston Press* 28 June 1923). In spite of local support and comforts provided, the unbearable June heat in a cell that was not air conditioned compelled the men to talk. The final tolls added up to the arrest of twelve men, including a local judge, who pleaded guilty to seventeen grand jury indictments which resulted in a one hundred dollar fine levied for each count against them (*Houston Chronicle* 24 Jul. 1923). However, there was an even greater outcome as adverse publicity and fear of arrest brought an end to what was described as a "reign of terror." After the investigation revealed twenty beatings—some of women and children (*Goose Creek Gasser* 24 Jul. 1923)—the once popular organization became a group that people no longer wished to be associated with. When the Klan lost its local support, Klan membership declined until it was unable to function as an organization and disbanded. Just as members announced their arrival, they announced their departure—Mrs. Ashworth recalled that they held a final parade "and nobody interfered."

An initial response to the Ku Klux Klan's role in Goose Creek would be a blanket condemnation. Certainly one cannot condone their attempt to sit as judge, jury, and executioner, or their willingness to deny their victims basic constitutional rights. However, in historic perspective, one can have some compassion for these men, who joined an organization that they were beguiled to believe would preserve what they saw as the "crumbling Victorian standards" (Alexander 19) of Goose Creek. Charles C. Alexander declared that "an increase of crime, the erosion of traditional morality and some degree of a social deterioration usually accompanied the boom of a new city." He went on to say that "many respectable, middle-class city dwellers" in "seeking to preserve the values of their rural upbringing, saw in the Klan a method to bring law and order to their city" (29). Goose Creek, with its oil boom that brought so many changes, was a city that by Alexander's definition was ripe for the Ku Klux Klan.

NOT ALL STUDENTS FIND their topics because they have a personal interest in the subject or because they are history buffs who find challenge in a mystery from the past. Sandy Lindsey, a nursing student, needed credit for a humanities course to comply with the requirements for her degree. She signed up for American Studies because of its humanities component and probably wondered frequently in the beginning what she had gotten herself into. In searching for her paper topic, she came across several references which alluded to an electric railway which served as an important method of transportation in the period prior to World War II. As a Highlands resident, Lindsey became interested in this enterprise which originated in her town. Although the line is now past history, some of the economic development of the community can be attributed to this important form of transportation. Ironically, cities have recently begun looking at such transportation as alternatives to the massive traffic jams, the smog problems from automobile exhausts, and the difficulties in maintaining the miles of freeways that automobiles need to efficiently transport people. Certainly, the facts that Lindsey uncovered in researching Baytown's early experiences with an interurban railway attest to the efficiency of the system and the benefits accrued by the community.

Sandy Lindsey achieved fourth place in the Caldwell Competition in 1985.

The Houston Northshore Railroad

SANDY LINDSEY

Skirting the bay shore on Houston's east side, the thirty-two mile long Houston North Shore Railroad promoted development of the north side of the ship channel during a period when deficient highways were not yet dominated by the automobile. The electric railroad connected Houston, an inland port city of southeastern Texas[1], with developing farm and oil producing communities along the North Shore-Bay Area, which included the communities of Highlands, Baytown, Pelly, and Goose Creek. Highlands is located twenty-seven miles to the east of Houston on the east side of the San Jacinto River and six miles north of the San Jacinto Monument.[2] Southeast of Highlands, Baytown is located on the Houston Ship Channel, thirty miles from Houston and forty miles from the Gulf of Mexico.[3] To serve the transportation needs of such diverse commu-

1. In the early 1920s Houston was considered the largest inland port in the world, linked to the Gulf of Mexico by way of the fifty-mile-long ship channel that was Buffalo Bayou.
2. In the late 1920s Highlands was a farming community which was adjacent to the 550-acre Elena Farms, primarily a fig orchard which was advocating the building of a canning plant.
3. Baytown was created January 28, 1948, by the consolidation with Pelly and Goose Creek and by the establishment of the Humble Oil and Refining Company which produced around sixty million barrels of oil in the mid 1920s.

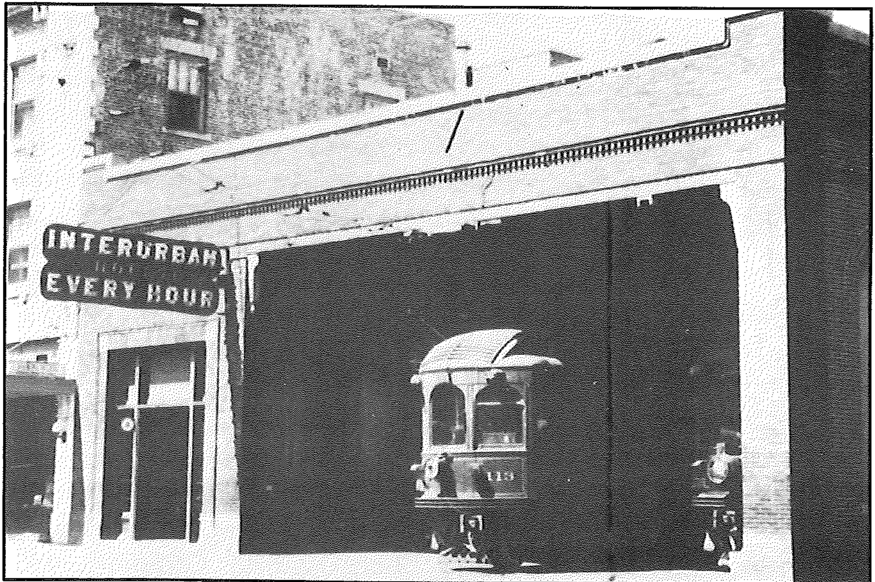
nities, the railroad's dual passenger and freight service was an innovative departure from the conventional passenger-oriented interurban lines which some cities have observed as the "conclusive interurban to be built in the United States" (Grant 48).

In 1924, the railroad was constructed by the late Harry K. Johnson, an experienced engineer and railroad builder, who also promoted and built the Beaumont Street Railway System, the Oceans-Kenner line out of New Orleans, and other roads throughout the country ("News of the Industry" 411-412). Making Houston, and later Highlands, his home, Johnson speculated on the possibilities and saw the need for an electric interurban railroad connecting Baytown to Houston.

Drawing from his earlier experience as a promoter, Johnson considered the population, industrial growth, and land development potential as prerequisites to the formation of a railroad. His personal files indicated that Baytown and Goose Creek had a combined population of about sixteen thousand, while the population of the area of the Turning Basin to Galena (which is now called Galena Park) was about three thousand. There was nothing between Galena and Baytown, a distance of fifteen miles, but a few farms and country houses. Johnson's papers also revealed the industrial growth of the individual industries along the north side of the ship channel.[4]

4. As an indication of Johnson's thorough research, the following information was found in his personal files: "Houston Terminal and Refining Co., 300 men."

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM



The Houston North Shore Interurban at its Houston terminus

Promoters with the Elena Farms, now Highlands, contemplated building a canning factory adjacent to the tracks when the electric interurban railroad was completed ("Packing Plant"). Another favorable condition that interested Johnson was a proposed riverside park, a suggestion by S. Herbert Hore from Kansas, a consultant for the City of Houston on park and city planning. The riverside park was to extend along the San Jacinto River from the Southern Pacific Line bridge which crosses the river between Sheldon and Crosby, eighteen miles northeast of Houston, to Lynchburg where the ship channel enters the San Jacinto River, a total distance of thirteen miles ("San Jacinto").

Considering the possibilities of the area, Johnson secured rights-of-way and began construction of the Houston North Shore Railroad before a charter was granted. Two grading crews worked on the rights-of-way under the contractor, W.A. Smith. The road, laid with eight pound rail and gravel ballast, extended across the property of the Humble Oil and Refining Company at Baytown, with the grading beginning at the main gate of the refinery and extending toward Houston. Grading was also started on the right-of-way near Elena ("Interurban Line to Baytown").

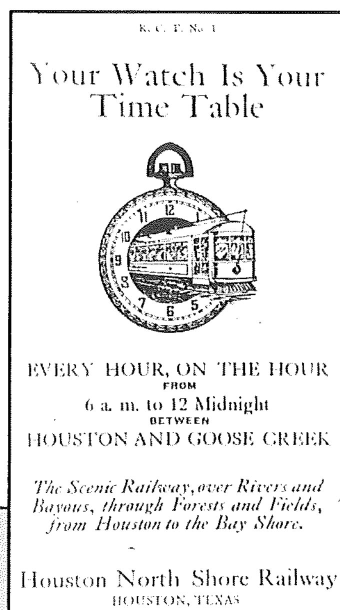
The right-of-way work progressed rapidly. However, the two year duration of the railroad construction was complicated with a variety of legal problems concerning the charter. Johnson and his attorney, F.W. Franklin of Houston, traveled to Austin on June 27, 1925, to file for the charter of the Houston North Shore Railroad. Filing of the charter followed a hearing held in the State Department with Judge D. A. Gregg in which Ed Kennedy, promoter of the Houston, Beaumont and Orange Interurban Company, protested the granting of the charter. Kennedy contended that Harry K. Johnson had started work on the North Shore interurban line from Houston to Goose Creek and that his line ran between Kennedy's proposed line and the source of revenue — the north side industries. Kennedy was not present at the hearing; in fact, none of those who had protested the granting of the Houston North Shore Railroad charter were present. A telegram from B.E. Norrel, president of the Houston, Beaumont and Orange Interurban Line, and McFarlane and Dillard, attorneys for Ed Kennedy, stated that it would be impossible to attend the hearing and asked for an extension because the engineer of the road could not get his data ready at the time. On the other hand, a message from the Goose Creek Chamber of Commerce urged the approval of the charter, stating that the Kennedy road did not propose to touch Goose Creek. Judge Gregg and Assistant Attorney General May explained that the State was not concerned with the question of right-of-way, but with the legal phase of the charter. Despite the protest, the articles of incorporation of the Houston North Shore Railway Company, with capital stock of

$100,000 and a proposal to build a thirty-two mile line from Houston via Baytown to Goose Creek, a distance of thirty-two miles, was filed in the Secretary of State's Department and received approval from the Attorney General's Department. The incorporators were Harry K. Johnson, R.W. Franklin, L.E. Blankenbecker, M.F. Smith and M.G. Johnson. According to the *Houston Chronicle*, June 27, 1925, Mr. Johnson stated: "I have acquired over 10,000 acres along the proposed route and have so far spent approximately $100,000 on the project. I have been working quietly on the project since October acquiring property and rights-of-way. It is my purpose to proceed with the work of construction of the road and expect to have it completed by February, 1926" ("Charter Granted").

On this same day, June 27, 1925, in Houston, another suit was filed in Judge Roy F. Campbell's court against Johnson and W.A. Smith, contractor for the Houston North Shore Railroad. The hearing on permanent injunction was filed by Sid Mitchell who asserted that he owned a one-seventh interest in part of two hundred six acres next to the Baytown Refinery land through which the right-of-way extended and about which Mitchell had not been consulted ("Interurban Line Has Difficulties").

As legal implications were arbitrated and the charter was granted to the Houston North Shore Railroad, construction continued. By September 17, 1925, grading had been completed from Baytown to the San Jacinto River, a distance of ten miles ("North Shore Line Work").

With the completion of the entire right-of-way and a section of the railroad graded, a tour group was



PHOTOS COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

The Highlands depot of the Houston North Shore railroad as it appeared in the late 1920s. A 1927 schedule shows a car left Houston every hour on the hour.

invited to inspect the construction. Officials of the company and a group of more than fifty representatives from Houston and the Tri-City Chambers of Commerce toured the Houston North Shore Railroad. Being a promoter, Johnson exalted the railroad and the surrounding land. Leaving Houston by private cars, the group rode over the right-of-way of the railroad to the San Jacinto River. The bridge under construction was inspected, and the group crossed the river by a barge. On the east side of the river, the party boarded flat cars which a steam engine pulled over the track that was laid from the river to Baytown where the group again boarded automobiles and drove along the right-of-way to Goose Creek. They observed the construction which was being done by a work force of five hundred and twenty-five men, who used tons of dynamite daily, blasting stumps to clear the right of way, and building bridges entailing eight thousand eight hundred feet of trestles ("New Interurban").

Rapidly progressing, the first section of the Houston North Shore Railroad was completed by August 29, 1926. The poles, cross arms, insulators, and brackets for holding the interurban wire had been installed. In September a contract for power with the Houston Electric Company was signed, and the Standard Electric Construction Company of New Orleans installed overhead transmission line ("Interurban Cars"). With this section of the railroad completed, electric cars transported not only the railroad's workmen to and from work but also those workmen that were employees of the Humble Oil and Refinery Company. Regular service also began between Highlands and Baytown, but the train schedule ran in accordance with the working hours of the shift and construction men at the refinery (Allen). On Wednesday, January 28, 1927, at 3:30 p.m., the workmen and officials celebrated the driving of the last spike in the railroad between Baytown and Houston. This twenty-six mile, $1,200,000 section had been under construction for about a year and a half. Completion of the track between Baytown and Houston enabled the hauling of materials and equipment for the $400,000, one-mile trestle across the San Jacinto River ("Electric Railroad").

The trestle, still in use today, reaches from the Highlands bank across the San Jacinto river near the mouth of Bear Bayou in Channelview. The Houston North Shore Railroad obtained its permit from the War Department on September 30, 1926, for construction of the bridge. All of the creosoted poles, crossties and bridge timbers were purchased from the American Creosite Works in New Orleans for the amount of $230,000. This one order amounted to more than five hundred car-loads. The bridge was composed of seven steel spans, the longest of which was one hundred and sixty feet, with each of the remaining six fifty-four feet long. The Virginia Bridge and Iron Company received the contract for providing the iron and steel, while the construction was under the supervision of the Austin

Bridge Company from Dallas. Constructing the mile-long bridge was a major engineering undertaking due to the low land and the fact that, as a safeguard from flooding, the bridge had to be built twenty-five feet above the water ("Orders for Material").

While construction of the bridge continued and rails were being laid from Baytown to Goose Creek, the Houston North Shore Railroad was purchased May 1, 1927, by the Beaumont, Sour Lake and Western Railway, which was one of the Gulf Coast lines of the Missouri Pacific. An application to gain control of the Houston North Shore Railroad was presented before the Interstate Commerce Commission on March 23, 1927. The hearing was conducted in Washington by Examiner Sullivan with W.L. Cook representing the Missouri Pacific lines. The Missouri Pacific purchased the railroad, valued at $1,150,000 with capital stock and by lease ("Seeks Control").

While Missouri Pacific's application for control of the Houston North Shore Railroad was pending, plans were made to inaugurate passenger train service by April 1, 1927. Prior to this time, Johnson had ordered four ultra-modern electric passenger cars built by the American Car Company of St. Louis. The four interurbans were olive green and upholstered in black leather. According to some reports, the cars, with writing desks, restrooms and smoking compartments, were classed as being among the finest in America ("Johnson Receives Photos"). The new interurbans had their individual names painted beneath the windows on both sides of the cars, honoring the cities of Baytown, Goose Creek, Highlands, and Houston; however, later the cars were numbered, and the names removed. Baytown became car 525; Goose Creek, 526; Highlands, 524, and Houston, 523. At the same time, air whistles on the new electric interurbans were replaced with air horns. With passenger service maintained by the four $20,000 electric interurbans, freight would be hauled by an electric locomotive. Johnson ordered the engine from Baldwin Locomotive Works in Baltimore. Number 512 was a brand new steeple cab electric locomotive possessing a sixteen hundred horse-power pull at the coupling and capable of hauling twenty cars with a capacity of one hundred thousand pounds each. In addition to the new locomotive, other freight equipment consisted of car number 528, purchased secondhand from the Coal Belt Electric that ran out of Herrin, Illinois. The combination line carbox motor was unlike any other equipment (De Verter).

Power to operate the locomotives and interurbans was furnished by the Houston Lighting and Power Company. The overhead transmission lines were installed according to specifications compiled by A.N. Feinemen of the Railway Department, General Electric Company. Located equidistant along the Houston North Shore Railroad, the substations consisted of one 500 kilowatt machine and three 300 kilowatt automatic substations. The central substation

located in Highlands was the only one manually operated. Thirty-five volts A.C. of current were transmitted to the four substations and reduced to six hundred volts D.C., which was the voltage carried on the interurban wire (Johnson, Scenes 3).

On May 11, 1927, power was to be provided for the first run of the new interurbans from Houston to Baytown. The new cars would run from Houston, transporting many employees of the Humble Oil and Refinery to their Eighth Annual Company Picnic being held in Baytown for the first time. To the disappointment of many, the new electric interurban could not run because at the last minute installation of various electrical devices could not be made and steam trains had to carry the passengers to the Humble Company picnic ("Humble Company").

The thirty-two mile long Houston North Shore Railroad that had transported passengers from Houston to Baytown for the annual Humble day festivities was officially controlled by Missouri Pacific Railroad as of May 1, 1927. C.W. Strain, passenger traffic manager, announced that hourly service would be provided for passengers beginning at 8 a.m. every day. A car would arrive at Union Station every hour until 8 p.m. After a three hour hiatus, the last car would leave at 11 p.m. to accommodate those who attended the theater in downtown Houston. The first car from Baytown would leave at 8 a.m. and the last car would depart at 9 p.m. The outbound cars left the Union Station and moved via Crawford, to Texas Ave., to Travis St., to Franklin St., to Main St. and over the north Main viaduct. Cars from Baytown arrived over the North Main viaduct to Franklin, to Fannin, to Prairie, to Crawford, then on the Union Station. The trip from Houston to Baytown took approximately one hour and forty minutes. Stops along the North Shore Railroad were provided at Greens Bayou, Market, Sheldon Road, Timberland, Cedar Bluff, Park, Highlands, Coady, Wooster, Baytown, Goose Creek and Pelly.

Photo courtesy Baytown Historical Museum

The last run of electric car 524 in September of 1948

Actually, the Interurban stopped wherever someone was walking by the tracks and could hop aboard. Fares from Houston to Greens Bayou were thirty-five cents; to Cedar Bluff, fifty cents; to Highlands, fifty-five cents; and to Baytown, seventy-five cents ("Interurban is MOPAC Line").

The sale of the Houston North Shore Railroad to the Missouri Pacific provided the north side of the ship channel with two major trunk line roads, the Southern Pacific as well as the Missouri Pacific. Purchase of the railroad by Missouri Pacific indicated to some the improvement of the port and an expansion of industries along the ship channel.

Freight service was not instituted simultaneously with the passenger traffic because of a tariff, which did not take effect until November 1, 1926 ("North Shore Service"). Scheduling of freight depended upon the volume of business, stated J.E. Anderson, assistant to the executive vice president of Missouri Pacific; however, within a week, three crude oil trains entered Baytown over the Houston North Shore Railroad. These electric freight locomotives, built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works, were the first of their type ever operated in the south ("Circle Coming").

In a few short years the Houston North Shore made vast contributions to the surrounding area. Plans were made to build a vegetable packing plant adjacent to the railroad near Highlands which would serve truck growers of the area in icing vegetables to be shipped to market. Many inquiries from East Texas and Louisiana farmers had been made concerning the agricultural possibilities. Johnson said, "There is no doubt in my mind that a new farming community which will have an important part in the Texas commerce will develop following the completion of the interurban" ("North Shore Road to Make").

Purchasing the Houston North Shore Railroad, the Missouri Pacific had the facilities and offered every inducement to industries and to truck and berry growers to locate along the railroad. Having direct connection with the Northern markets, the Missouri Pacific could offer and furnish transportation that gave growers of truck and berries in the territory advantage over any other locality (Johnson 7-8).

The construction of a telegraph office in Goose Creek along the track was another contribution of the Houston North Shore Railroad ("Railway Builder"). Lack of transportation between Houston and the San Jacinto Battleground had cut attendance to various events held at the state park. Located six miles north of the Battleground, the Highlands interurban station would help alleviate the attendance problem. It was probable that a short-line bus service would be available for transportation from the station to the Battleground (*Post Dispatch* 13 Nov. 1926). The railroad with its electric interurbans

also made transportation possible for Highlands school children when the Highlands school district consolidated with the Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District (Haenel 130). Mrs. Anna Keith Chandler recalls that she rode the interurban from Highlands to Robert E. Lee High School in Baytown many days, and after completing high school, she used the interurban as her means of transportation to secretarial school in Houston (Chandler). The interurban provided transportation for many employees that worked along the ship channel and in Houston. During the gas rationing of World War II, the interurban was filled with workmen commuting to the Humble Refinery. World War II also brought a boom to freight business along the tracks of the Houston North Shore Railroad. Three or four main troop trains transferred guard troops every few months to and from the Humble Oil and Refinery and the army base. Scheduled on the thirty-two mile railroad were nine freight and fifty-two first class jobs. The railroad company handled as many as three and four hundred cars a day for the refineries alone (Haenel 133). The Houston North Shore Railroad also carried mail from Baytown and Goose Creek to Houston (DeVerter 3).

The railroad also provided transportation which contributed to such pleasures as a Sunday afternoon outing to the San Jacinto River for a picnic or an all-day Saturday shopping trip into Houston ("Travel by"). Many children, such as myself, were victims of these all-day shopping trips. On other pleasant little trips, one might ride the interurban with his grandmother from Highlands to Baytown to get a chocolate ice cream cone at Retteg's Ice Cream Parlor and then sit on a bench under a shade tree to wait for the next interurban for the return trip home.

The interurban was a safe means of transportation: according to Railway Workers, it was one of the safest trains in the United States (Orton 4). However, two workers were injured, and there was one death connected with the Houston North Shore Railroad. Working on the trestle across the San Jacinto river, J.B. McCord, an electric welder, and an assistant, E.A. Whitmire, stepped on a small platform on the side of the track as a train approached. The train struck a handcar that had been lifted from the rails which knocked the men thirty feet into the water below the trestle. Both of the men were seriously injured ("Electric Workers"). The only death connected with the railroad was that of Clyde O'Donnell Norris, seventeen years of age, who was hired by Missouri Pacific as a night watchman on the trestle across the San Jacinto River to keep people off the trestle. It was believed the boy fell asleep while lying between the rails about midway on the trestle. The engineer of the train did not see Norris until it was too late ("Watchman on Span").

Another accident occurring on a foggy Saturday morning, December 29, 1954, involved the head-on collision of two North Shore interurbans near the Coady crossing which is midway between Highlands and Baytown. H.L. Dunn, the conductor, was the

most seriously injured; however, seventeen passengers were also injured ("18 Hurt").

The Houston North Shore Railroad lost its trackage rights to Union Station in Houston during the late 1930s. Rail service then terminated at McCarthy Avenue in north Houston and passengers were carried to Union Station in a Missouri Pacific bus ("Interurban Only"). After loss of the trackage rights to Union Station, the railroad purchased Evans auto-railers for mail carrying. These strange looking vehicles had both rubber tires for highway use and retractable flanged wheels for use on the rails. By 1946 the railroad lost the mail contract, and the vehicles were junked (DeVerter 3-4).

Due to the high cost of providing electric power and suitable maintenance for the overhead system, the Missouri Pacific decided to replace the electric cars in 1948 with an experimental rail bus system. On September 25, 1948, car 524, previously named Highlands, was the last electric interurban to run between Houston and Baytown. The rail buses were ordinary city buses manufactured by the Twin Coach Company in St. Louis with mounted flanged wheels instead of the usual rubber tires. Considerable operational difficulties were encountered with these buses, due to their lack of weight as well as to their inability to trigger crossing signals. After finding a method to ground the rail bus wheels, the company ordered more of the buses (Orton 4).

In its prime, the Houston North Shore completed well over twenty-five round trips a day, but by 1948 this number had fallen to two. The company showed a loss of $12,239 in the running of the last year of the interurban. Total revenue for four runs—two round trips, one to Greens Bayou and one to the Missouri Pacific yard, was less than $5,000. On September 25, 1961, Missouri Pacific Railroad Company received official notification of the Texas Railroad Commission's decision to allow service to stop (Marsh).

The service stopped; however, the Houston North Shore Railroad is still intact and used daily by Missouri Pacific freight trains. In the early 1970's, the railroad was extended across the Cedar Bayou Stream to the new U.S. Steel plant. In keeping with the line of first events, the bridge that crosses Cedar Bayou is the first and only vertical lift bridge west of the Mississippi River (Orton 2-3).*

Thus, from one man's vision of a railroad to skirt the bayshore, the Houston North Shore Railroad established an epoch in the development on the north side of the ship channel. It is somewhat remarkable that this thirty-two mile long track is still intact but no longer offers passenger service to an area possessing congested highways which create many transportation needs.

* Editor's note: This bridge has now been demolished, leaving no trace of the line which once served the area well.

HIGHLANDS, TEXAS, a small unincorporated community situated on the east bank of the San Jacinto River a few miles northwest of Baytown, began its history in the early part of this century as a predominately agricultural settlement. Highlands' growth in the 1920s and 30s was a direct consequence of the aggressive business activities of the Tyrrell and Garth Investment Company, which not only introduced fig cultivation to the area but in 1928 opened a large processing and canning plant. Partly because of the existence of the cannery, during the Depression the Farm Security Administration announced its decision to construct a large federally-funded agricultural cooperative near Highlands—the Sam Houston Farms project. In her article, Gail Luckner insists that the symbiotic relationship that developed between the community, the cannery, and the Sam Houston Farms permitted Highlands not only to weather the Depression years of the 1930s but to actually experience population growth as well. Curiously, today the Highlands cannery packages motor oil and anti-freeze; the symbolism borders on the painfully obvious.

Luckner's research, originally titled "The Elena Farms Fruit and Cotton Company: A Microcosm of Depression Era Economics on the Upper Texas Coast," earned a second place in the Caldwell Competition in 1987.

Elena Farms Fruit and Cotton Company

GAIL LUCKNER

The Southern Publishing Company's Tri-Cities telephone directory for 1929-1930 contains a listing for the Tyrrell & Garth Fig Preserving Plant in Highlands, Texas, a cannery which operated at full capacity only thirteen years.[1] At publication of the updated directory in 1946, the cannery had already been closed four years; but despite the plant's short duration, its activities played an integral role in the economy of the area during the Great Depression. The relationship between the cannery, the community, and surrounding agricultural and industrial interests illustrates the delicate balance which unites the fortunes of a geographic area. Highlands, located on the lower San Jacinto river in Harris County, is twenty-eight miles east of Houston, immediately northwest of Baytown, and just northeast of the great industrial and shipping amalgamation known as the Houston Ship Channel. The community, originally called Elena, changed its name to Highlands in 1926 (Carver 3).

The history of the community and of the Elena Farms Fruit & Cotton Company began in 1902 when the San Jacinto Rice Company

1. Three small towns—Goose Creek, Pelly, and Baytown—were known as the Tri-Cities. The towns incorporated into the city of Baytown in 1948.

purchased approximately 17,000 acres of land along the banks of the San Jacinto River (Carver 3). Captain William C. Tyrrell of Beaumont—real estate speculator, oil baron, and philanthropist—held the San Jacinto Rice Company, and its acreage encompassed most of the area which is now Highlands, Baytown, and Channelview.[2] In 1911 Captain Tyrrell's son Harry and his grandsons, J.W. and Thomas Garth, formed the Tyrrell & Garth Investment Company and assumed control of the San Jacinto Rice Company (Webber). The concentration on rice production continued for several years.

But there were problems. A combination of a severe decline in the rice market after World War I and a storm which backed salt water from Galveston Bay into the San Jacinto River and thus into the rice canals forced Tyrrell & Garth to abandon the rice business. The company began selling some of the storm-ruined acreage, a portion of which, purchased by Humble Oil & Refining Company, later became the site of the Humble Baytown refinery. On part of the land not ruined by salt water, Tyrrell & Garth planted cotton, clover, corn, and other vegetables and formed the Elena Farms Fruit & Cotton Company to manage this enterprise (Webber). Harry Tyrrell

2. Captain Tyrrel invested large sums of money in real estate by underwriting the efforts of individuals seeking to begin agricultural enterprises. Based on knowledge of adjacent acreage owned by Tyrrell in the area and the fact that his son's investment company later assumed ownership of some of this acreage, we believe he had an interest in the San Jacinto Rice Co.

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Thomas and J. W. Garth display part of a bumper fig crop.

and the Garth brothers were experienced in the agricultural business; in addition to Elena Farms, their holdings included fruit and vegetable farms in the Rio Grande Valley and canneries in Mission and in San Leon (Collins).[3]

Development of the Highlands acreage continued in 1923 when Tyrrell & Garth planted magnolia fig orchards. The crop thrived in the local climate, considered ideal for the fruit with its mild nights and hot, sunny days. The company also plotted a townsite, complete with streets, near the banks of the San Jacinto River. In the early part of the century, about 300 people inhabited the area around Highlands, most of them employees of the San Jacinto Rice Company. With the opening of the Humble refinery in 1919, population rose in the Tri-City area, and Tyrrell & Garth hoped to lure additional residents to their new community with the attraction of agricultural employment. To promote the settlement in 1925, Tyrrell & Garth brought two train loads of homeseekers to Crosby and bused them to Highlands where they received a free barbeque dinner ("Highlands"). They stayed. In 1928, aided by the opening of the North Shore Railroad which ran from Houston to Highlands, the population of the town increased to 1,200.

In a spirit of optimism generated by growth and development of the entire area, construction of the Elena Farms 23-acre cannery complex, known locally as "the fig farm," began in 1928. Facilities included a cotton gin, a grist mill, and a water system which supplied the town of Highlands until it formed its own utility district several years later (Smith).[4] Tyrrell & Garth installed the most modern equipment throughout the facility, and fire-proof buildings housed both the cannery and the cotton gin. The complex brought attention and recognition to Southeast Texas, and the many visitors who inspected the facility considered it a remarkable accomplishment (Doss).[5] A spur of the North Shore Railroad ran into the plant and provided transportation for produce shipped from Tyrrell & Garth farms in the Valley for processing at the Highlands cannery (LaBlanc).[6] The spur also insured ease in conveying the finished products to markets throughout Texas and Louisiana. The complex cost ap-

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3. Collins was born in Highlands and currently resides there. Her father, Claude Cauthen, the last surviving charter member of the First Baptist Church of Highlands, moved to Highlands in 1920.
4. A. J. Smith purchased the defunct Elena Farms Cannery complex from American Can Co. in 1947. After refurbishing and expanding the cannery, he owned and operated it until 1976. Smith currently resides in Baytown.
5. Annie Doss, newspaper clipping from personal diary, c. 1928, no page. Doss' diary is a collection of personal entries and memorabilia, as well as newspaper clippings, many of which are unidentified and/or undated. From their location in the diary, it is possible to determine approximate dates. Doss moved to Highlands in 1926 and kept a diary from 1926 until her death in 1969. The Doss family donated her personal papers to the Stratford Branch Library in Highlands.
6. LeBlanc moved to Highlands in 1928 when Tyrrell and Garth relocated his family from Louisiana. LeBlanc currently resides in Highlands.

proximately $200,000 to construct.

Before completion of the cannery, Tyrrell & Garth began to relocate families from Louisiana to work at the farm. Most had been railroad workers. For those who could not afford to purchase a home, the company provided housing in a row building that contained nineteen apartments. Later, frame houses built in close proximity to the plant accommodated supervisory personnel and their families (Smith). Mr. L. J. LaBlanc, three years old when his family moved from Louisiana into one of the row apartments in 1928, offers some insight into the life of an agricultural worker in the late 1920s.

> Tyrell & Garth didn't hire just one man; they hired the whole family. When you got old enough to work, you worked. . . . When my daddy first came down, he wasn't making but $20 a month and had five children. I can remember when he got a raise and was making $23; we really thought that was a lot. . . .
>
> When I was just a little fella, my mother would pick cotton in the summertime and drag me and my sister around on the cotton sack. The whole family had to be working somewhere, even the kids when they wasn't in school. They had the fig plantation, cotton fields, corn; and people worked all of those.
>
> When you were about seven, you were old enough to start chopping cotton and hoeing . . . you'd pick a big gallon bucket of figs, and that was worth three cents. . . . I worked at the cotton gin when I was nine years old at ten or twelve cents an hour.

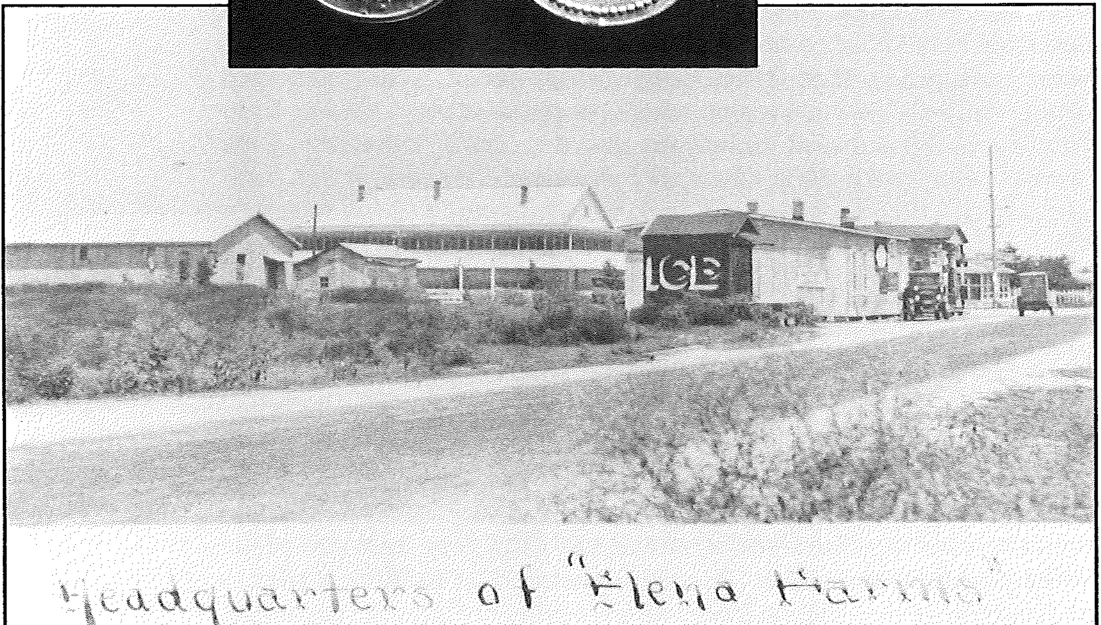
Significantly, the cannery began full operations in the same year that the Great Depression engulfed the nation. This crisis certainly helped the company succeed when so many other agricultural enterprises throughout the country failed. Labor became cheap and available in a region where people were moving away from traditional agricultural endeavors and depending increasingly on employment in the Ship Channel refineries, chemical plants, and other industries. A second attraction drawing labor to the area was the Humble Oil refinery, important to the economic fortunes of any small town in the Baytown vicinity. LaBlanc summarized the situation most succinctly when he said, "If you lived in Highlands and you didn't work for the cannery or the [Humble] refinery, you didn't get credit."

However, as the effects of the Depression filtered into the Texas Gulf Coast region, the decreased demand for petroleum products reemphasized the importance of agriculture to the community. By the end of 1930, the Humble Baytown refinery had reduced its workforce by one-third; and by the end of 1933, less than half of the 1929 workforce remained. Decline in demand for refinery products reduced process work and forced abandonment of large construction and research projects at the Humble facility. Nearly all the dismissed

employees were local labor and construction workers. In three years, over 3,000 unskilled men and women lost their jobs with Humble (Larson 358-59). Although some economists deem the effects of the Great Depression less severe in the Texas Gulf Coast region than in other areas of the country, and although the depression did arrive later and end sooner along the Texas Gulf Coast (Cotner 153), to the people who lived there, the results were equally frightening. LaBlanc describes a plight common to many families in the region: "In the wintertime, they [Elena Farms] planted turnips in the fig orchards to fertilize the figs. We'd eat figs in the fig season and turnips in the winter. We'd eat anything we could get a hold of back then."

Elena Farms provided supplemental income—sometimes sole income—for displaced members of the community. When the cannery first began operations, Mexican laborers brought in by truck performed most of the harvesting (Doss). By 1931, the company abandoned this practice and employed local labor (LaBlanc). Fig season lasted from June through November 15; during this period, the company added extra employees to the regular payroll, which

The headquarters of Elena Farms in Highlands (date unknown) used tokens to pay workers.



PHOTOS COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

normally ranged from 80 to 150 people.[7] At the peak of the packing and cotton harvesting seasons, the company hired temporary hands in an unusual manner. Mr. LaBlanc tells us:

> They used to blow a whistle when they needed help . . . it was a steam whistle . . . from Highlands, Crosby, Goose Creek, all over. You could hear that whistle all the way to Baytown. You didn't have to have any experience or anything. They would hire anybody who would come up, but the old hand who had worked there before had precedence over a new man . . . if they [the cannery] got more than they needed.

The workers earned tokens which varied in value depending on the crop. For each unit of produce the worker turned in at the weigh station, he received a token, and at the end of the day, he received cash for the value of the tokens collected (LaBlanc).

Two major factors contributed to the success of Elena Farms during this period. First, the economic complexion of the area changed. Many small businessmen whose enterprises failed because of the depression returned to farming for income, thereby increasing the agricultural base; and, with Humble's misfortunes, a large, local labor force became available for low wages. Second, Tyrrell & Garth seized every opportunity to run the canning plant and cotton gin at full capacity year-round. The expanded agricultural base created an additional source of local produce and, coupled with produce shipped from their fields in the Rio Grande Valley after the Upper Coast harvest season, enabled the company to maximize use of the favorable labor situation at the Highlands facility (LaBlanc). Thus, production peaked in the mid-1930s when Elena Farms packed over three million pounds of produce annually and processed more than 500 bales of cotton per year.[8] By 1937, encouraged largely by the increased agricultural activity in the area, the population of Highlands increased to over 2,000 ("Highlands in East Harris County").

Another factor which prolonged the vitality of agriculture in the area involved the United States government's decision to build a federally-funded cooperative agricultural project in eastern Harris County—the Sam Houston Farm Project. According to Alton Netherlin, editor of the *Highland Star*, under Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal in 1935, the Farm Security Administration purchased 5,000 acres from the Tyrrell & Garth Company in the area now called McNair, immediately east of Highlands . Its proximity to an already success-

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7. The actual records of Elena Farms Cannery are lost. These statistics reflect best estimates compiled from written and verbal accounts.
8. See note 7.

ful agricultural community and the low cost of the Tyrrell & Garth acreage made the site attractive for the federal government's farm project. The Farm Security Administration intended to transform tenant farmers into independent, self-sufficient businessmen through the use of scientific agricultural techniques ("5,000-Acre Project"). According to M.L. Rees, project engineer, "We want these farmers to serve as models to prove to the producers of the Southwest that farming can be made profitable by the use of a little common sense coupled with scientific methods." Although tenant farmers in eighteen Gulf Coast counties became eligible for low-cost government loans if they could not obtain credit elsewhere ("Sam Houston Farms"), most of the project residents were from Houston and Harris County ("Prospective Buyers").

In early 1938, the Farm Security Administration opened the first twenty cooperative units of the Sam Houston Farm Project ("First Family"). Each unit contained a small frame house and averaged about seventy acres of the black, fertile gumbo which comprises the soil of the Upper Texas Coast. Under the guidance of Farm Security Administration experts ("5,000-Acre Project"), the project farmers grew cotton, sugar cane, and truck crops. Sixty-five government-sponsored farm units operated in 1938 ("Highlands Farm"), and by 1941 the Sam Houston Farm Project contained more than 450 residents on 86 farm units ("Sam Houston Farms"). Elena Farms purchased cotton and tomatoes from the project farmers, and these purchases enabled the company to continue operations despite a failure of the fig crop in the late 1930s.

Yet even as the Sam Houston Farm Project opened, the agricultural boom in the Highlands area had already begun to decline. When the United States formally entered World War II in 1941, the demand of the war effort for explosives, synthetic rubber, aviation fuel, and other petroleum products revitalized the petrochemical industry along the Texas Gulf Coast. Wartime quotas imposed by the federal government on glass, metal, and sugar—items essential to preserve fruits and vegetables_created a hardship for the cannery (Smith). In 1939, the nematode, a parasite which attacks plant roots, began to destroy the fig trees in the Elena Farms orchards, and the changing labor situation made reinvestment in agriculture unprofitable. According to LaBlanc, "Humble was expanding and hiring a lot of the people around here. They were making more money there, and many from the cannery went to work for Humble." The high wages offered by Humble to staff its massive war effort enticed nearly every able bodied man who had not entered the armed forces. Thus, shifting fortunes once again dictated economic and social changes.

In light of the deteriorating world political situation, Humble anticipated wartime demand and in 1939 hired and trained hun-

dreds of new employees (Larson 600). In 1941, the refinery started construction of a toluene plant, completed two years later, which supplied the raw materials for a large percentage of the explosives used in the United States war effort (Larson 597). To replace traditional sources of natural rubber from Southeast Asia, the Defense Plant Corporation contracted with Humble in 1942, to build one of the first synthetic rubber plants in the United States (Larson 598). After the invention of the catalytic cracking process, which converts heating oil into high-octane aviation fuel (Luckner),[9] the Baytown refinery produced more of this product than any other refinery in the world and provided other domestic refineries with its surplus components of aviation gasoline (Larson 598). As a result of such drastic changes in the local economy, compounded by crop failure and wartime rationing, Elena Farms Fruit & Cotton Company filed for bankruptcy in 1942 (LaBlanc). Although American Can Company assumed ownership of the complex, the plant sat idle for several years (Smith). In addition, the Sam Houston Farm Project closed in 1943, after the Federal Works Administration purchased 1,100 acres of the land and on it built a storage reservoir to provide water for the aviation fuel and rubber plants at the Humble refinery ("History"). The Farm Security Administration sold most of the remaining acreage at the farm project as individual homesites. With the demise of agriculture, the petrochemical industry assumed its place as the primary source of income along the Upper Texas Coast.

In the 1980s, some of the 7,000 residents in the Highlands area still raise rice, soybeans, and cattle in moderate quantities, but the once-great orchards, cotton fields, and truck farms now contain housing projects and shopping malls. People work in the refineries, the chemical plants, the heavy industry—or in businesses and services that support them. Agriculture has become mostly a part-time endeavor, pursued in spare hours or as a diversion during retirement. Ironically, the old Elena Farms complex, recently refurbished, today packages antifreeze, motor oil, and other petroleum-based products ("Land of Plenty"). The complex stands as a symbol of the fortunes of the Upper Texas Coast in the twentieth century, an example of the transition from a diverse agricultural center to a petroleum-dependent economy.

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9. Personal interview with Robert C. Luckner, PhD ChE, 20 Nov. 1985, a manager of Exxon Co, U.S.A., Baytown refinery, considered an expert in the chemical engineering field.

"THOSE WHO LABOR IN the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people," insisted Thomas Jefferson in his *Notes on Virginia*. "Corruption of morals in the mass of cultivators is a phenomenon of which no age or nation has furnished an example." In the eyes of the eloquent future president, rural living and rural people were the well-spring of everything fine, decent, and worthwhile in American society. Jefferson longed to see his country become and remain a nation characterized by a predominance of small, independent farmers who owned and cultivated their own land. Only such a class could safely be regarded as trustworthy custodians of the nation's future. Such ideas, actually as old as the Romans, have come to form the core of one of the most persistently held beliefs in American political and social culture—that the preservation of the way of life of the small family farmer is a fundamental requisite to the maintenance of democracy. During the depression years of the 1930s, the Federal government (as part of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal) sought to salvage this disappearing agrarian tradition by instigating a number of experimental programs. Among the more controversial and ambitious were the efforts of the Farm Security Administration to relocate dispossessed tenant farmers and sharecroppers on government homesteads. Teri Mullins' essay deals with just such an effort in Highlands, Texas. Mullins, a native of Highlands whose grandparents were among the original Sam Houston Farms settlers, maintains that the attempt failed because it was based on the false premise that the agrarian tradition was so strong that the relocated sharecroppers and tenant farmers would be content to accept a modest lifestyle based on near subsistence agriculture. Instead, when higher paying, full-time jobs became available at the Humble Refinery and other nearby petrochemical plants following American entry into World War II, the great majority of the homesteaders abandoned the Sam Houston Farms. The American dream of financial well-being proved to have much greater appeal to the former sharecroppers than the Jeffersonian agrarian tradition. Regardless, the efforts of the Farm Security Administration to perpetuate Thomas Jefferson's dream of an American Arcadia, while perhaps failing in its long range goal, did permit communities like Highlands, as well as untold numbers of dispossessed farmers, to more easily weather the economic hardships of the depression years.

Mullins won first place in 1989 in the Caldwell Competition. She received further recognition for her work when she was invited in the fall of that year to read this essay, originally titled "Subsistence Farming Experiment: Sam Houston Farms," at the annual convention of the East Texas Historical Association. She is presently working on her Associate of Arts degree at Lee College.

Sam Houston Farms

TERI MULLINS

When Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Dealers established cooperative farming communities across the United States during the Great Depression, they failed to reach originally forecast goals; but they succeeded in helping many destitute tenant farmers grow to productive homeowner status. Roosevelt's Resettlement Adminis-

tration (RA), created in 1935, was assigned the task of assisting former sharecroppers in a cooperative agricultural environment where they would own their own homes and cultivate their own land (Ketz IV: 99). The United States government planned to organize these agribusiness operations and finance the houses, land, and farm equipment for the impoverished farmers. These farming communities reflected widespread public sentiment during the 1930s that called for people to move from crowded urban areas to open rural stretches. Henry Ford expressed popular opinion in 1932 when he said, "The land! . . . That is where our roots are. No unemployment insurance can be compared to an alliance between a man and a plot of land" (qtd. in Schlesinger 361). Also, Ralph Borsodi, a prophet of the back-to-the-land movement, wrote *Flight from the City* in 1933, a book that prescribed a ". . . program of subsistence homesteads to be organized into communities where men and women could secure their satisfactions from creative and self-expressive activities instead of from conspicuous consumption and vicarious play" (qtd. in Schlesinger 362). Borsodi implied that wholesomeness prevails on subsistence farms while just the opposite attitude thrives in cities. The RA endorsed this back-to-the-land movement and attempted to revive Thomas Jefferson's dream of an America peopled by land-owning farmers, leading a life of "happiness" precisely because [they were] so much more likely to own property than the typical farmer in Europe" (Jordan 112). However, these agricultural cooperatives eventually failed because as the nation recovered from the depression, the farm participants abandoned the government-sponsored farming communities and provided for their families through jobs available in a recovering American economy, thus returning to the individualistic life most Americans treasure. The RA's Sam Houston Farming Cooperative in Highlands, Texas, may be considered a case study that reflects the nation's experience with these subsistence farming communities.

When the Great Depression hit an already suffering American agricultural population full force in the early 1930s, Roosevelt vowed to help the destitute farmers. An idea born in the Jeffersonian era, known as the agrarian myth, suggests that farmers represent the backbone of America, and the New Dealers felt compelled to protect this "backbone of America" during the hard economic times of the 1930s. When a sick American economy got weaker on October 29, 1929, stock prices toppled on the New York Stock Exchange, and American investors lost ten billion dollars in a few short hours. By the time of Franklin D. Roosevelt's inauguration in March of 1933, unemployment had reached thirteen million people (Jordan 631). Roosevelt responded with a "New Deal" for the people. He immediately began passing numerous bills aimed at speeding economic recovery. The desperate plight of farmers in particular disturbed the

New Dealers. The farming community had first felt the beginnings of the Great Depression immediately after World War I because during the war "Hoover's Food Administration . . . set such a high government price on wheat and other staples that farmers stretched their resources to acquire more land" (Jordan 580). Thus, when foreign markets created during the war dried up, American farmers were caught with surplus produce and no markets; this situation led to financial disaster for the farming community. Subsequently, the national depression of the 1930s only made a bad situation worse for farmers. In January of 1933, the generally conservative Head of the Farm Bureau Federation, Edward A. O'Neil, said that "unless something is done for the American farmer, we will have revolution in the countryside within less than twelve months" (qtd. in Jordan 637). Soon, the New Dealers passed the Agriculture Adjustment Act (AAA). This legislation offered assistance to farmers by reducing existing surplus crops and encouraging them to plant soil-conserving crops.

Under the guidelines of the AAA, the New Dealers promised landowners and tenants federal payments for the plowing up of existing crops ("FDR—32nd President"). Unfortunately, these benefits did not help the tenant farmer because often landowners received checks directly from the government and ignored instructions to give tenants their fair share; "despite provisions in the AAA contracts, little federal money filtered through to the tenants" (Schlesinger 376). Mrs. Nora Keyes, a tenant farmer at this time who later moved to the Sam Houston Farm Project in Highlands, Texas, reports that landowners plowed up cotton that she and her husband had planted and planned to harvest and that they did not receive promised AAA funds. Apparently, the Keyes' experience reflects the plight of most tenant farmers at this time because, according to William E. Leuchtenburg's *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal 1932-1940*, when the landowners received government subsidies, they often ". . . cheated tenants of their fair share of benefits" (137). Many of these croppers joined the more than one million farm families receiving direct relief at one time or another during the depression.

Although the AAA attempted to help the entire farming community, the initial legislation worked to the detriment of sharecroppers, often forcing them off the land and out of their homes. The AAA paid landowners to reduce crop production, thus eliminating the landowners' need for sharecroppers. In the words of Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "the plow up and the acreage reduction uprooted cropper families and cast them onto the roads, the rivers and the swamps" (376). Although"the New Deal was not to blame for the social system it inherited, . . . New Deal policies made matters worse" (Leuchtenburg 137). As a result, of all the New Deal policies, the AAA

received the most criticism in Washington and in living rooms across the nation. The plight of the homeless and jobless sharecropper concerned many. John Steinbeck, author of *The Grapes of Wrath*, tells about " . . . thousands of Americans uprooted from their farms, . . . drowned in a sea of cheap labor, exploited by the great orchards, hounded by sheriffs, their poverty a badge of shame" (Leuchtenburg 139). Occasionally, the exploited tenants did protest the unfairness of their situation, but such protest often encountered resistance. For instance, landlords terrorized sharecroppers in Arkansas when they created the Southern Tenant Farmers Union in July of 1934 by hunting down union leaders like runaway slaves (Leuchtenburg 138). As the Depression wore on, concern for sharecroppers, farm tenants, and hired farm laborers grew among FDR's policy makers.

The New Deal's response to the predicament of the outcast tenant farmer was the Resettlement Administration (Jordan 640). On April 30, 1935, under Executive Order No. 7027, Roosevelt combined four agencies—FERA's Rural Rehabilitation Division, the FERA Land Program, the Interior's Subsistence Homestead Division, and the AAA's Land Policy Section—into one agency: the Resettlement Administration (Tugwell 1). Roosevelt assigned the Resettlement Administration the responsibility of alleviating the farm-relief problem. Under the new guidelines, the RA was assigned "to administer approved projects involving resettlement of destitute or low-income families from rural and urban areas, including the establishment, maintenance, operation, in such connection, of communities in rural suburban areas" (Tugwell 2).

In his report to the Senate regarding the objectives, accomplishments, and effects of the resettlement program, RA Administrator, Rexford G. Tugwell, stated that "the primary purpose for the establishment of the Resettlement Administration was the rehabilitation and resettlement of destitute farm families" (19). Although some of these farm families lived on relief in rural areas, many remained stranded in cities, begging welfare workers for something to eat each week (Schlesinger 362). The RA supported the popular back-to-the-land movement and planned to help these people make the move from city back to country.

In keeping with this goal, the RA began planning the Sam Houston Farm Project in Highlands, Texas, in 1935, " . . . the first vast scale rural resettlement project in Texas and Oklahoma, according to . . . D. P. Trent, regional Rural Resettlement Director for the two states" ("100 Families"). M. L. Rees, manager of the project in 1938, predicted that " . . . farming will be lifted out of the plight into which it has fallen, partly as a result of such an institution as Sam Houston Farms" (qtd. in "U. S. Farms"). An early *Houston Press* article extolling the opportunities offered at the Highlands Farm Project states that "it has long been the belief of many that the solution of

these hard times is a movement back to the land" ("Subsistence Farm Project"). The subsistence farm project in Highlands represented one of the one hundred and forty Rural Resettlement Programs projected by the Resettlement Administration (Tugwell 6). All of these programs reflected the back-to-the land movement endorsed by the RA.

In May of 1935, the *Houston Press* predicted that " . . . a family would really be happy and feel a sense of security" on one of the subsistence farms in Highlands ("Subsistence Farm Project"). Certainly newspaper articles written prior to the establishment of the Sam Houston Farm Project in Highlands predicted profitable farms, an education in new agriculture techniques, and peace of mind to those who would participate in the project ("Subsistence Farm Project"). Highlands offered the right combination of favorable weather, fertile soil, and an optimistic market that promised good farming conditions. For example, according to the government, the Tyrrell and Garth Canning Plant in Highlands guaranteed a market for the produce raised on the farms. "Providing a ready market was one of the factors that caused the project to be considered . . ." ("Giant Resettlement Development") because the RA planned for farming cooperative members to earn needed cash by selling excess produce. Also, "soil tests made by soil engineers have convinced the government that the land [was] ideally suited for the project intended . . ." ("100 Families"), and forecasters predicted that the weather in Highlands would provide excellent farming conditions since an industrious farmer could produce two crops in one year ("$1,140,000 Will Be Expended"). Optimism prevailed, and the *Houston Press* predicted that the " . . . fellow who works this farm is [not] going to have much time to take an outside job . . ." ("Subsistence Farm Project"). All of these articles expressed the general idea that the subsistence farmer in Highlands would raise enough food on his farm to feed his family and sell the surplus yield for his ready cash.

The first families moved onto the farms of the RA's Project RR-TX-19 in Highlands, Texas, on February 6, 1938 ("First Family Moves In"). Eligible applicants included families living in eighteen Gulf Coast counties ("Highlands Farm $73,500 Project"). The Highlands project was designed to help the " . . . tenant farmer who has fought for the past ten years in the war against depression" ("RA Speeds Plans"). Typical of the experience of many of the new settlers, the Leo Jannise family of seven, tenant farmers from Beaumont and one of the first nineteen families approved for the project ("RR-TX-19 Calling Farmers"), moved into a four-room house located on forty-two acres (Jannise). Nora Keyes also lived on one of the farms. She and her husband, along with six children, moved to the project in December of 1939. She had heard about the opportunities offered at the Highlands Farm Project from the manager of a smaller

subsistence farming community in Grimes County, Texas, where she and her husband formerly lived. The manager offered the option to resettle in Highlands to Mr. and Mrs. Keyes because they rated the highest of the dozen or so families living on the Grimes County project. At this cooperative, government officials graded families on farming abilities and results, as well as housekeeping techniques; Mrs. Keyes proudly says she and her husband accumulated several gold merit stars while on the Grimes County project. Later, when she finally arrived in Highlands, Mrs. Keyes came to forty-two acres and a four-room house with barn, henhouse, and chicken yard. Mrs. Keyes says she moved into the nicest home she and her husband had ever lived in (Keyes). This represented the case of many of the original participants, as the Highlands farming community consisted of well-built, modern homes, and plans for the $1,140,000 project included a community building with recreation hall, auditorium, library, and offices ("$1,140,000 Will Be Expended"). The 5200-acre Sam Houston Farm Project consisted of approximately eighty farms ("Dedication Held").

Even though farmers taking part in the large Highlands project produced corn, cotton, peas, potatoes, cabbage, cucumbers, tomatoes, and other vegetables, as well as marketing chicken, pork, beef, and eggs, participants gradually lost interest in the Highlands project. They did not find the successful markets promised by the Tyrrell and Garth Investment Company because local grocery stores were once again saturated with a surplus of farm produce (Keyes and Jannise). Both Mrs. Keyes and Mr. Jannise report raising large crops but finding no market to sell the goods. Mrs. Keyes says her husband and a neighbor tried to sell the produce at local grocery stores but that the stores would not even pay what the farmer had already invested in his crop. As a result, many farmers eventually let surplus tomatoes and eggs ruin because there was no market for the produce (Keyes). In addition, adverse weather conditions also contributed to the failure of the farms. According to the September 21, 1943, issue of the *Daily Sun*, " . . . the Highlands Project has been plagued by record rains, coastal storms, etc." ("Sam Houston Farms Liquidation"). A hurricane passed through the vicinity in September of 1941, and "damage from Matagorda County eastward to the Sabine River exceeded $6 million, primarily to crops" (Griffiths 107). Sam Houston Farms sat directly in the storm's savage path. And, although earlier tests promised excellent soil conditions, Mrs. Keyes and Mr. Jannise both report that soil conditions varied from tract to tract, and soil fertility differed throughout the project. In conclusion, although the Sam Houston Farm participants raised enough food to feed their families, they did not acquire cash as anticipated by the Resettlement Administration.

However, industry offered a way for subsistence farmers to

obtain needed currency. Fred Chandler, long-time Highlands resident, reports that most of the farmers went to work locally, and Mrs. Keyes states that her husband would rather receive regular paychecks in industry than depend on the varying climatic conditions that could wipe out the profit of a healthy crop. In fact, most people liked the freedom of working the approximately forty-hour industrial week, as opposed to the endless labor and risky economics that go hand in hand with subsistence farming. Subsequently, the subsistence farm projects which proved most effective were the ones located near local industrial plants, and "although the leaders of the movement believed they were affording people the opportunity to escape the evils of a vulgar industrial society, the subsistence homesteads which proved the most successful were precisely those . . . which quickly took on the character of any suburban subdivision" (Leuchtenburg 136). By the 1940s, most Americans showed a definite preference for paychecks in industry over the unreliable profits of subsistence farming. Moreover, when America entered World War II in December of 1941, interest in the project steadily declined because participants could not produce a cash crop and local job openings attracted farmers from the land to regular paychecks. Employment opportunities opened up everywhere. President Roosevelt encouraged everyone to go to work to help the war effort. As a result of incentives offered to join the industrial work force, many farmers in the Highlands project, not previously attracted to industry, left the land. Mr. Keyes, for example, went to work in a local underground munitions factory producing ammunition for the Allied forces (Keyes).

As more and more farmers like Keyes turned to industry, subsistence farming activity in Highlands dwindled. In May of 1943, the *Daily Sun* announced that local businessmen planned to build a 4,000 acre reservoir in Highlands ("Farms Acreage"). One hundred and four acres of the Sam Houston Farm Project sat within the planned reservoir boundaries. Project leaders moved eighteen houses from this section and placed them near the community center of the project. Eventually, local war workers rented the houses ("Farms Acreage"). The nation's focus moved from fighting the Depression to fighting Japan and Germany in World War II.

On September 21, 1943, the *Daily Sun* announced final liquidation of the ill-fated Sam Houston Farms project ("Sam Houston Farms Liquidation"). At this time, the *Daily Sun* reported that the Resettlement Administration offered occupied farms to the tenants. Those remaining considered three options: to buy the house and land from the federal government, to buy the house and move it, or to move altogether. Jannise bought his house and a 162-acre tract from the government for $4,000.00 financed for forty years (Jannise), and Mrs. Keyes bought her house from the government

and moved it into town in order to live near local schools (Keyes).

The Sam Houston Farm Project in Highlands failed for several reasons. Certainly, adverse weather conditions, poor soil conditions, and lack of a market contributed to the failure. However, the main reasons lie in the Resettlement Administration's reluctance to understand the nature of the American people. Rexford G. Tugwell, RA Administrator, blamed the press and the pulpit for failing to encourage the participants to make the communities work (Schlesinger 371). But the problem went much deeper; "the trouble lay basically in the fact that most Americans were . . . children of an individualistic and competitive culture, lacking any faith in the community idea" (Schlesinger 371). This analysis brings to mind Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis that the frontier experience of the 1800s forged American values and that this unique experience created a resourceful and individualistic attitude in the American people (Jordan 507). Obviously, cooperative communities do not appeal to an individualistic and resourceful society. Many farm members viewed assistance offered by the Resettlement Administration as a temporary sanctuary from the depression, and "most participants regarded community life as no more than a depression makeshift" (Schlesinger 372). Mrs. Keyes confirms that she and her husband regarded the Sam Houston Farming Cooperative as assistance in tough economic times and looked forward to taking care of themselves in a healthy American economy. In the opinions of many, World War II opened up real jobs for these people who happily returned to the mainstream of American life. Although the flow of population from cities to the suburbs would occur in another decade and a half, the back-to-the-country idea of the Resettlement Administration was short-lived because the RA operated on the idea that people would be happy doing subsistence farming. Most of the Americans who moved to the suburbs in the 1950s remained employed and received regular paychecks. Therefore, despite the agrarian myth, the typical participant at the RA's Sam Houston Farming Cooperative in Highlands, Texas, seemed unsatisfied with subsistence farming once employment opportunities became available in the healthy American economy of the 1940s.

Even though the Resettlement Administration failed to generate a permanent back-to-the-land movement, it should be noted that many of those who participated in the project benefitted immeasurably from the opportunity to grow from tenants to landowners (Jannise and Keyes). These people will remain eternally grateful to Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Resettlement Administration for their assistance at a time when tenant farmers faced a bleak existence.

IN THE DARK DAYS OF THE Great Depression of the 1930s, many Americans found vicarious thrills and excitement in newspaper accounts of the exploits of the era's more infamous outlaws—criminals such as Pretty Boy Floyd, Machine Gun Kelley, and, the most notorious of all, Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow. Baytown had its own legendary bad man, Thomas Jefferson Goleman, an alleged bank robber, christened by the regional press "the Red Fox of the Big Thicket." While not himself a resident of the tri-cities, Goleman not only had relatives in Goose Creek but purportedly robbed and shot a local taxi driver. As a consequence, Goleman's exploits were dutifully reported by the *Goose Creek Daily Sun*, as well as by Houston and Beaumont papers. Steve Gouldman (no relation to Red) in his article suggests that Goleman was not nearly the arch criminal that the press portrayed him to be. While it is true that Goleman was under indictment for murder in Corpus Christi, Gouldman argues that Red may or may not have committed the bank robbery in the Big Thicket town of Hull that became the principal reason for his later infamy and insists that T.J. Goleman, the colorful desperado, was in many ways the invention of a news media eager to serve a reading public hungry for excitement. The day after Goleman was killed in a shootout with lawmen on his grandmother's farm near Kountze in the Texas Big Thicket, the *Goose Creek Daily Sun*'s headlines proclaimed, "Posse Kills Goleman, No. 1 Bad Man; Cagey Criminal is Caught in Corn Crib."

Steve Gouldman won first place with this essay, originally titled "T. J. Goleman: East Texas' Pseudo Gangster," in the 1985 Caldwell Memorial Competition and is the author of an article on T.J. Goleman to be published in the new *Handbook of Texas*. He has recently completed his B.A. in anthropology at the University of Texas in San Antonio, and his future plans include graduate studies in anthropology.

East Texas' Pseudo Gangster

Steve Gouldman

In the Thirties, Charles R. Hearn contends, the stereotyped American gangster became a legendary, mythological figure, symbolic of his environment and his era. His violent rebellion against society's laws represented a perversion of the conventional myth of success, and yet in his career the raw ingredients of the rags-to-riches story could be observed. His individualism was brutal and antisocial, but appropriate to a cruel and corrupt world, where attempts to succeed were, of necessity, aggressive acts. People could simultaneously identify with and keep their distance from the gangster, responding to his attractiveness as a rebel, yet dissociating themselves from his corruption and from the violent destruction that was the normal culmination of his career. The gangster myth of the Thirties perhaps contributed more than any other source toward establishing the tough guy as a modern folk hero.

Tabloids and newspapers played a key role in popularizing gangsters. Publicity, portraying real gangsters as noteworthy cultural figures, laid the mythological foundations for the heroic gangsters. Journalists, who acted as modern interpreters of reality, like ancient priests, assigned nicknames to the criminals and thereby took the first step in establishing gangsters as modern mythic heroes. The result, ironically, meant the myth's extinction. As such heroes, the gangsters created by journalism so too were damned by the same means. Thomas Jefferson"Red" Goleman was one of these unfortunate individuals. His story was printed April 12, 1940, on the front page of the *Houston Chronicle* headlined "Red Goleman, Bank Bandit, Slain In Duel," and read

> Texas officers wiped the slate clean today for T.J. "Red" Goleman, alleged bank robber, slayer and kidnapper who fell mortally wounded in a blast of gunfire when he attempted to resist arrest near Kountze.
>
> Goleman was identified as one of two men who last summer, walked into the Hull bank, locked two women employees in a vault and escaped with $12,000. Arrested a few days later, Goleman led officers to a portion of the loot but refused to name his companion.
>
> Goleman was also blamed for several other kidnappings and was indicted for robbery of the Kirbyville bank but another man confessed the crime.
>
> He was identified as the man who kidnapped and robbed Chester Lockley, local taxi driver, taking his cab and then shooting his victim and beating him mercilessly. The car was later found in the Big Thicket.
>
> He was identified as the man who kidnapped a man in Goose Creek, locking him in the trunk of his own car. The man, who knew Goleman and said he was taking him riding at the time, managed his escape, and the car was later found near Sour Lake.
>
> A Port Arthur refinery worker said a man who identified himself as Goleman held him at pistol point, but decided against robbing him when the Port Arthurian pretended to agree on staging a robbery with the bandit. The Port Arthur man later told officers and a trap was set, but Goleman failed to appear.

The Southeast Texas Big Thicket area, where Goleman had

many friends and relatives, had been his hiding place after his forays, and it was in this area where he was found and killed.

The thicket, in which Goleman 'knew every pig trail' (Hearn 122-23), was where a portion of the Hull bank loot was recovered, and where a number of autos, theft of which was blamed on Goleman, were later found. ("Red Goleman Bank Bandit")

This brief summary of Red Goleman's life of crime and his death, dramatized the end of "Texas' Number One Public Enemy" ("Red Goleman Will Be Buried")—Thomas Jefferson "Red" Goleman had become a dead folk hero.

Goleman spent most of his early life in the Big Thicket around the Little Rock settlement between Kountze and Sour Lake. His mother, known to be a hard working woman, helped make a living for her family by washing and ironing for neighbors while his father, Henry, periodically moved from one place to another, doing various odd jobs. Although Red had some minor encounters with the law during his childhood, once for selling newspapers after midnight, many people did not label him as "bad" and remembered him as being quite industrious (Landry 108).

As Red matured, he became more frequently involved in some sort of wrong-doing, little of which received public attention. Allegedly, he committed his first major criminal offense in Corpus Christi, where he was charged with the murder of C.W. "Four Eyes" Brown, whose corpse was later found floating in the Nueces River. Explaining the incident, Red's distant cousin, Albert Ewing, testified that when Goleman and several co-workers were together drinking, Red became so intoxicated that he passed out. While Red was unconscious, a fight broke out, Brown was killed, and the death was blamed on the person most likely not to have a recollection of the day's event—Goleman (Ladd 1). After his arrest, Red was released on bond but failed to appear on the date set for trial. He dropped out of sight, reappearing three months later in the tiny east Texas town of Hull.

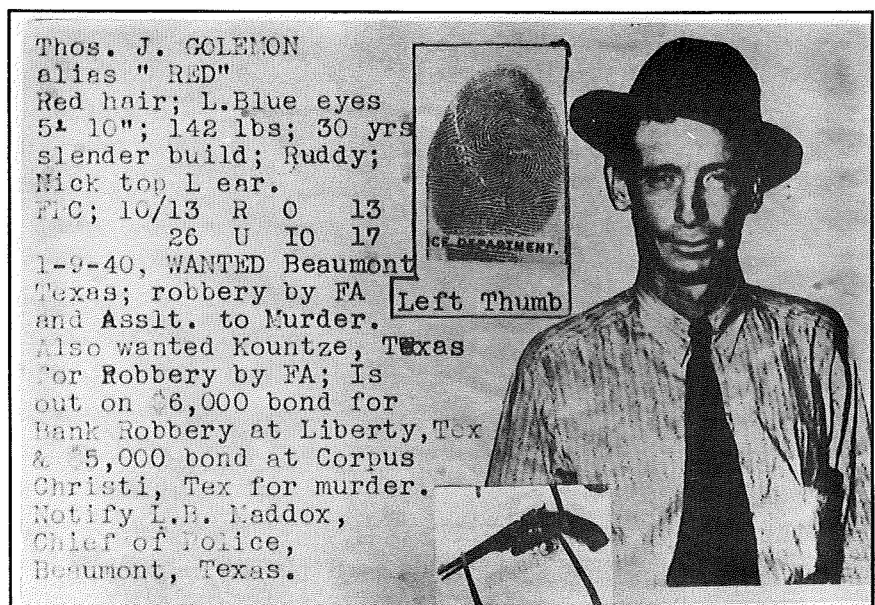
Goleman gained his first wide-spread notoriety on July 26, 1939, when he and an accomplice, Francis Elva Smith, allegedly walked into the Hull State Bank, locked two women employees in the vault, and escaped with $12,000 in cash. Of course, the people in the small community of Hull and the surrounding area could have no idea of the events to follow these bold actions, nor did they have any intentions of encouraging a tragic myth which would ultimately end in the death of Red Goleman. The foundation was laid, however, when Goleman and Smith entered the bank that hot summer day.

Eyewitness reports contributed to the veil of mystery that

immediately obscured the case, leaving an open invitation for the implications to follow. The first reports stated that the pair of bandits, believed to be "outsiders," carefully cased the bank and chose the lunch hour for their assault ("Pair Escapes"). The only two in the bank, Miss Florine Hundall and Miss Hazel Hilliard, were locked in the vault, allowing the two men to grab currency from the vault and from the teller's cage and flee. Authorities reported that clues, though scarce, were being followed closely ("Highways Are Blocked").

The conflicting reports added to the confusion. For instance, one said that the officers covering the case believed the men used a black Buick coupe, 1937 or 1938 model, for their getaway ("Highways Are Blocked"). However, another stated that the car ostensibly had a recent paint job ("Pair Escapes"). Although the description of the men was thoroughly clear, other accounts from the scene contributed to the image that was being constructed. One of the bandits was described as tall, blonde, about 33, and light complexioned, dressed in khaki shirt and trousers, and sporting a straw hat. The other was described as five feet five inches tall, about 35, with sandy-red hair and ruddy skin, also dressed in khaki and wearing a straw hat. However, the actions attributed to the men varied from report to report. One stated that the outlaws, upon entering the bank, "ordered the women to 'get-em-up,' or words to that effect," since the young ladies did not remember exactly just what the men

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM



Thos. J. GOLEMON
alias " RED"
Red hair; L.Blue eyes
5' 10"; 142 lbs; 30 yrs
slender build; Ruddy;
Nick top L ear.
FC; 10/13 R O 13
26 U IO 17
1-9-40, WANTED Beaumont
Texas; robbery by FA
and Asslt. to Murder.
Also wanted Kountze, Texas
for Robbery by FA; Is
out on $6,000 bond for
Bank Robbery at Liberty,Tex
& $5,000 bond at Corpus
Christi, Tex for murder.
Notify L.B. Maddox,
Chief of Police,
Beaumont, Texas.

Left Thumb

In 1940 the Beaumont police issued this wanted poster for the man the press characterized as the "Red Fox of the Big Thicket."

said. They were, however, made to understand quickly "that 'it was a holdup' and the men scooped up all the money in sight" ("Robbers Escape"). In contrast, another account reported that "the two women said the men were courteous and apologized for their actions as they leisurely walked into the bank. . . .'This is a holdup; we're sorry,' one declared, and proceeded to gather up cash" ("Highways Are Blocked").

In addition to the conflicting reports of the women's testimony, one further destructive element added to the growing tale. The *Beaumont Enterprise* reminded the reader that the "robbery touched off the first sizable manhunt in this section since the days of Raymond Hamilton about five years ago. The alarm was spread north of Longview and west of Houston, while modern police means were put into action. . . ." ("Highways Are Blocked"). This reference to Hamilton, an accomplice in many excursions attributed to the infamous Barrow gang, combined with all other erroneous reports of the robbery and undoubtedly contributed to the image of a living "gangster" Goleman was to and, in fact, had become.

The following day marked the beginning of what was to become a common occurrence in the remaining life of Red Goleman. The headlines of the *Beaumont Enterprise* read "Officers Hunting Hull Bandits Turn To Industry Case," and stated that southeast Texas officers who were hunting the robbers of the Hull State Bank "turned their attention to Industry, Texas, about 88 miles west of Houston, where a lone gunman shot a bank cashier in an attempted holdup." The Hull job and the Industry holdup, though not definitely linked, provided officers a number of facts which coincided. According to Sheriff Pat C. Lowe of Liberty County, several of the points in the Industry robbery checked with those in the Hull case, and that while he acknowledged that the links might mean nothing, he said,"it is still a likely lead and one that will be followed up." Lowe showed initiative in probing into the incident at Industry. The facts he received, however, and his rationalization of these facts echoed the standard by which Red Goleman would eventually be condemned. In one discrepancy, officers investigating the robbery at Industry contended that the gunman appeared a "greenhorn"; the two at Hull were described as working with the manner of veteran criminals. "This discrepancy," Sheriff Lowe explained, "could be accounted for because the Industry robber was confronting a man and was working alone, while in Hull there were two men--giving each other actual and moral support—and were holding up two women." He added that "the fact the Industry bandit used a small pistol and the Hull robbers large pistols could be an error in description. The end of a pistol," he continued, "looks as big, as the end of a sewer pipe if it's pointed at

you" ("Officers Hunting"). Liberty County officers' attention returned to their own vicinity on July 29, when the car used in the Hull holdup was discovered in dense woods six miles north of Liberty and ten miles from Hull in the Trinity River bottoms. Sheriff Lowe received information that Saturday afternoon from "negro log workers in the area," who reportedly stated that "the two men appeared in no hurry when the car was deserted, but calmly walked off" ("No Clues"). The car was delivered to Beaumont where J.A. McGuire of the Department of Public Safety searched for fingerprints. Sheriff Lowe "expressed the opinion that some useful prints were found" but declined to elaborate ("Hull Bandit Car"). Thus the attention shifted from the Industry case, but the impact of the attempted comparison of the two events presumably aided in perpetuating Red Goleman's mythical image.

One would think that the capture of the bandit would put an end to the excitement created, but this was not to be. For several days, Liberty County Sheriff Lowe and Hardin County Sheriff Miles Jordan drove throughout the Big Thicket warning Goleman's friends and relatives of the penalties for harboring a criminal. Not knowing the extent of law enforcement activities, Goleman, on August 6, appeared at the home of one forewarned kinsman. During the course of the visit, he ventured to the back porch of the farmhouse, set his gun on a crudely constructed shelf, and began washing his face. One of his kin, Dan Browne, grabbed the gun while another man held a shotgun pointed directly at Goleman. The pair then took Red to Kountze and turned him over to the sheriff. Sheriff Lowe drove to Kountze, took Goleman back to the Liberty County jail, and locked him up. When arrested, Goleman had a total of $18.80 in his pockets" ("Suspect Jailed").

On the following Wednesday, the front page of the *Liberty County News* contained a story which announced that "opening the day's disclosures was an element shrouded more or less in mystery, when a hat was found in the door of the Hull State Bank. . . .The headpiece was immediately identified by one of the young ladies in the bank as being 'exactly like' the hat worn during the recent robbery by the bandit who stayed in the front part of the building and later took $12,000 from the vault ("Hat Found"). At approximately the same time of the discovery, according to former Harris County Deputy Sheriff Ray Allen, Sheriff Lowe called Harris County Sheriff Norfleet Hill and told Hill that he had received a tip indicating Goleman's accomplice was going to attempt to "bust" Red out of the Liberty County jail (Kyle "Former Harris Deputy"). The revelation involving the mysterious hat occurred on August 10, two weeks after

the infamous robbery, and the oversight of the investigating officers at the time of the crime remains a mystery. Perhaps Francis Smith did return to liberate Goleman and just happened to leave his hat while revisiting the site of the robbery. Or perhaps the excitement that remained in the small community and the fact that Smith remained at large forced Sheriff Lowe to draw his own peculiar rationalizations in much the same manner as he did with his comparison of the Hull robbery to the holdup at Industry. The answer is not known; however, Sheriff Hill did agree to accept Red Goleman as a temporary visitor (Kyle "Former Harris Deputy"). Lowe's only comments on the discovery of the hat and possibly on the hint of escape were "I have nothing for publication now but it may be that at almost anytime, I will have a real story for you" ("Hat Found"). Ownership of the hat and the jailbreak conspiracy, never confirmed as facts, nonetheless bolstered the growth of the legend of Red Goleman as a notorious outlaw.

Before Goleman was removed to Houston on August 12, he attempted suicide. Using a piece of tobacco can, he slashed his arm. Goleman, in an extremely weakened condition, was found lying on the floor in his cell. Blood was splattered over the cell and the man's thin body and was still flowing slowly from a gash across the elbow crook ("Hull Robber"). Three days later, still weak from the suicide attempt, Goleman led officers to what he described as "quite a wad" he had buried in a fruit jar near Votaw. The officers indeed uncovered a "wad": $645 in five dollar bills ("Hunt for"). He was then taken to Houston for a short time and eventually returned. On September 1, Francis Smith, Goleman's alleged accomplice in the Hull robbery, was captured in Wichita Falls and brought back to the Liberty County jail. Bond was set at $6000 for each and, at different times, both men were set free. The release of Goleman, a bank robber possessing a large sum of money, further allowed the fears and imaginations of the people in the area inexhaustible space to expand and Red's chances for life to diminish.

T. J. "Red" Goleman walked out of the Liberty County jail on December 11, 1939, to a community whose imaginations had been fueled not only by names such as Barrow, Capone, and Dillinger but by a cycle of gangster films such as *Public Enemy, Little Caesar, and Scarface.* David Madden, remarking on the age of the gangster, states that "popular culture expressed the spontaneity of violence in America, and the public was eager, even while condemning it as evil, to experience it vicariously" (Madden 25). If in fighting to triumph over the limitations of his environment the glamorous gangster always lost, he made for everyone a momentary show of toughness.

This was the environment Red Goleman re-entered.

Stories began to flow from citizens of the area connecting Goleman to events which they claim to have experienced. For these creative people, it seemed that he could pop up from out of nowhere, commit a crime, and return to the Thicket without leaving a trace. One story, set near Kirbyville, Texas, told of Red stepping from behind a tree one day onto the running board of a car passing by. The startled driver, looking into the muzzle of a loaded gun, obeyed orders to stop his car and get into the trunk. With the apparent intention of robbing and killing the man, Goleman drove directly to one of his hiding places in the Thicket. However, after releasing the man from the trunk, Goleman changed his mind. By wits alone, the terrified man was able to gain Red's confidence. The victim convinced the desperado that he also needed money and wanted to become Red's partner in crime. He told Goleman about a rich bank in Dayton, Texas, that he had been watching for quite some time. The outlaw and his new friend spent the remainder of the day making detailed plans to rob the Dayton Bank. The captured man left Red the following afternoon under the pretense of going home to prepare for the robbery. He and Goleman made an appointment to meet two nights later on the railroad tracks one mile west of Dayton (Landry 110). The man immediately contacted W.W. "Bill" Richardson, the sheriff of Jefferson County, who had the reputation of being very successful in capturing criminals. Richardson alerted officials in Liberty County, where the proposed crime was scheduled to take place. Two nights later, the released man walked down the railroad tracks near Daytown to keep his rendezvous with Goleman while highway patrolmen, sheriff's deputies, and armed volunteers hid along the tracks. For several hours, the men waited anxiously for Red to appear—a vain vigil—since Goleman never came (Landry 111). Did Goleman become suspicious and elect to stay away? Was it Goleman the captured man encountered in the first place? Could it have been the work of the victim's imagination? No one knows.

Other events were soon reported to officials and added to Red Goleman's myth. One incident was recounted to Hardin County officials on December 21, by C.W. Jackson of Pelly. Jackson declared that he, his two sons, and Goleman left Pelly the previous night for a ride through the country in Jackson's car. Between Kountze and Sour Lake, about 3:30 a.m., Goleman turned a gun on Jackson and ordered the boys to tie their father and then to crawl into the trunk compartment. Goleman then took ten dollars from Jackson and drove to the home of a cousin. While Red was away from the car, the boys escaped from the trunk, untied their father, and the three fled

into the woods. Jackson's car was found wrecked near Sour Lake that afternoon ("Officers Search"). Research uncovered no public report that confirmed Goleman's presence in the stolen vehicle. Was it possible that Goleman became the central figure in a story constructed to cover a late night drinking spree by father and sons, which resulted in a drunken mishap? Did a bandit with several thousand dollars really need ten more? Although no factual reports confirm or deny the story, these accounts no doubt swelled the "badman" reputation of Red Goleman.

Allegedly, the notorious Goleman committed his final crime on January 8, 1940. A 24-year-old taxi driver, Chester Lockley, was beaten and shot by three men, who robbed him of $1.45, his wallet, his taxi driver's cap, and his taxi. He was then abandoned on a country road and later rescued by Beaumont police officers. When rescued, Lockley did not know he had been shot. Physicians, examining him later, discovered the wounds ("Taxi Driver"). Several weeks passed before Lockley's cab was discovered in dense undergrowth near Kountze by a surveying crew (Landry 112). Amos Laird, one of Goleman's relatives, states that "late one night I heard a car door slam in the front yard and looked out the window to see it was a taxi." Once inside the house, Laird asked Goleman who was in the cab, and Red told him he had picked up his brother Darius (Kyle "Harris County Deputy"). Both Darius and Red were later accused with another man in the theft and beating. Goleman's alleged accomplice confessed to his part in the crime but refused to name his partners, and Darius was later cleared of any involvement in the case. The point is, did these men need $1.45? Did Red Goleman need a stolen car when he supposedly possessed thousands of dollars and new cars sold for less than one thousand? Also, if fingerprints were taken from the cab to match Goleman's, why was there no reference to this fact in the various reports? As for the money, the amount Goleman and Francis Smith took was reported to be $12,000. In all reports, this fact is verified only by G. B. Ezell, vice president of the bank at Hull. He stated that the men took "$2,000 in $20 bills; $4,000 in $10 bills; $4,000 in $5's and $2,000 in ones." No other verification was ever released to the public. Ezell added that "the entire amount was covered by insurance, the institution having a blanket coverage of $30,000" ("Highways Are Blocked"). Only $2,225 of the stolen money was ever recovered and, one should recall that in each previous event involving Goleman, Red either had very little cash on him, or he robbed others of a small amount. Did he and Smith really walk away from Hull with $12,000? And concerning the cab and his cousin Laird: Why did Red leave his brother in the car when they were at the home of a mutual cousin? Was Darius not welcome, or was Laird's version derived from a pressured imagination? Again, no factual report exists.

Whatever the case, Goleman disappeared from the public until April 11, the day his life came to an end. Here again, reports of his final moments lend credence to the "gangster" mystique that had been built to excite and satisfy the depressed society. The epitome of the final nine months of Goleman's life appears in two separate articles following his death, printed in sister publications, the *Beaumont Enterprise* and the *Beaumont Journal.*

Beaumont's morning paper, The *Enterprise*, presented a detailed account of Goleman's death, stating that Miles D. Jordan, sheriff of Hardin County; W.W. "Bill" Richardson, sheriff of Jefferson County; and several deputy sheriffs participated in Red's demise. A portion of the article read:

> Shortly before eleven o'clock last night, they moved in on the house and surrounded it.
>
> Then they saw Goleman's grandmother, who lives nearby, leave a small feed house in the rear of the farmhouse. They also noticed a light in the feed house.
>
> As they closed in, shots started pouring from the little frame building, and the officers returned fire, all directing their lead into the side of the structure.
>
> 'Drop that gun, Red,' one of the officers shouted during the battle.
>
> 'I've dropped it. . .you've got me,' came a voice from the feed house, followed by moans.
>
> The officers ceased firing and cautiously approached.
>
> Inside they found Goleman, dead from numerous bullet wounds, and a still-smoking .44 caliber pistol beside him.
>
> Also in the feed house they found a sizable supply of groceries, a sawed-off shotgun and bedclothing. ("Officers Slay")

Red Goleman, the "Red Fox of the Big Thicket," was dead from numerous bullet wounds, his "still-smoking" pistol and sawed-off shotgun lying within reach.

The *Journal* apparently decided to alter the event and add to the "gangster's" farewell. Their version stated that

> Goleman was eating a fried chicken dinner with all the trimmings and dressed in a new suit of overalls and jumper bought Thursday afternoon, when officers walked into the yard demanding that he surrender. His answer was bullets fired from the same pistol that officers believe he knocked a taxi cab driver in the head with a few months ago near Beaumont when he stole his car. . . .

> When officers got in view of the house, two women were standing at the door of the corn crib talking to Goleman while he was eating the chicken dinner. When the women saw the officers approaching, they ran back to the house and, with other members of Goleman's family, saw the pitched battle between officers and Goleman.
>
> After several minutes of firing, one of the officers said 'Red, drop that gun.'
>
> 'I've dropped it . . . you've got me,' was the answer that echoed back to the officers. They ceased firing and cautiously approached the house and knocked the door in to find Goleman lying flat on his back with his head in the doorway and still grasping a .44 pistol that he had been using.
>
> The bullet entered Goleman's right breast and came out under his heart on the left side.
>
> On the floor of the corn crib were two large flour sacks full of fresh food, ammunition, several rifles, a large pistol, and Goleman's old blue suit that he wore during the robbery of the Hull State Bank last year. ("Trip Home")

Indeed, the "gangster" went out in a flurry of gunfire with his arsenal surrounding him. The khaki clothes he originally wore during the Hull job had changed to reflect his dispositon.

Another version of the ordeal is that of Red's aunt, Addie Ewing, who claims later that the entire story was constructed by officials participating in the raid. She holds that while T. J. was standing in her yard, he suddenly ran toward the corn crib hollering over his shoulder, "watch them laws." And as if from nowhere, men were moving in from all sides of the woods. "He ran to the corn crib, slammed the door behind him and everybody started shooting everywhere. T. J. didn't even have a gun," Ewing claims. She added that after the shooting stopped, "they gathered up every gun in the house and took a mattress and blanket off one of my beds and took it all out to the crib. . .by the time a photographer from Beaumont got here they had the crib looking like T. J. had been sleeping in there . . . they also propped the gun against the crib . . . I swear that's the truth" (Kyle "Addie Ewing").

Commenting on the death of Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker, Ted Hinton says "There is no explaining it, but curiosity to see a famous desperado laid out makes people crazy as loons," and so it was for the people anxious to view the remains of Thomas Jefferson "Red" Goleman (Hinton 179). Thousands broke the quiet of old Hardin Cemetery on the edge of the Big Thicket to become almost disorderly as last rites were said for "Texas' Number One Outlaw." In

the biggest funeral ever held in Hardin County, T. J. Goleman was buried near the spot where he was born and where he was killed. The dense crowd, estimated at nearly 4,000 persons, paraded by the casket for nearly an hour for a last curious glimpse of the man who terrorized southeast Texas. The multitude became almost violent when it became time to close the casket since it appeared these people might not see the body. They began to push and shove in their efforts to see Red Goleman in death, and officers were required to step in and control the long line of pseudo-mourners ("Crowd"). The bandit's mother, Mrs. Agnes Goleman, collapsed several times during the course of the funeral, revived each time by two nurses who accompanied her from Beaumont. Several others in the crowd fainted, and many women became hysterical ("Thousands").

While the services were underway, several hundred others visited the small farm nearby to view the site where Red had been killed. Addie Ewing said the crowd began making such a mess in the yard, she decided to charge them ten cents a person to walk in and stare at the bullet-riddled corn crib where Goleman was slain (Kyle "Former Harris Deputy"). The crib no longer exists and, to this day, an appropriate epitaph to T. J. Goleman's life of crime remains in the cemetery at Hardin; his grave bears no headstone.

Alexis Clérel De Tocqueville, in a philosophic observation concerning journalism in the United States, declared that "the press cannot create human passions however skillfully it may kindle them when they exist"; the press may not greatly initiate, but it wonderfully reverberates (Graves 320). A terrifying result then is when we pick up our newspapers, we expect them to bring us momentous events since the night before. We expect new heroes every season, a literary masterpiece every month, a dramatic spectacular every week, a rare sensation every night. We expect anything and everything, and by harboring, nourishing, and ever enlarging our extravagant expectations, we create the demand for the illusions with which we deceive ourselves and which we pay others to make to deceive us, not only in advertising and public relations and political rhetoric, but all the activities which purport to inform and comfort and improve and educate and elevate us. What Red Goleman became a victim of was a frustrated society expecting more than the world could give or more than could be made of the world. Thomas Jefferson "Red" Goleman died then, not as a result of a single bank robbery, but he died as a result of the influences produced, magnified, and harbored in the Great Depression which required that he become, in the eyes of his fellow southeast Texas citizens, a news grabbing glorious "gangster."

IN JUNE OF 1990 BAYTOWN was visited by a team of outside observers, the Regional Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) of the American Association of Architects, that offered suggestions for the revitalization of the city. In their report to the community, the R/UDAT group reported that "Baytown has a rich history worth rediscovering . . . [and that] one part of that history worth remembering, in light of many of today's issues and conflicts, is [its] racially and ethnically diverse history." This cultural heterogeneity should be viewed in a positive light as one source of the community's energy. Thus, R/UDAT concluded, "Baytown should acknowledge and celebrate its . . . diversity enthusiastically and often.

Clemencia Vigil's essay, originally titled "A Background in Culture and Tradition," represents just such a celebration. Baytown has a rather large and well-established Hispanic community whose historic roots in the area run deep. Vigil explores the role that Our Lady of Guadalupe Church has played—and continues to play—in providing many of Baytown's Hispanic citizens with a spiritual anchor and, at the same time, has permitted many members of the Hispanic community to maintain strong ties to a vibrant and dynamic cultural heritage.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Church

CLEMENCIA VIGIL

America is a nation of immigrants. Unfortunately, in their search for the American dream many immigrants have lost their own culture and traditions, yet this is not always the case. An example of immigrants who have not lost their roots is found in Baytown, Texas, in the community surrounding the church, Our Lady of Guadalupe. Our Lady of Guadalupe Church enables the Baytonian Hispanic immigrants to retain ties to their own traditions and cultural backgrounds.

The person who recognized the Hispanics' need for a place to worship, Reverend Francisco Urbanovsky, went wherever he saw a need for spiritual guidance. In the 1930s Hispanics in the Baytown area did not have a church; instead they attended St. Joseph Church which as an Anglo-Saxon church did not meet all the Hispanic's spiritual needs. To provide an alternative, Father Urbanovsky improvised and sometimes used a trailer home to hold mass. In 1959 the Hispanic Community and Fr. Urbanovsky built the church , Our Lady of Guadalupe, which for the next twenty years would be the Spanish speaking community's place of worship, adding a parish hall in 1963. The structure annexed to the parish hall in 1967 became the classrooms for the Christian Catholic Education group

and many other groups such as the Guadalupan Society and the Sacred Heart Society. In creating these clubs Fr. Urbanovsky helped to promote the belief and reverence held for the Mexican patron saint, Our Lady of Guadalupe. Activities held by the clubs enabled Hispanics to communicate in their own language and to enjoy social gatherings in an environment full of ethnic food , drinks, and music. In 1971 Fr. Urbanovsky retired, leaving the parish in the hands of the Hispanics and their pastor Fr. Acevedo.

The origin of Baytown's Hispanic community is linked to the Humble Refinery Company, later part of Exxon. As pointed out in *A Social History of Baytown, Texas*, by Olga Haenel, since 1919 Hispanics provided the menial labor needed for the booming oil industry, and today Hispanics still comprise an integral part of this industry. The majority of these Hispanics were Mexicans, often recent arrivals, who professed to be Catholics.

By 1975, the Hispanic community had grown tremendously. Father Fiorenza, chancellor of the Houston-Galveston Diocese, and Bishop Morkovsky asked the Augustinians of Michoacan, Mexico, to provide clergymen for the area. The St. Augustine order, named for the great thinker Saint Augustine of Hippo, provides missionaries dedicated to teaching people about the Eucharist. "The Augustinians as a whole were notable for their confidence in the spiritual capacities of the Indians." (Ingham 33) The order of Augustinians, considered citizens of the world, are nonetheless deeply bound to Mexican culture and tradition because they are of Mexican origin. This tie enables them to further help Hispanics identify with their own background. One priest was hired immediately; two more came at a later date.

The first priest chosen to carry out this task was Reverend Efrain Gutierrez, helped by his two assistants Rev. Jose Martinez and Javier Lopez. During Fr. Gutierrez's tenure, attendance flourished and the need for a bigger and better church became apparent. The present Our Lady of Guadalupe Church was built in a mission architectural style in 1979. It seats 475 people and contains at the front of the church a Spanish statue of the risen Christ.

Since Father Gutierrez's transfer in 1981, the Augustinian priests sent to Baytown include Father Nicholas Gomez and Father Jose Romero. The present pastor of the parish Father Jose Ayala and his assistant pastor, Father Salvador Medina, are also Augustinians.

The philosophies of the priests set up membership guidelines, which clearly state the ideal of Hispanic focus. The mass bulletin handed out every Sunday declares "This is not a territorial but a national parish. All Spanish speaking people and those interested in

Spanish culture are considered parishioners of this parish, which does not have any boundaries. That's why our parishioners come from several directions" (Bulletin).

The doors are open to U.S. citizens, amnesty applicants and illegals. All members are treated as equals. Like a true version of the "melting pot," the mixture of several nationalities,this pot also contains the immigrants' language, tradition, and culture. Although the majority come from a Mexican background, included are Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Central Americans, and South Americans. All these people have one common bond in addition to their Catholicism—the Spanish language.

Our Lady of Guadalupe receives all Hispanic immigrants and helps them adjust to their new environment. Just as the Irish fled to this new world in the nineteenth century due to social, economic, and political problems, so did these immigrants of the twentieth century (Handlin 69). Latin Americans cross the border in search of work and to escape the social and political oppression by which many Latin American countries are burdened. In this transplantation, immigrants, in time, lose their own sense of identity; because many become obsessed with becoming true Americans, they strip themselves of their own culture. However, for many Hispanics Catholicism serves as a tie to their cultural background. Ninety percent of all Chicanos are Catholics. Oscar Handlin states, "The whole configuration of the peasant's ideas in the United States strengthened the place in his life of the established religion he brought with him. It was not only an institutional reluctance to change that held him to his faith, but also the greater need that faith satisfied in the New World" (75).

The Catholic Church in general and locally has become many Hispanics' only tie to the Spanish language and traditions. It helps Hispanics to nurture their roots and at the same time create their own American dream. Tradition is an integral part of the parish, Our Lady of Guadalupe. Hispanics identify with the Patron mother of Mexico, Our Lady of Guadalupe, since they believe that she consoles those who suffer and helps those in need. Hispanics celebrate the apparition of the virgin on December 12, with a special mass, an offering of flowers, and the traditional *mañanitas*, folklore mariachi music. Art is an important part of Hispanic life; most Catholic Churches found in Mexico contain murals or paintings and are part of the culture inherited by succeeding generations. An example of such inheritance is the mural painted by Leo Tanguma in 1976. This mural depicts a procession or peregrination of Hispanics towards Jesus on judgment day . These are two of the obvious links between

the tradition of the Hispanics homeland and their present homeland, America.

The link to the hispanics' background can be seen in the regular Sunday schedule of the parish. This schedule consists of three Spanish masses and an English mass delivered by Father Ayala or Father Medina. Father Ayala states that," Sometimes people will become members after a hard time in their lives such as a death or accident and are always welcome." The leader of this small microcosm is the priest. In the actual mass not only the priest presides but also young and old members who take part in the lecture and in the serving of communion. The church changes as the people's needs change in order to better attend the members' needs. The priests have assistant deacons, Fernando Gonzalez, Rudy Venegas, and George Rincon. During the Spanish masses two guitar players lead the people in Spanish songs . The youth ministry also assists during the mass with the collections and offertory ceremony. Sometimes insufficient seats for all the attending members cause some to be left standing. The final culmination of the mass

PHOTO BY DON BOGGS

This recently restored painting of a compassionate Christ, located in the recreation hall of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, is the work of Leo Tanguma and reflects the heroic tradition of Mexican muralists.

celebration is the communion, and the unity of the church members is felt. The mass is not just a religious gathering but also a social gathering. The members range from single men and women to young and old married couples along with their children. All members become part of the same society , not just as Catholics, but as people joined by the same beliefs, traditions, and culture. Father Ayala openly admits that "there is not a written-in-stone schedule but a mission to attend the person or persons in need or who needs help. Even if it is in the middle of the night."

The Catholic Church aids in the social and political development of Hispanics by creating groups such as Encuentros and Padres, Fathers and Reunions. The five general areas on which the church has focused are evangelism, education, leadership development, youth ministry, and social justice. An example of this focus is the parish council which enables church members to practice their voting and leadership skills. One person who gained much confidence in himself from being in the parish council is Mr. Mario Delgado. Today Mr. Delgado represents the Hispanic community in Baytown's city council. A further example of the aid given to Hispanics by the parish is its bilingual Christian Catholic Education classes set up to teach children catechism in their own language.

Church groups include the Sacred Heart Society, Legion of Mary, Knights of Colombus, Amigos and Amigas of San Augustine, Youth Ministry, Grupo de Oración, and the Grupo Matrimonial Juvenile. The oldest group, Guadalupe Society, started even before the church was built. All these groups join in organizing bazaars which feature ethnic foods, music, folk dancing, and contests. Days such as Fiestas Patrias, Our Lady of Guadalupe Day, and Cinco de Mayo are celebrated at the church with bazaars or jamaicas, which usually include all the favorite foods and music that Hispanics enjoy. These celebrations enable Hispanics to not lose touch with their own roots and culture.

There is no doubt of the importance of the parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe; it is a landmark to all of the Hispanic community because it stands for many years of Baytown's Hispanics' work and sacrifice. In this church many people have been baptized, married, and consoled for the loss of a loved one. Hispanic immigrants can go to the parish to be stimulated because becoming an American does not mean becoming a conformist, but adjusting to an entirely new way of life. Our Lady of Guadalupe helps Hispanics adjust to this new way of life and helps immigrants feel optimistic. Building this parish and keeping it alive by injecting young Hispanics into it helps support John Bodnar's statement, "But on the level of everyday

life, where ordinary people could inject themselves into the dynamic of history, acquiesced, resisted, hoped, despaired, and ultimately fashioned a life the best they could" (87).

By becoming members of a bilingual church, Baytown Hispanics assert pride in their culture. In being proud of their culture, Hispanics can become better individuals, citizens, and a better unified group, capable of progressing. The United States is marked by Hispanic heritage by names such as San Antonio, Los Angeles, Colorado, and San Francisco; by retaining their culture , immigrants are no less Americans than any other citizen. Loss of an identity can take away the variety and strength of a nation, especially of a nation such as the United States which draws its strength from the cultural variety of all its immigrants. Culture is an important issue in the United States which can be proved by the popularity of the film, *La Bamba*, which deals with Hispanic ordeals and culture.

Madaras questions, " Were the immigrants' Old World cultures destroyed as they adjusted to American life?" (68). In observing the parish Our Lady of Guadalupe, the answer to the question is a definite no. The Hispanics are not alienated from their Old World cultures and are not in a hostile environment. On the contrary, these immigrants have adjusted themselves and their culture to a new way of life. Their old ties did not break because they did not allow them to; instead Hispanics fortified them. Hispanics were not uprooted but transplanted deeply into the soil of the United States.

MAJOR WARS HAVE A profound effect on the nations who are caught up in them. Many historians have written about World War I and the way it changed European society; World War II is America's turning point. Despite the aftermath of the war with its fears of nuclear destruction, during the war itself America pulled together against a common enemy. Ralph Fusco's paper deals with the pulling together of the community of Baytown. Baytown's Humble Refinery manufactured more than half of the toluene produced in the United States during World War II. (Toluene is the second T in TNT.) The significant role of the community in the manufacture of this vital ingredient in explosives promoted a new community spirit. Prior to the war Baytown was comprised of separate towns, each with its own insularity, and each with its suspicions of the strangers who had poured into the oil fields in the area. The war effort became a turning point for the area as all the individual groups cooperated in a common goal.

Ralph Fusco, a former Baytown fireman and Lee College graduate, won fifth place in the 1989 Caldwell Competition for his essay, originally titled "The Effects of World War II on the Consolidation of Baytown." He completed a pre-med degree at the University of Houston at Clear Lake and is currently studying dentistry.

World War II's Effects on Consolidation

Ralph Fusco

Prior to the advent of World War II, the Tri-Cities area of southeast Texas, composed of the smaller townships of Cedar Bayou, Goose Creek, Baytown, and Pelly, located about thirty miles east of Houston near Galveston Bay, was both a farming and industrial area. The discovery of oil and the eventual construction of the Humble Oil and Refining Company has changed the earlier primarily agricultural complexion of the region. However, these changes did not occur without problems. The oil boom and the influx of a transient population made difficult the development of a cohesive community. Long time inhabitants of the area, particularly the residents of Cedar Bayou, resisted these changes by disassociating themselves from incoming oil field workers. Local residents viewed the refinery employees, though more permanent residents, in the same light as they viewed the oil field people (Anderson). The fact that the oil field industry gave rise to the construction of the refinery fostered the feelings expressed by long time residents. Despite such stormy beginnings, these feelings slowly subsided and the construction and subsequent wartime expansion of the refinery proved the beginning of a stable community. Even with the seeds of

unity planted by the formation of the Humble Oil And Refining Company, sectionalism hung on in the several towns that survived. It took the drastic and rapid changes brought about by World War II to weld these separate districts into a single homogeneous city. While these changes initiated the breakdown of the old social, economic and geographic barriers, they also encouraged the ultimate consolidation of Goose Creek, Pelly and Old Baytown into the present day city of Baytown. Through precipitating these changes, World War II provided the catalyst that sped this consolidation (Tilton).

The many changes in the community due to the war effort included the government funded expansion of the Humble Oil And Refining Plant. The company received the first government contracts for toluene (toluol) production, an intrinsic part of the make up of TNT, in 1941. The toluene project, built on Humble Refinery sites at a cost of twelve million dollars, employed two hundred people, and included a barracks that would accommodate three hundred workers ("Toluol Unit"). On January 9, 1941, the local newspaper, the *Daily Sun*, ran an article stating that Humble Oil Company had bid on a government funded project for the construction of a synthetic rubber plant ("Humble to Submit"). Another article in the *Daily Sun* dated January 19, 1941, indicated that as soon as authorities hacked through governmental red tape and cleared obstacles concerning government funding, construction would begin ("Rubber"). By June of 1942, construction of the rubber plant was under way (Henson 124-125). Along with these government financed additions to the refinery complex, Humble Oil, using company resources, expanded its existing operations. This expansion enabled Humble to supply the new plants with the raw materials necessary to their successful operation ("Humble To Make"). In conjunction with the construction of these plants, the improved roadways and transportation facilities needed to expedite incoming and outgoing shipments proved instrumental in erasing boundaries existing between communities (Tilton).

Enlargement of the Humble complex proved advantageous not only to Humble Oil and its employees, but also to other area businesses. Local concerns such as Brown and Root, Fisk Electric, and Texas Water Supply rode the coattails of Humble's growth. The *Humble Bee*, the house organ of Humble Oil's Baytown refinery, dated October 30, 1941, gives an idea of the magnitude of the area's industrial development. It stated that "Even from the roadway . . . tall towers of the hydroformers with their tops wreathed in plumes of snow white steam was [sic] an inspiring sight. Visitors sensed . . . that here was national defense in action" (*Humble Bee*, "Humble Produces").

Industrial expansion markedly changed the employment picture, created an unprecedented demand for people, and profoundly affected the labor force in the area. An article in the *Humble Bee*, dated April 1944, illustrates the need for workers. The *Bee* observed that for the first time in Humble Oil's history, the company embarked on a special campaign to recruit new workers; the goal was to hire one thousand people by July 1, 1944. To encourage applications for employment, the company ran ads in local papers and bought time on local radio stations, appealing for workers ("Humble Company"). Plant Manager Gordon L. Farned's plea indicated the desperate need for people in industry. "Almost any man under 45 years of age or any woman under 35 years of age who can meet our physical requirements will be accepted, while those with physical disabilities unable to meet our physical requirements may be accepted as war emergency employees for the duration" ("Humble Company").

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

In 1945 representatives of the armed services explain to refinery workers the importance of Humble's continuing contribution to the campaign to defeat the Axis.

This churning of the labor front affected many groups. Unions saw the dire need for labor as a godsend. Severe industrial manpower shortages allowed labor unions to obtain concessions from employers, but at times the concessions sought by the unions precipitated labor-management disputes. For example, in April of 1941 the steel workers union called for a strike, demanding a pay increase of thirteen cents per hour with the overtime rate set at twice the hourly rate. Humble Oil and Refining, the parent company, had no comment on the labor discussions ("Steel"). While these negotiations progressed, the *Daily Sun* stated that Humble Oil and Refinery workers received a wage increase of five cents per hour ("4200"). On April 8, 1941, the *Daily Sun* ran another article stating that the company had given its oil terminal workers a five percent raise in pay. The article related this increase to the increase received by Humble's refinery workers ("Humble Raises"). The employment situation and

the common ground of national defense coupled with the solidarity fostered by unions served to unite the people of the area (Tilton). Social divisions crumbled under the weight of an increasing and diversifying population (Anderson). Collapsing social barriers affected even old established families. Margaret Sjolander, a member of one of the old Baytown families, exemplified how changes in employment practices affected established local families. As one of the women entering the work force at this time, her willingness to associate with the newcomers demonstrates how the larger sense of community generated by the war effort provided the adhesive that began to cement the area into one (Henson 123).

Miss Sjolander's entrance into the industrial labor force illustrates how the status of women changed dramatically due to World War II, possibly more dramatically than any other group. Before the war fraternal organizations and church groups, like the Precilla Club and the Women's Club, provided the major social outlets for women. These garden club type organizations served to keep women aware of happenings through books and discussions on current events (Henson 122). At the beginning of the war, women assumed duties similar to those performed by women during the Civil War (Henson 123). However, this restriction to traditional "women's duties," such as rolling bandages and housekeeping in hospitals, lasted only a short time, and as men entered the armed forces, women stepped in, filling the vacancies in the work force thus created. In 1941 the community established a women's ambulance corps. Women completed training in first aid and in emergency procedures to be used in the event of enemy attack. Incorporation of women into the civilian emergency labor pool foreshadowed what followed in industry. The depletion of the work force that prompted Humble Oil to advertise for people forced acceptance of women in traditional male roles. Although many women continued to labor in conventional clerical positions, by late 1941 or early 1942 women also worked in mechanics shops and in area plants as laborers ("Humble Women").

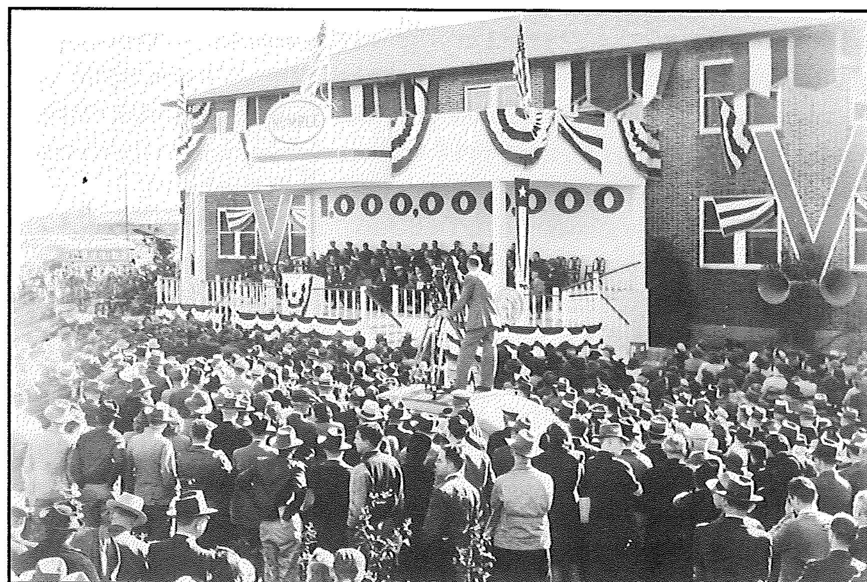
Not all the changes occurred without incident. The *Humble Bee* dated January 1943 expresses some of the frustrations with change. "They [women] not only create a pleasant picture, but they also create a problem in the matter of costumes that are safe and attractive, hairdos, safety shoes, etc." ("Humble Women").

The same article further illustrates the stereotype that industrial management had given women: "She is there to do a man's job . . . and must not be hindered by impractical clothing. However, style must not be forgotten. Give a woman an unattractive costume and down goes her morale" ("Humble Women").

In spite of some negative attitudes on the part of industry, women persisted, training in firefighting, incendiary bomb control, and chemical warfare. A women's home defense organization was formed, and its members took on many additional duties, training in general disaster relief techniques (*Humble Bee*, "Women's Home Front"). The climate of war forced the integration of women into the work force, hastening the breakdown of prevalent social distinctions by throwing together women from vastly different social and economic backgrounds. These women found that they worked well together and that their differences were not as important as they had once thought. Long time resident Lelia Tilton is convinced that this attitude was carried from the work place into society, thus creating a more congenial community atmosphere.

Nineteen forty-two brought the creation of the civilian defense program to the area (*Humble Bee*, June 1942). Because both civilians and Humble workers all trained in civil defense procedures, this program brought together several local businessmen and Humble employees in the role of program division directors. Men like L.G. Sanders, a Goose Creek businessman; William Marshall, a physician; and L.A. Loving of Humble Oil worked together to implement the program and coordinate training ("Preparedness"). With this citizen interaction came the necessity of cooperation among the various town governments. Wartime defense drills like blackout exercises made collective cooperation of these separate political entities necessary. The *Daily Sun*, January 8, 1942, stated that East

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

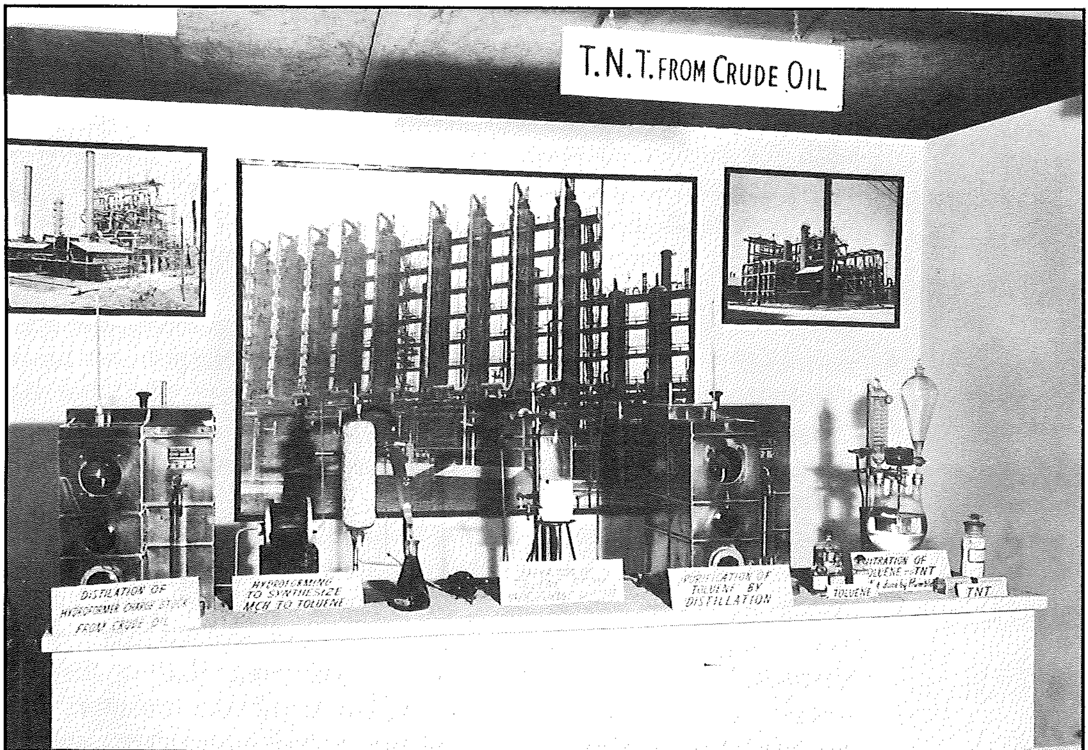


Humble Oil and Refinery company employees celebrate the production of the billionth gallon of 100 octane aviation gasoline at a ceremony on December 14, 1944.

Harris County scheduled a blackout drill for that date. Municipal authorities in conjunction with civil defense commanders assumed responsibility for coordination and execution of the drill ("East Harris"). Inter-community cooperation became very necessary; the various communities affected could no longer remain isolated from one another.

The population increase brought by the new employment opportunities aided this increase in community cooperation. In 1930 the geographical area now comprising Baytown and Highlands had a population of 14,360, broken down as Baytown, 5200; Cedar Bayou, 300; Goose Creek, 5,208; Highlands, 200; and Pelly, 3,452 (*Texas Almanac*, 1939-1940). On the eve of World War II, the population had grown by 7,255 to a total of 21,615. Baytown's population was now 5,986; Cedar Bayou grew to 1,227; Goose Creek increased to 6,971; Highlands had the largest growth, now at 2,044; and Pelly now posted a population of 4,338. Two other areas currently part of present day Baytown, Wooster and Busch Terrace,

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM



A model, intended to demonstrate the importance of Baytown's Humble Refinery to the war effort, shows how TNT is produced from crude oil. More than half of the toluene, the second T in TNT, produced in the United States during World War II was manufactured in Baytown.

had populations of 788 and 261 respectively (Henson 127). By 1950, one year after consolidation, the area's population had swelled to 31,169. The population of the City of Baytown, now comprising Old Baytown, Pelly, and Goose Creek, ballooned to 26,863. This number had doubled since 1940. Cedar Bayou rose to 1,880, while Highlands posted a population of 3,647 and Wooster reported 1,779 (*Modern City Directory*). These figures show that the population of the Baytown area more than doubled in the twenty years from 1930 to 1950. The fact that the population only doubled in the thirty year period from 1950 to 1980 shows that even the oil boom years of the late seventies and early eighties did not cause the swell in population that World War II did. (Though only Baytown, Goose Creek and Pelly comprised the Tri-Cities proper, all other areas mentioned, with the exception of Highlands, now comprise the City of Baytown. Highlands, however, remains in Baytown's extraterritorial jurisdiction, and as such cannot incorporate as a city without permission from the City of Baytown).

This influx of new people looking for work helped abolish the distinct physical boundaries that had existed between communities. Increased population demanded better thoroughfares. Bridges and concrete overcame such geographic and physical boundaries as Goose Creek Stream and dirt roads made impassable by heavy rains. With the disappearance of these boundaries, the individualism of the communities also disappeared (Henson 127). Newly created governmental agencies such as the Harris County Tire Board, set up to deal with the rubber shortage, further eroded community singularity ("Tire Board"). This board organized scrap drives in which the whole area participated. The *Daily Sun* of June 16, 1942, had two articles concerning these drives. One stated that shortages forced the U.S. military to cut their rubber consumption by twenty-five percent. The other observes that the ongoing scrap collection netted tons of scrap rubber collected at the price paid by Humble of one cent per pound ("Rubber Drive"). Ironically, while in January of 1942 the U.S. Government increased production of synthetic rubber to four hundred tons per year, this effort did not increase domestic supplies ("Humble Listed").

Tragedies and emergencies also helped to join the communities. The war emergency and resulting rationing programs did unify the nation as well as the community, but on a local level a hurricane in 1943, erroneously predicted as a small storm, caused much severe damage to homes and businesses in the area, uniting the local people as they worked together to overcome the disaster. War security concerns on the part of the federal government possibly contributed to the lack of accurate information available to the public. The rationing program affected the ability of residents and businesses to make repairs. People had difficulty obtaining material,

and some had to improvise to make repairs (Henson 127). Building supply shortages forced local inhabitants to rely on one another for help, promoting interdependence on a personal level. This need hastened the breakdown in the existing barriers (Tilton). A captioned photograph in the *Daily Sun* dated January 4, 1945, brings out another side of the war that, ironically, catalyzed this breakdown. The caption stated simply that Cecil Montgomery had been killed in naval action in the Pacific ("Photograph"). Paradoxically the sense of loss served to give area residents a stronger sense of "being in this together." Montgomery's death in and of itself did not unite the area, but his death represented the loss suffered by many area residents. When a serviceman was killed, neighbors assisted his family as best they could. This shared grief brought together people who, otherwise, would not normally socialize (Anderson).

The war brought other changes as well that promoted a new sense of community cohesiveness. Area communities grew due to the increase in jobs and the coming of people to fill them; the consequence was a housing shortage. In April of 1941 the local Jaycees wired Congressman Albert Thomas, asking him to have the Tri-Cities declared a defense area. This action would qualify the region for special consideration under a Federal Housing Administration building loan program ("Defense Area"). The *Humble Bee*, April 1943, in an article titled "Humble Employees Eligible For War Housing," announced that Humble employees could purchase or rent houses built by the National Housing Authority ("Humble Employees Eligible"). In 1945 the *Daily Sun* ran an ad stating that houses built at Camp Butyl, near the rubber plant, could be purchased and the company would deliver the house to the purchaser's lot ("Houses For Sale"). These housing programs and offers helped pull the area together by giving many residents, who had up to this time been renters, the opportunity to become homeowners. Once renters became homeowners, they had a vested interest in the welfare of the area. This community interest, in conjunction with the many other changes brought by the war, welded the area together (Tilton).

World War II, with its rationing, increased demand for industrial output, and creation of new employment opportunities caused the Tri-Cities area to grow and served to unite the area. New people coming into the area helped combine the separate groups that existed before the war into a single more homogeneous group. Old geographic boundaries were being rapidly erased, and old community isolationism disappeared. Rapidly occurring changes lent a feeling of oneness to the area. In this sense World War II became a major contributing factor for change when earlier attempts at consolidating the Tri-Cities had failed. In 1949 the area communities joined and incorporated into one city, the City of Baytown.

WORLD WAR II SIGNIFICANTLY affected the social structure in the United States, particularly for women. The war's myth of "Rosie the Riveter" provides insight into the changing status of women; the war effort sparked social evolution. As Donna Bonin contends in her essay, women enjoyed better wages, more challenging jobs, and increased responsibility, and the women who did "men's" work were not content to return to the kitchen. Since the war, the number of women in the work force has steadily grown. Old stereotypical roles have been permanently eroded. Baytown, like the rest of America, will never be the same.

Donna Bonin won first place in the Caldwell competition in 1988 for her paper and has since shared her research at state conventions with the East Texas Historical Association and the Texas State Historical Association and with several local organizations. She graduated from Lee College in 1989 and has transferred to the University of Houston at Clear Lake to pursue a degree in history.

Baytown's "Rosie the Riveter"

DONNA BONIN

World War II brought both permanent and temporary changes in American society. The war sent many of America's men overseas and left a shortage of male workers in the labor force at home, thus encouraging women into the factories to replace those men who had left to serve their country. "The predominant media portrayal of women war workers, the image called Rosie the Riveter, was that they were young, white, and middle-class; furthermore, that they entered the labor force out of patriotic motives and eagerly left to start families and resume full-time homemaking" (Honey 19). Like many communities which experienced a shortage of workers, Baytown, Texas, met this shortage by hiring women at its Humble Oil and Refining Company plant, one of the largest oil refineries in the nation (Larson and Porter 9). The experiences of women working at the Humble Refinery during World War II questions the national myth of Rosie the Riveter.

On December 7, 1941, when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, the United States officially entered World War II, and more and more men were drafted or volunteered for the armed services, depleting the available labor force. The solution to the shortage gave rise to the myth. Despite the fact that the Federal Government Manpower Commission drafted bills designed to alleviate the shortage of workers, Manpower Commissioner Paul V. McNutt said, "that [he] did not believe that a law should be adopted by Congress until all indirect means available for mobilizing manpower are exhausted." He suggested "womanpower will be required to solve the manpower problem, because 5,000,000 workers must enter the labor force by

the end of 1943" (*Daily Sun* 21 Oct. 1942). At first, some theorists would disagree with McNutt because they felt the manpower shortage was caused by poor distribution rather than by a shortage of workers (*Daily Sun* 20 Oct. 1942). "But as men went into military service, new sources of workers were needed and old prejudices had to be overcome, as President Roosevelt made clear in his Columbus Day speech in 1942: 'In some communities employers dislike to hire women. In others they are reluctant to hire Negros. We can no longer afford to indulge such prejudice'" (Gluck 10).

McNutt's statement became more and more the national position. As the war progressed and the need for workers increased, patriotic appeals made to women stressed that women could help win the war by working in war industries (Rupp 155). To persuade women into war work, industry started a national campaign. For example, "Lockheed Aircraft invented 'Rosie the Riveter' as part of their general campaign to recruit women workers" (Nimitz Museum). "Lockheed Aircraft went so far as to hold Victory Fashion Shows during lunch hour, where shop workers modeled coordinated two piece work outfits" (Gluck 11). To glamorize the appeal, national magazines showed women in overalls, carrying lunch pails to work (Rupp 145) or welding and riveting in a war related industry. Magazines as diverse as *Real Confessions* and the *Saturday Evening Post* published stories about the war effort to let women know they were doing their part for the war (Rupp 144-46). In keeping with the national campaign, the movie industry also had great influence in promoting this image; Hollywood produced films like *Swing Shift*

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

For continued excellence in operations, Baytown Ordnance Works employees were awarded a star for their Army-Navy "E" flag in the spring of 1943. Notice the number of women employees in the group.

Maisie and *Rosie the Riveter*, and popularized a song titled "The Lady at Lockheed," all of which glorified the women's war efforts (Rupp 144). The focus of the media appeal concentrated on women who were homemakers and who would be willing to give up their jobs when the war ended.

The myth of "Rosie the Riveter" grew with such campaigns, most of which were directed towards young housewives with little or no experience of employment. However, employers, fearful of the consequences of so many new people entering the work force, presented mixed messages. The women were needed "now" but must know that after the war they should return to "their place" (Rupp 138). Moreover, the War Production Board's Labor Division stated, "There's little doubt that women will be required to leave their jobs at the end of the war to permit the return of men to their jobs as they are released from the armed forces" (Honey 25). Women were allowed to leave the "kitchen" when their services were needed in the male dominated work force, but when the war ended, they were sent back to do "women's work."

Although these campaigns were directed to women without previous work experience, and despite the myth of Rosie the Riveter, the facts support that the majority of women working in war industries had previously held jobs outside the home (Honey 19). Although many women went to work in war jobs for patriotic reasons, more of the women did so for the increased wages they could earn. As higher paying jobs became available, women who worked in low-status and low-paying jobs seized the opportunity. The war began to change the belief that women could not handle a man's job, and employment of women increased in male-dominated industries (*Life and Labor* Feb. 1943). However, the women in war industries had to prove to their employers that they were competent to do a man's job. They had to learn quickly and efficiently new trades, including welding, mechanics, soldering, laboratory testing, and riveting on airplanes (*Life and Labor* Mar. 1941). In addition, women also encountered obstacles built by angry men who did not want them on the job site. One man who worked at the Rock Island Shop dubbed "the women laborers 'rails' and complained that the foreman's office [was] always littered up with lipstick, rouge, powder, and the like these days" (*Daily Sun* 26 July 1943).

Despite the "all white" image of Rosie the Riveter, for the first time, many plants hired black women, although the major defense plants still would not hire black women for semi-skilled or skilled occupations (*Life and Labor* Nov. 1941). In one of its displays, the Admiral Nimitz Museum in Fredericksburg, Texas, shows a black woman welding. Next to the picture a caption reads, "two female factory welders in Connecticut were part of the 11.3 percent increase in the number of black women in industry." Black women also held

jobs as sheet workers, press operators, jewelers, sign writers, and electrical goods assemblers (*Life and Labor* Nov. 1941). Black women made some small gains during World War II, but if the prejudiced attitudes of the white society had been different, they might have made more gains.

The problems to be overcome involved more than just those that workers shared; the factories hiring the women also had some adjusting to do. Many of the factories lacked facilities for so many women entering the market so rapidly. Factories had to provide washrooms and toilet facilities for their new women workers (Wolfson 53); in addition, the companies now had to pay attention to the problems of living conditions to maintain the health and morale of women employees. Employers knew that women who were tired and not eating properly would be unable to do a good job (*Life and Labor* Feb. 1942). The new plants had lunch rooms built where the women could eat a hot meal and constructed adequate washrooms and toilet facilities for them (Wolfson 53). Industries and women had to learn to work together. Some of these benefits have remained to the advantage of all workers regardless of gender.

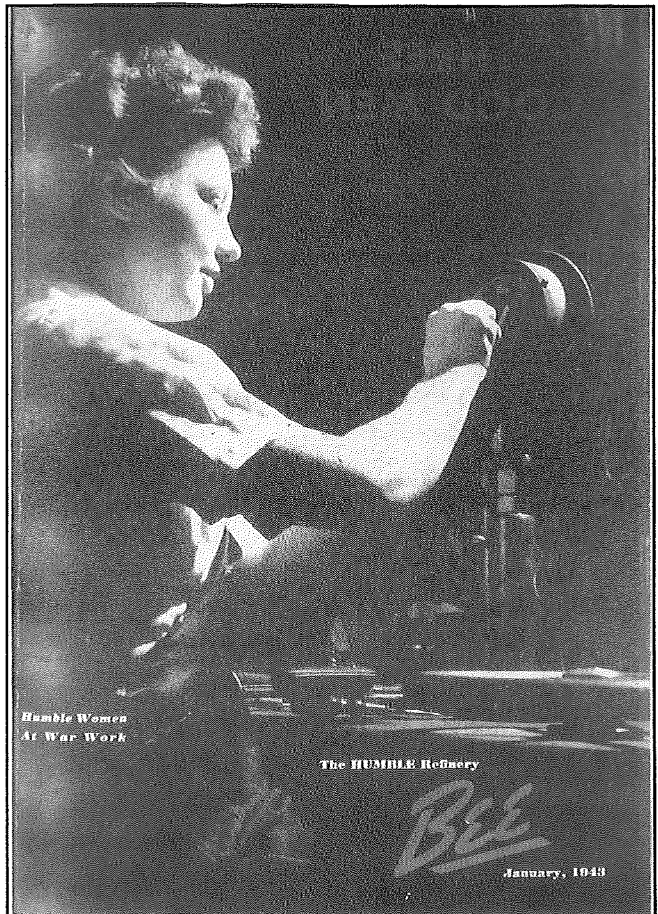
The national picture is reflected in the Baytown experience. The Baytown, Texas, Rosies went to work at the Humble Oil and Refining Company. The Humble Refinery, a young company when the war broke out, had been in operation for only twenty-one years. Humble became a war plant in November of 1940 (Henson 124) to help supply the Allies with fuel. At first Humble felt no need to hire women to take over the men's jobs. However, because male employees either left for war or went into civilian war activities, and "more than 4000 employees—about 29 percent of those employed August 31, 1939—entered military service" (Larson and Porter 570), Humble had to hire replacements. As the major supplier of aviation gasoline, toluene, fuel oils, lubricants, asphalt for airplane runways, and synthetic rubber (Larson and Porter 589), Humble, to meet a growing labor shortage and to keep production to its maximum output, announced in the *Daily Sun* (now *Baytown Sun*) in November of 1942 that "girls and women will be employed at once in the instrument department at the Baytown Refinery." The ad stated that starting pay for women hiring into the instrument shop would be 89.5 cents per hour, and after a training period of three to six months, women would receive the regular instrument rate of 98.5 cents per hour (*Daily Sun* 19 Nov. 1942). The pay at the Humble and other war industries averaged forty-eight dollars a week or more for a forty-eight hour week. In contrast, industries such as textiles, food, and paper goods had weekly averages of around thirty dollars (*Life and Labor* May 1944). Although originally hired for less skilled jobs, women by September 28, 1942, had already started working as testers in the Baytown Laboratory (Stevenson 15). The number of women working in the

laboratories increased once Humble finished the new plants they were constructing.

The opportunities increased as the responsibility of the plant grew. On May 18, 1942, Humble contracted with the Defense Plant Corporation to build and operate a Butyl rubber plant, a plant which had become necessary because of Japan's capture of the Far East's rubber supplies in early 1942. The United States had to produce its own synthetic rubber (Larson and Porter 597), and in September of 1944, the Baytown Butyl Plant completed its first satisfactory production of synthetic rubber (Larson and Porter 598). The demand for synthetic rubber increased the need to recruit women to work in the Butyl laboratories. Humble started going to colleges in Texas and Louisiana to recruit new workers (Easley); the plant had to keep on schedule.

Three of these early Rosies recruited to work at the Butyl laboratory, Marjorie Walker Eastwood and Mary Carlson Easley, who started in July of 1943, and Mary Barron Bonds, who started in

The January, 1943 issue of the Humble Bee *highlighted Humble's female work force, offering, among other things, tips on plant fashions.*



PHOTOS COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

July of 1944, share fond memories of working for the Humble Refinery (Eastwood, Easley, and Bonds). After training for two weeks at Humble's main laboratory, the women transferred to the Butyl Plant. Following a one month training period, they earned 95.5 cents per hour and after completing six months employment, their pay rate increased to $1.13 per hour (Easley). The women shared the same responsibilities as the men and their pay equaled the men's. Ironically the equality was not based on the shared responsibility. The men, during one of their union meetings, decided that to keep women from getting more of their jobs, the pay would have to be equal for men and women (Eastwood).

The memories of the women support the fact the myth was nothing like the reality. Bonds remembered that the Butyl lab staffed 125 women between the ages of eighteen to twenty-one years; the myth shows Rosie as a married woman supporting her husband's war sacrifices; the majority at Humble were single women. Only three or four were married. Bonds, twenty-one years old and single when she came to work for Humble, found working in a laboratory a new experience and a very enjoyable one. She does remember having to adjust to shift work; learning to sleep the next day after working the night shift, particularly difficult during the hot summer days; wearing pants which she hated; and getting dirty from the chemicals. For a time Bonds worked in the SHB finishing building where the synthetic rubber was dried out. She had to test the rubber at a certain stage of the process. Just being in the building was onerous because it had no windows, and the inside temperature rose to 130 degrees. At the time she went to work for Humble, Bonds did not perceive herself as helping the war effort; in reality, she just wanted a good paying job (Bonds).

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Mrs. Winifred Brown worked in the Humble machine shop during World War II. This photo originally appeared in the May, 1943 issue of the Humble Refinery Bee.

Unlike the myth, and much like Bonds, Easley did not see herself at the time as aiding the war effort. Eighteen when Humble hired her, Easley felt that the war was the last thing on her mind: she too took the job with Humble for the high pay. Her memories involve

her living arrangements rather than sacrifices for a war. She recalls calling the local priest to ask him if he could locate a place for her to rent, for at the time it was difficult to find decent places to live. The priest fortunately found her a room with a respectable Baytown family. Even though Easley had to work shift work and meet a work schedule of 48 hours a week, these duties presented no problems for the family she was living with. Her duties at the Butyl Lab included analyzing samples, touring certain units, drawing samples, and then writing reports on them. Easley recalls her distaste for the heavy rubber apron she had to wear when testing chemicals, even though it protected her from chemical burns. Although employees had a long work week, she remembers getting off work for the day and taking the bus into Houston to shop, eat, and see a movie. Easley still feels that this experience helped to shape her whole life because if it were not for her going to work at the Humble Oil and Refining Company, she would not be living in Baytown nor would she have met the man she married (Easley).

Questioning the myth like her co-workers, Eastwood commented that she took the job at Humble because it paid better than most jobs at the time. Although Eastwood was only twenty when she started working for Humble, she was given many responsibilities. Her responsibilities in the Butyl lab included running samples, conducting tests, going to control to set up procedures, and catching samples at the lab. Eastwood remarked that no matter how qualified the women were, they could not become supervisors; only the men were allowed that privilege.

Although each woman has fond memories of working at Humble, some of the memories are more vivid than others. Bonds remembers that they were not taught too much safety until after a fatal accident took place in the Butyl lab sometime in 1945. Three deaths resulted from an explosion caused when a five gallon drum of chemical that was leaking was sparked by an instrument in the lab. Margaret Martin, Lena Fore, and Norris Hollaway died in the accident; the two women were the first women to be killed in a plant accident at Humble. Like others who died in the war, it could be argued that they gave their lives for their country.

Bonds also remembers Clifford M. Bond, the public relations director for the Federation (employees union), who commented: "When a woman is hired for this type of work, the company has no assurance that she will prove capable or adapt herself readily to the duties" (*Daily Sun* 11-19-42). When Bonds and the other women were asked in 1987 to respond to his statement, all three women laughed and thought the statement was ridiculous because they believed that some of the women at the plant, themselves included, proved more capable and qualified than the men (Bonds, Easley, and Eastwood).

However, some differences exist between the Humble Refinery and the national experiences. No records could be found that black women were hired to work at the Humble Oil and Refining Company; it just was not done at this southern plant as it was elsewhere. The women at Humble did not hold welding positions, nor can one find a great deal of information in the *Daily Sun* or the *Humble Bee*, the plant publication, on what the women were doing during the war years. As in the myth of Rosie the Riveter, Humble's women were young, white, and middle class (Eastwood, Easley, Bonds), whereas in reality on a national scale these wartime workers were more diversified in age, race, and socioeconomic class (Honey 19).

Just as there were differences in the experiences, there were also similarities. The Humble Refinery, like other war plants, had to make accommodations for women's washrooms and toilet facilities. The Humble Refinery even had a requirement that a couch had to be placed in the women's restroom for the women to lie down on if they needed to when they were menstruating (Easley). The jobs women held at Humble were similar to the jobs held nationally. At Humble women operated radical drills, tested and repaired gauges and other instruments, worked in the carpenter shop and laboratories (*Humble Bee* Jan. 1943). In other parts of the country, women did identical tasks (*Life and Labor* Mar. 1941). All women, both in Baytown and nationally, encountered employers and men who were less than ecstatic that a woman was working a man's job (*Life and Labor* July 1942; Shaver). Women who worked at Humble, like women throughout the nation, were told that these jobs would last only for the duration of the war (Rupp 138; *Humble Bee* Apr. 1944). Regardless the women war workers proved capable of handling the work set before them.

In 1991 Americans will be commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of World War II. In Baytown, Texas, the old Humble Oil and Refining Company, today's Exxon U.S.A., will be remembered for its part in the war. The Baytown refinery may even display the Navy Certificate awarded to the plant in January 1946 for its exceptional accomplishment and contribution to the National War effort (*Humble Bee* Jan. 1946). During the commemoration, men who fought and those who died in the war protecting this country will be remembered for their heroic deeds. The women, too, contributed to the victory. Despite the fact that the women's memories deny the myth, one cannot refute the fact that their achievements did indeed help the war effort. So perhaps this occasion can be a time to remember those women who readily took up the slack in the labor force when they were needed; women need to know that America has not forgotten their part in the war.

MANY PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN Baytown today, especially if they were born or have arrived since Hurricane Carla, know little if anything about Hog Island. In fact, it is quite likely that they may not even know of its existence. However, to an older generation, the mere mention of the Island's rather unromantic sounding name may evoke the flicker of a knowing, nostalgic smile. Hog Island, they will tell you, was where all those cars packed with families of weekend adventurers (heading with ill disguised impatience for the beach at Galveston) waited in that interminable line for the ferry across the ship channel. Certainly many will recall with fondness the tamale man, who peddled his savory wares from a push cart near the ferry landing, and they no doubt will remember the notoriety that the Island enjoyed as a favorite parking spot for the area's teenagers. But Hog Island, as Phyllis Alexander shows us, was more than a ferry landing and a lover's-lane. She focuses on the efforts in the late 1930s of the East Harris County Federation of Garden Clubs to turn the now forgotten island into a park—a living testament to a newfound regional pride. To Alexander, Hog Island's colorful history serves as a metaphor for the movement of the Baytown area from an agricultural to an industrial based economy. Alexander confesses that before she started this project, which was suggested to her by the Director of the Baytown Museum, Jean Shepherd, she herself had never heard of Hog Island. However, as she put it, "as my research came to an end, I found that I had developed something close to a romantic feeling toward the unapproachable piece of land that once played a vital role in Baytown's history. The myths, the misconceptions, and the self-serving interest that surrounded the island only served to enhance the aura."

Phyllis Alexander's essay, originally titled "Revelations from the Obscure: Hog Island Revisited," won fourth place in the 1989 Caldwell Competition. She will continue her education at the University of Houston at Clear Lake, working on a degree in English.

Hog Island Revisited

PHYLLIS ALEXANDER

Approximately thirty miles southeast of Houston lies the city of Baytown, population 60,000. Baytown has earned its place in Texas' history from the earliest days of the fight for independence to its present status in the oil industry. Just south of Baytown, separating Tabbs Bay from the Houston Ship Channel, a tiny island rests, unobtrusive, unimpressive, and unmemorable—or so it seems. Under closer scrutiny, Hog Island emerges as a reflection of Baytown's evolution from an agricultural community to an industrial town, to a city affluent enough to consider a community project that would exemplify civic pride.

Hog Island acquired its name during Baytown's agricultural

period from the swine which Dr. Ashbel Smith kept on the island after he purchased it in 1859; originally the island appeared on maps as Ashbel Smith Island and retained that name until after his death in the late 1800s (Harris 1). A local myth arose over the island's name, creating the misconception that Texas' former governor, James (Jim) Hogg, who served from 1890-1892, originated the name of the island (Ponder; Nethery). This myth gained wide enough acceptance that by 1939 it was misspelled on a county map. Current maps list both spellings. History, however, establishes pigs, not a governor, as the true originators of the name.

In addition to its agricultural use, Hog Island served as a steamboat landing on the Houston Galveston route for those traveling to the Tabbs Bay mainland and as a shipping point for mainland families in the late 1800's (Nethery; Rogers 3). The influx of new people coupled with the discovery of oil at Spindletop, Texas, brought change in the offing for Baytown and, as a result, the island. As Baytown became caught up in an industrial movement, the island became a pawn in the oil game.

Hog Island's first real attention came in 1905 when John Gaillard purchased it from the heirs of Ashbel Smith (Harris 1). Prior to his purchase, Gaillard leased the island to graze his livestock. His father had often fished off the island, convinced that the bubbles rising to the surface resulted from the mud sucking buffalo fish he believed swam below. A La Porte man, Royal Mathews, persuaded the younger Gaillard to investigate another possibility for the origin

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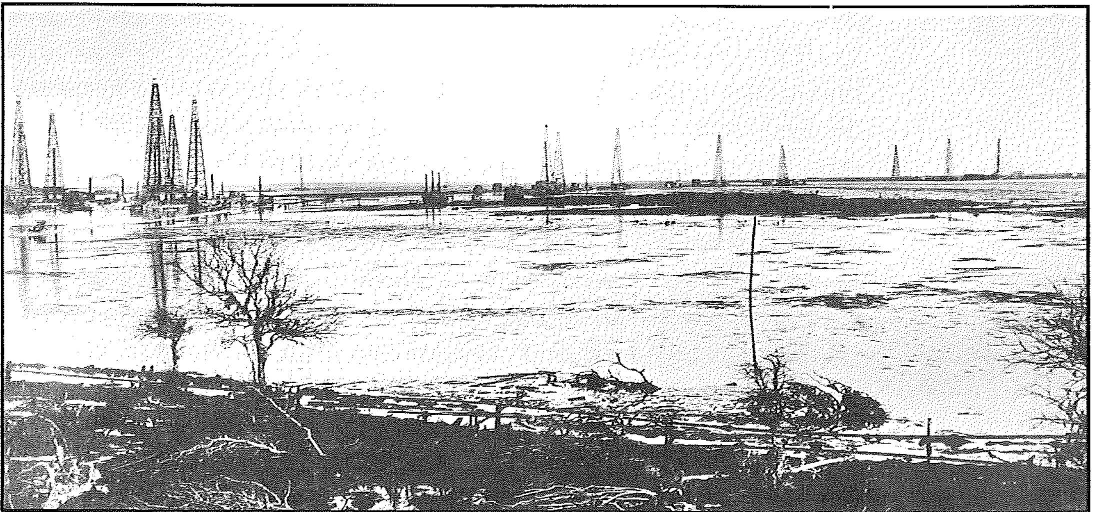

This photograph of Hog Island and the Goose Creek oil field was taken in 1918, the early days of the oil boom.

of the bubbles, oil. Matthews conducted an experiment by applying a lit match to a risen bubble. The small explosion that resulted confirmed the suspicion. Natural gas, contained in the bubbles, often signals oil reserves below (Deavers). "Gaillard's Bubbles" still float to the surface today (Nethery).

Another discrepancy that arises in the historical record of the island refers to the amount Gaillard paid for the 223 acre tract. Amounts recorded range from $900 to as high as $8000 (Nethery; Henson 79). In fact, Gaillard paid $2000 for the island, $1000 on July 29, 1905, followed by two subsequent payments of $500 made at six month intervals (Harris 1). Whether or not the two payments actually ensued remains unclear.

Ironically, Gaillard, who bought the property as a place to graze his cattle, leased the island to Goose Creek Oil Company less than three months after the purchase (Deavers). Since Gaillard had already leased the island in 1867 for the purpose of grazing livestock, a question arises as to his motivation. Did Gaillard buy Hog Island for grazing purposes or for the profit inherent in the discovery of oil?

A 2000 foot well drilled on the island yielded a total of 1500 barrels of oil. When lack of funds for proper drilling equipment forced Producers Oil Company, the drilling company that bought Goose Creek Oil Company, out of business, other wildcat test wells on the island were abandoned. Producers Oil Company sold out to Humble Oil Company who, in turn, subleased to Gulf Coast and Crown Oil Companies (Deavers). When the Goose Creek oil field erupted, Hog Island became a valuable property. Several wells in Tabbs Bay, adjacent to the island, offered great yields (Deavers). Consequently, John Gaillard sold the island to Humble Oil and Refining Company in 1918 at the height of the Goose Creek oil field boom for $300,000, one of the highest prices paid for land in the section (Deavers). Subsequently, Hog Island left its agricultural past behind, and industry manipulated the island's fate from that point on.

The first barge load of Goose Creek oil departed from a landing on Hog Island (Rogers 3). Ross S. Sterling Pipeline Company also routed crude from the Goose Creek oil fields to the Houston Ship Channel via Hog Island. Two 7000 foot lines of four inch pipe crossed the bay to Hog Island and emptied into cypress storage tanks with a 20,000 barrel capacity. Oceangoing tankers docked at the wharf on the island and received the oil through a 500 foot, six inch line from the tanks (Rundell 120). The island earned noteworthiness in Baytown's story as the city grew into an important energy producing center.

Hog Island also reveals a personal side to its oil days. Mrs.

Hettie Perry ran a boardinghouse on the island from 1917 to 1920 (Webber). Mrs. Perry, a colorful character who commanded respect, offered bed and board for a dollar a day to roughnecks who worked in the Goose Creek oil fields. According to Margaret Davis, who resided under the protection of Mrs. Perry at the time, tramps looking for food always left the boarding house with a full stomach. The tramps never stole from Mrs. Perry, paying for their repasts by doing odd jobs around the boarding house only after their meal (Webber). Mrs. Davis also recalls that people crossed the water to the island in a hand operated ferry with a forty person capacity and made the trip in approximately fifteen minutes (Webber).

Prior to 1933, people reached the island only by boat (Nethery). A two day barbecue that began on July 29, 1933, celebrated the opening of the Morgan's Point ferry that ran from La Porte to Hog Island and the causeway that spanned the water from Baytown to the island (Evans). A .9 mile concrete highway ran from the causeway to the ferry landing on the south end of the island. Hog Island became the first link that connected Baytown to La Porte (Nethery). Thus, Hog Island grew in importance to an increasingly affluent city as a thoroughfare and a recreation spot. In 1937, the Texas Highway department took over maintenance of both the ferry and the causeway (Rogers 4). Until the opening of the causeway and ferry, Hog Island served the interests of only a few, its value primarily monetary in nature. The organization of the East Harris County Federation of Garden Clubs in Baytown signaled Baytown's development into a city of wealth, concerned with the face it presented to the outside world. Such concern brought Hog Island to the pinnacle of its notoriety, and the tiny island emerged as a source of civic pride.

Soon after it organized in the spring of 1939, the Federation sought a project that would build interest among members. Under the leadership of the temporary chairman, Mrs. W.A. Jones of Highlands, the clubs undertook a project for the beautification of the highway approaches to the Tri Cities and La Porte, the San Jacinto Memorial and, later, the Morgan's Point ferry site on Hog Island (Rogers 4). Dorothy Thompson, a member known for having a way with words, said, "Whatever develops resources inside ourselves, whether from eighteenth century poetry or twentieth century cookery, adds to human courage, and anything that increases consideration for human life helps toward the prevention of wars, and anything that makes life more beautiful makes it more tolerable" (Rogers 9). Mrs. Thompson's statement suggests an underlying uneasiness that permeated the country throughout the prewar years and suggests that perhaps civic pride did not exist as the sole

motivation for the beautification project. Despite the war abroad, the club women set about creating something of beauty out of a wasteland island.

Focusing their efforts on converting the unsightly face of the island into a recreational haven, the Federation took into consideration elements that would aid in achieving their goal. The island's esthetic and environmental value could enhance the experience of its patrons if the park became an arboretum for preservation of native trees and shrubs as well as a bird sancturary for fresh and salt water migratory birds (Rogers 1-2). Mrs. Mildred Kater, Mrs. Ella Holland, and Mrs. Georgia Hederhorst accepted appointments as trustees for the Federation (Rogers 5). As assignees for East Harris County Federation Garden Clubs, the trustees entered into an agreement with Harris County Houston Ship Channel Navigation District, the current owners of the island, for the lease of Hog Island on October 1, 1940 (Hog). The Hog Island Project became the first of its kind in the state developed solely at the suggestion of a group of public spirited residents who organized and went to the State Highway Department for help (Rogers 8).

In conserving and beautifying the Galveston Bay corner of Texas, the Hog Island Project combined the efforts of many groups Two months before the lease signing took place, The Tri Cities Safety Council hosted a meeting in the Baytown Community Building for organizations interested in helping with the project. A panel discussion followed the presentation given by the Highway Department concerning the development of the island (Tri Cities).

As a result the women of the Federation were offered assistance by the Harris County Commissioner's Court, Tri Cities Junior Chamber of Commerce, senior trade groups of the area, schools of the district, bird clubs, and Humble Oil and Refining Company. Hog Island's Park Project became a kind of adhesive, bonding the separate interests in the community into a unit with a single focus in mind. C. Rogers of the Federation writes, "The project has become a gigantic community endeavor, not limited to the interests of any particular group, uniting the efforts of organizations interested in conservation and beautification, a rare type of constructive effort in a world upset with destruction" (5).

The Federation's pride in the historic Galveston Bay area hints at the general mood of the country during the war. It seems that anything under the threat of loss becomes more precious. Did the ladies, by endeavoring to preserve the past, perhaps seek to retain the status quo? The island, as a park, also would serve a certain kind of moral need in the community by offering a wholesome family

atmosphere.

In keeping with the idea of wholesomeness, Federation trustees extended their concern to include the agreement that intoxicating liquors or alcoholic beverages of any kind would not be permitted on the island, whether sold or consumed. In addition, no signs would mar the esthetics of the park (Rogers 8). Any buildings constructed required prior approval, in writing, by a representative of the Federation, Department of Highways, and the Navigation District, as to location, architectural design and finish (Hog). Finally, no more than two subleases for concessions would exist on the island, with the monies accrued going into a fund for maintenance and operation of the park and beach. All buildings would exist for the public's use (Hog). Plans to invite boy scouts, girl scouts, and school children to share in the development and care of the project provided an added dimension to the scope of the park. Mrs. Kater pointed to statistics that proved a project like Hog Island would benefit the children by teaching them about plants and animals and thus reduce delinquency and behavioral problems while also providing scientific knowledge. Of equal importance, the park would have commercial value as a tourist attraction (Kater, Texas Ranks).

Hog Island, already viewed by Channel boaters as a convenient boat launching spot and by Tri Citians as a local "swimming hole,"

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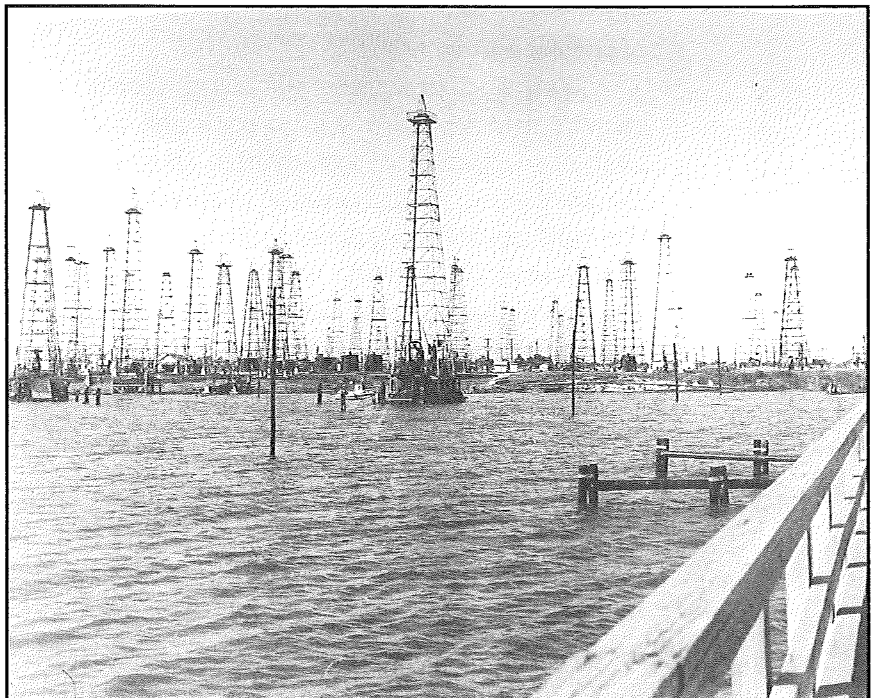


The mainland and Goose Creek oilfield photographed from the Hog Island-Highway 146 causeway. The causeway was destroyed by Hurricane Carla in 1961.

overflowed with congestion on holidays and weekends (Rogers 2). Tri Cities Area Safety Council coordinated the efforts of other agencies to supervise the construction of a staffed life guard station to serve the needs of an enlarged beach area projected by park plans. The Highway Department planned to lay 2000 feet of cable along the channel side of the island to "protect bathers from the drop-off where the sandy beach meets the deep water of the channel without interfering with channel traffic" (Rogers 7). A planned playground and picnic area, along with parking facilities to lessen congestion, would fill the demand for a facility of that type in eastern Harris County (Rogers 1). The Bayshore Bird Lovers Club, organized to work toward establishing a bird sanctuary on Hog Island, and the Texas Game, Fish and Oyster Commission, who surveyed and laid plans for a warden station on the pathway to the sanctuary, spearheaded the animal conservation efforts (Rogers 6).

Many other community groups also aided the project. Federation trustees obtained ways and means to meet the estimated $500 to $600 needed for shrubbery, top soil, and planned landscaping (Rogers 6). Fidelity Chemical Company of Houston donated fertilizers for use on the land. Robert E. Lee High School supervised the planting of cuttings and seeds that would develop part of the project. Some of the species targeted for development were parkinsonias, oleanders, salt cedars, cape jasmines, mimosa, crepe myrtles, and Washington palms. Highway Department workers made plans to plant native flowers, trees, and shrubs to complete the landscaping of the area (Rogers 7-8).

Men and machines worked diligently to erase a wasteland eyesore and replace it with a park and bird sanctuary. The State Highway Department leveled high spots and built up low places in the park area. Progress made in clearing the shacks situated along the channel shore adjacent to the highway surpassed the expected time frame (Rogers 9). Most of the inhabitants of the shacks, fishermen, honky tonk operators, and people who enjoyed living by the water, either rented or paid nothing for their house sites and cooperated with Federation leaders' desire to remove the buildings from the island. Many found work elsewhere; some simply drifted away (Rogers 7).

Hog Island, the first roadside park bordered on one side by a ship channel, clearing and grading complete, became established as a public beach and bird sanctuary by 1942 (Rogers 7). However, the illustrious plans for concessions, a lifeguard station, and an on-site game warden never came to pass. The reason remains a mystery. Speculation given offers two possible answers. The first theory states

that the East Harris County Federation Garden Clubs disbanded with the onslaught of World War II patriotism. The balance in the treasury supposedly went to the Red Cross to assist in the war effort (Fuller). No written record exists that proves the claim either true or false. Contrary to written sources, a former Federation trustee asserts that the Federation's main goal came out of a singular desire to rid Hog Island of the riffraff that inhabited its perimeters, a goal which did indeed reach fruition (Hederhorst). This statement suggests that perhaps the Hog Island Park Project emerged in prejudice born out of ethnocentrism and simply burgeoned from the effort of self-serving organizations into a civic endeavor. If indeed this were the case, then the logical assumption is that interests in the project on the part of some individuals was less than altruistic. And, perhaps the slightly blemished selflessness would affect a greater number when combined with a nationwide effort against a force much more dastardly than the undesirables on Hog Island, Nazism. Unfortunately, gaps in historical record prevent more than speculation at this juncture.

Hog Island, from that point, lost its image as a source of civic pride, but, ironically, gained a romantic reputation that still survives in the memories of many Baytonians. In the forties and fifties, the island held distinction as a teenage lovers' parking spot (Orten; Ponder). And, though the fear of contaminated water in the channel during the polio epidemic virtually shut down the island for a time, people often hunted crab along the shoreline. Many also swam in the dirty water for lack of an alternate spot in close proximity to Baytown (Orton; Ponder). Horror stories, perhaps exaggerated, of victims of the quicksand along the causeway abounded (Orton). Nevertheless, a real danger did exist at the island for swimmers. Passing ships drew the water away from the shore. In their wake, the water rushed in swiftly over the beach and out again. Unsuspecting swimmers risked drowning in the fierce undertow (Ponder), and reports record several drownings off the island (Maher). Still, those with stout hearts and strong swimming arms braved the unstable currents.

The final coup de grace to Hog Island also catapulted the island into obscurity. In 1953, the opening of the Baytown/La Porte tunnel had closed the Morgan's Point Ferry. In 1961, Hurricane Carla's force destroyed the causeway, eliminating the island's only remaining link to the mainland. Presently, a lonely island, a victim of subsidence, Hog Island has reverted to its original marshy state. For the powerful men it served, for the companies who profited from it, for the civic interests it advanced, Hog Island, most cherished in the hearts of those who only sought to enjoy it, remains an enigma.

SUSAN ESTES FELT THAT she had gained a friend when she wrote her paper about Victoria Walker, a black educator who began her career in the period when the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision of "separate but equal" determined the structure and quality of education for blacks in America. Walker knew the importance of self image and community pride in a period when the prevailing social customs worked against her. Her story is illustrative of the experiences of other educators throughout the development of black education in the state of Texas. Walker is one of those heroes in a very recent social struggle. Probably Estes' most frustrating experience was her repeated attempts to locate the minutes of the Cedar Bayou School District (now part of the Goose Creek system) for the period in question. Her efforts were met with the statement that such minutes were no longer available. Eventually Estes' persistence paid off. The minutes were located and demonstrated how little importance was alloted to a tiny black school on the edge of a large district. Estes, who plans a career in the public relations field, and maybe as a result of her experience with a culture foreign to her within her own community, hopes to extend her knowledge of other cultures in the world with the ultimate goal of writing a book.

Susan Estes won fourth place in the 1987 Caldwell Competition for her essay, originally titled "In Keeping With the Dream: Victoria Taylor Walker, Black American Educator." She presently attends the University of St. Thomas in Houston, completing a degree in communications.

Victoria Taylor Walker, Black Educator

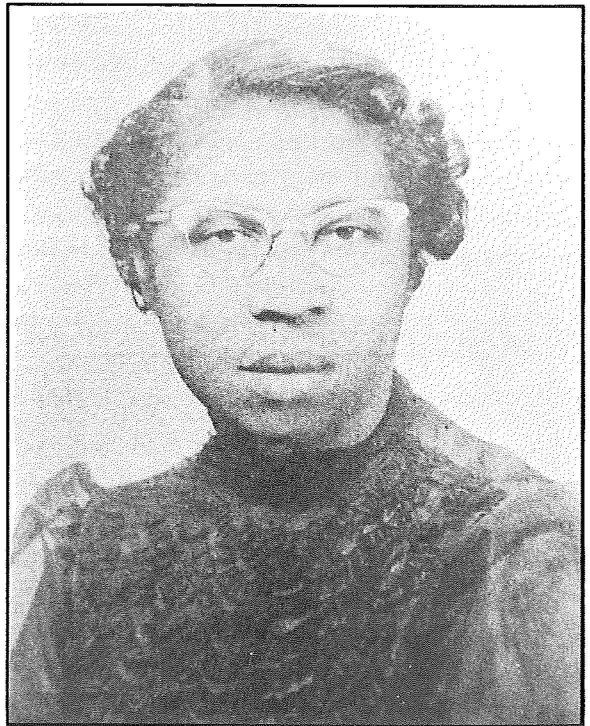
SUSAN ESTES

The passing Model T's sent the dust flying, mingling it with the white fluff of the fields, producing a white onerous cloud, seemingly bending the backs of the pickers, as if part of their natural stance. One small child remained erect, as if defying the fate which had placed her there. That child, Victoria Taylor, although anonymous among names of such black leaders as W.E.B. Dubois, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Thurgood Marshall, began to share those same characteristics which had made men such as these true leaders of their time. Each had used his tenacity, ambition, and dreams as a ladder to climb above oppression and become more, not only for himself, but for his people—black Americans. Victoria Taylor Walker's experience as an educator illustrates the struggle of a black American to achieve the promise of America.

Victoria Taylor's childhood experiences in cotton fields of the rural southern community where she was raised cannot be classified as unique; a thousand—a hundred thousand—young blacks have

stood in her place in cotton fields across the South. What is exceptional is her determination to become educated during a period of America's history when education was something most blacks only dreamed about. Shortly after the turn of the twentieth century many rural Texas communities such as Goose Creek turned their cotton fields into oil fields and enjoyed a period of boom town "whoopee" associated with any new oil discovery in America; however, just a short distance away by skiff across Cedar Bayou stream, a traveler would swear he had slipped back in time when the southern landscape was nothing but vast fields of hardy cotton (Haenel 6). This rural farming community known as Cedar Bayou was the birthplace and lifetime home of Victoria Taylor Walker. Walker's birth, September 12, 1905, to Adlene Drawborn, marked the beginning of a relationship between a community and a special individual which would last a lifetime.

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM



Mrs. Victoria T. Walker, from the 1929 Cedar Bayou School yearbook

For many rural black families of the early 1900's, life consisted of little more than struggles for sustenance. In order to survive, many households encompassed not only parents and their siblings, but grandparents, as well as boarders. Walker's home was no exception. While these conditions may seem unfavorable when compared with today's lifestyles, Walker attributed much of her own inner strength and determination to succeed to her early childhood under the guidance and support of her maternal grandparents and a family boarder, Leah Cooper. From her grandmother Rose Winfree, born in nearby Lynchburg, and her grandfather Maurice Winfree, a possible descendant of slaves belonging to the Winfree family, a prominent family in the Cedar Bayou area, Walker inherited a will to succeed, which had enabled her grandparents to survive, despite the rigorous hardships of early pioneer life in Texas. Her grandfather, unable to read or write, and her grandmother, with only a third grade education, were determined to see their only grandchild educated, regardless of the

sacrifice. While many children were kept from the classroom in order to work in the fields or help with other chores to provide what they could to the family's finances, Walker, with the help of Leah Cooper, who was also the community's only teacher, began her education at the unusually early age of four. Although Walker claims she was really too young to learn much, she could carry her "'big ol' lunch bucket just the same." Walker's response to the teacher's question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" best demonstrates her strong purposefulness even as a young child. Unlike her fellow classmates, who expected nothing more from life than to wash, iron, and farm just as their parents had done, Walker replied that she wanted to become a teacher. This imaginative answer so delighted her teacher that Cooper felt Walker warranted careful nurturing and immediately discussed with Walker's family the need to further the child's education (Walker).

Along with the support Walker received from her family, her church also contributed to her education. Like many black communities, the church in Cedar Bayou offered those with "little money and scant education," opportunities for "recognition and fulfillment denied them in the white-run world" (Klugel 11). Their church provided a "haven which served, by natural extension, as a social club, recreation center, meeting house, political headquarters, and schoolroom. Walker not only attended school in Mt. Olive Baptist church but found spiritual strength there as well. Due to her outstanding academic achievement, she was admired by fellow church members and was even, at a very early age, placed in the responsible position as church secretary. When the time neared to find the necessary funds to further Walker's education, the church community passed the hat more than once, in the hope that one of their own would finally succeed (Walker).

Walker had succeeded with the help of her community in gathering the financial support needed to further her education. But one obstacle still remained. Although the Texas forefathers had placed great importance on education and wrote in "The Texas Declaration of Independence" that "unless a people are educated and enlightened, it is idle to expect the continuance of civil liberty or the capacity of self-government," they little realized the hold "King Cotton" had placed on democracy in the South. "King Cotton" had made economic slaves of whites as well as blacks (Benedict and Lomax). Whites, realizing their dependence on the pickers, could not allow blacks to become educated beyond the most "rudimentary training," for to do so might make them "restless with [their] lot" and take them away from the cotton fields where they were so desperately

needed (Klugel 13). Blacks, on the other hand, could not afford an education because of their constant ties with the fields which enabled them to survive. Although the majority of blacks allowed this arrangement, a few like Walker challenged a system that perpetuated illiteracy and undermined the development of a whole race. Although the whites in communities near Victoria's had established high schools to promote higher education for the white students, socially-segregated blacks who wished to further their education in the Cedar Bayou area beyond the seventh and eighth grade were required to travel to other communities in order to receive a high school diploma. The distances involved and the cost of tuition served as deterrents to black aspiration to higher education (Walker).

In Walker's case, the nearest institutions available to blacks were in Houston and Waller County. Walker's family, concerned with the dangers a young lady might confront in a growing metropolis such as Houston, decided to send her to the Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College in nearby Waller County (Walker). Organized under an act "to provide for the organization and support of a normal school, for the preparation and training of colored teachers," the law (or act) establishing the school was approved by Governor Oran M. Roberts, April 19, 1879 (Prairie View *Catalogue*, 1924). Having selected her school, Walker, at fourteen set off to accomplish her first goal—the completion of high school. She knew that her family's meager earnings required that she make more than sufficient grades and that she would have to work to supplement what her family sent for room and board. Walker spent all her extra time between classes laboring in a laundry to provide additional funds. Today she laughs and says, "Many a night after studying, I would kneel to pray, as I had been taught as a child, and wake up the next morning still on my knees." But after two trying years, at the age of sixteen, Walker's first dream became a reality—she was certified to teach, which at the time only required a teaching certificate and not a college degree. Walker came back to teach her first year in Anahuac at the Bayshore Elementary School close to her own community. After one year at Anahuac, she returned to teach in the community to which she owed so much. In retrospect, Walker laughs and comments that her young age, close to that of her own students, and her lack of experience, made the task difficult. She felt she was simply "spreading ignorance." So once again she returned to Prairie View A & M University to work on her first college degree, which she received in 1937 (Walker).

In May of 1917, the community of Cedar Bayou, on the Harris County side of Cedar Bayou stream, was granted its petition by the

state to become an independent school district, and Walker's little one-room school building became part of its jurisdiction (*Local and Special Laws of Texas, 1917*, 333). The minutes of the Cedar Bayou Board of Education covering the years from 1919 through the consolidation with Goose Creek in 1954 delineates the racial injustices which occurred. Walker's salary is the most obvious of the inequities she was required to endure. Throughout the minutes in which the names and salaries of teachers are indicated, Walker's salary was from $30.00 to $45.00 less than her white counterparts, which in her earliest years of teaching forced her to return to the cotton fields during the picking season to supplement her income. But even then, Walker met the challenge, and she proudly claims that she could pick up to 250 pounds of cotton in one day. Along with the injustices directed at Walker, those which directly affected her children were her first concern (Walker).

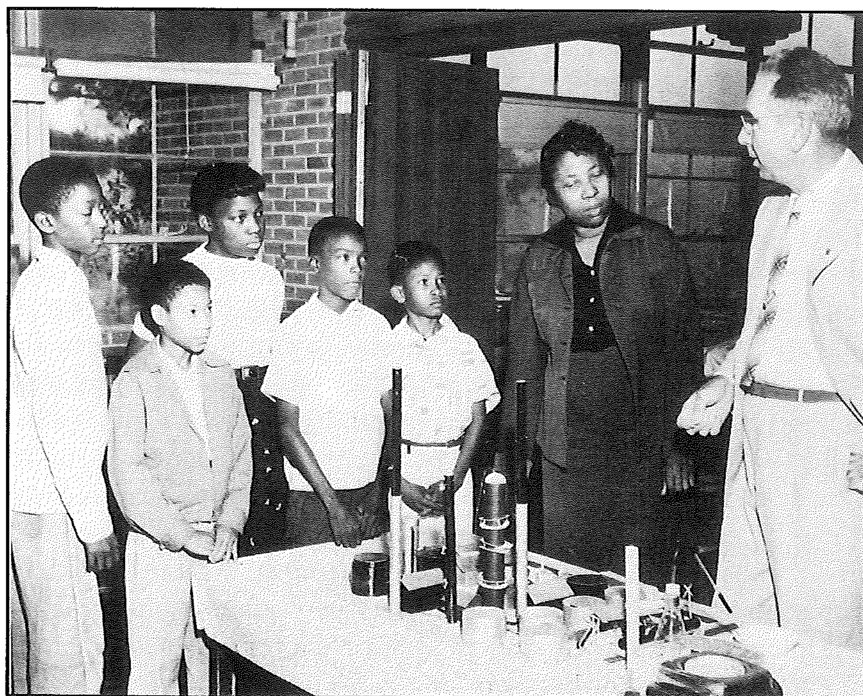
Walker's first goal, after the new school district was organized, was to request a lengthening of the school term for her school. Although the white schools had already incorporated a nine month school system, Walker's black school continued to remain on a six month schedule in order for the children to help in the fields during the cotton picking season. Walker, in order to validate her request for a longer school term, had the parents sign a petition requesting

PHOTO COURTESY VICTORIA WALKER

Victoria Walker and her students. Note the Brownie and Cub Scout uniforms.

the lengthening of the school term to provide a more equivalent education for her black students. Despite the school board's inquiries throughout the community—in the hope that the parents would be against the idea—the Cedar Bayou School Board consented to grant a nine month term for Walker's school. However, despite this step, in many other ways equal schooling was denied. Throughout the Cedar Bayou minutes, references are made to improvements of older buildings and the construction of new ones, but no mention is made of improvements to Walker's school (Cedar Bayou Minutes, 30 Mar. 1939). As the years progressed, the little one-room school building where she taught, a building which had been discarded by whites years before, began to show signs of considerable deterioration. Not only did it lack standard plumbing and sufficient heating already installed in the white schools, but the floors had rotted in several places leaving holes, about which Walker recounted, "one day a child fell through, hurting his leg, prompting a great deal of dissatisfaction throughout the community." Feeling it her responsibility to rectify this situation, Walker went before the board of trustees and asked for the immediate consideration of a new school. One trustee, as Walker recounts, was so mad that he told her "that the only reason the community had wanted her back there to teach was because they knew she would be up at the trustee's office every

PHOTO COURTESY VICTORIA WALKER



Victoria Walker shows Cedar Bayou School Superintendent Shaffer the science kit assembled by students at Walker School.

day begging in their face." He continued "that if she was dissatisfied with the way things were, she could use her own money to get what the community wanted." Unfortunately that was already the case; Walker had used her money to provide nearly all the materials necessary to give her children an education anywhere comparable to what the white children received (Walker). Money allotted for band instruments, field trips, and other extra curricular supplies for the white school was not used to provide any assistance for Walker's school (Cedar Bayou Minutes, 3 Sept. 1951-28 Jan. 1952). Walker, realizing the need for additional enrichment to continue the children's interest in school, formed a PTA in the black community in order to raise funds for band instruments, curtains for the stage, and uniforms.

Walker felt inadequate to provide the training the children deserved, even after being awarded a Master of Arts degree in education in 1945 from Atlanta University, and once again returned to school at Texas Southern University and received a Master of Education degree in 1952. During her own schooling at Texas Southern University in Houston, she was able to receive additional help for her band students, not provided by the Cedar Bayou district, and would bring the children each Saturday for guidance from the college's music department (Walker).

Although Walker attempted to give her students an education comparable to that of the white students, she also realized that education was not enough for children who knew nothing more than the surrounding area in which they lived. In many cases, these children had not even seen the inside of a department store. Walker, aware of their limited experiences, encouraged them to leave their community in order to achieve a higher education by offering them a ten dollar scholarship to attend a boarding school such as the Kendleton School in Kendleton, Texas, which was established through the Rosenwald Foundation in the early twenties. Walker also realized the need to establish pride in her children. She began to preach this need so strongly that she finally was called to the superintendent's office. Realizing that many times blacks were stereotyped for eating watermelons and drinking red soda, Walker began to tell the children not to eat or drink these items in public. One mother, a maid for one of the white teachers, not understanding Walker's intentions, told the teacher about Walker's recommendations to her child, and the white teacher immediately informed the superintendent. Walker, strong in her convictions, recounts that she informed the superintendent "that he had pride in his people and she had the same for her own."

Totally disillusioned with her progress in meeting the needs of her school, Walker, after many years, decided to find a job in another community and applied in the town of Settegast, where she talked with the principal, a Mr. Holland. When asked why she wanted to leave her community, Walker explained her unsuccessful attempts to get cooperation from the school board. When Mr. Holland realized Walker's superintendent was none other than an old college classmate, he insisted on talking with him to see what could be done. In less than two weeks after Walker's interview, Mr. Ackeridge, President of the Cedar Bayou School Board, found the funds necessary to build Walker's new school. In 1951, after some thirty years, a new building was erected and named after Victoria Walker, a tribute suggested by her community. Over the years many changes occurred, eventually resulting in the closing of the school. The increase of the scholastic population throughout Texas and the cost of education resulted in the consolidation of many small districts such as Cedar Bayou with nearby Goose Creek in 1954. But the Supreme Court's decision in the *Brown vs. Board of Education* case of 1954, which ostensibly ended forever the segregation of blacks in America's schools, had the most profound effect. By 1964 the Victoria Taylor school was required by Goose Creek to shut its doors in order to comply with the new desegregation laws (Walker).

In 1964 as the Victoria Taylor school closed its doors for the last time, so did a nation of blacks also close the door on a part of America's history in which blacks such as Walker had only dreamed of equality. Although the closing of the segregated facilities opened new doors for blacks across America, the Victoria Taylor Walker story suggests that opportunity alone does not decide success, but that determination and a desire to accomplish a dream are also determining factors.

IN 1954 THE SUPREME COURT issued an opinion in the *Brown vs. The Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas,* that the separate but equal concept that had established educational policies in the United States since the end of the nineteenth century was not constitutional. In the 1960s, school districts all over the country struggled with the changes which were, at best, controversial. Baytown, like many communities, responded to the problem, but Baytown did more than just shift students around to comply with new federal regulations. The Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District found an innovative solution by establishing a program at Harlem Elementary School which serves as a magnet school in the community, attracting students from all areas of Baytown; it builds its curriculum around the G.A.T.E. program for academically gifted and talented students. Harlem has not always enjoyed this status. Once a little known school, part of the black community, Harlem became the center of controversy when its modest environment was proposed as the solution to Baytown's struggle to comply with integration. The plan met with considerable resistance since all parts of the community were suspicious. Because her children are part of the present program, Diane Fanning became interested in the topic. She learned a great deal about the background of the school, the involvement of the community in the changes, and the trauma of the struggle for both majority and minority groups. Creative planning and thoughtful approaches made Harlem a school to be proud of. Baytown's Harlem Elementary is one of the success stories in a national picture.

Diane Fanning's essay, originally titled "The Harlem Experiment: Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District's Move to Peaceful Integration," placed second in the 1988 Caldwell Competition. She has since completed a degree in literature at the University of Houston/ Clear Lake and teaches English at Robert E Lee High School.

The Harlem Experiment

DIANE FANNING

". . . I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin." (Kluger 757-58). Like many blacks of the turbulent 1960s, Martin Luther King had a dream—the dream of equality. That dream faced a violent battle. The President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, helped establish the battle lines in 1963 by proposing a civil rights bill which no longer allowed for the idea of separate but equal (756). Forced integration by the federal government brought still more violence, but the passage of the civil rights bill would give the Justice Department power "to go to court in the name of black Americans who could ill afford the time, energy, and cost of suing sovereign states and their subdivisions whose laws and policies effectively

frustrated the desegregation process" (757). In many school districts the dream of equality—an integrated school system—was mandated by the Justice Department through the Federal courts (759). An election in Richmond, California, demonstrated the controversy brought about by forced integration. On April 15, 1969, the voters of Richmond rejected a proposal to integrate their school system through busing. They also elected three new school board members who ran using the slogan, "Education. No Buses." These new board members replaced the only three board members who were for bused integration. Prior to the vote, the turmoil over the integration issue resulted in school disturbances, disrupted board meetings, and financial problems ("Mix" 70). Some school districts found, however, that integration did not always have to be accomplished through anger and busing; it could be a cooperative action that might result in a better education for everyone. As school districts throughout the South struggled to integrate their schools so did the school districts in Texas. In Baytown, Texas, thirty miles east of Houston, the Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District proposed to integrate Harlem Elementary, an all black school, through an innovative education system.

The concerns that Baytown struggled with had long been concerns throughout the nation. After the *Brown vs Board of Education* decision in 1954, the process of integrating the nation's schools was slow to halting, with many areas deliberately resisting the spirit of the law. When George Wallace, the governor of Alabama, ignored federal court orders and refused to allow two blacks to attend the University of Alabama, President Kennedy retaliated by federalizing Alabama's National Guard to force Wallace to allow the black students into the university (Kluger 756). The entire episode so outraged President Kennedy that he appeared on national television that night with one of his most moving speeches on civil rights. Kennedy's powerful words were aimed at the nation's conscience—"If an American, because his skin is dark, . . . cannot send his children to the best public school available . . . then who among us would be content to have the color of his skin changed and stand in his place?" He asked who had the patience to wait ". . . one hundred years . . . since President Lincoln freed the slaves" when "their heirs, their grandsons, are not fully free . . . . And this nation, for all its hopes and all its boasts, will not be fully free until all its citizens are free." He pointed to America's emphasis on freedom around the world and at home "except for the Negroes; that we have no second-class citizens, except Negroes; that we have no class or caste system, no ghettos, no master race, except with respect to Negroes" (756). Then

on June 19, 1963, President Kennedy made his boldest move towards equality for blacks by introducing the strongest civil rights bill ever brought before Congress. In August, the March on Washington occurred, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his "I Have a Dream" speech to two hundred thousand people who had gathered on the Mall. King's remarks, a bold appeal for solidarity, showed the nation the unity behind the civil rights movement. During the Johnson administration and exactly a year after President Kennedy introduced the civil rights bill, the Senate passed the landmark 1964 Civil Rights Act (757-58) which gave notice to all school districts that they could no longer maintain a "dual system" of education; school districts had to integrate their schools—faculty and students.

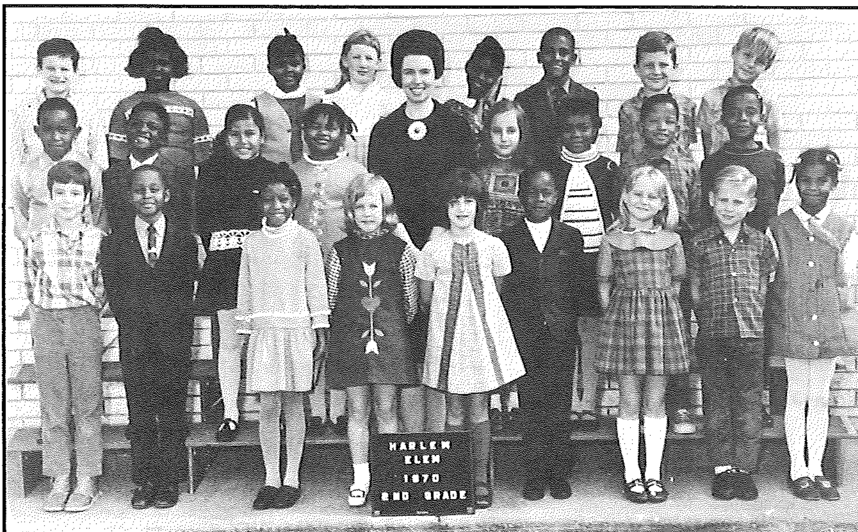
Texas also felt the pressure to integrate their schools. In Baytown, a suburb of Houston, the Goose Creek school system accepted integration prior to the Civil Rights Act. By closing schools and then moving students to new facilities, they successfully accomplished integration of their schools with the sole exception of the all-black Harlem Elementary School. Harlem's history graphically illustrates the struggle between district officials and communities which resulted in an entirely new education system.

Harlem, built in 1928 on land donated by Harry Johnson, a wealthy land owner in the area, was named Harlem to designate it as a black school. The community that developed around the school, McNair, was totally comprised of black families. Harlem had three rooms with dirt floors and outside bathrooms (Roberts; Nichols). When Miss Johnnie Walton, a long time black teacher at Harlem, joined the faculty in 1948, the conditions had not improved. The bathrooms remained outside (Walton), children served themselves in the cafeteria (McPhail), and available classroom space remained limited. The district added buildings, but no overall design determined the campus which appeared "haphazardly put together" (Walton). The school board put no real thought into the building plans of the school just as the the board had put little thought into the education of the students at Harlem. Throughout the struggle, Harlem's teachers and students were made to feel like "second class citizens." Harlem's students received all second-hand books and supplies. Even without administrative support, the faculty worked diligently to fulfill its dream of giving the students the best education possible (Richard; Walton).

In 1963 a bond issue passed giving $410,000.00 toward the building of a black junior high school next to Harlem Elementary (Boynton "Trustees Hope"). E.F. Green, the McNair community spokesman as well as principal of the all black Carver High School,

expressed the community's desire that the district not build a junior high school adjacent to Harlem since only "total integration" would answer the educational problems of the black community. Building a junior high in McNair would only serve to further segregate the black children (Pendergrass 1-2). The school board then decided to renovate Harlem, and the McNair community voiced strong opposition to this plan as well. Black leaders wanted Harlem torn down because they felt that a separate school would perpetuate segregation. McNair citizens suggested that their children be bused to other schools within the district (Walton and GCCISD Minutes; "Compliance"). But the board never listened to what the McNair residents said (Coltharp and Dignam), nor did the board go to the campus to see the condition of the school. The community, knowing the deplorable condition of Harlem, wanted it closed; the school board decided to renovate Harlem (Coltharp and Dignam and Boynton "Trustees Hope"). The district added an auditorium, library, five classrooms, and an administration building, improvements which required an additional $67,000.00 from the district. Still, the school needed an additional $23,000.00, which the school district paid, for air conditioning and a stove on which to prepare the students' lunches, which at the time, were prepared off campus at Highlands Junior High School. Ironically, Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District spent the same total amount of money a year later to build the new Pumphrey Elementary School, in the center of an all-white neighborhood, that could house three times the number of students that Harlem could (Boynton "Trustees Hope"). Condi-

Photo courtesy Dale and Gerri Adams



Harlem Elementary's 1970 second grade class — the first year the school was integrated under the magnet plan

tions improved, but Harlem remained an all-black school.

To comply with the Civil Rights Act, Deputy Superintendent W.D. Hinson said, "Goose Creek would no longer have any all-white or all-Negro schools or faculties in the district" ("Faculty Desegregation" 1). Without an acceptable plan of desegregation, the district could lose Federal funds ("Compliance" 1). Art Coltharp volunteered to move to Harlem as principal—becoming the first white employee on the campus. Coltharp immediately began integrating the faculty. The "cross-over" teachers that came did so voluntarily with the understanding that they could leave at the end of the school year if they were displeased with their assignment. The community, although somewhat suspicious of the new faculty, continued to support the teachers (Coltharp; McPhail).

Once the process of integrating the faculty had started, the district began recruiting white students to attend Harlem. Art Coltharp and the district administration began an integration program called "Freedom of Choice." To all the parents of elementary students, the district sent a "choice-of-school" form. Parents could choose any school within the district for their children to attend as long as overcrowding did not exist within the school or within the grade that the parents requested. Superintendent Gentry said, "Schools will operate in all respects without regard to race, color, or national origin" ("Here is Civil Rights" 18). No member of the district could influence parents or students in their choice of schools. If overcrowding existed, the students living closest to the school would have priority over those living farther away from the school ("Here is Complete Text" 2). The district had integration on their school buses, but it would not provide the students with transportation to any school other than their neighborhood school; therefore, many students did not have transportation to schools outside of their neighborhoods ("More Integration" 1). Unfortunately the program did not result in the integration of Harlem. Harlem is isolated in the middle of the McNair community, and white parents saw no need to transport their children across the district to a black community for the same education—or possibly an inferior one. Consequently, for the next three years Harlem remained an all-black school (Coltharp;"GCCISD Membership Report").

The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare—the agency responsible for strictly enforcing the integration rules set forth in The 1964 Civil Rights Act—used threats of lawsuits and termination of federal funds to force school districts to integrate. All-black schools within an all-black neighborhood did not meet HEW's standards. Obviously, because of Harlem's racial make-up, the district did not

meet the racial criteria set forth by HEW; therefore, it had to find a way to integrate Harlem so that the district could continue receiving federal funds (Boynton "Trustees Hope to Integrate" 1-2).

The Goose Creek school board then began long, often secret, meetings on what new program they should use to integrate Harlem. F. Philip Dignam, a board member at that time, felt the board used executive meetings to discuss programs inappropriately. "I told them that if they did not stop the discussion, I would leave the meeting and go straight to the people and the press waiting outside and tell them exactly what was going on." And there were many people waiting outside. The people overflowed the board room and covered the lawn surrounding the building. The board felt threatened by the vocal, white Highlands community, so several members found it necessary to have closed executive meetings. Highlands and McNair differed strongly as to which of the district's ideas the board should implement. The Board discussed three plans: zoning, pairing, and closing Harlem. Several of these programs provoked intense anger within both communities; therefore, the board tried to avoid a confrontation with either Highlands or McNair until all the board members agreed on one program. Mr. Dignam disagreed with what he considered the board's deceptive tactics, and the meetings became public board meetings. The board opened the windows so everyone could hear and received comments from the communities involved. Some of these comments came in the form of speeches; some were simply shouted from the crowd (Dignam).

The first program, zoning, which would increase Harlem's attendance area to include white families, caused anger in both Highlands, the white community involved, and McNair, the black community involved (Boynton "Zoning" 1). Highlands felt the district would infringe upon its rights by forcing Highlands' children to ride buses to school when they had a neighborhood school. One parent quoted in the *Baytown Sun* stated that "she did not mind integration; she just did not want her child going to school in their [the black] community." McNair also opposed the zoning program because it would only add approximately thirty white students to the school, and that number did not meet HEW's standards (GCCISD Board Minutes "Compliance"). Dignam realized that by pulling the children of angry Highlands parents into Harlem, a peaceful integration could not possibly happen (Dignam; Coltharp; Walton).

The second plan the board discussed, pairing, contained ideas similar to zoning. The district would use Harlem for kindergarten through the second grade and Highlands Elementary for the grades three through six. Again, the suggestion angered the Highlands

parents. Dr. Dan Golden, spokesman for Highlands' Committee for Individual Rights in Education, said, "They as a united community wished to go on record, here and now, that they were unalterably opposed to pairing or zoning of Highlands Elementary School and the Harlem Elementary School." Several reasons determined Golden's argument: such procedures 1) would cause the students to lose their right of freedom of choice, 2) would not satisfy HEW, 3) would be inconvenient because of time for busing, 4) would create a safety hazard by forcing children to unnecessarily ride buses twice a day, 5) would increase the district's costs but would not improve the students' education, and 6) would make it difficult to respond to the school in case of an emergency. The Highlands community did not oppose integration; it opposed mandatory busing (GCCISD Board Minutes; "Compliance"). These same families who said they did not oppose integration had deep concerns about their property values dropping if the district forced their children to attend Harlem (Dignam). Pairing, the most feasible program for the McNair community, would leave their newly renovated community school open and supply a well-rounded education to all of the students. This program also fulfilled the HEW requirements. Reverend Sherman Gray Jr., the McNair community representative, said, "A child should grow up realizing that all people are not white, middle class, protestants, etc. Part of their education should include knowing people of all walks of life" (GCCISD Board Minutes; "Compliance"). Again, Dignam realized that this option brought many of the same problems as zoning, especially the problem of angry parents (Dignam; Walton).

A few board members were also opposed to pairing. One board member commented that "Negro students were [one and a half to three] grades behind white children." Some board members "felt that there was a possibility of white children being hurt academically if they met and went to school in Negro areas" (GCCISD Board Minutes; "Compliance"). Dignam realized that by trying to pull into Harlem the group of students least likely to deal well with integration, little would be accomplished. Along with integration would come anger and resentment on the part of the white students and their parents. Phil Dignam had a dream to find an innovative idea that he could use to entice white parents and their children to Harlem (Dignam; Walton).

The McNair community strongly opposed the third proposal—to close Harlem and bus the students to other schools. McNair "had gone along with the school district's desegregation plans up to now, but was it possible that the district wanted all of their students bused out of the community where they had a modern school available"

(GCCISD Board Minutes; "Compliance")? Since the renovation of Harlem Elementary School, it had become the center of the community just as a community school should. The citizens of McNair had grown very proud of the facility and wanted their children to remain in their own community. As yet the district had not developed a plan that could solve the integration problem and please the people of both communities.

Dignam, very concerned about the problem, went to E.F. Green, the former principal of the all-black Carver High School, and asked Green what type of program he would like established for an elementary school if he had all the money needed and a building in which to enact the program. Green replied that he would like to have a program suited to the student. If the student read above level, he could work above level in school, and if his math skills fell below level then he could work at his level in math. All students would not work at the same level. The programs would also include enriched science, art, and music programs. The teachers in this dream school would work diligently to make the materials interesting so the students would not become bored in the classroom. "The idea is that children vary in their abilities and in the speed at which they develop these abilities; instead of fitting the child into a limited grade division, the study materials are fitted around the child. He is allowed to progress as fast as he is able" (Boynton, "Trustees Hope"). Dignam, enthused by Green's ideas, went before the board and proposed this innovative program as an "individualized program."

In his proposal Dignam included open transportation. Any student who wanted to attend Harlem would have access to district bus transportation. Also, any student from Harlem who chose to leave Harlem, would receive transportation to the school of his choice. Dignam felt that instead of using forced busing to integrate Harlem, the board could offer voluntary busing and persuade the parents, through the use of enriched programing, to send their children to Harlem (Dignam). He understood that it was an ". . . adventurous approach" (Boynton, "Trustees Hope") that might take some time for the community to accept, but he also knew it would benefit everyone who became involved with the program. The board enthusiastically received Dignam's proposal with only one change. Board member Bob Wahrmund proposed that if not enough white students enrolled in Harlem by June 10, that the district then close Harlem. Dignam did not agree; he felt that HEW should set a date to make the evaluation, not the district. He also felt that the evaluation should not occur before the completion of Pumphrey School. The board decided to evaluate the program as an integration

tool at the end of the 1969-70 school year. Phil Dignam, the member who had proposed the program, became the only member to vote against the proposition—in protest of the closing clause (Boynton, "Trustees Hope").

Superintendent Gentry did not see the program as a feasible solution, but he accepted the board's decision (GCCISD Board Minutes; "Compliance"). The board, "relieved" to have a possible solution to the problem, gave a "blank check" to the program because it was cheaper than paying for the pending lawsuit with HEW. Dignam said, "They'd pay anything to get the government off their backs" (Dignam). Art Coltharp, the principal at Harlem, enthusiastically received the idea and immediately began working on his dream—integration for Harlem.

Coltharp sought to obtain the best faculty that he could posibly get—a dream faculty. He wanted young teachers just out of college who had not developed old-fashioned ideas about education and the classroom. He knew the importance of getting teachers who were open-minded about integration and who understood the need to work the many hours needed to accomplish their task, offering an enriched education to the students. He knew that if he did not have the complete support of his faculty, the program could never succeed. "We were on the cutting edge" and to succeed they had to work as a team—administration, faculty, custodians, and cafeteria staff (Coltharp). But to accomplish this goal, he had to replace many teachers, black and white, already on Harlem's faculty. He tried to be "color blind," a difficult task, because the school also needed a well-integrated staff. To remove the teachers who did not meet his criteria, Coltharp had principals from the other elementary schools visit Harlem and observe the teachers in the classroom to decide whom they would accept as transfers to their schools. Many of the transferred teachers had taught at Harlem their entire careers and were unhappy with the transfers. One teacher, rather than transfer, retired, but the rest of the teachers accepted the move and continued their careers in other schools. Miss Walton, who had received a transfer, requested to stay, and gladly Coltharp allowed her to remain at the school where she had taught for twenty years. Unfortunately, the transformation of the faculty left only a few black teachers on staff (Walton; Coltharp).

Art Coltharp succeeded in obtaining his dream faculty and then along with Tom Royder, chairman of the Citizen's Committee (organized to promote Harlem), began publicizing the school through the *Baytown Sun* and the local radio station, K-BUK, hoping to entice white parents into sending their children to Harlem. Royder and

Coltharp attended any organized meeting that would allow them to speak on the new program at Harlem. The district offered commitment forms to prospective parents that Tom Royder would hold until June so the parents could see the number of white children who would actually attend Harlem that year. Coltharp offered an open house so that parents in the Goose Creek district could see everything that Harlem had to offer (Boynton "About 100"). Coltharp and Royder tried everything possible to entice white students to Harlem.

In September of 1969, fifty-nine white children had registered for Harlem Elementary but so had two hundred and eighty-nine black children. The black population increased by eighteen leaving a total population increase at Harlem of seventy-seven (GCCISD "Membership Report") The board had expected several black children to transfer to other schools, but they did not transfer. Even with an increased enrollment, the newly integrated school had no real problems. The McNair community, the faculty and the children, all accepted the program and each other very well (Coltharp; GCCISD "Membership Report").

Through district funds and the federally funded Title I program, Harlem obtained many new teaching tools. The school increased its texts, including two reading series instead of the usual one (Ferguson; Coltharp; Walton). Harlem students no longer felt like second class citizens; instead, many schools envied Harlem for all of the new educational tools and innovative ideas Harlem had obtained.

The district had accomplished desegregation for Harlem through the dreams of many people. F. Philip Dignam, E. F. Green, Art Coltharp, and Tom Royder all struggled to have peaceful integration, but also helped to create an enriched educational system. Congressman Bob Eckhardt said, "We're holding out empty promises to our children—black, white and brown—if we offer them integration measures alone. We must also give them better schools" ("Forced Busing"). McNair's struggle to fulfill its dream—an integrated community school—developed without violence or forced busing. Goose Creek managed to accomplish integration through an innovative peaceful plan, benefiting the district, the communities of Baytown, McNair, and Highlands, the faculty, and the students. Martin Luther King's dream of equal rights remains unfulfilled in many schools throughout this nation, but at one school, Harlem Elementary, every child receives an equal and enriched education.

THEY CALLED HER "Racer's Storm," and she raked the upper coast in early October, just months after Texas was swept by another tempest—the War for Independence against Mexico. The 1837 hurricane might have occurred too late to be regarded as politically prophetic, but it was certainly the harbinger of a number of catastrophic Gulf storms that would hit Texas over the next century and a half, having serious consequences for the Baytown area. An 1886 hurricane that leveled forever the once thriving port city of Indianola left several dead and destroyed a great deal of property in the region bordered by the San Jacinto and Trinity Rivers. The great Galveston Storm of 1900, easily the worst natural disaster in the history of the United States, saw a devastating tidal surge sweep the upper bay. Another hurricane in 1915, considered by many to be even larger in sheer size than the 1900 storm, destroyed the nearby town of Wallisville. When a large storm centered on Baytown in 1943, many local residents believed they were not adequately warned. These early storms made the community aware of its precarious location. However, it was Hurricane Carla in September of 1961, the greatest tropical cyclone to ever make landfall in Texas, that brought home to Baytonians the frightening vulnerability of their community. Hardest hit was the Brownwood subdivision where subsidence, a product of decades of the neglectful removal of sub-surface water and petroleum, exposed the fashionable neighborhood to devastating tidal flooding. Many residents of Brownwood—as well as those living in other flood prone areas—were unaware that their losses were not covered by insurance; virtually all policies at the time exempted damage resulting from rising water. One of the immediate consequences of the Brownwood tragedy, argues Linda Jayne, was increased pressure on the United States Congress to develop a program of federally subsidized flood insurance. "When I started my research, I was concerned primarily with the manner in which the Baytown community responded to the hardships resulting from the wide-spread damage caused by the storm; I was totally unaware of the insurance issue. The deeper I dug, however, the more I became fascinated with how this seemingly isolated incident in the history of Baytown, Hurricane Carla, had a profound impact on the later development of a far-reaching federal program."

Linda Jayne, whose essay was originally titled *Hurricane Carla: Her Legacy, National Flood Insurance*, presently works as a paraprofessional in the Lee College Writing Center. She will finish a degree in literature at the University of Houston at Clear Lake with the ultimate goal of teaching.

Hurricane Carla and Her Legacy

LINDA JAYNE

Early in September of 1961, residents along the Texas Gulf Coast began battening down for Hurricane Carla, one of the most destructive hurricanes to hit the area since the Great Storm of 1900. Thirty miles east of Houston, Texas, the city of Baytown and the surrounding southeast area, including the Brownwood Addition also prepared for the approaching storm ("Damage" 1). In the wake of

Hurricane Carla, the Brownwood residents would not only be left with devastation but also with questions and controversy regarding hurricane insurance. National attention focused on the questions; however, the answer, National Flood Insurance, took ten years to develop.

Hurricane Carla, born in the Caribbean, packed winds of 100 mph as she moved into the Gulf of Mexico on September 7, 1961. The eye of the storm measured twelve miles wide at this time, but gave no indication where Carla would come inland. However, weather forecasters knew it would be in the Gulf for several days ("Gulf-Bound" 1). On Saturday, September 9, Baytown's emergency precautions took final shape as a weather advisory placed Baytown and the surrounding area within the Hurricane Warning zone, indicating Carla was twenty-four hours or less from landfall (Marsh, "Baytown Gets Set" 1). By eight o'clock Sunday morning, some of the houses in Brownwood, a middle class suburban neighborhood located about four miles southwest of the Baytown city limits and surrounded by Scott, Crystal and Burnett Bays, already were flooded with a foot of water. Preceding the "eye of Carla, scheduled to strike sometime Monday afternoon, mailboxes and traffic signs dangled underwater, and many homes had water to the middle of the first floor (Marsh "Flood Waters"). Then Carla hit land with her full fury, leaving very little untouched along the coastal areas of Texas and western Louisiana. As the storm moved further inland after making landfall on Monday, its wrath extended throughout the midwestern states. Although Baytown is approximately thirty miles from the Gulf proper, this industrial city of approximately 30,000 at the time and one of the oldest petroleum-processing centers on the Gulf Coast did not escape Carla's devastating winds. Brownwood seemed to have taken the brunt of Carla's push inland. Towering tides replaced the normal stillness of the three bays. By Tuesday, September 12, water stood several feet deep in scores of Brownwood houses. Baytown Civil Defense Director, Bob Feinberg had declared Brownwood a disaster area on Monday afternoon, and the Baytown National Guard Unit patrolled the area (Hale, "Brownwood" 1).

The raging winds and water left indescribable damage. Some of the homes in Brownwood had been completely swept from their foundations while others remained as hulking shells of 2x4's. Ironically, other homes escaped total destruction ("Damage" 1). "The Pieces," an editorial in the *Baytown Sun*, best summed up the emotional and physical wreckage left by Carla:

> The power of the storm was brought painfully home to Baytonians, scores of whom suffered irrepa-

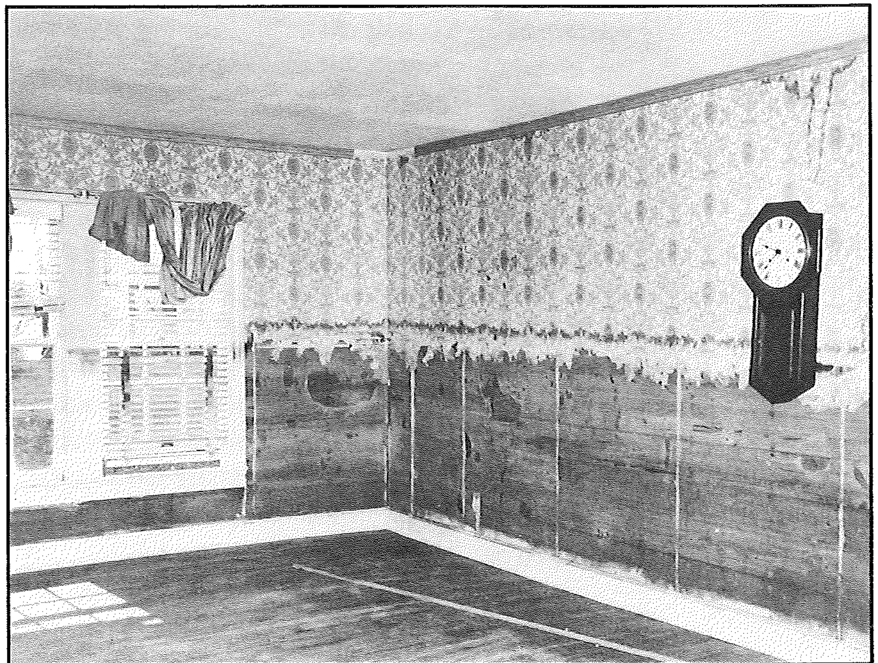
> rable losses.
>
> Hardest hit in the Baytown area was Brownwood subdivision—where nearly all 500 odd homes were either totally or partially destroyed.
>
> Unless you have seen the destruction at Brownwood, you cannot comprehend the awful extent of it. It is a disaster of no small magnitude, for there nearly 500 families have been left homeless. All of the things they worked and saved for are gone or ruined beyond further use.
>
> Words are inadequate to convey the full meaning of this disaster. The extent of some of the property damage might be described, but there is no way to describe the hurt, the disappointment and the frustration felt by the people affected. (2)

The Thursday after Carla struck, homeowners returned to Brownwood, trying to salvage anything left by the hurricane. Many wondered whether help would come and from where. More than 300 families who once lived in Brownwood found themselves homeless, and officials estimated the damage in that subdivision at 3.5 million dollars ("Damage" 1). Fortunately these residents did have help almost immediately from the Red Cross and the federal government. Since presidential declaration of a major disaster area is necessary before most federal agencies commit their resources in disaster situations (Moore 109), Representative Albert Thomas of Houston began work immediately to have East Harris County declared a national disaster area. Texas Governor, Price Daniel, after touring the area, said he could see ample evidence of wind damage. Because many of the residents had expressed fear of non-payment for their insurance because of rising water exceptions in their policies, Governor Daniel stated that he could see no reason why insurance claims should not be paid in this section since it was apparent that Brownwood suffered extremely high winds. The Governor assured Baytown Mayor Al Clayton that the Governor's office would do all it could to get insurance claims handled ("Daniel" 1).

Nevertheless, the Brownwood residents did have cause to worry. In 1961, a basic provision of the standard home insurance policy approved by the Texas State Board of Insurance listed hurricane as one of the perils insured against. But it also provided that the insurance company should not be responsible for any hurricane damage or other damage not caused directly by winds. Because policy holders tended to see any damage precipitated as a result of the hurricane as caused by the winds, the insurance

Baytown's Brownwood subdivision, at one time among the city's more attractive neighborhoods, resembled a war zone following Hurricane Carla.

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM



The water damage line in this Brownwood home bears silent but compelling witness to the awesomeness of Carla's flood tides.

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

companies quickly pointed to a series of court decisions clearly stating that damage from water blown inland which flooded homes was not covered unless blown into the home through an opening made by the wind. Storm victims needed little imagination to see the endless possibilities for argument raised by this provision (Moore 178). Homeowners still felt entitled to reimbursement up to the amount of their policy for damages suffered in the hurricane situation. The companies disagreed since policies exempted damage caused by water and Brownwood had flooded even before the actual storm had gone through. The insurance companies asserted that flood insurance was not available because of the exclusively high premiums it would require. The sale of the insurance, they argued, would be restricted to persons living in areas subject to frequent floods and the loss rates would be so high as to make it unfeasible to carry such protection (Moore 187).

The Texas State Board of Insurance did what they could to resolve the conflict. The Board informed Governor Daniel that they had been assured by representatives and officials of insurance companies that the insurance companies were making every effort to settle fairly, reasonably, and promptly on all claims. Also the Board had placed qualified personnel in the field to keep a check on the progress made in settlement claims because insured losses sustained as a result of the storm were expected to be the largest in the state's history ("Disaster Aid" 1).

In spite of the Board's assurance, complaints against the insurance companies continued to pour in. The Brownwood people, in particular, expressed the most dissatisfaction with the handling of such damage claims ("House Probers" 1). According to his article in the *Baytown Sun*, Fred Hartman reported that more than 350 Brownwood residents held a meeting to voice their complaints. John S. (Bud) Blackburn, the temporary chairman of the group, revealed that he had at least a half-dozen affidavits in his possession confirming tornado winds. The affidavits stated that tornado winds had been sighted in Brownwood just as winds had been reported in Galveston, Channelview, and other Gulf Coast sections. The residents hoped for equitable handling of their insurance claims but prepared for a battle if necessary.

Also at this meeting, Blackburn told of the steps taken by Speaker James A. Thurman of the Texas House of Representatives that might lead to legislative investigation of any failure on the part of the storm sufferers to get equity. Blackburn expressed hope of obtaining follow up support from the governor's office to persuade insurance companies to make liberal settlements. Members of the

group asked the news media in the southeastern part of Texas to focus on the plight of the more than four hundred homeowners in Brownwood and parts of the adjacent Lakewood subdivision whose homes were either totally destroyed or severely damaged (Hartman, "Brownwood Tornado" 1).

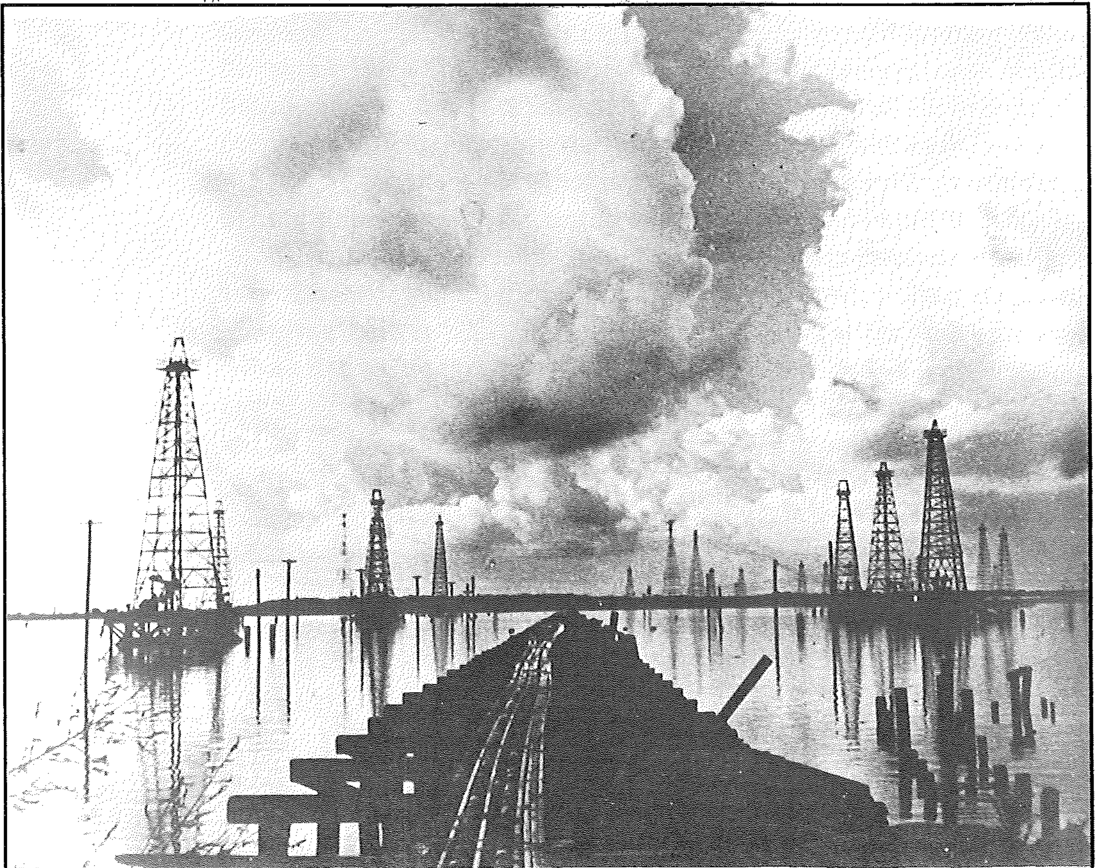
The Texas House of Representatives instructed the newly created Texas House General Investigating Committee to conduct a statewide inquiry into complaints against insurance companies ("Brownwood Asks" 1). On September 30, 1961, a hearing held in Houston received complaints and proposals of representatives from Harris County. James Thurman called the hearing after receiving complaints that insurance companies refused to pay claims concerning damage done by water or by wind-driven water. Concerned by the controversy, lawmakers recommended many proposals to give the public better protection against disasters like Hurricane Carla. Representative Robert (Bob) Eckhardt proposed changing the laws so that the insurance companies, not the policy holders, had the burden of proving what caused the damage. Under existing law, the policy holders had to show proof, and in cases where no home was left, it was impossible to show anything. Eckhardt displayed pictures of the Brownwood addition to prove his point. He also urged that the Texas State Board of Insurance require policies to be worded more clearly (Friedman, "Better Disaster Coverage").

J.C. Whitfield, another representative, offered a possible plan to require insurance companies to set up a "disaster reinsurance pool" in which part of the premiums collected could be deposited to pay policy holders at the time of disaster. He said that this program could be backed up by bond issues if the pool were exhausted by a disaster. According to Saul Friedman, Whitfield and other representatives suggested a study by the legislature of the possibility of making tax remissions to hard-hit areas ("Better Disaster Coverage). Whitfield and other legislators recommended that homeowners collect their own evidence of damage claims and go to court if necessary. Of course the committee drew criticism. Woodrow Herring, operator of Herring Claim Adjusters, criticized the committee for holding hearings without having read the policies (Friedman, "Better Disaster Coverage").

This was not the first time that local, state, and federal lawmakers had discussed the possibility of a government flood insurance program. In fact, nine years before Carla, federal guarantees for flood insurance were explored, sought and authorized in legislation, but never materialized. President Truman was among the first to acknowledge the need for flood insurance when on May

5, 1952, in a special message to Congress, he requested a national flood insurance. Then four months later the H.H.F.A. (Housing and Home Finance Agency) held meetings from September 8th through September 21st. In these meetings, representatives of the insurance companies and lenders explored the feasibility of flood insurance. As often happens with many legislative policies, no one mentioned flood insurance again until January 4, 1956, when President Eisenhower presented his Economic Report to Congress. On August 7 of that same year, Congress passed Public Law 84-1016 known as the Federal Flood Insurance Act of 1956. This law directed the H.H.F.A. Administrator to establish a system of indemnification of losses sustained in flood and tidal disaster, to reinsure private insurance coverage of such losses, and to assure a line of credit, where necessary, for the restoration and reconstruction of properties damaged or lost as a result of flood. The Act provided for the

Photo courtesy Baytown Historical Museum



The old Highway 146 causeway out Evergreen Road was destroyed by Hurricane Carla in 1961.

establishment of a federal flood insurance program, a federal loan contract program covering flood losses, and a federal reinsurance. On September 28, 1956, the H.H.F.A. Administrator established a Federal Flood Indemnity. The H.H.F.A. Administrator suspended activity because Congress did not provide funds for starting operations (*Congress & The Nation* 488). Just six months before Hurricane Carla, on February 23, 1961, President Kennedy had requested all federal agencies concerned to provide data on flood hazards in specific areas and to assist states in their efforts for regulation and zoning of the flood plains (*Congress & The Nation* 488). However, at the time of Hurricane Carla, almost no help was available from federal or state governments except for the Small Business Administration which provided assistance in disasters like this. The S.B.A. did help by providing loans to small businesses and homeowners to rebuild (Moore 192).

As time passed, Carla and its resulting problems were not forgotten. The Texas State Board of Insurance in 1962 studied the feasibility of flood insurance with deductibles of $500 or $1000 and considered a proposal that the state act as a reinsuring agency for companies writing flood insurance or that the state assume a fixed liability of flood losses regardless of need of the property owners (Moore 193). The Board did not want a repeat of 1961. "There probably is no storm at any time in which the insurance companies were subject to more abuse, more misunderstanding, more grief, and more downright hostility" (Moore 185).

After compiling all the statistics, the Board revealed that the extended coverage losses for 1961 reached an all-time high in dollars. These figures made it clear that the year of Carla was a year in which insurance companies paid out more in settlement of claims than they collected in premiums (Moore 189). On July 25, 1962, the U.S. Senate passed an Administration-backed bill (S 3066), sponsored by Senator Williams (DNJ), authorizing a nine-month study by H.H.F.A. of alternative programs of financial aid to victims of flood disasters, but the House took no action on this bill. Senator Williams tried again with another bill on November 8, 1963, but the identical fate befell this bill (*Congress & The Nation* 488).

Meanwhile Brownwood and its residents remained in the minds of many people. Baytown had annexed Brownwood into the city, and local authorities, along with the aid of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, continued doing a study of the feasibilility of a levee around Scott, Crystal, and Burnet Bays to provide hurricane protection to prevent a repeat of the devastation similar to that left by Carla. Other problems arose when residents also found that land subsid-

ence was taking its toll. Subsidence made the need for some type of flood insurance even more evident (Shepherd). Bob Eckhardt, now a U.S. Representative, continued to try to get help for Brownwood residents.

Help came very slowly. Finally, in August of 1968, Senate Bill #3497 became Public Law 90-448 under the "Home Ownership Housing Act," and under Title XIII of that act, National Flood Insurance became a reality. Title XIII gave the Secretary of HUD (Housing and Urban Development) the authority to set up a program of flood insurance as a joint federal/private venture and permitted the Secretary to establish an all-federal program in the event that a joint program was not feasible. This bill provided that subsidized personal and property insurance would be made available for flood damage to homes for one to four family residences and to small business properties in flood-prone areas. It specified the availability of insurance only in states which "evidenced a positive interest" in flood insurance and adopted land use and control regulations before June 30, 1970, to prevent unwise use of flood-prone land.

In addition, a fifteen-member Flood Insurance Advisory Committee assisted the HUD Secretary in determining the scope of the program, the premiums to be charged, and the operation of the program. In this bill the specifications for rates below actuarial cost (subsidized premiums) were as follows: $17,500 for a one-family dwelling; $5,000 for the contents of each unit; $30,000 for a business structure; and $5,000 for the contents of each business unit. The Secretary was directed to encourage private insurers to form a pool to sell and service flood insurance and to share profits and liabilities. Insurance outstanding at any time was limited to $2.5 billion. The Secretary had authorization to make equalization payments to the insurers' pool to make up the difference between below cost premiums paid and the actuarial cost of the insurance. Title XIII also pledged the Federal Government to back-up private firms by paying any claims in excess of the financial capacity of the privately financed pool. The HUD Secretary was directed, along with other federal agencies, to identify flood zones according to declining risk of disaster and, within five years after enactment, to establish a set of actuarial flood insurance premiums based on the flood-zone statistics.

Under this same Bill, a National Flood Insurance Fund was created in the Treasury and this Bill also gave the HUD Secretary borrowing authority of up to $250 million. Existing authority for Congress to appropriate any amounts the President deemed necessary for flood control was rescinded. The Bill specified that the Fund

would pay premium subsidies to the insurance pool and reinsure claims when the pool suffered excessive losses. It also authorized appropriations to reimburse the Treasury for payment from the Fund.

HUD also set up comprehensive criteria for state and local planning which included regulations of land use in flood prone areas (*Congress & The Nation* Vol. II). However, these measures did not become available until March 1969, almost a year after the "Home Ownership, Housing Act" had been passed ("HUD Wades In" 31). According to Johnella Boynton, an estimated 300 families, who lived in areas of Baytown subject to tidal flooding, were qualified for the subsidized insurance after Baytown city officials voted to follow appropriate land use and control measures for flood insured areas. Finally word came to Baytown by Senator John Tower that National Flood Insurance would be available beginning February 27, 1970 ("Flood Insurance For Baytown" 1). Almost ten years had passed since that day Hurricane Carla made her Texas visit; and now, for the first time, actual flood insurance became a reality. Homeowners now had a way to pay for the furniture, carpets and draperies (Moore, "Conflicting Ideologies").

As long as there are hurricanes and homeowners, there are bound to be questions of just what is covered under insurance policies. Because of the massive damage inflicted by Hurricane Carla and the controversy regarding insurance coverage, legislative action resulted in the National Flood Insurance.

BAYTOWN, LIKE MANY Texas communities, has experienced some traumatic changes as a result of recent economic difficulties. The January 1987 shutdown of the U. S. Steel plant in Baytown caused many hardships for management and for steelworkers. The decision to close the plant provoked anger, frustration, and extreme distress on all sides of the proverbial negotiation table. Nevertheless, the decision was made, and the plant was closed. Cindy Pentecost's paper does not attempt to give a total assessment of the decision; she writes about the dilemmas encountered by her family whose lives will never be as they were before the shutdown, and her family serves as a kind of microcosm of the community. Many Baytonians suffered. Certainly other businesses dependent on employees and on the facility itself have failed. Baytown, like many cities and towns in the United States, has felt a profound impact from decisions to close down plants which promoted a lucrative and secure environment. Pentecost's paper, originally titled "History in the Making: The Actions of U.S. Steel and Their Effect on Baytown Employees and Their Families," does not attempt to condemn management for the decision nor to excuse it. Her focus is the individual. Not all the changes in the lives of U. S. Steel employees have been unproductive; Cindy Pentecost, who decided to attend college, will eventually become a teacher.

The Effect of the Closing of U.S. Steel

CINDY PENTECOST

Large corporations often provide economic advantages to the area in which they locate, and the population in the surrounding area finds itself enjoying the benefits. The opening of a large business creates job opportunities at the business itself, as well as throughout the community. After an extended period of prosperity, some members of a community become dependent upon the job and revenue that these companies provide. When one of these large businesses closes down, the entire community feels the effects, but the terminated employees and their families feel the impact even more. The shutdown of U.S. Steel's Texas Works located in Baytown, Texas, southeast of Houston, drastically affected and altered the course of the lives of its employees and their families.

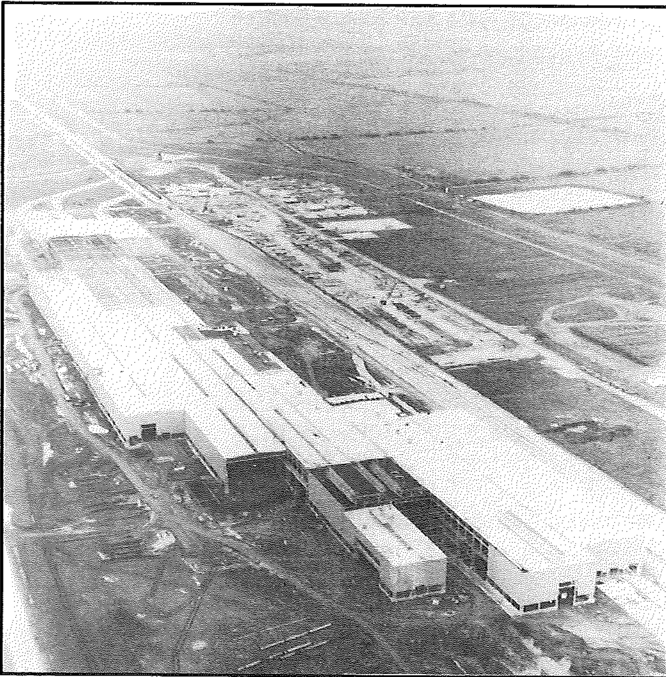
Looking at the extensive growth since the corporation's beginning, any community would consider U.S. Steel as a stabilizing addition to its area. The United States Steel Corporation (now a division of USX) developed from J. Piermont Morgan's "sincere, if

domineering, sense of responsibility towards doing his part to keep business steady" (Tarbell 114). That development included Charles M. Schwab's idea that "instead of having one mill make ten, twenty, or fifty products, the greatest economy would result from having one mill make one product, and make that product continuously" (Tarbell 112). Morgan combined that plan with Judge Elbert Gary's idea to make, at the lowest cost, all the principal forms of finished steel for sale in all parts of the world" (Tarbell 116). The United States Steel Corporation, which incorporated on February 25, 1901, included original member companies: "Carnegie Company, Federal Steel Company, American Steel & Wire Company, National Tube Company, National Steel Company, American Tin Plate Company, American Steel Hoop Company, and American Sheet Steel Company" (*United States Steel Corporation* 125). With the addition shortly afterwards of the American Bridge Company and the Lake Superior Consolidated Iron Mines, the United States Steel Corporation became "the first billion-dollar corporation in the world and the first integrated steel-making company, where all the steps from the gathering and transporting of the raw materials to the production of finished products ready for shipment to customers were included in one corporation" (*United States Steel Corporation* 124). Since its beginning, U.S. Steel had continuously expanded to meet the changing needs of the steel industry.

Due to the vastness of U.S. Steel, it is understandable that Baytown, Texas, would look forward to such a stable addition to its economic community when on December 8, 1965, U.S. Steel announced plans for a mill near Baytown. Excitement exploded throughout the area. A Humble (now Exxon) spokesman said, "The location of this new industry here will open up a new source of employment and . . . should have a positive effect on the economic life of the community" ("Humble Welcomes U.S. Steel"). An editor of the *Baytown Sun* said, "There is no accurate way of gauging the long range impact this industry will have on the Greater Baytown area, but is safe to say that it will provide the impetus Baytown needs to become a full-fledged industrial center . . .. The community prepares to welcome a 'bread-and-butter' industry that no doubt will transform the entire economic system of this area" ("Baytown Welcomes USS"). According to U.S. Steel President Leslie B. Worthington, the United States Steel Corporation expected the Baytown plant "to become one of the greatest steel producing complexes in the nation, if not the world" ("Baytown Plant").

Baytown and nearby communities looked forward to all the advantages which U.S. Steel's new Texas Works could provide. The facility opened in 1969 and provided welcome jobs. According to Bob Clowers, the local steelworkers' union president, "everybody was saying it was going to be another Gary, Indiana. There'll be thirty to forty thousand people working out there. Baytown's going to boom." Although never reaching its expected employment potential, the company expanded and provided around 2,500 blue-collar jobs at its Baytown facility. This number dropped to approximately 800 blue-collar workers just prior to the "lockout" in August 1986 (Pentecost, Rusty).

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM



Baytown's sprawling U.S. Steel plant, shown here during its construction phase in 1976, seemed to offer never-ending prosperity to the community. The plant closed after only a decade of operation.

One family affected by the change provides an insight into how the closing of a major plant echoes throughout a community. Jack Pentecost, his two sons, Rusty and James, and a cousin, Kenny Dykes worked at U.S. Steel's Texas Works. Jack began his job at Texas Works July 17, 1972, James on February 2, 1973, Kenny on March 7, 1978, and Rusty on June 16, 1978. All four men, as did the majority of employees, intended to continue working at the Baytown facility until reaching retirement age.

The planned future of these men, their families, as well as all Texas Works employees and their families, began a drastic change when the U.S. Steel Corporation and union representatives failed to agree on the terms of a new contract. The union offered to continue working for the company under the terms and conditions of the old contract while negotiating a new one. USX refused to let the steelworkers stay under the stated conditions, and they were "locked out" of their jobs at midnight, July 31, 1986.

Clowers stated, "We did not walk off the job. They [USX] locked the gate on us, and they would not let us come to work." Speaking about the contract negotiations, Clowers further observed, "You go and you negotiate . . . on a day by day and hour by hour situation . . . and a lot of the local union presidents thought that U.S. Steel would settle at the eleventh hour." Most union members and their families did not expect a lengthy work stoppage. James Pentecost said, "I expected it [work stoppage] to last a month, possibly two months . . . but not much longer than that." Rusty, however, felt less optimistic. He commented, "If the 'lockout' wasn't settled by the end of August, I didn't look for us to go back until after the first of the year." Kenny Dyke's wife Jackie agreed with Rusty and figured that the "lockout" would last a while.

As the "lockout" dragged on, financial hardships became more prevalent. Many employees had made preparations for a work stoppage by reducing their financial obligations. Rusty stated that he and his wife Cindy "whittled our bills down to practically nothing"—a mortgage payment and utilities. The company still provided health insurance until the end of January 1987. Jackie said that they realized there might be a strike and had paid off everything within reason, too, except their mortgage payment and truck note. Sandy, James' wife, anticipated a work stoppage in November 1985

PHOTO COURTESY BAYTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

This aerial photograph shows the U. S. Steel plate mill in January of 1970. Notice the city of Baytown in the distance.

and started getting all of their bills paid. They borrowed money from Sandy's parents to pay off their car loan and waited to make payments to her parents until they could financially afford it.

Although many of the employees had worked plenty of overtime prior to the "lockout," few could have been prepared adequately for months of financial hardship. As savings dwindled and bills mounted, many of these families desperately needed financial help. Such help came from the International Steelworkers' Union, and, in many cases from churches and family members. James said, "The International [Steelworkers'] Union provided money for homes and cars when people got to a point to where they just flat were desperate. They'd furnish the payments so that they [members] wouldn't lose totally everything. U.S. Steel there again offered nothing." According to Clowers, for a little more than a year, the International Steelworkers' Union, through a local union committee, awarded almost one million dollars in assistance to steelworker families. When asked if U.S. Steel had given any type of financial assistance, Clowers firmly stated, "No, absolutely not." It did not take long for steelworkers to realize that they could not depend on the company for any financial or emotional support. However, the union pulled its members together by providing needed financial help, holding various activities for members and their families, and providing information and emotional support at the local union hall.

At the time of the "lockout," Jack and his wife Faye found themselves on an extremely tight budget. As they added part of their savings to the unemployment benefits each month to pay bills, both watched their savings dwindle. Nevertheless, they managed to pay their monthly expenses without the necessity of asking for financial assistance. They did, however, depend on family members and the union for emotional support (Pentecost, Faye).

Jack's oldest son Rusty, his wife Cindy, and their five children did receive financial assistance through their local union. Rusty had recently returned to work at the steel mill following a layoff of two years. During that two-year period, he worked in Channelview, Texas, for a company which produced offshore components and rigs until it went out of business. Following the loss of this job, he worked at a temporary job on an offshore oil platform. When Baytown Works called Rusty back to work, he and his wife were aware of a possible work stoppage if the company and the union could not reach an agreement by the end of July 1986. Rusty and Cindy decided to take their chances with U.S. Steel since it appeared that the offshore job

would soon end. Neither, however, felt secure with the job at Texas Works. This family had only four months in which to build up their savings, and if there were a work stoppage, they hoped "it would be solved quickly" (Pentecost, Rusty).

During the work stoppage, Jack's youngest son James, his wife Sandy, and their two children managed without the need to ask the union for financial help. Sandy's part-time work as piano teacher, substitute teacher, and bookkeeper provided additional income to James' unemployment benefits (Pentecost, Sandy). Within a few months, James found a job at Power Operating Company in Channelview, Texas, and maintained that when the steelworkers returned to work, he would stay with his new job (Pentecost, James). James and Sandy felt thankful that they did not need to ask for financial help, other than a temporary loan from Sandy's parents to pay off their car. However, James and Sandy both felt that if James had not found a job so quickly, they would have found themselves in a financial bind.

Jack's cousin Kenny, his wife Jackie, and their two children received some financial assistance through the union. Kenny had worked many hours of overtime prior to the "lockout," and they had paid off their bills, except the mortgage payment and truck note. In an effort to not completely deplete their small savings, they requested financial aid through the union. Kenny drew unemployment benefits, while Jackie worked for a local veterinarian; when Kenny's unemployment benefits ran out, he worked odd jobs to supplement their income.

After a work stoppage of six months, USX and union representatives reached an agreement in January 1987. The local steelworkers' vice-president, Pete Brady, felt confident that local members would approve the proposed contract. "Brady discounted rumors that the Texas Works Plant might not reopen and expressed confidence that local Steelworkers would be back at work sometime in the [near] future" (qtd. in "Results of USWA"). The members of Steelworkers of America voted in favor of the new contract and fully expected to return to work within a few weeks. Families excitedly discussed how things could shortly return to normal.

However, within a few days, these same families who had shown so much excitement, felt "really shocked " (Pentecost, Sandy). Local steelworkers heard the announcement that a portion of Texas Works was to be "indefinitely idled" and that chances for reopening were remote. The plate mill would reopen if and when it had sufficient

orders. In terms of profit at Texas Works, Roderick, chairman of the board at U.S. Steel, explained, the mill has "pretty well been a continual dog . . .. It isn't like we are idling the crown jewel. We're getting rid of Ugly Susan" (Guynn).

Reaction to this announcement varied from stunned disbelief to already knowing it probably would not reopen. One steelworker mentioned that the workers went "from lockout to layoff—to fired—all in one simple operation" (qtd. in "Steelworkers Tire"). About the idling of the plant, Clowers, the local union president, commented, "I tell you, I would never have believed it." He was almost sure that several of the older plants would be shut down, but did not expect the inclusion of the Baytown facility because "you have the state-of-the-art mill right here. It's one of the newest mills that they've [USX] got, . . . and I tell you what — I couldn't believe it when they announced it [idling] over the radio" (Clowers). Rusty said that he felt as though he had his "sails knocked down," and Jack, his father, commented that he "felt like the bottom fell out." Jackie felt devastated and her husband Kenny stated that he never expected to go back to Texas Works after he had heard that four plants were going down (Dykes, Kenny & Jackie). Faye summed up the reactions when she said that the idling of Texas Works was a "total disaster, [and] everybody was in a state of shock . . . because you work out there that long. You have a regular paycheck coming in. It was bad enough living on unemployment for that length of time, and then all of a sudden, you don't have a job, period. You don't have any income. You have nothing. You have no support to keep you going."

Steelworkers could no longer count on returning to Texas Works. These workers and their families had to face the fact that their lives had changed drastically overnight. Previously, "they had benefits. They had salaries. They thought they were secure, and it's all gone" (Clowers). Lynn Williams, union president, maintained that "union employees deserve[d] better treatment by the company" (qtd. in "Union Head Outraged").

Many workers and their families wondered why U.S. Steel would close down Texas Works and leave the steelworkers jobless. Roderick, chairman of USX, reminded workers that he had previously warned that an extended "work stoppage would threaten the future of some of USX's steel manufacturing facilities." Roderick also said that the work stoppage was not the only reason for Texas Works being placed on "idle status" (*Baytown Sun*, 4 Feb. 1987, 1). No matter what the reason, 800 blue-collar workers' immediate future

did not include Texas Works.

When asked about future plans, Rusty said that he had no particular plans and "didn't know which direction to go." He further said that his family's life had changed dramatically; the "quality of life has fallen, added strain on the family, left us with no savings, stopped the plans of expanding the house, [and] generally gave me a bleak outlook on the working industry as a whole." Many other Baytown Works' employees who had similar thoughts now found it necessary to adjust and make plans for a future that did not include Texas Works—plans such as to search for another job, to retire, to transfer, or to go to school. Families who had felt the stress of the past six months now had to cope with and handle even more problems while they tried to pull their lives back together. These families, who once had a common bond of being steelworking families, were forced to go their separate ways and find new futures.

Some families adjusted more quickly and easily than others. James, like a few other workers, had already found a satisfactory job, and Sandy said, "It [the idling] really didn't [hurt] because he wasn't off long enough for it to really affect us." James said, "I was glad to get a job. It is a securer feeling." His new job pays more per hour, but the benefits are not quite as good as they were at U.S. Steel (Pentecost, James). According to Clowers, some union members have found good jobs; however, others are now underemployed, but at least working (Clowers).

Some steelworkers and their families have transferred to other U.S. Steel facilities. According to Clowers, around one hundred union members went to Fairless Works, fifty to Lorraine, five to Gary, and three or four to Birmingham, leaving a void in the community of approximately 159 families. This exodus left the community with a tremendous sense of loss, not only socially but economically as well. Due to his age, Jack felt that he had no other choice than to go to Fairless Works in Pennsylvania. Staying with U.S. Steel until April 1988, enabled Jack to receive an extra $400 a month in an early retirement incentive program as well as his retirement benefits and hospitalization.

Kenny also went to Fairless Works. Out of desperation for a job, he left for Pennsylvania in October 1987. His family followed one month later. The family found it hard to acclimate to the area, hated Pennsylvania, and returned to Baytown before the new year. Two weeks after returning, Kenny found employment and now works for Payne and Keller at Exxon Chemical. He likes his job and makes

approximately as much as he did at the mill. However, because his new position has no benefits, Kenny plans only to stay with this company until he finds a better job (Dykes, Kenny & Jackie).

Some steelworkers did not want to transfer to another facility and have yet to find a decent job. Some of these workers decided to return to school to further their education in hopes of attaining a decent job with a good future. Rusty now attends ITT Technical Institute in Houston, where he also works as a part-time lab assistant. He is working toward a degree in electronics and hopes to enhance his other capabilities and open up new career opportunities. His wife attends Lee College and participates in the federally funded work/study program. Their family works together to keep expenses to a minimum during this time of financial struggle, which they hope will end when Rusty graduates in June 1989. Their eligibility for grants and scholarships, along with their part-time jobs and assistance received through their church, enable them to continue in school as they work toward a brighter future (Pentecost, Cindy & Rusty).

In January 1988, as Baytown steelworkers continued to adjust and seek their future, they learned that USS, a division of USX Corporation, planned a permanent shutdown of Texas Works by May 1, 1988 ("Late News"). Although most workers and their families had already assumed that U.S. Steel would not reopen its Baytown facility, they could not understand the decision. James said, "Yeah, I was surprised, too, because they had just spent somewhere in the neighborhood of twenty or thirty million dollars on new equipment that they were just implementing right when they had the 'lockout,' and it was designed for that particular mill . . . . It surprised me that they would be spending that kind of money and turn around and shut it down."

Workers and their families speculated on reasons for the shutdown. Clowers said that he felt U.S. Steel was "downsizing" its operations and making less steel in order to raise prices and create a false market (Clowers). Similar to Clowers, Rusty believes the shutdown was "partly political and the same as the oil industry did in the 1970s—which has proven itself out—to drive the price of steel up with supply and demand. Demand has been there, but they've shut down their facilities, which has pinched down the supply of steel just as the petroleum companies—less supply, more demand, higher prices." Other workers speculate that U.S. Steel now finds other products more profitable than steel and will deal with steel less

and less (Pentecost, James). Kenny said, "It wouldn't surprise me if they totally went out of the steel business even though they're the United States' largest steel company." Jackie sees the closing as a way to get rid of union workers and believes USX will reopen the mill under a new name with nonunion employees. Clowers also believes the plant will eventually reopen and said, "It's just a matter of when. It's just too new of a plant to remain idle." He, however, did not speculate as to which company he thought might reopen the mill.

James described the steelworkers' future when he commented "Life does go on after the steel mill, you know. That's not the end of life. It's just a job locally, and it's not the end . . .. There was [sic] people that had jobs before the steel industry . . . that ought to have jobs somewhere else now." This idealistic view, however, may not comfort families whose lives remain torn apart and completely changed due to the closing of the steel mill. Some families have yet to put their lives back together. They still search for a direction in life that will satisfy their needs and give the security they desire. No matter what reason is found for the shutdown of U.S. Steel's Texas Works, the fact does not change that lives have drastically altered due to the vital loss of Baytown's steel mill.

Note: USS, a division of the USX Corporation, permanently closed Texas Works on April 30, 1988. Eligible Texas Works employees received severance pay. The plant remains idle.

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