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A Call to Worship

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Taking Flight in Song

Some glad morning when this life is o'er, I'll fly away.
To a home on God's celestial shore, I'll fly away.

Dr. Joseph Pratt

When I was young, my mom took our family to gospel music "singings." We would drive up dirt roads back into the piney woods of Sabine County in East Texas, out where the snakes and the red bugs and ticks held sway. There we met other good country folks at old Baptist churches. Our spirits were high. We were not gathering for a Sunday sermon to hear how we were going to burn in hell; we were not attending a week-long revival meeting where we listened for hours to sermons and then sang verse after verse of "Just As I Am" while the evangelist exhorted us to come forward and be saved. No, we were coming together to make a joyful noise using the best part of the Baptist religion—its hymnal.

Hour after hour, we sang gospel music that was both inspired and inspiring. As in every church I have ever visited, one woman's voice always seemed to stand out, ringing loudly and clearly above the rest, taking the songs on up toward heaven. At times, a different sort of distinctively gospel voice dominated, as touring gospel quartets entertained us with rousing harmonies built around bass voices that rattled the walls. During one singing, a gospel quartet rocked the old church with a rousing song that must have been named "Sing, Brother, Sing." I say "must have been" because I have never been able to find any mention that such a song has ever existed. I liked the great old favorites such as "The Old Rugged Cross" and "Softly and Tenderly." I loved "Amazing Grace," which remains, for me, one of the best songs ever written. But best of all was the hard-driving, rock-and-roll gospel music that filled the church with spirit.

One great attraction of the singings was lunch, with row after row of home cooking laid out on old wooden tables in front of the church. This was what Whole Foods today might call "free range" food—meat from hogs, cows, and chickens that had been raised, slaughtered, and smoked on the farm. Grandmaw Pratt always named her chickens, and she asked the grandkids to pick one out when we first arrived for a visit. She would then call to "Sally," for instance, walk over and pick her up, and wring her neck in front of us. The next morning, our breakfast would feature chicken-fried Sally. For a decade or so, I refused to eat any and all chickens, even those to whom I had not been formally introduced. Ham from hogs that I had helped "slop" down by the pond worked fine as a substitute until I watched my dad and the other "men folk" slaughter one of them. I did not go hungry at the singings, however, since beside plates of meat were bowls of corn right off the cob and beans and melons picked fresh from gardens. My favorite foods, of course, were the desserts prepared by country women whose singing voices perhaps did not stand out, but whose special recipes for pecan pie or chocolate cake surely did.

At times, the singings would have a sort of children's hour, with kids called up from the pews to lead songs. Once at about ten years of age, I found myself up front with my big sister, Carolyn, leading "I'll Fly Away." She was two years older, with some degree of self-confidence; in addition, she could actually sing. I was still a shy boy whose confidence had been shaped by my kinfolks. An aunt, for example, once noted at a family reunion: "I'll swanee, Joe, if you grow any taller, you're gonna fork"; my grandmaw told anyone who would listen that I "looked like a hoot owl." Unfortunately, my voice was more like that of a screech owl, so I let Carolyn do most of the serious singing while I frantically pumped my arm to mark time to "I'll fly away, Oh Glory; I'll fly away (in the morning). When I die, hallelujah, by and by, I'll fly away." When the ordeal was over, I realized that I had actually enjoyed it and had not seriously embarrassed myself.

These singings, some fifty years ago, remain the closest I have yet come to feeling at ease with organized religion. The songs moved me. I felt the power of the religious inspiration embodied in the lyrics of such hymns as "Amazing Grace," which I learned later had been written in the 1770s by the Englishman John Newton, a captain of a slave ship who experienced a "great deliverance" during a horrible storm at sea and changed his ways after surviving the storm. "I'll Fly Away" was written in the 1930s by the Oklahoma-born song-writer Albert E. Brumley, who later admitted that his inspiration came one day while working in the cotton field and imagining flying away from the endless rows of cotton.

The communal act of singing felt right, as did the "good Christian fellowship" and the home cooking spread out on tables for all to enjoy. I realize now that part of what I felt was a deep kinship with these sturdy, hard-working farmers and our common ancestors back through time. Harboring no illusions that life was easy, they needed to believe that rewards for a hard life well lived would come in the after-life: "Just a few more weary days and then, I'll fly away. To a land where joys will never end, I'll fly away." Joys will never end? There must be gospel music singings "on God's celestial shore."

The editorial staff of *Houston History* would like to thank Barbara Eaves for her tireless devotion to the magazine. Barbara not only gathers and writes the news on a regular basis, she acts as our marketer, photographer, bookstore liaison, and all-around good will ambassador. Barbara, we appreciate all of your help!

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EDITORIAL POLICY

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COVER PHOTO: *In 1958, while pastor at Hibbard Memorial Baptist Church, John Osteen experienced baptism in the Holy Ghost. Since most Southern Baptists rejected the charismatic gifts, Osteen resigned and started Lakewood Church in 1959. With approximately 100 members, simple surroundings in an East Houston feed store marked Lakewood's early years.*
Photo courtesy of Lakewood Church.

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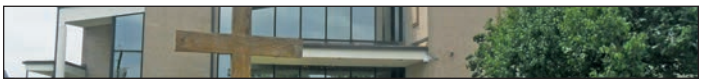

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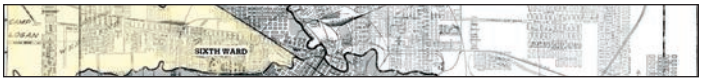

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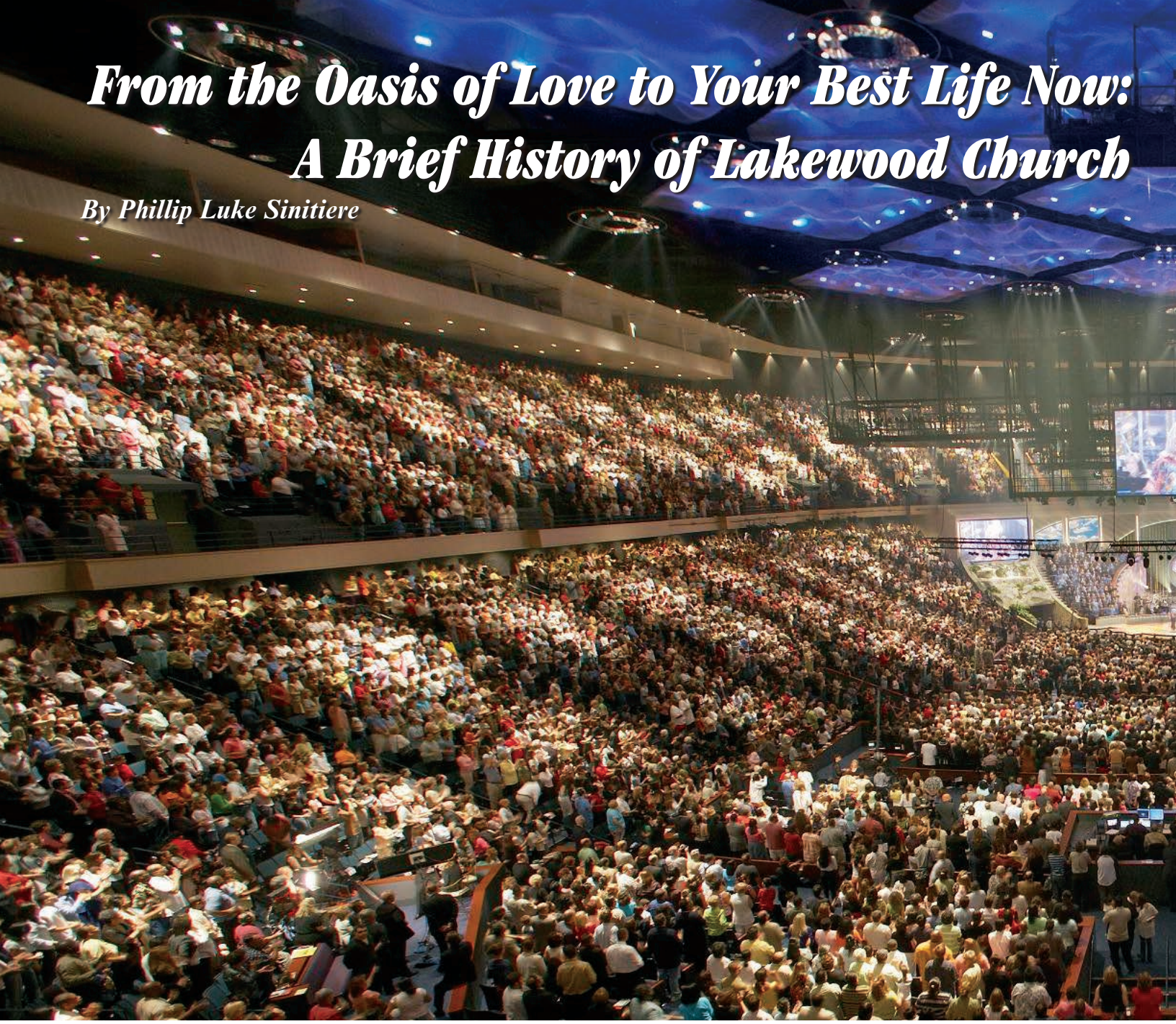
From the Oasis of Love to Your Best Life Now: A Brief History of Lakewood Church

By Phillip Luke Sinitiere



Houston is known for its leading role in energy, oil, and medicine. Texas' largest city is also the home of Joel Osteen and Lakewood Church. One of the city's most ubiquitous features is its megachurches—large, Protestant places of worship with over 2,000 regular attendees. Houston is home to over fifty megachurches, and of the largest twenty-five megachurches in the United States, Houston claims three with Lakewood Church headlining the list. If, as Rice sociologist Stephen Klienberg claims, Houston is the "city of the future," then Houston may well be the megachurch capital of twenty-first century metropolitan areas.[1]

This article presents a brief history of Lakewood Church, currently the nation's largest megachurch with nearly 50,000 regular attendees. Dubbed the "Oasis of Love" when its founding pastor John Osteen was alive, within the last decade—particularly upon the publication of *Your Best Life Now* (2004)—the name Lakewood Church has become synonymous with Joel Osteen. Journalists have chronicled the rise of the "smiling preacher," a designation popularized in 2005 by *Washington Post* writer Lois Romano. Talk shows such as *Larry King Live*, *The View*, and *Piers Morgan* further established the Joel Osteen brand. And Joel's three *New York Times* best sellers helped to disseminate his message of encouragement and positive thinking.[2]

Paving the way for Joel's ascendency, John Osteen established a reputation as a fiery preacher, impassioned evangelist, charitable giver, and prolific writer. In addition to serving his Houston congregation, John held preaching revivals across the world. Remarkably, John authored over fifty books and edited two magazines, *Praise* and *Manna.* Understanding John Osteen's Lakewood Church as part of his six-decade ministry puts Joel's meteoric rise in historical context while chronicling an important chapter in Houston's religious history.

After contract negotiations and a Houston City Council vote, Lakewood Church moved into the former Compaq Center in July 2005. Lakewood Church seats 16,000 people and a typical weekend welcomes nearly 50,000 attendees. In May 2010, Lakewood completed the purchase of its property for $7.5 million. Photo courtesy of Lakewood Church.

FINDING FAITH IN FORT WORTH AND THE HOLY SPIRIT IN HOUSTON

It was 1939. World War II commenced with Hitler's blitzkrieg invasion of Poland. African American singer Billie Holiday recorded "Strange Fruit," a haunting song about the brutality of lynching. The classic film T*he Wizard of Oz* appeared in theatres. And John Steinbeck published his Depression-era, Pulitzer Prize winning novel *Grapes of Wrath*, capturing the rugged realities of economic calamity.

In 1939, John Osteen, a seventeen-year-old theatre employee and frequent nightclub patron, found an anchor for his wandering heart. After the patient prodding and faithful evangelism of a boyhood friend named Sam Martin, Osteen recalled in an autobiography, *Rivers of Living Water* (1975), that at a Southern Baptist church in Fort Worth, "I surrendered all to the Lord Jesus and passed from death into life. I became a new creature in Christ Jesus." In another autobiographical testimony in 1977, Osteen claimed that as a teenager he was "living for the world," but upon considering the possibility of his eternal future responded to an alter call and "gave Jesus Christ my heart."[3]

John Osteen's conversion in 1939 took him to churches and other venues throughout the U.S. where he would preach, asking others to find faith in Jesus. A committed Baptist, Osteen's newfound faith proved inspirational on other levels. He completed a bachelor's degree at John Brown University, and his 1944 Master's thesis at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary explored the formalities of the Baptist Sunday morning service and formulated a strategy for Christian education curriculum. Osteen applied

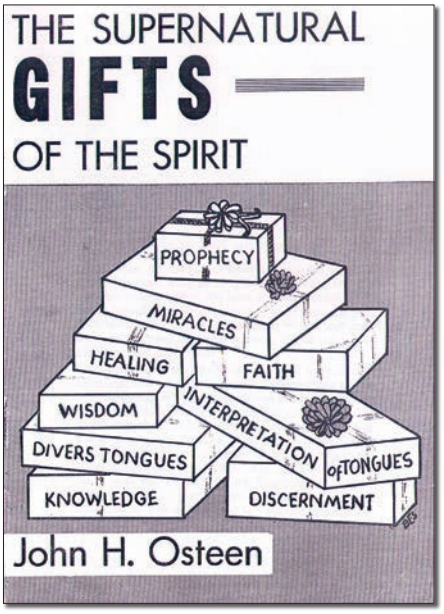
these insights as an assistant pastor at First Baptist Church in San Diego, then in the late 1940s as a minister at First Baptist Church in Hamlin, Texas. During Osteen's tenure in Hamlin, church membership increased by 400 people and nearly 150 members were baptized. A deacon remarked that Osteen was "sound in doctrine, humble and always willing to be led of the Lord." Osteen left Hamlin in 1948 to become a traveling preacher, inaugurating a lifelong itinerancy. But a year later, he quickly found steady employment as pastor at Central Baptist Church in Baytown, Texas.[4]

Success marked Osteen's tenure. He expanded Central Baptist's Christian education program and classroom space in addition to inaugurating a building program that resulted in the construction of an 800-seat sanctuary. Moreover, Osteen played a leading administrative role in the San Jacinto Baptist Association from 1950-1955. He served on multiple missionary committees, including a program focused on evangelism in Mexico. Osteen left Central Baptist in 1956, his resignation likely the result of marital unrest that led to a divorce. He nevertheless continued to minister in official capacities in the late 1950s. At Hibbard Memorial Baptist Church, Osteen added a new building, and under his preaching membership had soared to nearly 1,000. However, new and ecstatic religious experiences in 1958 along with modifications in theological beliefs led to Osteen's resignation. The following year Osteen founded Lakewood Church.[5] *(See cover photo and caption on p.1)*

The first daughter of John and Dodie Osteen entered the world in 1958 with what appeared insurmountable health problems. Both doctors and parents feared Lisa would never have full mobility of her limbs nor live at full mental and cognitive capacities. "When our little girl was born we saw immediately she was not a normal child," Osteen wrote in 1961, "We thought her neck was broken. She couldn't hold up her head. She couldn't hold her arms up. She couldn't hold her legs up. She was just a little blob of quivering flesh." In desperation, John started to study the concept of physical healing in the New Testament and began to imagine the possibility that Lisa could be healed. In time, Lisa began to lead an active, normal life, something Osteen attributed to divine influence and supernatural activity. These changing convictions, which contrasted sharply with Southern Baptist teaching, proved instrumental in Osteen experiencing what he called "baptism of the Holy Ghost." After reading the New Testament account of Pentecost in Acts 2, at a prayer retreat in Houston, Osteen exhibited glossolalia. This term refers to speaking in tongues, and is a defining religious experience for Pentecostal, or charismatic Christians. Osteen's emerging charismatic Christianity began to reshape his sermons and books, which largely focused on speaking in tongues and offering reports of physical healing. Osteen brought this message to his church in Houston, and, in time, traveled far and wide to teach about spiritual power.[6]

"PENTECOST IS NOT A DENOMINATION BUT AN EXPERIENCE FROM GOD FOR EVERYONE"

Attaining more flexibility, John Osteen began to operate outside of a denominational framework. Although he had been preaching for nearly two decades, in 1961 Osteen left Lakewood Church to pastor Marvin Crow and began to travel the world. He held revival meetings in India, Europe, the Philippines, and Mexico. He plugged into existing neopentecostal preaching networks, collaborating with Tulsa-based healing evangelists such as T. L. Osborn and Oral Roberts. Osteen published several articles in Osborn's ministry magazine *Faith Digest* throughout 1961 and 1962. He pledged support for Osborn's Juarez, Mexico, preaching tour and discussed Osborn's revival in Houston. In these articles Osteen revealed that Osborn's book *Healing the Sick* "showed [me] how to believe" in divine healing in relation to his daughter's health concerns. So Osteen was excited to host Osborn in Houston; he longed for Osborn's message to take root in a city he believed was overly concerned with "wealth and sophistication." "Thousands of other attractions beckoned nightly," Osteen observed, "for the attention of the Gospel hardened multitudes in this great city." Osteen was not disappointed. "I was trembling with emotion as th[e] first service ended," he said. "The mighty Word of God had its effect anew upon me" as Baptists and Methodists experienced healing, including members from Osteen's former Baytown church. Not only did *Faith Digest* introduce an unknown Houston healing evangelist to readers, but Osteen's articles, under Osborn's ministry, further legitimated his place among neopentecostals, which historian David Edwin Harrell calls "new breeds."[7]



One of John Osteen's earliest publications. Complementing the contents of his magazine Praise, *Osteen's books published in the early 1960s emphasized healing, speaking in tongues, and other charismatic gifts.* Photo by author.

Much like other independent ministers, Osteen established his own evangelistic agency that distributed materials, solicited donations, and organized preaching revivals. Between 1961 and 1964, for example, Osteen published five books on the work of the Holy Spirit and divine healing. In many of these early works Osteen interweaved his own personal transformation from a rational-minded Southern Baptist to passionate charismatic. The John H. Osteen Evangelistic Association began to distribute *Praise*, a bimonthly periodical. Osteen often reminded readers, as he did on the fall 1964 cover: "Pentecost is Not a Denomination but An Experience from God for Everyone (Acts 2:39)."[8]

In addition to Osteen's publishing ventures, his impassioned, mature preaching impressed established minis-

John and Dodie Osteen often ministered together at Lakewood Church and throughout the world. Dodie remains a formidable presence at Lakewood by leading a weekly healing service, speaking at "Evening of Hope" events, and sharing her testimony of divine healing. Photo courtesy of Lakewood Church.

ters. His horizons widened further when he met Demos Shakarian, the founder and leader of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (FGBMFI). Shakarian founded the FGBMFI in the 1950s to provide a place of worship, fellowship, and encouragement for working men and women of Pentecostal conviction. Osteen first met Shakarian through Houston businessman A. C. Sorelle, who sent Osteen to an FGBMFI meeting in Los Angeles. In the summer of 1963, the FGBMFI held its annual convention at the Shamrock Hotel in Houston. Osteen soon became a regular speaker at FGBMFI meetings and continued his involvement with the organization into the 1980s.[9]

Achieving national stature in post-World War II charismatic circles throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Osteen published a dozen books and Lakewood Church expanded its worship space twice. In 1972, Lakewood's sanctuary grew to seat 500, and in 1979, the church expanded to accommodate 5,000 members. This exponential growth was a sign of things to come.[10]

THE OASIS OF LOVE

The growth of Lakewood Church in the 1980s mirrored the prosperity associated with Houston's oil boom. John Osteen became a televangelist, and by the decade's end, when Houston's oil fortunes plummeted, Lakewood opened a new sanctuary. Finally, the "Oasis of Love," as Lakewood became known in the 1980s, emerged as one of the leading churches in Word of Faith Movement (WOFM).[11]

John added another family member to Lakewood's operations when Joel left Oral Roberts University in 1982 to help his father start a television ministry. John's friendship with televangelist Oral Roberts proved useful as a team of Roberts's producers assisted the church in establishing a presence in local, national, and international television markets. John became a fixture on local religious television. A marketing campaign, extensive mailing list, and distribution networks allowed the dissemination of Osteen's messages at home and abroad. But it was often Houstonians who most felt the impact of his television ministry. For example, Osteen's message resonated with Houston federal judge and Democrat Woodrow B. Seals, a committed and influential layperson at St. Stephen's United Methodist Church. "My dear Brother Osteen," Seals began an April 1987 letter; "I turned on the television Saturday night while I was preparing my church school lesson for Sunday [and] you were walking out to that small pulpit and starting a sermon." Despite a condescending tone about the working-class neighborhood where Lakewood was located, Seals found Osteen's sermon meaningful. "Like everyone in Houston, I have noticed those bumper stickers, 'Lakewood Church—Oasis of Love,' for two or three years." Seals continued, "I have always wondered how anyone could start a church out where you started yours. But after hearing your sermon Saturday night…I agreed with everything you said, and I especially appreciated what you said two or three times, 'Tell the untold and reach the unreachable.'" Seals again mentioned the Lakewood bumper stickers as a testimony to an active and vibrant church. "[T]he Lord is raising up people like you who will save the world," he said.[12]

Through the magazine Praise*, the John H. Osteen Evangelistic Association documented the post-World War II neopentecostal revival during the early 1960s. John reported association news, advertised books, and provided stories of baptism in the Holy Ghost and divine healing.* Courtesy of Holy Spirit Research Center, Oral Roberts University.

Lakewood's numerical growth in the 1980s necessitated the construction of a new building in 1987 to seat over 8,000 members. The dedication ceremonies lasted a week in early April 1988. A full-page ad in the *Houston Post* featured distinguished invitees such as Mayor Kathy Whitmire, Congressman Jack Fields, along with leading Charismatics Oral Roberts, Kenneth Hagin, and T. L. Osborn. Prominent Houston clergy who made the ad included First United Methodist's William H. Hinson and Second Baptist's Edwin Young. Coupled with the publication of Osteen's two dozen books in the 1980s, Lakewood became Houston's premier

Lakewood Church as it looked during the 1970s. The church grew significantly under John's ministry, expanding its worship space twice, so that by 1979 the sanctuary could accommodate 5,000 members. Photo courtesy of Lakewood Church.

church and served as a model megachurch across the nation and throughout the world.[13]

Lakewood Church's growth allowed John to launch the Lakewood Bible Institute (LBI) in the mid-1980s. An unaccredited school devoted to biblical training from a charismatic perspective, LBI offered classes for laypeople in New Testament, Old Testament, principles of Bible study, healing, spiritual growth, faith, conversion, and prayer. In addition to daily chapel services, students were required to attend all of Lakewood's missions and pastor's conferences, and taping of Lakewood broadcasts. LBI promised that students "would learn how to apply the life-changing truths of God's Word in a practical way . . . you'll enjoy Spirit-filled services while you learn in a supernatural atmosphere of worship, teaching, and world evangelism." LBI also provided unique access "to observe firsthand the pastoral ministry of John Osteen and learn from his powerful message of faith and great love." Osteen served as LBI's president and emphasized practical application of religious knowledge. While LBI did not survive the 1980s, it served as one manifestation of Osteen's focus on Christian education.[14]

In the 1980s, Osteen family circumstances tested nerves and stretched faith. The family's faith in redemption and belief in second chances fueled persistent convictions that troubles would always turn around for the better. Lisa Osteen, one of her father's assistant ministers, underwent marital difficulties that ended in divorce. Raised on her father's teaching, Lisa turned tragedy into triumph by publishing *Six Lies That the Devil Uses to Destroy Marriages* (1988). This book attributed marital strife to demonic influence and counseled regular, consistent prayer as a remedy. Lisa taught this philosophy under Lakewood's marriage enrichment program.

Survival also marked Dodie Osteen's life. The mother of five children and a regular minister by her husband's side, Dodie was diagnosed with cancer in 1981, and doctors gave her only a short time to live. Just as the couple prayed for their daughter, John and Dodie's charismatic faith shaped the prayerful response to this situation. Medical professionals eventually gave Dodie a clean bill of health, unable to find cancer. Relieved, the Osteens attributed these medical reports to divine intervention and passages about healing found in the Bible. In her autobiography, *Healed of Cancer* (1986), Dodie wrote, "The Word of God is extremely important to people who are fighting a battle with their health, for often it's the only hope they have. I know I would have died if it had not been for the Bible." Dodie also linked her healing to verbal confession of Bible verses. "Day by day," she remembered, "I gained hope and encouragement from the precious promises that God revealed to me through His Word. I clung to my Bible and its healing promises." While the Osteens emphasized the spiritual dimensions of her bout with cancer, the family's Houston residence proved fortuitous as increased funding and research allowed doctors to "make cancer history" at M. D. Anderson Cancer Center.[15]

FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

Lakewood Church's history took another historical turn in January 1999 when John Osteen died of a heart attack. John had often asked Joel to preach, yet Joel routinely dismissed the suggestion, wishing to focus on the church's behind-the-scenes duties. "I always loved working in production," Joel reflected in 2004, "with the cameras and editing and all that, even when I was a teenager." Although Lakewood's ministerial leadership team ordained Joel in 1992, he never expected to assume pastoral responsibilities. In the midst of his 1999 illnesses, John asked his son once again to fill

in one Sunday; again Joel adamantly refused. Joel wrote in *Your Best Life Now*:

> *Daddy's words kept flitting through my mind, and with no other provocation, I began to have an overwhelming desire to preach. I didn't really understand it at the time, but I knew I had to do something. Keep in mind, I had never even prepared a sermon, let alone considered standing up in front of thousands of people to speak…. I studied all week and prepared a message, and the next Sunday I spoke at Lakewood Church for the first time.*

Not only did the congregation welcome the newer Osteen with open arms and rapturous applause, his siblings Lisa Comes and Paul Osteen, also ministers at Lakewood, quickly confirmed his ministerial calling. Reticent to embrace the ministerial task of his father, Osteen submitted to what he now believes is his life's calling.[16]

Building on his father's legacy, Joel retained aspects of John's ministerial vision. For example, Joel situated a rotating globe behind the pulpit at Lakewood, signifying the church's commitment to evangelism and missionary outreach. Joel has maintained the "This is my Bible" confession at the beginning of services, a Lakewood tradition John started in the 1980s. "My dad's whole message was that you can rise higher," Joel writes, "you can overcome, and with God all things are possible. He lived it out before us, and for more than forty years he pastored Lakewood Church with great love and faithfulness." Joel's calling has transcended John's work too. Lakewood experienced exponential growth on many levels—virtually embodying sociologist Joe Feagin's description of Houston as a "free enterprise city." Most notably, Osteen helped to obtain an initial lease of the Compaq Center for $12 million over thirty years, and the church agreed to spend approximately $90 million to renovate the former sports arena, which seats 16,000 people. In May 2010, Lakewood completed the purchase of its property for $7.5 million. Moving from its working-class roots to the upscale Greenway Plaza area, Lakewood church opened in its new location in July 2005. "For nearly thirty years they've crowned champions in the sports field in this building," preached Joel at Lakewood's grand opening service, "but I believe for the next thirty years we can crown people champions in life. We're going to let them know that they are victors and not victims, we're going to let them know they can do all things through Christ." While John once said he'd eventually preach in the Astrodome, his son fulfilled that dream on a much larger scale.[17]

Not only has Lakewood Church increased in numbers, the dissemination of Joel's message has followed publication paths blazed by his father. To date Osteen has published three *New York Times* best sellers. Joel's wife and Lakewood co-pastor, Victoria Osteen, has found her niche as well, with a self-help book for women along with a series of children's books. In 2012, Lisa Osteen Comes, Joel's sister, will publish her first book in over two decades. From one generation to the next, the family's message of faith, forgiveness, and second chances has impacted Houston and the world.

The creation of "Evening with Joel" events in 2004 marks another way that Joel expanded Lakewood's reach. Regularly sold out, these events consist of a concert by Lakewood's musicians, Dodie's testimony of healing (or one by another special guest), a recitation of Lakewood's history, and Joel's message of God's plan for self-improvement. The inaugural event took place at Madison Square Garden in 2004, the site of Billy Graham's 1957 revivals. More recently, the monthly services were renamed "Evening of Hope," with well-publicized events at Dodger Stadium, Yankee Stadium, and, in early 2011, in Jerusalem. Other "Evening of Hope" events took place in Killeen (2006) and Corpus Christi (2011). Joel succeeded in establishing the camp meeting of the twenty-first century by holding monthly services at arenas in select U.S. cities and around the world.[18]

While Lakewood maintains the multiracial composition that John ushered in during the 1970s after Houston's civil rights struggles, acquiring the Compaq Center allowed the church to expand its thriving Spanish ministry. In a strategic move in 2002, Joel hired Latin Grammy Award winner Marcos Witt. An accomplished musician and talented speaker, Witt was an established presence in Latin America who expanded Lakewood's Spanish service. Born in San Antonio, Witt grew up in Durango, Mexico, where his parents worked as missionaries. After Witt's father died, his mother remarried and continued to preach in Mexico. With a name many Spanish speakers recognize, Witt rarely gets enough credit for solidifying Lakewood's presence in Houston—particularly since Houston is a hub for Latin American immigration. Below the surface, Witt's hire had a deeper connection to Lakewood Church's history. In the 1960s, Witt's parents spoke at Lakewood about plans to

Known as the "smiling preacher," Joel Osteen's messages emphasize self improvement, second chances, and faith that God can change one's circumstances. Joel's teaching is broadcast on major television networks, available on iTunes, and published in three New York Times *best sellers:* Your Best Life Now *(2004),* Become a Better You *(2007), and* It's Your Time *(2009).*

Photo courtesy of Lakewood Church.

travel to Mexico, and John Osteen was "stirred and moved" to help with a $600 offering toward their missionary endeavors. Witt stated, "The seed that Lakewood sowed in that ministry lives to this day." Witt is also an author who writes about Christian leadership, music, and spiritual growth.[19]

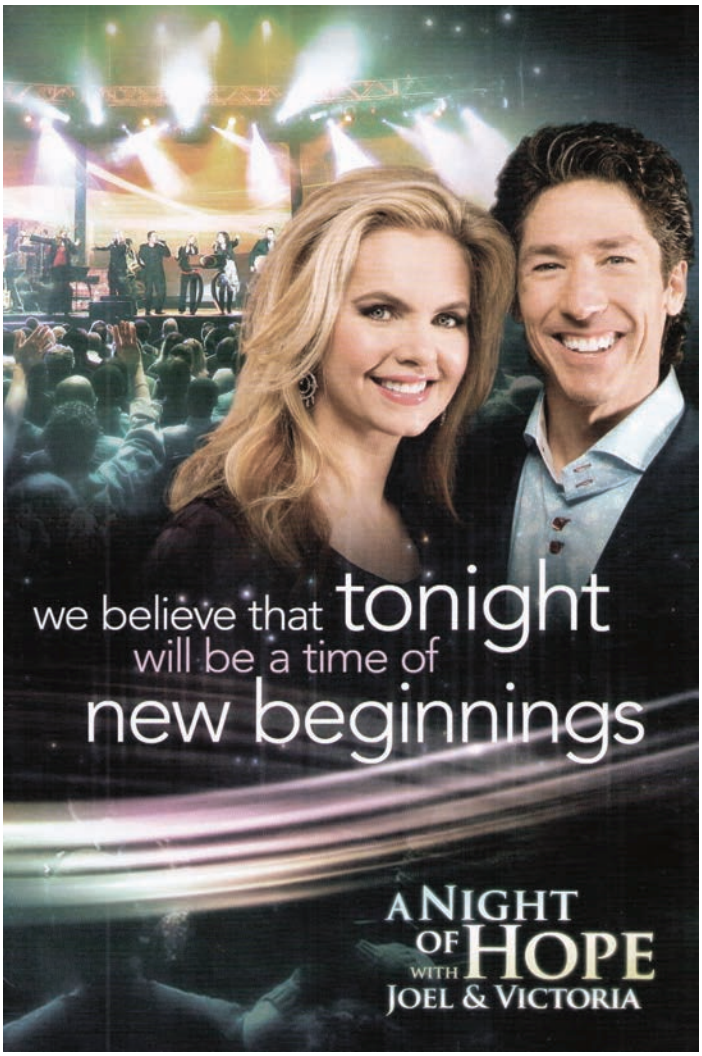
Despite these successes, the growth Lakewood Church has experienced under Joel has also precipitated a flurry of criticism. Critics spoke up most forcefully beginning in 2005 after Joel's appearance on *Larry King Live*. The extent to which critics analyze Osteen's ministry attests to his popularity, and offers an alternative way to document his rise to fame. Moreover, it complicates the public image of the smiling preacher: Osteen is not passive when it comes to his critics. Armed with determination and biblical passages, Osteen responds by invoking the ministries of the Apostle Paul and Jesus Christ.[20]

When pressed about the eternal fate of non-Christians on *Larry King Live*, Joel's answer that it was in God's hands left evangelical viewers unsatisfied, suspicious, and angry. Many balked that Joel did not emphasize the Christian claim that salvation centers on Jesus Christ. In the days that followed, Osteen received numerous phone calls, questions, and complaints regarding his statements. After reading the program's transcript, Osteen posted a letter on his website apologizing for his unclear statements. He stated categorically his convictions about the evangelical doctrine of salvation. "It was never my desire or intention to leave any doubt as to what I believe and Whom I serve," Osteen wrote. "I believe with all my heart that it is only through Christ that we have hope in eternal life. I regret and sincerely apologize that I was unclear on the very thing in which I have dedicated my life….I believe that Jesus Christ alone is the only way to salvation." Chastised and true to his philosophy of ministry, Osteen promised, "I will use this as a learning experience and believe that God will ultimately use it for my good and His glory." Osteen observed, "I am comforted by the fact that He sees my heart and knows my intentions. I am so thankful that I have friends, like you, who are willing to share their concerns with me." The following December, Osteen again appeared on *Larry King Live*. King noted the controversy surrounding Osteen's earlier comments, in effect giving the humbled minister a second chance. "I believe that Jesus is the only way to heaven," Osteen reiterated, "I believe in a personal relationship with Christ…the foundation of the Christian faith is that Christ came as a sacrifice so that we can receive forgiveness…So I do believe that. It's the foundation of our faith." Despite Osteen's clarification of his beliefs, critics continue to lambast his message as shallow. Evangelicals such as John MacArthur, Hank Hanegraaff, and Michael Horton tackle Osteen's message in sermons and books, cautioning followers to steer clear of Osteen's "cotton candy gospel."[21]

Closer to home, theologian, minister, and seminary professor J. B. Hixson is one of Osteen's foremost Houston critics. Preaching at Brenham Bible Church just outside Houston, he is a dean and professor of systematic theology at Grace Theological Seminary and utilizes this area of expertise to analyze Osteen.[22]

Hixson's self-published book, *Getting the Gospel Wrong: The Evangelical Crisis No One Is Talking About* (2008), is a study of evangelical ideas about salvation. Hixson decries the WOFM because the prosperity gospel "elevates personal prosperity to a place of centrality in the gospel." It emphasizes the power of faith itself rather than the object of faith in evangelical teaching, Jesus Christ. "Because reaching one's *full potential* is couched in terms of a declarative attitude of the heart," writes Hixson, "the reader is inclined to think that eternal salvation is likewise built upon the power of positive thinking." According to Osteen, one can find *peace* and *happiness* in life simply *by asking Jesus to come into his heart and making Him his Lord and Savior*." Therefore, in Hixson's view, Osteen "mischaracterizes faith" because he calls it a "conception of the mind" rather than an act of trust in an object of faith.[23]

Osteen's most persistent critics highlight Joel's appearance on *Larry King Live*. By singling out Joel's missteps in 2005, they overlook subsequent statements that clarified a commitment to the Christian gospel. Osteen's critics also underestimate change over time that has impacted movements, institutions, and individuals throughout America's religious history.



"Evening of Hope" flier from Corpus Christi event (February 2011). Started in 2004, "Evening of Hope" events consist of a concert by Lakewood's musicians, Dodie's testimony of healing, a recitation of Lakewood's history, and Joel's message of God's plan for self-improvement. Photo by author.

While routinely queried about his critics, Joel has addressed them most directly in his second book, *Become a Better You*. In the chapter "Handling Criticism," Osteen replies to his critics. "Every one of us will have times when we are criticized," Osteen admits, "sometimes fairly, but more often unfairly, creating stress in our hearts and minds and tension in our relationships." By and large, criticism does not come "in the spirit of blessing" but "with an intentional sting." He teaches that as one becomes more prominent—presumably because of "God's increase"—one can expect more criticism, which often comes from jealousy. "[I]f someone chooses to misinterpret my message or my motives, there's nothing I can do about it anyhow," Osteen contends. "Now I don't let my critics upset me or steal my joy. I know most of the time it's not about me. The success God has given me stirs up the jealousy in them." For example, Osteen wrote of the criticism he received locally during talks for Lakewood's move into the Compaq Center, remarking that a businessman said, "It will be a cold day in hell before Lakewood Church gets the Compaq Center." Osteen retorted, "When I heard about that remark, I just shook it off. I knew our destiny was not tied to one dissenter. I knew that remark was nothing more than a distraction." Osteen writes that "I realize that not everybody is going to understand me. I also recognize that it is not my job to spend all my time trying to convince [my critics] to change their minds. I'm called to plant a seed of hope in people's hearts. I'm not called to explain every minute facet of Scripture or to expound on deep theological doctrines or disputes that don't touch where real people live. My gifting is to encourage, to challenge, and to inspire."[24]

Hired in 2002, Marcos Witt has greatly expanded Lakewood Church's Spanish ministry. An accomplished musician and Latin Grammy Award winner, in addition to pastoral duties, Witt is also an author who writes about Christian leadership, music, and spiritual growth. Photo courtesy of Lakewood Church.

Osteen finds the life of Jesus and the witness of the Apostle Paul meaningful for dealing with criticism. Osteen recalls that Jesus counted as friends tax collectors and sinners, and as a result was often misunderstood and therefore "perpetually criticized for doing good…Jesus didn't change in a futile attempt to fit into everybody's mold. He didn't try to explain Himself and make everybody understand Him; He stayed focused and fulfilled His destiny." Turning to the Apostle Paul, Osteen noted that other teachers became jealous of the "great crowds following him" and "ran him out of town." Paul responded to his critics, argues Osteen, by staying confident that he was using God's call on his life to the best of his ability and "shak[ing] the dust off his feet." Osteen invokes the Hebrew prophet Isaiah to defend himself, citing the verse "No weapon formed against us will prosper, but every tongue raised against us in judgment, You will show to be in the wrong." Again, Osteen appeals to the reality of judgment, but advises the criticized to "stay on the high road and keep doing your best" as "God will pour out His favor on you, in spite of your critics."[25]

CONCLUSION

This short history of Lakewood Church highlights important developments in the congregation's early years, particularly in the context of Houston's emergence as a leading Gulf Coast city. It documents the energy with which John pursued his life's mandate to teach, to preach, and to write. Although based in Houston, John was a prominent member of leading neopentecostal networks that brought him into the global orbit of the WOFM. While John embodied certain elements of the boundless enthusiasm of Houston's free market philosophy—and certainly benefitted from its money—the church's original location in an east Houston working-class neighborhood meant that the church welcomed many who experienced the underside of the city's economic growth. Within this crucible of capital, competition, and conflict, Lakewood Church emerged as a multiracial, charismatic megachurch. While the church continued to grow during the 1980s and 1990s, coming of age in the twenty-first century when energy and medicine drove the city's economy, Joel's vision helped to situate Lakewood in a city and a world defined by technological networks and globalization. His message of God's plan for positive thinking and self-improvement—not unlike Norman Vincent Peale's message of positive thinking during the Cold War—offers predictability in unstable, complicated times. If Houston is indeed the city of the future, the religious life embodied in its megachurches (along with other sites of spiritual importance) is integral to understanding the larger meaning of metropolitan areas as the twenty-first century continues to unfold.

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J. W. E. AIREY, THE COWBOY PRIEST

By Anne Sloan

This image of Rev. Airey, wearing his traditional black suit and Roman collar with his cowboy boots and sombrero and sitting astride his horse comfortably whittling, captures the essence of this remarkable clergyman. He received the horse as a gift from his buddies at the Sam Houston Whittler's Association and named it Feedlebaum. He kept the horse in a make-shift stable behind the Parish Hall and pastured it on nearby Heights vacant lots. Photo courtesy of J. W. E. Airey, Jr.

Few if any Episcopal priests wear cowboy boots and sombreros with their Roman collars. Yet, for Jim Airey, who served as the rector of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Houston Heights from 1934 to 1944, boots were as much a part of his dress as his church vestments and collar. Parishioners called him the "Cowboy Priest," but an examination of his life reveals a man with far more than an affectation for boots.

Born on January 20, 1904, in Shreveport, Louisiana, Airey must have grown up admiring the idealized cowboys he saw as a teenager at the movie theaters and the western milieu that surrounded them. Young people in the 1920s found Tin Lizzies, ragtime, and movie queens fascinating, but for Airey it was horses, western gear, and figures like Buffalo Bill, Quanah Parker, and Kit Carson.

Airey's interest in frontier life was well established before he became a priest, and this avocation shaped his ministry. After his ordination, people often commented, "Why, he doesn't seem like a preacher."[1]

A journalist called this the greatest compliment a layperson could give a clergyman; but Jim Airey, in fact, stood out as a revered church leader, delegate to the General Convention of the Church, and chairman of several diocesan committees in addition to his duties at St. Andrew's. When he died, The *Texas Churchman* obituary stated, "Airey's place in the Diocese and in Houston will be almost impossible to fill."[2]

Jim Airey's first passion probably stemmed from his exposure to vaudeville where he presumably learned the art of magic and ventriloquism. He had become accomplished in both these professions before he entered graduate school at The University of the South in Sewanee on a scholarship. He paid his living expenses by staging shows in Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama, going onstage as Merlin the Magician and performing his ventriloquism act with his dummy "Oscar" that he carried in a black suitcase. The handsome, six-foot-tall Airey performed in Texas and Louisiana in the summers. He chose a career in magic and became an assistant to the era's best magician, The Great Thurston, who operated the country's largest traveling show.

A chance visit with the Texas Episcopal bishop, Clinton S. Quin, interrupted Airey's career choice and changed his life. In 1927, Quin so impressed Airey that he gave up his magician's dreams and turned to the church. Anyone who knew the dynamic and charismatic bishop can easily understand how Quin worked his own magic to persuade Airey to give up his. If only a record existed of that meeting between the senior churchman and the neophyte theological student, two larger-than-life figures who had both mastered the art of persuasion. Airey may have been swayed by his mother's desire for him to enter the Episcopal priesthood. Was the opportunity to move to Texas also a factor in Airey's decision? Airey had never lived in Texas, a center for Western culture.

By 1929, Airey had been ordained and installed as the rector of two churches, sixteen miles apart, at Columbus and Eagle Lake. Airey organized a Boy Scout Troop in

Jim Airey poses with an unknown Indian, probably in Oklahoma. The man to the right is the famous showman Major I. Lillie "Pawnee Bill," Airey's adopted father.

Photo courtesy of archives of Dana Butler, Mason, Texas.

Columbus and became leader of the Eagle Lake troop. His first scout project provides an indication that he would not forego showmanship as a cleric. Airey rented three elephants, a camel, a lion, and three other caged animals from a nearby circus to stage a "Boy Scout Circus." They played in nearby towns, and Airey laughed, "We didn't make any money, but it was a wonderful experience."[3]

In 1931, Airey went to Trinity Church in Longview, helping this mission achieve parish status. While there, he met and married Johanna Guelich. He also met Major I. Lillie and his wife, visiting them on their ranch in Pawnee, Oklahoma. "Pawnee Bill," as Lillie was known, had a partnership with Buffalo Bill and later formed his own Wild West show. Lillie "adopted" Airey and taught him how to handle a pistol. During his stay at Lillie's ranch, an Olympic champion, Thurmond Randle, who later became president of the National Rifle Association (NRA), taught Airey to shoot a rifle. A cowboy movie star taught Airey to rope, and Tommy Burns, former light-heavyweight champion taught him to box.[4] Airey happily acquired all of the physical skills of which he had dreamed.

In 1934, Bishop Quin called Airey to St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Houston Heights. He arrived at Quin's office wearing his customary garb, a Roman collar, sombrero, cowboy boots, and hair to his shoulders frontier style. Quin reportedly told him to get a haircut.[5]

St. Andrew's had no rectory for their clergyman, but Airey accepted the job anyway and moved his wife and two small children into the second floor of the Parish Hall. These were cramped, miserable quarters—the roof leaked, and rats and cockroaches ran rampant.[6] Airey's family would live there for the ten years he served as rector of St. Andrew's. More important to Airey than his family's comfort were his vision of a clergyman's duties and continuing his activities as a showman and frontiersman. Houston provided a splendid arena for his talents.

A year later, in 1935, nineteen-year-old freelance journalist Walter Cronkite wrote an article that appeared in the *Houston Press* discussing the many hobbies of the Episcopal minister. Included are a photo of Airey in his clerical collar and a photo of him wearing full western dress with Santos Sandoval, governor of the Taos Pueblo Indians, and Pawnee Bill. Cronkite praises Airey's showmanship and his work with the Boy Scouts. He concludes by stating, Airey's "scope of interests are as wide as the universe but his work as a cog in the spiritual machinery of the Episcopal church is still closest to his heart."[7]

Airey's clerical status in Houston offered the chance to combine his diverse interests with his religious convictions. Over the next five years he became chaplain of the Young Democrats of Texas, Arabia Temple Shrine Circus of Houston, and Houston Yacht Club, in addition to serving as chaplain of the National Frontiersman's Association and national chaplain of the Circus Fans of America. He received lifetime honorary memberships in the Elks and Odd Fellows, became an honorary member of the Rodeo Association of America, and an honorary chief of the Alabama and Coushatta Indians of East Texas.

Within three years, he became friends with several socially prominent Houston businessmen and journalists with whom he founded the Sam Houston Whittler's Association in 1937. Named after the general whom Marquis James described as an "inveterate whittler," the club formed "to keep the ancient and therapeutic art of whittling alive." They chose *Houston Post* columnist Morris Frank as the "Disseminator of Shavings," and Airey as the "Blesser of the Wood."[8]

Airey has just baptized a new St. Andrew's parishioner.

Photo courtesy of St. Andrew's Archives.

Airey preached well-received sermons in his powerful, melodic voice but continued his showmanship. In 1938, Chaplain Airey, acting on behalf of the Shrine Circus, "booked, produced and directed the largest indoor circus that had ever been seen in the Southwest." The newspaper called it a "rousing

financial success." The St. Andrew's Register recorded numerous weddings and funerals for "performers" whose residences are listed as "Big State Shows," "The Auditorium Hotel," and the "Dragon Night Club." A baptism took place at the "Gypsy Campgrounds." He reportedly married film stars Jennifer Jones and Bill Walker. One former parishioner recalls Father Airey's friends often staged shows in a vacant lot on West Nineteenth Street between Rutland and Ashland. According to his son, these visitors usually stayed overnight at the rectory.[9]

The young people of St. Andrew's considered Father Airey their hero, but some parishioners found fault with him, especially the ladies. Three years after arriving at St. Andrew's, Airey had a fifty-foot metal Quonset hut built adjacent to the Parish Hall/Rectory as a Frontiersmen's Museum. Here he housed, along with other artifacts, wax figures he purchased for $1500 from Scout Younger, claiming to be the last of the infamous Younger Gang. The money came from a fall 1938 "Hell's Half Acre Show" Airey held in the Coliseum partnering with a Houston newspaper. St. Andrew's parishioners tired of the museum, which they felt "never helped the church in any way." Despite complaints about their minister known as "Wrangler" or "Cowboy" Airey, the minutes of a special vestry meeting on February 17, 1941, record, "If all the ministers of this Diocese were lined up for our selection of a minister for this parish, we would still choose Mr. Airey."[10]

Airey, on the right at the north end of the Reflection Pool, points to the San Jacinto Monument in the distance at the monument's dedication in 1939.

Photo courtesy of the San Jacinto Museum of History, Houston.

In February 1942, the Frontiersman Museum issue resurfaced when the women of the church wrote to Bishop Quin complaining about the Quonset hut. Among other suggestions, they wanted Airey to move his office into the museum and requested the rectory be moved away from the Parish Hall, which Airey's children used as a playhouse.[11]

Balancing his clerical duties with his other interests proved difficult for Airey. He informed the vestry that he needed his outside activities to supplement his meager salary. In truth, money meant nothing to him; the extra activities brought him pleasure. He loved people and "thought money was valuable only in the good that it would do."

By 1940, the rector of this small Houston church had achieved prominence in the city, state, and nation. His writings included magazine and newspaper articles about pioneer history. He wrote an article for the *Houston Post*, later reprinted in *Frontier Times Magazine*, titled "Is Jesse James Among the Living?" The *Post* referred to him as the life-time chaplain of the National Frontier Association and an "authority on Frontier History."[12] In August 1935, Airey conducted the funeral for a prominent Colorado County resident, Mrs. Bertha Wagner. The *Colorado County Citizen* obituary acknowledges indebtedness to Rev. Mr. Airey for his notes on the "history of this brave and bold pioneer woman of Texas."[13] Elmer Parker, descendant of Comanche Chief Quanah Parker, sent a telegram to Airey on November 5, 1937, regarding his "Dad's surgery in the Kiowa Hospital."

Shown at the dedication of the San Jacinto Monument, held April 20-21, 1939, Airey, on the left, poses with Ariadne and Marguerite Houston, granddaughters of General Sam Houston, Andrew Jackson Houston, and two unidentified men in Indian attire.

Photo courtesy of the San Jacinto Museum of History, Houston.

Airey, seated, with individuals who are probably members of the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe. Dressed in western clothes, Airey's solemn expression may indicate his having been recently named their honorary Chief. Photo courtesy of J. W. E. Airey, Jr.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt wrote a letter addressed to "Reverend J. W. E. Airey, Chaplain, and The National Frontiersman's Association" on October 27, 1937, sending "cordial greetings" to the association members, and trusting "that their forthcoming roundup will be a red letter day in the lives of all lovers of the Old West."[14] *Life* magazine covered the dedication of the San Jacinto Monument in May 1939 and included a photograph of Airey with Sam Houston's granddaughters. The magazine caption states the women, "fluttered timidly in the background" but came forward to be photographed when "they sighted an Indian from a nearby reservation." Airey, an honorary member of the tribe, was photographed with them and identified as "chaplain of the Frontiersmen's Association."[15]

Airey could not adequately support his family and participate in his outside activities on his monthly salary. How did he manage? Airey wore Bishop Quin's hand-me-down vestments and enjoyed the patronage of many wealthy Houstonians. His son recalls the men regularly gave Airey expensive cigars, but Airey gave them away and smoked his Roi-Tan's, not wanting to get used to expensive tobacco. Airey wore the same pair of cowboy boots, which he re-heeled many times. Others customarily compensated Airey for meals and hotel accommodations. Though he accepted these kindnesses, he was known across Houston as one who gladly emptied his pockets for anyone in need.[16]

Airey's love of adventure and horses unfortunately caused his untimely death. In December 1942, he fell from his horse on Heights Boulevard. Riding bareback, Airey pulled back on the reins to control his horse that shied from a car noise, but the horse threw him. Airey fell onto a stake in the ground puncturing his chest and causing irreparable kidney damage.[17] He lingered two years but never recovered and knew his injury was fatal. He died on October 31, 1944, at the age of forty.

Shortly before his death, he penciled a letter on notebook paper to Jerry Werlla, his closest St. Andrew's friend, that provides a poignant glimpse of this complex churchman. He apologizes for the unfinished business he is leaving behind, mentions his terrible pain, and expresses gratitude for "all the good things with which my life has been blessed. I deserved so little and I have had so much." He thanks God for "all of his blessings and especially for the revelation of Himself to me through so many of His children" and calls Paradise "much sweeter than this so precious earth." He asks forgiveness for his "blunders" and concludes by quoting the Twenty-third Psalm.[18]

Airey's death, though not a surprise to the many who had witnessed his decline after the fall, was nonetheless an occasion for great mourning. Bishop Quin conducted the Requiem Eucharist at St. Andrew's on November 2, 1944. Thirty clergymen served as pallbearers. Quin's eulogy in *The Texas Churchman* is especially touching.

> ***While my whole ministry is built on the conviction that life goes on in the new body, I shall miss greatly dear Jim. I believe I never saw quite such a representative outpouring of people as were present at this Burial Service. Every cross section of human life was there, and we record our grateful appreciation for Jim's life among us.***[19]

One newspaper account said Airey's friends numbered in the thousands and praised him as a man "equally at home in the circus or on a cow pony as in the pulpit."[20] At the time of his death, he was trustee for the Diocese serving on the board of trustees for The University of the South.

No one can account for the forces that created this extraordinary man who lived such a furiously paced life. His son vividly remembers after finishing a meal, whether at home, in a parishioner's home, or a restaurant, his father would rise and say, "Well, I hate to eat and run…." A magician, ventriloquist, cowboy, whittler, showman, circus promoter, frontier historian, writer, and dedicated Episcopal clergyman, Airey had no time to waste. How could one man combine talents and interests as varied as these with a pastoral vocation that made his small parish, the Bishop of Texas, and the Diocese so seriously mourn his loss? How could he accomplish all of this in a lifespan of forty years? There seem to be no answers to these questions.

Anne Sloan received her B.A. from the University of Texas at Austin, and her M.A. from the University of Houston. She is a retired Heights businesswoman whose poetry, essays, and articles have appeared in newspapers and national magazines. Her fourth book, *St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Faithfully Serving Houston Heights for 100 years*, was published in November 2010.

Unexpected Adaptability: The Cenacle Sisters Navigate Changing Times

by Jere Pfister

It is not the strongest of the species that survives nor the most intelligent, but rather the one most responsive to change.

—Charles Darwin

A group of Roman Catholic Sisters has greatly influenced most of my adult life by teaching me to meet life's challenges head on. Their example of acceptance of life's realities served as an important guide in my struggle to find meaning as I confronted a world and life that demanded changes in my thinking and ways of being. It may seem unexpected to use the word adaptation and begin an article about a congregation of religious women with a quote from Charles Darwin, but read on to learn about this exceptional group of women.[1]

I first met the Cenacle Sisters at their retreat center in New Orleans in 1961. I was twenty years old, already married for a year, and struggling to find my role in life. I had concerns about being a better Catholic and a good wife. A miscarriage earlier that year caused me great sadness in a world that said, "Don't cry, you'll have plenty of babies." But I knew that this one baby was my specific loss. I needed a place to grieve and learn to trust again.

The retreat was silent. The sisters' religious clothing included pleated caps that surrounded their faces and long veils that trailed down their backs. They looked mysterious as they moved in silent strides and appeared to hover like gentle spirits over the floor. Their long black skirts barely rippled as they moved forward with their short purple capes covering almost immovable shoulders. The sisters sat in a special part of the chapel for the Mass and other times of prayer called the Divine Office.[2] The only man at the retreat was the rather stern priest who gave talks, said the Mass, and served communion. The sisters spoke very little. I found peace and order in the house and gardens—a place apart, a place to heal from the loss of my first pregnancy and to nurture the longing for order and peace in my life apart from my husband and friends.

Srs. Rosemary Reid and Elizabeth Mozina welcome two guests for a regular weekend retreat made possible by the opening of the new Cenacle Retreat Center in 1968.

Photo courtesy of Cenacle Sisters.

In 1987, when I arrived for my first weekend experience at the Houston Cenacle Retreat Center, the sisters greeting me were dressed in blouses with skirts or slacks. I wanted to know more about these sisters, grounded now in sturdy Birkenstocks and SAS tie shoes. Though they wore no makeup or earrings, they had fashionable hair styles. Their only identifiable sign as Religious was the

small gold cross all the sisters wore pinned to their lapels or hung from a gold chain around their necks. The Cenacle Sisters worldwide wear a simple hammered gold square cross with "I came to cast fire upon the earth. Luke 12:49" engraved on the back.

Learning to recognize that particular cross took a while. It took me longer to realize that identifying who was a sister held no relevance for them or me, and longer still to see that they remained as intriguing in secular garb as they had been in those long dresses that gave the illusion of levitation.[3]

In 1996, I began an oral history project with the Cenacle Sisters to capture what many describe as a dying culture. They proved to be natural storytellers. But as I listened and interviewed and dug, I discovered a group of women very much a part of the present culture as they consciously and deliberately allowed their community to evolve into whatever the times and place demanded.

Sr. Emily Katz, one of the first sisters interviewed, was in her eighties, trim and fit with a firm body that she exercised regularly in a health club pool. She had a long Middle-Eastern nose with a slight hook, and she delighted in introducing herself to people by announcing she was born a Jew. Her father was Jewish; her mother, an Irish Catholic, died when Emily was still a child. In her early teen years, she was baptized at her own request. Her favorite stories centered around her childhood and her friend Hannah who introduced her to God.

Sadly, Emily had begun to show the classic signs of dementia by 1996. She made lists to remind herself of her day's activities; but her sense of humor remained intact and she seemed incapable of feeling sorry for herself. As I verified her stories with the other sisters, they would tell wonderful new stories about the Sr. Katz who had headed Cenacle Houses in the East and was educated at Fordham University. She made friends throughout Houston through her connections to the C. G. Jung Center, and the Theresians as well as the Cenacle.[4]

One of Sr. Emily's lay friends told me the following story, which demonstrated the sister's openness and desire to help others:

I was only forty-five, the mother of five children who were still way too young to have me die. I had just had a radical mastectomy. The year was 1985. After surgery, the doctor had been reassuring . . . that he had removed all of the cancer, but I was devastated. There had been so little time to prepare myself. I knew Sister Emily from the Theresians. She entered very quietly and pulled the curtain around my bed. She did this very strange thing. She began to unbutton her blouse.

"Now Dear, I know you're afraid and worried about how you are going to look now. Most people don't know this, but I had a mastectomy too. I remember the way my imagination played on me. 'What will it look like?'"

Opening her blouse and removing her bra, she said, "Look darling, it's not bad. See how the scars have healed. Is that so ugly?"[5]

Sr. Emily had a passion for God. From early childhood, she sought to know this stranger. As she learned about Him, she grew to love God with an intensity that allowed her to be comfortable with herself. That gift of love and acceptance of self seems to be the common attribute of the Cenacle Sisters. When Sr. Emily Katz died in 2007, she was remembered as a woman who loved to laugh and led by example.

The name Cenacle refers to the "upper room" where tradition says Jesus and his disciples celebrated the last supper, and where Mary and the other women and friends and followers waited in prayer and instruction after the resurrection and ascension. Here the Holy Spirit came to empower the disciples with knowledge of their mission in this life. Since their early founding days, the Cenacle sisters sought to provide such a place for women seeking that same spirit in their lives.

A young laywoman, Marie-Victoire Couderc, later Therese, and Fr. Stephen Terme at La Louvesc in the French Alps, founded the Sisters of the Congregation of the Cenacle in 1826.[6] In the beginnings of the congregation, their mission filled a simple need, to provide women a safe place to lodge while on pilgrimage to the holy shrines dotting the landscape. Gradually the community built retreat houses throughout the world. The growth of the Cenacle paralleled the emancipation of women.[7]

In 1955, a small contingent of sisters, dressed in traditional religious habits of the time, arrived in Houston at the invitation of Bishop Wendelin Nold.[8] The Cenacle Sisters, known on the East Coast and Midwest for work in the cat-

At the groundbreaking of the new Cenacle Retreat Center on Kirkwood in 1966, Srs. Dorothy Irvin Superior of Houston, Ida Barlow (holding shovel), and Rita Foy, and Bishop John L. Morkovsky. Photo courtesy of Cenacle Sisters.

Dressed in the modified habits of the late sixties, the sisters pose at the newly finished Center on Kirkwood. Seated are Srs. Jackie Baker, Rosemary Reid, Petra Arredondo, and Emily Katz. Standing, Srs. Celina Schulte, Jean Murdock, Catherine Quinn, Roseanne Cronin, Elizabeth Mozina, and Mary Dennison. Photo courtesy of Cenacle Sisters.

echesis of children, and the spiritual and religious formation of women who came to their houses, accepted his invitation.

Bishop Nold, feeling a sense of urgency over the rapid growth of Houston and its Catholic population as well as the growing popularity of the Catholic Women's Retreat Movement, invited the sisters to establish a house in Houston. Because of the Church's rapid growth, Nold and later Bishops John L. Morkovsky and Joseph Fiorenza realized the newly established parishes would need catechists educated in the tenets of faith and capable of accessing their spiritual roots to train lay volunteers.[9]

On arrival, the sisters needed a temporary home. Bishop Nold provided an old home in Arcola, Texas, south of Houston, which was part of the Scanlan family estate. While the house and property looked beautiful, the structure had little space for the large retreats provided in other Cenacle locations. They built a small chapel, and Catholic women began coming for days of prayer and other programs as an introduction to the spirituality of the Cenacle.[10]

In those early years, the University of St. Thomas offered a dormitory as a temporary retreat center during summer break. Houston's Catholic women filled every retreat. They stayed in the un-air-conditioned dorm and brought their own linens and fans.

In 1959, a new pope, John XXIII, announced the second Vatican Council. He used the metaphor of opening a window for fresh air to help the Catholic Church address the changing needs of the post modern world. As Catholics studied the theological and spiritual questions the Council raised, they began realizing the extent to which the changes demanded a collaborative view of church, demanding greater responsibility and collaboration on the part of the laity. The Cenacle Sisters were instrumental in providing education and reflection on the Vatican II documents as Houston's laity sought to understand the unfolding changes.

Feeling the proper time had arrived, the sisters procured a site on North Kirkwood in the Memorial area, nestled between a suburban neighborhood and a wide easement of land that runs along Buffalo Bayou. The generosity of many Catholic women and families and funds from the Cenacle's United States province finally enabled the sisters to build. In 1967, they opened the new facility with several public and private meeting rooms, a small chapel, and the ability to sleep forty-eight guests. With the larger space and growing interest in spirituality, the retreats now opened to women and men.

In the early 1950s, Pope Pius XII invited leaders of the men and women's religious communities to Rome. He asked them "to revitalize their communities and to enhance the theological and professional credentials for those teaching and doing other professional work." He also called for "the elimination of outdated customs and clothing that estranged them from those they served."[11]

The sisters of the Cenacle, under the direction and guidance of Pius and later John XXIII, as well as the fathers of Vatican II, listened to their own leanings and modified their habits. They did this for practical reasons but largely to remind people that the Religious were very much in the

secular world and that all people are holy. This evolution in thinking and changing dress took time and did not occur without conflict.

In a 1971 St. Louis Globe interview, Cenacle Sister Margaret Byrne addressed the criticism by some clergy who claimed that the "changes in the religious women — making the community rules less stringent — were nothing more than polishing the sinking ship." In response to the sinking ship, she said that a "distinction should be made between the religious communities as large social organizations such we have seen as effective in the past few centuries and communities of committed Christians…serving the real needs of the contemporary world."[12]

The changes called for discernment as the sisters studied to know how best to make the required transition. Like so many women, the sisters found that returning to school and entering the work world brought further adjustments to their lives.

The SDI Class of 2010 gave a new sculpture and patio in honor of their deceased classmate, Debra Macomb. In the background, the reforesting and landscaping work of Loretta Coussirat who volunteered her time and talent has greatly enhanced the beauty and sense of peace that prevails when visiting the Center. Photo by Jere Pfister.

Sisters Elizabeth Mozina and Mary Dennison took jobs in the Diocesan Confraternity of Christian Doctrine office. They trained catechists and religious education boards. Sr. Dennison worked there from 1964 to 1970 and then joined the University of Saint Thomas faculty to work in the Masters of Religious Education (MRE) program set up in conjunction with the Catholic Diocese. Her primary duties were to train directors of religious education. During this time, she earned a doctorate in education from the University of Houston.

In 1984, Sr. Dennison became the associate director of the MRE program, which had expanded to include liturgical ministers, youth ministers, and social ministers as well as spiritual directors. In 1985, the Diocesan CCE Office created the Spiritual Direction Institute (SDI), located at the Cenacle Retreat Center, to train spiritual directors.

Although the graduate program closed in 1992, the SDI continues. With the class of 2008, 395 women and men had graduated from the program. The sisters had not limited the Cenacle retreats and programs to women for a number of years. The classes have become more ecumenical over the years, with twenty to twenty-five percent of graduates representing religions other than Roman Catholic. As an outgrowth of the Houston SDI, Episcopalians and Methodists developed similar training programs.[13]

Sr. Elizabeth Mozina, a Cenacle Sister for more than fifty years, was instrumental in updating and presenting a popular spiritual seminar, Effective Living, that fostered personal growth psychologically and spiritually. Since her death in 2009, the program continues under the direction of the sisters and staff.

As the Cenacle sisters age and their numbers decline, they have tried to prepare for the future by sharing responsibility for running the houses with trained laity. In 1997, the Cenacle's Provincial House in Chicago collaborated with several other religious congregations to build a retirement home for sisters needing assisted living or skilled nursing care. The sisters discovered that caring for their elderly and infirmed at home while doing the work a family or thriving ministry requires is impossible. It has proven a bitter pill to swallow for the Religious as is the case for any family.

Station of the cross number "IV Mary Meets Her Son" on the way to Calvary is depicted in wood and metal by artist Mary Ellen Rouen. Visitors to the grounds can wander through the grounds praying or visiting each of the fourteen sculptures.

A lovely patio is offset by the sculpture known as Lou's Angel, given by the spiritual direction class of 1996 to commemorate the life their deceased classmate Lou Philleaux.

Photos by Jere Pfister.

The Scanlon family's old summer home served as temporary housing for the newly arrived Cenacle sisters. They built the small chapel seen in the back ground for women who came for days of prayer. Photo courtesy of Cenacle Sisters.

Money has always presented concerns for the sisters. They receive no financial help from the Diocese. They keep fees for the retreats low to make them affordable to all. Like many retreat centers around the country, hospitality groups provide some of the support. Despite that, the constant need for fundraising persists.[14]

While some Catholics feel the main body of the Church has regressed from Vatican II, the Cenacle Sisters still live out its spirit of reform and deep commitment to the ideals set forth in the Council documents. They have remained faithful to that ideal of church as a collaborative commitment to make God's love known in a world whose values often differ from their own.

Whatever their future brings, the Religious of the Cenacle have prepared numerous women and men of many faiths to face their own futures with clear-eyed fortitude and a belief that the power of love prevails. One could not ask for a greater legacy.

A wooden crucifix is silhouetted by the late afternoon light coming through the stained glass windows of the small chapel in the main building of the Cenacle Retreat Center. Visiting priests regularly celebrate mass for the sisters and their weekday guests in this quiet setting. Photo by Jere Pfister.

Jere Pfister has been gathering oral histories for many years. She is a storyteller and will be performing at the Tejas Storytelling Conference in San Antonio this summer. Her short stories have appeared in the University of Houston Downtown's *Bayou Review*. She teaches storytelling and public speaking at UHD. She and her husband Ted live in the Houston Heights.

Shepherds of the Children of Israel

By Rabbi Jimmy Kessler

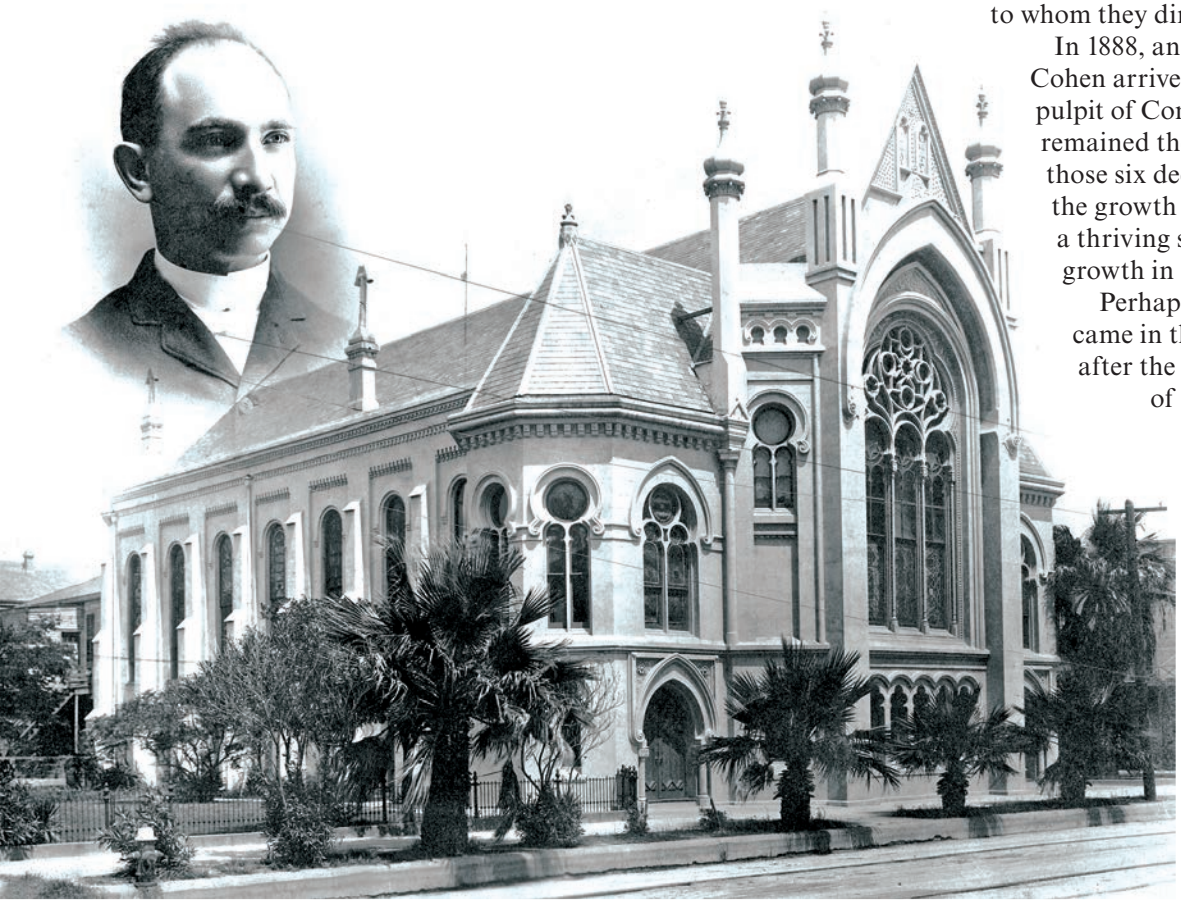
The term Rabbi in the original Hebrew means a teacher. In pursuing that calling, individuals have responded to the various needs of their Jewish community. In as much as Texas began as a frontier, Rabbis were called upon to meet an incredibly diverse set of needs.

In addition to the literal meaning of the word Rabbi, Jewish tradition views the three Hebrew letters of the word to represent an acronym. The abbreviation translates to *shepherd of the children of Israel*. Truly this appropriately describes Texas Rabbis.

I was twenty-nine years of age when I became the Rabbi of Temple B'nai Israel in Galveston in 1976. B'nai Israel is the oldest Reform synagogue in Texas, and the oldest extant Jewish community in the state. The average age of the Temple's membership was seventy-nine and they regularly shared stories from their childhood. It quickly became apparent to me that if someone did not record these stories they would be lost as these folk died. For twenty-eight years I have collected these histories and the information in this article is based on that oral tradition.

The Galveston-Houston area was blessed with several gifted Rabbis whose involvement in the larger community, in addition to their Jewish community efforts, played a key role in achieving Jewish acceptance amongst their fellow citizens. Each encountered different communities to whom they directed their attention.

Rabbi Cohen served the congregation at B'nai Israel until 1949, and died in 1952. Photo courtesy of Temple B'nai Israel.



The 1870 Temple B'nai Israel in Galveston with Rabbi Henry Cohen who assumed the pulpit in 1888. Photo courtesy of Temple B'nai Israel.

In 1888, an Englishman named Henry Cohen arrived in Galveston to assume the pulpit of Congregation B'nai Israel and remained there for sixty-two years. During those six decades, Rabbi Cohen witnessed the growth of Texas from a frontier to a thriving state as well as significant growth in the Jewish community.

Perhaps Cohen's most significant role came in the rebuilding of Galveston after the devastation of the Hurricane of 1900, the worst natural disaster in the United States with the loss of over 6,000 lives. Cohen's responsibilities in the storm's aftermath included helping to decide what would be done with the remains of those who died. Galveston's high water table made it impossible to bury the bodies. When the city authorities attempted to sink the bodies in the Gulf of Mexico, the tide brought them back to the surface and to the shore. Ultimately the committee on which Dr. Cohen served decided to

The pulpit of the 1870 Galveston Temple.
Photo courtesy of Temple B'nai Israel.

cremate the remains in spite of many religious prohibitions.

From 1907 to 1914, Rabbi Cohen served as the main contact person for the Galveston Plan organized to assist Jewish immigrants coming to America and redirect them into the middle states. Approximately 10,000 folk came through Galveston, which ranked as the second largest port of entry in the United States. Though many of the immigrants stayed in the Gulf Coast area and in Texas, Cohen's involvement generated situations that clearly demonstrated his belief that there were no Jewish chicken pox, no Catholic mumps, or any Presbyterian measles.

The many stories of Rabbi Cohen passed down through generations of his congregants testify to his giving spirit. When authorities ordered a newly arrived immigrant in Galveston sent back to Russia even though he explained his return would mean his death, Cohen appealed to local officials, but his petition fell on deaf ears. With the assistance of funds from his congregant, I. H. Kempner, Cohen took a train to Washington to see Texas' Senator Shepherd. Shepherd arranged for Cohen to see the secretary of labor whose department headed immigration. The secretary refused to do anything.

Again through the efforts of Senator Shepherd, Rabbi Cohen met with President William Howard Taft. Although Dr. Cohen impressed the President, Taft said that he normally did not interfere in local issues. As Cohen began to leave, the President complimented Cohen on his having made such an effort for one of his fellow Jews. Cohen quietly noted that the man was not Jewish; he was a Russian Orthodox Christian. President Taft was so moved that he called Dr. Cohen back into his office and dictated a telegram to the head of the Galveston immigration office directing him to hold the man and turn him over to Rabbi Cohen upon Cohen's return. It should be noted that the appointment appears in President Taft's calendar, and even though the conversation was not recorded, its essence remains clear.

Other projects which involved Rabbi Cohen included his efforts to create a state prison board to handle paroles, preventing the Ku Klux Klan from finding a home on the Island, challenging the liquor industry's influence on many businesses in Galveston, and clearly being the champion of interfaith relations long before the term existed.

The Klan group that organized in Baytown, Texas, planned on coming to Galveston and burning a cross. The Klan arrived at the causeway connecting the island to the mainland, but when they reached the center of the bridge, they were stopped by a pick-up truck turned sideways driven by Rabbi Cohen and Father Dan Kerwin. Moreover, the Galveston County sheriff was in a car behind the truck on the Galveston side of the bridge.

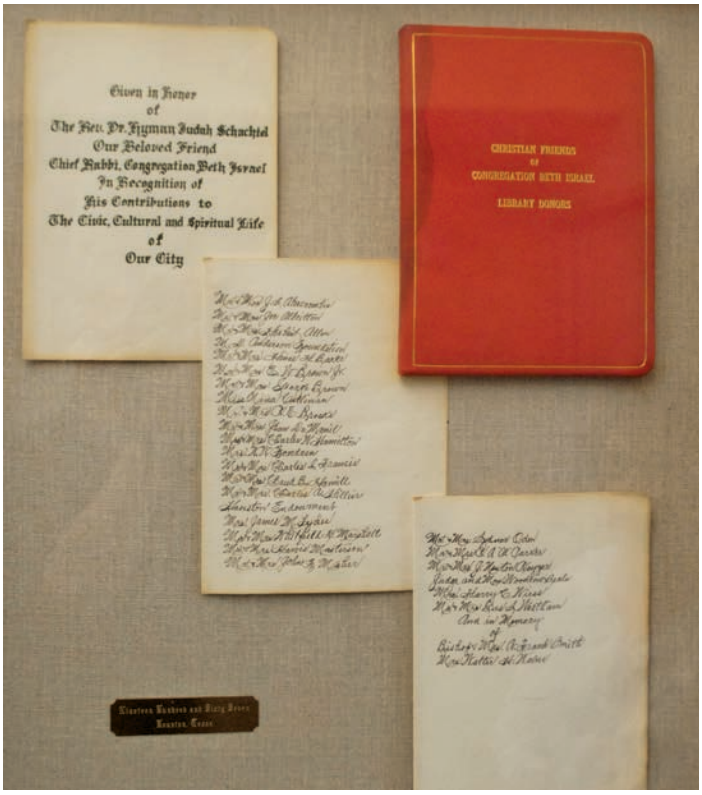
The leader of the Klan demanded to pass but the resisters told him the truck would not start. When the Klansman asked the sheriff why he was there, the sheriff said that he had heard that Kerwin and Cohen had car trouble, and he came to help. The Klan leader then demanded to know why some fifty plus folk stood behind the sheriff, all carrying shotguns. The sheriff commented that they came in case the sheriff could not get the truck started. It seemed earlier that afternoon word had spread amongst the locals that Rabbi Cohen and Father Kerwin planned to confront the Klan and keep them off the Island. One of the shotgun-holders explained that folk drove around Galveston gathering up supporters to come to the causeway—armed.

Not every concern of Henry Cohen rose to such a grand level; however, he clearly remained in tune with individuals in need locally. Several Galvestonians recalled the story of one young lady whose name has since faded from memory. Before autos, Dr. Cohen got around the Island on his bicycle. During one of his outings, he passed a child sitting on the curb crying. The Rabbi stopped to inquire about her problem. She explained that her parents did not have money for a Confirmation dress for her to wear for her service at St. Mary's Cathedral; it would have to be postponed. Cohen got her name and address and pedaled off to one of his congregant's store. The Rabbi arranged for a dress to be delivered to the young lady so she might be confirmed at the right time.

Rabbi Cohen was blessed to serve a congregation with several folk with financial means. As a result, he never hesitated to solicit their support in the need of others. Multiple individuals went off to college, went to medical school, got married, or opened a business with the funds that Rabbi Cohen arranged.

Dr. Cohen did deal with his share of anti-Semitism. Early in his career, he received notice that Ball High School

Rabbi Hyman Schachtel shown in a portrait painted by Robert Joy in 1968. Photo courtesy of Congregation Beth Israel.



At the 1967 dedication of the Hyman Judah Schachtel Library, Christian friends of the Rabbi issued a proclamation in recognition of his contributions to the civic, cultural, and spiritual life of Houston. The library, which houses approximately 20,000 volumes for all ages, serves Congregation Beth Israel, its Religious School, and the Shlenker School. Photo courtesy of Congregation Beth Israel.

planned to study Shakespeare's play "The Merchant of Venice." In as much as its stereotypical, hateful description of Jews provided a historic source of anti-Semitism, Dr. Cohen visited the superintendent of the Galveston schools. After a candid conversation, the superintendent arranged for the high school students to study a different work.

Then there was the case of the Jewish intern at the University of Texas Medical Branch assisting the chairman of surgery in an appendectomy. During the procedure, Dr. Cohen burst into the surgery suite with a surgical gown pulled up to his shoulders and holding a surgical mask over his face. Cohen looked at her and declared that he had not seen her in a good while and that he wanted to see her at services Friday night. As fast as he had appeared, he disappeared from the surgery suite. The chairman turned to his resident and remarked that she had better attend the services if she expected to "pass" this part of her rotation. Moreover, he told her that he particularly did not want to hear from Dr. Cohen about her.

During Cohen's tenure, legend has it that new students around the medical school periodically asked, "Who is this Dr. Cohen?" They heard his name all over town as well as in John Sealy Hospital, but they never seemed to run into him in the wards or on rounds. They soon learned about Dr. Cohen and why he remained so well known in the community. Some Christians would remark that they did not go to church or have a pastor, but they did have a Rabbi.

During Cohen's latter years in Galveston, two Rabbis came to Houston who significantly impacted the city and the Jewish community. Technically one served as the assistant to the other, but ultimately both came to guide two large synagogues in the city.

Houston's Temple Beth Israel is the oldest chartered synagogue in Texas and began as an Orthodox congregation. In the 1870s, the Temple began its move to Reform, and today it stands out as one of the preeminent Reform synagogues in the country. In 1943, their Rabbi since the turn of the century, Henry Barnston, retired, and Hyman Schachtel became the senior Rabbi. Until his death in 1990, Rabbi Schachtel was a prominent presence in Houston. Known for his devotion to the arts, he was also a gifted pianist.

Most especially, Schachtel involved himself in a particular part of the Houston community not always open to Jews. His work with people in many levels of society surely supported his selection to give a prayer at President Lyndon Johnson's inauguration in 1965.

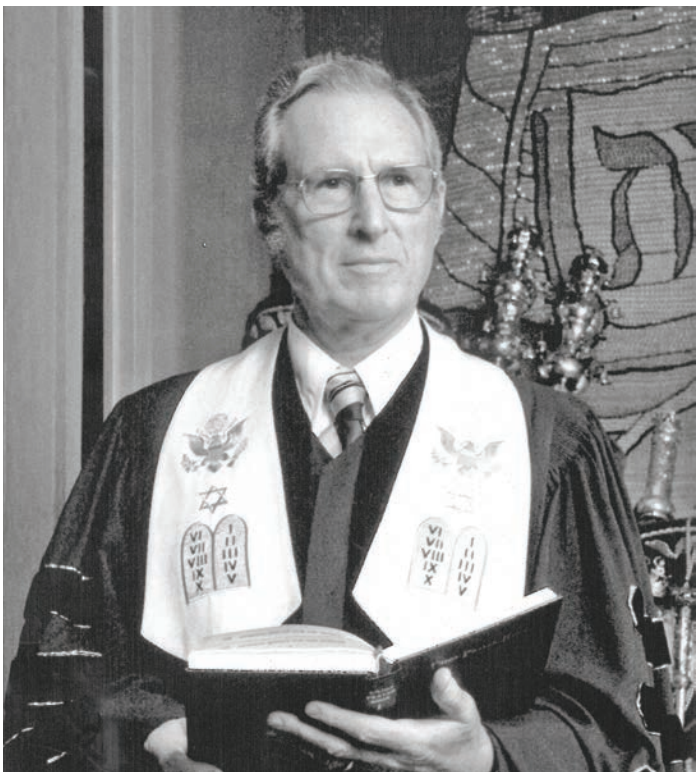
Schachtel's unique personality and memorable presence opened many doors to Houston Jews that might have otherwise remained closed. His book reviews of current publications attracted large numbers from both the Jewish and non-Jewish community. Though Dr. Schachtel's early years were embroiled in the then controversial topic of Zionism, his later years saw the growth of a congregation well settled in the American Reform Jewish community.

Prior to Hyman Schachtel coming to Temple Beth Israel and while Henry Barnston served as the Senior Rabbi of

Congregants come to plant grass at the new Congregation Emanu El before the dedication in 1949. Photo courtesy of Congregation Emanu El.

the Congregation, Robert I. Kahn served as the Assistant Rabbi at Beth Israel. Rabbi Kahn came to Houston in 1935 as the assistant but took a leave from the Temple to serve as an Army chaplain. During his years in the service and overseas, Rabbi Schachtel took over the Congregation.

In as much as Rabbi Kahn was a Zionist, and Rabbi Schachtel was not at that time, Rabbi Kahn resigned from the pulpit while overseas. At the same time, Beth Israel split, and those who broke away established Congregation Emanu El, naming Dr. Kahn as the Senior Rabbi in absentia. Upon his return, Rabbi Kahn assumed the helm of a new synagogue that would grow into a large, well-respected Reform congregation. Over the years, many came to consider Dr. Kahn the finest preaching Rabbi in America.



Rabbi Robert Kahn. Photo courtesy of Congregation Emanu El.

From 1967 to 1968, Kahn was president of the Houston Rotary Club, the largest Rotary Club in the world. He served as the grand chaplain of the grand Masonic Lodge of Texas and was a thirty-third degree Scottish Rite Mason. In addition, the Freedoms Foundation honored him with a George Washington Medal, and the French government recognized him for his service to veterans. Further, Kahn's peers elected him president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

Rabbi Kahn was obviously very active in his community and came to represent Houston Jewry in many ways, especially to the general citizenry of the city. Interestingly, Rabbi Kahn gave the invocation at Rice University when President Kennedy came to visit Houston the day before he was assassinated in Dallas.

Just as Rabbi Cohen had done in Galveston, these two imposing Rabbinic figures, Schachtel and Kahn, represented the Houston Jewish community for many decades. They enriched the lives of both their congregants and the general community.

For many years, Texas was seen as a Jewish wilderness. The state had few Jews and very few Jewish institutions such as day schools and community centers. Nonetheless, Jews lived in the Texas area from the time of the conquistadores. Moreover, the initial Jewish presence was made up of people not only committed to their personal goals but also devoted to the growth of Texas. These three Rabbis exemplify that dedication.

Rabbi Kessler is the founder and first president of the Texas Jewish Historical Society and the author of three books. He is a native Houstonian and holds the first doctorate in Texas Jewish history.

Breaking Bread: The Pink Iftar Movement

By Kafah Bachari Manna

Growing up in the 1980s as an Iranian in America often overshadowed my experience of growing up as a Muslim in America. Back then, being a Muslim was not quite as interesting or dangerous as being an Iranian on U.S. soil. Indeed, I got a kick out of telling fellow Americans that their movies and fashions were a big hit in Iran and that all this hullaballoo about "Down with the Great Satan" did not resonate with the average Ali Reza on the street in Tehran.

After September 11th, more often people questioned me about my faith than about my national or ethnic origins; although occasionally these elements were merged and confused (e.g. Iranian = Muslim or Iranian = Arab = Muslim). And the narrative people approached me with, the ideas that informed their questions, often went against everything I knew and understood about how my faith shaped my view of the world and my place in it. It became routine to get asked whether I had been subjected to female genital mutilation, how I managed to marry a man out of love versus by arrangement, or whether I had to fight my family (as enforcers of my supposed faith) to get an education.

I did not always know how to begin to answer these questions and to address what was at the heart of them: a basic misunderstanding of Islam. Fringe extremist groups, purporting to be Islamic, created this narrative; and poorly informed and fearful non-Muslims, looking for a way to categorize and understand a group of people presented to them as the "other" in a post-9/11 framework, embraced it. Eventually, I learned to talk through the misconceptions and offer my experience as part of the broader experiences of the women in my family and of my generation (as opposed to offering my experience as a fluke or exception to the narrative of Islam as a faith inherently oppressive of women). Despite

Guests and conversationalists in Christ Church Cathedral listen to Dr. Elora Shehabuddin speak about women and Islam.
All photos by Angelica Valle, POSH donna Photography.

Conversationalists Shaden Yousef Newton and Farah Shah praying with other observant Muslim women after breaking fast with tea and dates.

this, however, I never felt that my isolated encounters were enough. I believed that this narrative of Islam as repressive of women also constrained other women who felt as I did, but who did not quite know how to attack it in a systematic and effective way.

It was against this backdrop that I attended an Interfaith Women's Seder Dinner at Christ Church Cathedral in the spring of 2009. The dinner was a unique approach to the Seder tradition. Jewish women, not men, led tables of ten to fifteen non-Jewish women and with the aid of a feminist liturgy, discussed the contributions of Jewish matriarchs in the Old Testament story of exodus and deliverance. These Jewish women also discussed their own families, their mothers and grandmothers, and their faith experiences as women. As one might expect, their experiences were nuanced and reflective of the multitude of factors that shape a person's life and views. It got me to thinking, which in turn, got me to talking with some friends. By the fall of that year my friends and I assembled a group of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish women to meet regularly and plan an interfaith dinner showcasing the lives and experiences of Muslim women in Houston as well as the contributions Muslim women have made to the arts, sciences, religious and academic scholarship, politics, and everyday life.

What resulted in August of last year was the first Interfaith Women's Ramadan Iftar at Christ Church Cathedral. Women of all faith backgrounds attended a program that included a discussion led by Dr. Elora Shehabuddin on women and Islam, a call to prayer inside the Church followed by the breaking of the fast, and a multi-cultural dinner at tables led by local Muslim women. The program sold out at 200 participants and as a result the organizers and I decided to expand programming and rename our dinner program the "Pink Iftar." The "Pink" part being a tribute to my penchant for the color.

Co-founder Kafah Bachari Manna and her mother, Nahid Bachari.

Guests break bread with Muslim women conversationalists.

For Women's History Month the Ladies of the Pink Iftar presented a series of special dinners in the homes of Muslim women for women of other faith backgrounds to attend. This was based on the idea that once you bring someone into your home to break bread together you create the opportunity for women to gain a genuine understanding of one another, an understanding based on more than tolerance and acceptance, but grounded in compassion. That is to say, we might find that our views are different, just as our faiths are different, but that these differences do not limit our capacity to appreciate and celebrate each other's humanity.

Both Muslim and non-Muslim women who have participated in the Iftar dinner or the small dinner series have expressed surprise and delight at having created new friendships that inform and enhance their view of the world. For the Muslim women who participate as our conversationalists and hosts, myself included, the experience has empowered us and has offered a much-needed space for us to create our own narrative about our lives, whatever that may be. This August we will be presenting another Pink Iftar, as we hope to do every year. We also have plans to expand programming to showcase the art and music of Muslim women as well as create programming aimed at developing dialogue between young Muslim women and non-Muslim women.

I am fairly certain that we are onto something and that these kinds of programs and relationships will give us the tools we need to overcome the xenophobia and extremism we see in mainstream culture both here, in America, and elsewhere. I am also fairly certain that those of us who have taken on these challenges, who believe in the power of dialogue and discovery and who labor over the eradication of discrimination and intolerance, are the product of an entire network of supportive, progressive, women and men, fathers, mothers, grandparents, and many others, who have offered their shoulders for us to stand upon. We continue our struggle as part of their legacy and in order for the future to be brighter for all of our children, whatever their faiths may be and where ever their lives may take them.

For more information or to purchase tickets to the next Pink Iftar at Christ Church Cathedral on August 18th please contact *womensiftar@gmail.com*.

Kafah Bachari Manna is the co-founder of the Pink Iftar and a writer. She is currently working on a collection of short stories and a novel about the experience of Iranian Americans in Iran and America.

Iglesia De La Luz Del Mundo

By Timothy Wyatt

Travelling along Texas Highway 59 in northeast Houston, it is hard to dismiss the golden dome that towers above the landscape. Part of a larger Greco-Roman inspired structure, the dome stands in sharp contrast to the surrounding neighborhood. With a large number of vehicles passing by the building each day, only a small number of commuters and even fewer travelers know the purpose of the opulent marble edifice. The stark white construction, surrounded by a painted metal fence, looks more like a monument to an eccentric millionaire than a church, but it is one of the many houses of worship that can be found around the city. The denomination that meets here is not Baptist, Catholic, or even Greek Orthodox; rather a form of Pentecostalism that caters to a primarily Latin American congregation calls the church home. The church, known as *Iglesia de La Luz del Mundo* (Light of the World Church), represents the central Houston congregation of the Mexico-based denomination of the same name.

The Romanesque temple of La Luz del Mundo is located between Darden and Bostic Streets in Northeast Houston along Highway 59. The church is the central Houston location for the Mexican-based congregation. Photo by Omar Silva Ambriz courtesy of La Luz del Mundo.

Eusebio Joaquín González established the organization, formally known as *La Iglesia del Dios Vivo, Columna y Apoyo de la Verdad, La Luz del Mundo* (The Church of the Living God, Column and Foundation of Truth, The Light of the World), in Monterey, Mexico, on April 6, 1926.[1] Called into the service of God through a vision, González changed his name to Aaron and began his service as a minister. Known as the Prophet Aaron to congregants, González spread Oneness Pentecostalism across Mexico. The Oneness wing of Pentecostalism rejects the eternal divinity of Jesus, instead believing that it was his baptism that made him the Christ and therefore divine.[2] *La Luz del Mundo* ministers, in the tradition of Oneness beliefs, baptize solely in the name of Jesus Christ instead of the Trinity: God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In the 1950s, González established the *Hermosa Provincia,* or Beautiful Province, in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico, which remains the headquarters for *La Luz del Mundo.*

González held the positions of both "Apostle" and "international President of the *Luz del Mundo* church" until his death in 1964. During his tenure, the Prophet Aaron oversaw the expansion of the church throughout Latin America and the world. Oddly, Aaron opted to move north into the United States with his missionary work before continuing south into Central America. Because of a Pentecostal awakening in both the United States and Latin America, the denomination grew rapidly. With over one million members in Mexico, *La Luz del Mundo* is currently the second largest denomination in the country, eclipsed only by the Catholic Church.

Upon his father Eusebio's death, Samuel Joaquín Flores became the leader of the denomination, expanding the church's influence into forty-six countries with adherents numbering around five million worldwide.[3] From the *Hermosa Provincia* in Guadalajara, Samuel directs the ever increasing number of churches. As the sole head of the church, Flores appoints ministers, defines doctrines and practices of the congregation, and organizes religious rituals. Samuel attended the consecration of the Houston temple, and his son, Benjamin Jaoquín, currently acts as minister to the Houston church, showing the importance of the Houston church to the organization.

The golden dome rests atop the Roman-inspired temple of the La Luz del Mundo church. The staff of Aaron, the symbol of the church, can be seen at the peak of the dome. Photo by Timothy Wyatt.

Two brothers from San Antonio brought the teachings of *La Luz del Mundo* to Houston between 1965 and 1967. The movement started in a small house that the brothers used for prayer meetings.[4] As the congregation grew, the mem-

Fourteen stone columns are situated in a circle in front of the pastor's house to the right of the temple. Each column is adorned with the name of an apostle on a bronze plaque. The circle includes columns representing Aaron and Samuel Joaquin. Photo by Timothy Wyatt.

Detail of the hand-carved stonework depicting Biblical scenes located above the entrance to the temple. Photo by Timothy Wyatt.

bers of the church constructed a small temple off of Bostic Street in Northeast Houston, the site of the current church parking lot. In 2000, the construction of the present church began in earnest. With donations of time and money from the congregants, the current building was completed in 2005 and opened its doors in July of that same year. The work was done primarily by *La Luz del Mundo* members, many of whom work in the construction field as skilled laborers. The central Houston church acts as the regional center for Southeast, Texas. Members from this location have gone on to start churches in Pasadena, Victoria, Port Arthur, and in other areas of Texas, as well as churches as far away as the cities of Atlanta and Miami and in countries such as Israel.

The $18 million Houston structure consists of the temple, classrooms and offices, and a pastor's house, making it the largest *La Luz del Mundo* church in the United States. A white metal fence, trimmed in gold, surrounds the facility and remains locked when the church is not in use. Inside the compound is a sitting area encircled by fourteen free standing columns—one each for the original Twelve Apostles that followed Christ and two that honor Aaron and Samuel Joaquín.[5] The golden dome rests atop the temple, adorned with the unique symbol of the church, the staff of Aaron. This symbol stands not only as recognition of God's miraculous power but also in honor of the denomination's founder.

Both the pastor's house and the temple itself seem more apt to be found in Greece or Rome, with magnificent stone pillars reminiscent of the Parthenon. The front of the building is decorated with individual stone work scenes from the Bible and three panes of stained glass. As opulent as the outside of the church appears, the sanctuary, which can hold 4,500 congregants, is even more extravagant, boasting marble floors, glass chandeliers, and wood paneling. The building's architecture seems more decadent than one would expect of a congregation that comes from a primarily working class background.

Latin Americans, many of whom have migrated to the United States, make up most of the congregation. Migration plays an important role in the growth of the church with over half the congregation consisting of members who have immigrated from Mexico, Honduras, and El Salvador. A large portion of the *La Luz del Mundo* members formerly belonged to the church in their native country and, upon entering the United States, found a sense of community within the local church. The church actively aids new immigrants in assimilating into their new home, providing food, lodging, and help in finding jobs. This idea of community transcends race and nationality and reflects the nature of the denomination.

Though the hierarchy established in Guadalajara primarily leads the different member churches across the world, each individual church has a measure of autonomy. Each congregation acts as an independent body, which has its own ministers and missions. The church as a whole stresses community service within its congregations. *La Luz del Mundo* temples work hard to feed and clothe the less fortunate of their members, encourage youth to gain as much education as possible, and provide needed assistance in the assimilation process. Also, the church promotes lifelong marriages and provides counseling to couples.

Outside of work environments, many members only associate with other congregants, both in the United States and their home countries. This fosters an environment of a close knit community. To add to this idea, *La Luz del Mundo* directly and indirectly promotes endogamy, the practice of marrying within one's own community.[6] As a result, a large portion of congregants will only consider marriage within the denominational membership, including individuals from other churches in the *La Luz del Mundo* network. Because of the transnational nature of the organization, members from across the globe often stay in contact with others from churches half a world away. These communications across borders combined with a shared religious ancestry have bred a strong denominational identity. Though never explicitly denying nationality, many members of *La Luz del Mundo* often identify more readily with other members of the church rather than others of a shared national origin.

The Pastor's house, located on the south side of the compound, mimics the architecture of the main temple. The building acts as the residence for the head minister of the central Houston congregation. Photo by Timothy Wyatt.

The role of the founding church in Guadalajara strengthens the worldwide network. Every August, it encourages congregants from around the world to make the pilgrimage to the *Hermosa Provincia* to take part in the *Santa Cena,* or Holy Supper, celebrations. The week-long celebration, ending on August 14 (the Prophet Aaron's birthday), marks the beginning of the church's ritual calendar. An estimated 300,000 members from across the globe make the trek annually and spend the week in religious devotion and prayer with their fellow congregants. Members of the church in Guadalajara open their homes to the visiting pilgrims, extending the sense of community. At the *Santa Cena,* members of *La Luz del Mundo* fully immerse themselves in the teachings of the church.[7]

As in other Pentecostal denominations, *La Luz del Mundo* has strict codes of conduct for its adherents. Services are separated by gender, with women sitting on the left and men on the right side of the temple; both the congregation and choir remain segregated. Women wear traditional head coverings while in the church. In the tradition of Pentecostalism, women do not cut their hair or wear makeup or jewelry and are instructed to wear long, full skirts. By contrast, men of the faith do not have a dress code, with the exception of a ban on long hair.[8] Women congregants also carry a lower status in the church compared to their male counterparts. Female adherents cannot be ordained into the priesthood, but they can be *obreras*, a form of missionary or evangelizer, who occupy the lowest rung of the church hierarchy. Yet women do take an active part in the church activities. Women play an instrumental role in the organization, administration, and coordination of events that take place in the community. Also, since the early stages of *La Luz del Mundo*, women have led exclusively female prayer services.[9]

The central Houston church offers daily worship services at 5:00 and 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. The church encourages congregants to attend daily, with estimates of up to sixty percent of the members present on a daily basis.[10] The services lack any instruments, as believers see them as an abomination to God. However, *La Luz del Mundo* has a choir that performs traditional hymns as well as unique songs developed by members. The denomination has a long history of its own distinct hymnology. Though Samuel Joaquín ordained the minister of the central Houston church, lay ministers who later received ordination started most of the congregations.

The *Iglesia de la Luz del Mundo*, just as any religious body, plays different roles in the lives of its members. It not only provides religious instruction to its adherents, but also provides its primarily minority-based congregants with a sense of community. The central Houston church stands as a place of worship, education, and social interaction. As one of the fastest growing denominations in the world, it is likely that the church off Highway 59 is only the first of many *La Luz del Mundo* temples to be established in Houston. For example, the Magnolia congregation, an off shoot of the central Houston church, now resides in a converted movie theater to accommodate its growth. It is likely that the smaller congregations located around Houston will follow this same trend as the denomination's membership continues to expand.

Timothy Wyatt is a Ph.D. candidate and religious historian at the University of Houston, Department of History.

The current sanctuary of Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church completed in March 1985. Photo by Tomiko Meeks.

We've Come This Far by Faith: Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church

By Tomiko Meeks

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."[1]

Forty-nine years ago in March of 1962, Reverend William Alexander Lawson and thirteen people submitted to God's divine will and plan and established a church in Houston's Third Ward. Rev. Lawson, who now serves as Pastor Emeritus at Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church, first arrived in Houston in 1955 with his young wife Audrey A. Lawson. The Southern Baptist Convention invited the young minister to come to the newly formed Texas Southern University and work with students. Rev. Lawson played an important role in the history of Texas Southern University, serving as the Baptist Student Union Director, during a time when state universities were not allowed to have religious programs.[2]

Born William Alexander Lawson in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1928, Rev. Lawson grew up in Kansas City. He matriculated from Tennessee State College in Nashville, Tennessee, with a Bachelor of Arts in sociology in 1950. Reverend Lawson returned to Kansas City where he studied for the ministry at Central Baptist Theological Seminary, which conferred upon him a Bachelor of Divinity and Master of Theology degrees.[3]

When Rev. Lawson arrived in Houston in August of 1955, race relations simmered in the South. The lynching of Emmett Till occurred on August 28, 1955, the day Lawson arrived in Houston; and on December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger and was subsequently arrested, tried, and convicted for disorderly conduct and violation of a local ordinance. Parks' arrest and subsequent conviction led to the Montgomery Bus Boycott and effectively marked the beginning of the civil rights movement. Indeed, by coming to the South, Lawson understood the potential for heightened racial tension between blacks and whites in Houston.

During his time at Texas Southern University, Rev. Lawson served as Director of the Baptist Student Union and taught bible classes. Although he was employed at the University, the Union Baptist Association paid his salary because of the restriction placed upon state universities against having religious studies programs on their campuses. During this time, several people approached Lawson with concerns that no churches existed near the university where black students attended school and where black professors lived. These people asked Rev. Lawson to consider starting a church, proposing that because he was a minister and taught bible classes he ought to be qualified to start a church. Rev. Lawson, in a 2008 interview with Jane Ely, stated "I did not have a daddy who was a preacher. There had been no preachers in my background at all, and I had no idea how in the world you would start a church." Despite Rev. Lawson's reservations, the entreaties continued. Eventually, Lawson assented with the stipulation that he would start a church and hold onto it until he could find a young man to fill his position.[4]

In March of 1962, Rev. Lawson along with his wife Audrey Lawson and thirteen others, who would become the founding members, assembled in the lounge of the Baptist Student Union and established a church, which at the time was called Riverside Baptist Church. The church

was initially named after the neighborhood in Third Ward where Lawson lived. At the inception of the church, Rev. Lawson recalled that a young man named Prentice Moore was attending Texas Southern University and preparing for seminary.[5] Rev. Lawson saw Moore as the young man who posessed the potential to become the future leader of the newly formed church. Perhaps by fate or divine intervention, once Moore completed his seminary training he did not return to Riverside Baptist Church and Rev. Lawson continued on as pastor.

Shortly after starting the church, Rev. Lawson realized that it was impossible for him to continue working at Texas Southern and try to build a church on a part-time basis; he needed to devote his time and energy fully to the building of the church. Consequently, Lawson only spent another three years with the university.[6]

From its humble beginnings in the Baptist Student Union, it was unclear what the future held for this small assembly. However, an individual from the Union Baptist Association informed Lawson and his congregation of changes taking place at the University of Houston. The Baptist Student Union at the University of Houston was moving into a new building, which would house all denominational programs, and the small white framed building which housed the Baptist Student Union would soon become vacant. Rev. Lawson inquired about the fate of the building and found out that it would be maintained until somebody purchased it. Many would have given up, knowing that with little over thirty members it was virtually impossible to buy the small church. However, as faith would have it, a wealthy oil man whose daughter heard Rev. Lawson speak at Baylor University approached the minister. On his daughter's word regarding Rev. Lawson's character, the oil man made the proposition of acquiring the building for Riverside Baptist with the condition that the church must be purchased from him by selling bonds, which he gave the church. The selling price was an unbelievable $25,000, which church members successfully raised through the selling of the bonds.[7] The location of the University of Houston building was 3826 Wheeler Avenue, hence the changing of the church's name to Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church.

The establishment and growth of Wheeler Avenue during the height of the civil rights era was pivotal for the black community in Houston and specifically in the Third Ward area. While cities and towns in the deep South were in turmoil during the civil rights movement, Houston pushed for a quieter end to Jim Crow. Reverend Lawson and other leaders associated with Texas Southern University skillfully orchestrated and exercised pressure on powerful whites in Houston. The members of Wheeler Avenue along with Rev. Lawson were instrumental in keeping many young black students involved in the civil rights movement out of jail. Lawson's reputation as a peace negotiator is well known throughout Houston. Indeed, one particular event exemplifies this.

On May 16, 1967, the Houston police arrested Rev. Lawson for being on the scene of the Holmes Road garbage dump protest. However, Mayor Louie Welch bailed him out the same day to help settle a standoff between angry students and police at Texas Southern University. When asked to assess Lawson's role during the tumultuous years of the civil rights era, Welch recalled Rev. Lawson was, "more influential than any other black leader in Houston. He was a voice of reason who believed in confrontation but not force. He was fighting a battle for equality, and many of us agreed with him."[8] Indeed, this type of sentiment is shared among many political and civic leaders in Houston.

Since the 1960s, when black church leaders dominated the civil rights movement, the black church exerted a quiet power in the political arena. Hence, Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church and other black churches in Houston and elsewhere still maintained their political influence. Indeed, black clergy and their church members remain a mainstay of political force in Houston and other cities. However, unlike many of his counterparts, Rev. Lawson maintained a clear delineation between politics and the pulpit. While it is true that many politicians worshiped at Wheeler Avenue and several are members, Rev. Lawson has a tradition of not allowing the church to be used as a political forum. In fact, there is but one occasion where a political figure stood behind Wheeler Avenue's pulpit.

In 1963, shortly after the founding of the church, Rev. Lawson invited Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. to speak at Wheeler Avenue. The young pastor's act was bold; during this period in King's life many black Baptist preachers

Portrait of Rev. William A. Lawson, Pastor Emeritus by M. C. Whitman.

Portrait of former First Lady Audrey Lawson by M. C. Whitman.

Portraits courtesy of Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church.

Guest preacher Reverend Vannessa Hendrickson delivers the sermon at the 11:00 a.m. service on Sunday May 29, 2011.

Photo by Tomiko Meeks.

vilified him as a communist. Reverend Manson Johnson, pastor of Holman Street Baptist Church, was the only other pastor in town who extended an invitation to Reverend King. After King's visit, Wheeler Avenue became the Houston Chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which Rev. Lawson led for over three decades.[9]

From the establishment of the church, Rev. Lawson has represented the Trinitarian reality of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. From this biblical concept evolved the "triangle" ministry outreach program. The "triangle" represents the geographical locale of the Church in Houston's Third Ward. The first aspect of outreach ministry began with the Mission and Mercy Program in 1963. The Infant School, founded by Pastor and Mrs. Lawson, began in 1968. In 1974, the church became involved with the Central City Comprehensive Community Center, a multifaceted project that offered voter registration and other community service programs under the leadership of First Lady Audrey Lawson.[10]

Today outreach ministries include: Alzheimer/Dementia — which provides support for caregivers whose loved ones are diagnosed with Alzheimer or dementia related illness; Economic Empowerment — which provides members of the church and the community with the opportunity to learn and apply God's financial principles; and Matthew 25 — whose mission is to provide financial relief to seniors and families within Harris County.[11] Although the listed outreach ministries represent only a sample of the many ministries available at Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church, the whole of ministries reveal Rev. Lawson's maxim of being a blessing to others as God has so richly blessed you.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the church experienced extraordinary growth in membership, which spurred the expansion to the present day sanctuary. Additionally, the church focused its attention toward the spiritual nurturing of children and youth, expanding the churches ministries to include Rites of Passage for young males and Transformations program for young females. While Rev. Lawson continued to pastor Wheeler Avenue, he earnestly sought Divine council for assistance in finding the man who would lead the church upon his retirement. In 1998, Reverend Doctor Marcus D. Cosby, the third child of Roger and Bobbie Cosby of Chicago, Illinois, joined Wheeler Avenue as assistant pastor. Cosby matriculated from Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, with a Bachelor of Arts in religion and English. He also holds a Master of Divinity in homiletics and Christian education from the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia, and a Doctor of Ministry in homiletics from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Lombard, Illinois.[12]

Under the tutelage of Rev. Lawson, Rev. Cosby served as Wheeler Avenue's assistant pastor from 1998 to August 2004. In June of 2004, during the anniversary worship service, Pastor Lawson announced to the congregation that he would pass along his duties to another Shepherd.[13] After forty-two years, Rev. Lawson, through prayer and God's guidance, found the young man he envisioned taking over the newly formed church all those years ago. In a recent interview, Rev. Cosby was asked if he thought he was that young man. Reverend Cosby stated that, in hindsight, "yes," he could see himself as the young man for whom Pastor Lawson searched. Although it took forty-two years to find a new leader, Cosby believes Reverend Lawson was God's chosen vessel, divinely fashioned to lead God's flock for a season—chosen to carry out God's plan to prosper his people, not harm them, and to give them hope for a future.

Indeed, Wheeler Avenue's place in history rests on the shoulders of Reverend William A. Lawson and the faithful thirteen who established the church. The Church's history also has its place in the history of civil rights and desegregation in Houston, serving as a spiritual lighthouse guiding Wheeler's members and the greater Houston community. While Reverend Lawson represents Wheeler's past, Reverend Cosby exemplifies the church's present and future. Reverend Cosby's dynamic presence and extraordinary teaching is ushering Wheeler Avenue into a new season of growth. Since Reverend Cosby became senior pastor, two ministries have developed which are designed to "encourage and celebrate the Grace of God within the flock": Faith-Filled Friday that celebrates congregants demonstrating their trust in God, and Charter Day, which commemorates the inception of Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church.[14] Although Reverend Cosby's ministerial style and delivery is different from that of Reverend Lawson, it has become clear that this young pastor is Holy Ghost filled and divinely fashioned to lead Wheeler Avenue, Third Ward, and greater Houston in the twenty-first century.

Reverend William A. Lawson's Papers, 1955-2006, have recently been donated to the Social Change Archive, Woodson Research Center, Fondren Library, at Rice University.

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IN THE NICKEL, HOUSTON'S FIFTH WARD

By Patricia Pando

And stay off Lyons Avenue street
And don't go down on Jensen nowhere
Because you're living on luck and a prayer.[1]

Weldon "Juke Boy" Bonner, performing at Club 44 sometime in the late 1960s not far from that notorious intersection, had the facts straight (albeit incomplete) about Houston's Fifth Ward neighborhood, sometimes known as "Pearl Harbor, the Times Square of the Bloody Fifth" for the high possibility that someone in the wrong place at the wrong time would meet with a sudden demise. Many musicians were willing to take that nighttime risk just for the chance to perform at Club 44 or at Club Matinee, premier gathering spots. Other great musicians—Illinois Jacquet, "Gatemouth" Brown, Arnett Cobb, Goree Carter, "Lightnin'" Hopkins (usually associated with the Third Ward), and "Ivory Joe" Hunter—joined "Juke Boy" in this lively jazz community.[2]

By day, from the 1920s through the 1950s, Lyons and Jensen were busy commercial streets, home to everything from drugstores to lumberyards and repair garages. Predominately African American, blue-collar and middle-class neighborhoods offered stability and traditional values. In one such neighborhood, a recent graduate of Phillis Wheatley High School and Texas Southern University, where she had been a national-champion debater, looked forward to attending law school in Boston. Nearby, a teenage boy prepared to enter Wheatley where he would become a sports star before studying pharmacy at Texas Southern. Another Fifth Ward teen saved himself from slipping into a life of crime by taking up boxing; he was good—he won a gold medal at the 1968 Olympics. Barbara Jordan, Mickey Leland, and George Foreman always proudly recalled their Fifth roots.[3]

When Houston first established political wards, it designated only four; the Fifth Ward did not exist. Following the Civil War, the population of Houston soared with many of the new residents, particularly African Americans, moving beyond the established city to the north of Buffalo

Bustling traffic at the busy intersection of Lyons Avenue and Jensen Drive in 1956. Photo courtesy of Houston Chronicle Photo Library.

Today, the crowds and the buildings are gone, and the Houston skyline looms over the empty field bordered by Lyons and Jensen.
Photo by Patricia Pando.

Bayou and east of White Oak Bayou. In 1865, the Reverend Toby Gregg established a church, the oldest institution in what would become the Fifth Ward. The active congregation at Mount Vernon United Methodist Church continues today. By 1866, the large and growing population of the area led the city fathers to realize that these Houstonians needed representation; they decreed the area "across" the two bayous to be the Fifth Ward. The new Houstonians elected an alderman, and the area attained a new nickname, one that persists today, "The Nickel."[4]

The Fifth continued growing, growth accelerated by the expansion of the railroad industry in the city. Starting in the 1850s and continuing through the 1880s, Houston became the top rail center in the Southwest. Its support system of foundries and railroad shops, mainly in the Fifth Ward, flourished, providing jobs for the residents and attracting new jobseekers. In 1870, of the five Houston wards (the Sixth had not yet been created), only the Fifth had more African Americans than whites, and the majority was slim: 578 African Americans to 561 whites.[5]

The city granted The Nickel an alderman and accepted its tax dollars but gave little in return. Historian David McComb recounts how Houston was long considered "a huddle of houses arranged on unoccupied lines of black mud." The Fifth's streets ranked among the muddiest. City services persisted at such a low level that in 1875 the residents, demanding paving and upgraded utilities, threatened to secede and set up the "City of North Houston." In 1883, came another threat of secession; this time, the city appeased the residents with the construction of an iron drawbridge at the foot of San Jacinto Street.[6]

Early in the twentieth century, residents of The Nickel and the country enjoyed some Fifth Ward fun. Famed temperance crusader Carrie Nation visited Houston and judged that the city badly needed the prohibition of alcohol. During her visit to make a speech and sell souvenir hatchets, she became outraged upon hearing a bar in The Nickel was named "Carrie Nation Saloon." She got the owner to make a promise he didn't keep—he would change the name. Nation returned to the Bayou City in 1905 only to learn that the Carrie Nation, now under new owners, still served drinks, literally under her name. She did not merely sell hatchets this time. She took herself straight into the bar and did almost a thousand dollars of damage. The owner promptly and thriftily changed his sign to the "Carnation." The building still stands on the northeast corner of Wood and North San Jacinto.[7]

Hungry Fifth Ward residents and visitors alike often end up grabbing lunch at The Nickel Sandwich Grill near the intersection of Lyons Avenue and Lockwood. While The Nickel features barbeque, the house specialty, naturally, is "The Nickel Burger."
Photo by Patricial Pando.

In 1927, as in 2005, disaster victims from Louisiana found early refuge and, later, permanent homes in Houston. The massive Great Flood of 1927 that submerged the Mississippi River Valley left many Creoles of French, Spanish, and African descent homeless and jobless. They headed out for

An inferno of flames raced across The Nickel on February 12, 1912, when a lamp turned over during a fight in an abandoned saloon and rooming house. The wind spread the blaze over 40 blocks before it reached the Cleveland Compress where it destroyed 35,000 bales of cotton. Dawn's light made the loss clear: 166 boxcars, 9 oil tanks, 13 industrial plants, St. Patrick's Catholic School and Church, along with hundreds of homes.

Photo from the the George Fuermann "Texas and Houston" Collection, courtesy of Special Collections, Digital Library, University of Houston.

Houston and the Fifth Ward where they claimed the area around Erastus and Collingsworth Streets so completely that it became and remains "French Town." These industrious folks, including carpenters, plumbers, bricklayers, and mechanics, quickly found jobs. Many went to work at the nearby Englewood Yard of the Southern Pacific Railroad, others in Ship Channel industries.

Hardworking as they were, the French Town folk had time for two favorite activities: church and music. Most Creoles were devoted Catholics. Attending St. Nicholas Church, the nearest black Catholic Church, meant a tedious journey across town; the Hispanic Our Lady of Guadalupe was walking distance, but that church had the practice, unacceptable to the proud Creoles, of seating them on the last rows and inviting them to confession and communion last. Quickly they formed their own church. After a frenzy of fundraisers including zydeco dances and gumbo, boudin, and praline sales, they broke ground for their new church when French Town was but a year old. With over 200 founding members, Our Mother of Mercy Catholic Church officially became a parish on June 30, 1930. That fall the church opened a school. It charged tuition—ten cents a week. Our Mother of Mercy continues to serve French Town and the entire Fifth Ward.

It is no surprise that zydeco dances made good money for the church fundraisers, for the words "zydeco" and "creole" are practically synonymous, and, for many associated—strongly associated—with the Bayou City. This French music, amalgamated with country and western and blues, got a new twist in French Town. The rafters rang at the Continental Lounge and Zydeco Ballroom on Collingsworth and the Silver Slipper over on Crane Street, as well as many parish halls, long before zydeco entered the American music mainstream in the 1980s.

French Town, while still a Fifth Ward presence, has lost part of its distinctiveness. The children and grandchildren of those early settlers married non-creoles, and many moved out of The Nickel as they prospered financially. The soft sound of Creole French has become infrequent, and the founding residents who made the journey away from their Louisiana homes have diminished to zero. Those early ones clung to their language. Omowale Luthuli, a community organizer in the 1980s, recalled how the French-speakers solved a problem for him. Once again, the Fifth Ward became a refuge as Haitians, fleeing trouble in their homeland, settled here. Those trying to help them, including Luthuli, spoke no French. The Haitians spoke no English. Help was, however, at hand. Creole-speaking seniors happily translated the Haitian French into American English.[8]

The Fifth Ward thrived. In 1925, over forty doors were open for business along Lyons Avenue. Fire Station Number 19 offered protection from 3315 Lyons. Several drugstores and grocery stores offered staples, and Rosetta Williams provided furnished rooms for travelers and the newly arrived. Late in the decade, Phillis Wheatley High School bragged that with a student body of more than 2,500 taught by sixty faculty members it was one of the largest black high schools in the nation.[9]

Community services in other areas came more slowly. In the early 1940s, Houston's African American population topped 100,000, but the city offered fewer than 200 hospital beds to serve them. Catholic Charities of Houston,

Community volunteers and Menil staff joined community coordinator Mickey Leland (second from the right) in converting the abandoned De Luxe Theater into an art oasis in 1971. Photo courtesy of the Menil Archives, Menil Collection, Houston.

along with the Missionary Sisters of the Incarnate World Healthcare Society, sought to remedy this. On May 18, 1947, sixty-bed St. Elizabeth's Hospital opened its doors with a bi-racial staff. Today, the facility houses Riverside Hospital's Barbara Jordan Health Care Center. Shortly after the close of World War II, Kelly Courts, the city's second African American public housing project, opened its doors; Finnegan Park and Julia C. Hester House, a community center, also began to welcome Fifth Warders.[10]

One night in 1947, Texas blues guitar great "Gatemouth" Brown stood up in the Bronze Peacock Nightclub on Erastus Street and borrowed a guitar. He proceeded to give a knockout performance. "I made $600 in tips in 15 minutes," he later recalled. Bronze Peacock owner Don Robey, realizing he had a good thing going, signed "Gatemouth" to a management contract. In 1949, Robey established Peacock Records specifically to record Brown. Peacock, located at 4104 Lyons, became a force in the world of the Fifth Ward and on the national music scene.[11]

During the 1950s, The Nickel came into its own. As the population zoomed, businesses opened to serve it. Historians Cary Wintz and Howard Beeth observed that Fifth Ward and Lyons Avenue and Jensen Drive had eclipsed Fourth Ward's San Felipe Road (now West Dallas) as the African American "downtown." By day, shoppers filled the streets visiting the Twentieth Century Gift Shop or Platt's Department Store, Number 1, having their pictures taken at Jiffy Studios and grabbing a bite to eat at Tommie Mae's Tea Room or the Blue Shoe Café. By night, sounds of music, fun, and laughter rang out as crowds caught a movie at the De Luxe or Roxy and thronged to Club Matinee and Club Paradise. The nearby and luxurious Crystal Hotel welcomed visiting musicians and other prominent African American visitors to Houston who were not welcome, not allowed, in the "white" hotels. The Nickel reveled in its heyday.[12]

Two forces came to play in the 1960s. The legislation, court rulings, and social changes that racial integration brought to the nation and to Houston had great overall benefits, but to the Fifth Ward, the news was not all good. As white-owned stores welcomed their new black customers both downtown and in the beckoning new shopping centers, Nickel retailers lost out. At the same time, new neighborhoods and integration of existing ones attracted many younger, more prosperous families. Meanwhile, freeways came. I-10 and U.S. Highway 59, in the words of historian Joe R. Feagin, "literally crucified the area by creating large freeways in a cross pattern through its heart." Not only

did families and businesses suffer displacement because of construction, the freeways separated residential areas from the business district, which was further harmed by the lack of an exit to Lyons Avenue and Jensen Drive. Linda Brown, who grew up in the Fifth Ward, commented that the highway system caused a "disappointing loss of the economic community," recalling that her mother protested when the exits were changed again in 1994.[13]

The decline was slow; businesses did not disappear overnight. Nevertheless, by the late 1960s, the Lyons Avenue and Jensen Drive intersection was all but abandoned except for the still booming nightclub activity; that is when "Juke Boy" Bonner issued his warning about avoiding Lyons Avenue. Things, however, are never all bad. A 1979 article in *Texas Monthly* painted a grim picture of the "crowded and poor" Fifth Ward, but the author also commented that he had found "a community determined that life should win over death, hope over despair, pride over poverty." He also noted that while poverty remained pervasive, it was not omnipresent. Indeed, in stable residential communities, well-fed and nurtured children went to Sunday school, attended school, proudly joined the high-stepping, well-known Wheatley band, and went to college. Churches of various denominations offered myriad activities, both religious and social.[14]

In 1992, Ernest McMillan, founder of the Fifth Ward Enrichment Program, brought young members to Evergreen Negro Cemetery to help clean and maintain it as a service project.
Photo courtesy of Fifth Ward Enrichment Program.

Many worked to remedy problems, or at least assuage them. The City of Houston might provide the area with poor streets and sewers, but beginning in 1967 it did offer HOPE (Human Organizational Political and Economic Development, Inc.). HOPE served in many ways: a newspaper, job training, tutoring. Working with HOPE, local art benefactors John and Dominique de Menil, with the help of Mickey Leland, organized an exhibition of both black and white contemporary artists in the abandoned De Luxe movie theater. When the show closed, the Menils and Fifth Ward leaders created the Black Arts Gallery of the Black Arts Center in the De Luxe.[15]

Located near the intersection of Lyons Avenue and Jensen Drive and adjacent to Crawford Elementary School, "The Fruits of the Fifth" mural welcomes visitors to the Ward and features 21 individuals either from The Nickel or strongly associated with it. Reginald Adams from the Museum of Cultural Arts Houston directed Phillis Wheatley High students in building the mural in 2006.
Photo by Patricia Pando.

Teenage pregnancy plagued the Fifth Ward as it did so many cities and neighborhoods. Many social programs addressed the problem by working with girls. In the mid-1980s, community worker Ernest McMillan developed a new approach. He established the Fifth Ward Enrichment Program for boys, most from single-parent (usually female) homes. There the boys attended after-school programs staffed by African American men teaching life-skills and guiding behavior. FWEP has flourished and continues offering programs to boys from elementary school through high school.[16]

While FWEP focuses on individuals, Habitat for Humanity, organized in Houston and the Fifth Ward in 1987, sights in on families and on helping them to live in their own homes. The first Habitat houses in the Fifth went up in 1991 and 1992 on Rowley Street off Waco. Jimmy Carter chose The Nickel as the site of his first domestic projects to build 100 houses in a week. Habitat remains committed to the Fifth. New homes are planned in the foreseeable future; the organization has a new emphasis on renewal projects, helping families repair and renew their older houses.[17]

Habitat and FWEP are but two of many programs aimed at shining up The Nickel. Churches sponsor programs, such as the Fifth Ward Missionary Baptist Church Multi-Service Center, for their members and the community. Civil organizations, outreach programs from Houston churches not in the ward, community volunteers—the list grows. Like Barbara Jordan and Mickey Leland, other notables who grew up in the Fifth Ward—such as Ruth Simmons, president of Brown University; Beneva Williams, who as a teenager helped bring integration to Houston schools; musician Joe Sample; State Representative Harold Dutton; former Representative Al Edwards; County Commissioner El Franco Lee—are among the many who proudly claim to hail from The Nickel.[18]

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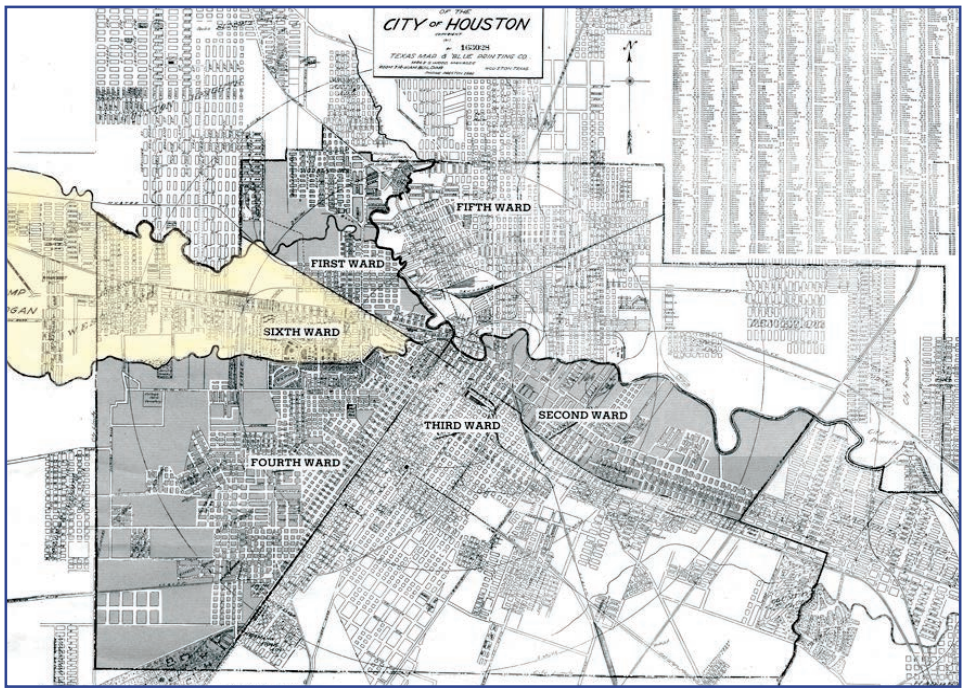
Sixth Ward: Carving Out its Own Place

By Janet K. Wagner, RLA



City of Houston, 1920.

The Sixth Ward began as the north portion of the Fourth Ward. The north and south portions of Fourth divided by an east flowing Buffalo Bayou. About three fourths of Fourth Ward fell south of the bayou. The remaining one fourth to the north resembled a slice of pie, pointing toward the town center and the Harris County Courthouse. Beginning with four wards for Houston government, the future Sixth Ward spent the first forty years as the north part of the Fourth Ward, becoming designated as the Sixth Ward in 1874.

Houston adopted the New York ward system in 1837, allowing ten wards to accommodate the future geographic expansion of the town. The ward system served to provide two elected officials from each ward to serve as aldermen to city government and represent the ward citizens' needs and desires on regulations for the common good.

The city organized on June 5, 1837, and held the first election on August 14. James S. Holman won out with twelve votes for mayor over Francis Lubbock with eleven. Holman took his oath of office on August 28, 1837. A new charter ensued in 1839 with a supplement in 1840 that placed the courthouse in the center of nine square miles of the town. The four wards provided two aldermen from each to serve in the city government. During the next sixty-five years, the city used only six of the ward system numbers before switching to a commission form of government in 1905, eliminating the ward system.[1]

Congress Street running northwest from Main became the division line between the First Ward on the north side and the Fourth to the south of the imaginary line as it crossed Buffalo Bayou ending at the western city limits. As Congress did not constitute a street line after crossing Buffalo Bayou, the line split town blocks and acreage. The local citizens living in the area knew exactly which ward affected their property.

Buffalo Bayou ran through the new town of Houston from west to east, meeting White Oak Bayou nearly in the center of the city at Main Street. A ferry became necessary to carry persons across Buffalo Bayou to the north blocks. Between 1837 and 1860, industry began to settle on the north side of the bayou with town proper on the south. Residential housing, initially built on the south side of the bayou, was scattered around the east, south, and west parts of the central city core within a few years.

Two main roads led from the city to the northwest. One, Spring Street, turned due north through the north side of Fourth Ward, passing Beauchamp Springs, then crossing White Oak Bayou to continue to the Montgomery Road. The other road became a stage line to Washington on the Brazos, hence the local name, Washington Road. A toll bridge, established by Elam Stockbridge in 1838 at an old Ford or water crossing, served to carry citizens across Buffalo Bayou between the south and north sections of the Fourth Ward. The toll bridge became the entrance to the city from the west, the terminus of Washington Road.[2] As Buffalo and White Oak Bayous acted as water fences, the Stockbridge toll bridge became essential to travelers and industry serving the city and region. Using oxen for power, Stockbridge also operated the only gristmill close to the city, grinding wheat, barley, rye, and corn to produce flour and corn meal. Each time Stockbridge changed his grinding stone, he advertised the dates in the newspaper as customers had favorites among the various grinding stones.[3] Washington Road soon became lined with houses, small shops, grocers, boarding facilities, wagon yards, stables, and campers living in tents.

In late winter of 1846, over 2,500 Indians, including chiefs of the Comanche, Keachies, Wacoes, and Towanconoes, arrived in Houston crossing Buffalo Bayou on a new bridge north of the old Stockbridge Ford and Bridge.[4] The entire group came to visit at Terry's Trading House in late December. Following a day of trading, rabble rousing, and hard liquor, the local police chased all of the tribes across the bridge and out of the city. The activity has been reported as a common occurrence during the 1840s.

Whereas the bayou water fence assisted cattlemen to hold their beef herds between the major streams, the bayous also brought import and export business to the city. The

same water fence became an impediment and boundary for individual citizens living in the ward system. All cattle were free range in Harris County in the early years. Clear Creek, Galveston Bay, Buffalo Bayou, and the Brazos River served as water fences for a single cattle range south of Houston. North and west of the city, the San Jacinto River, Buffalo Bayou, Spring Creek, and the Brazos provided a barrier for cattle grazing.

Increased population of French, English, Germans, North Americans, a few Spanish, and many free Blacks began to settle in clusters around the town. Between 1836 and 1860 came the largest migration to Houston from overseas. Although Germans continued to travel through Houston during the 1840s and 1850s, many stayed, joining 6,000 Germans by 1847. The Fourth Ward north of Buffalo Bayou was settled and occupied by German families through Reconstruction. Free Blacks resided in First Ward, north and west of Buffalo Bayou near Beauchamp Springs. Following the Civil War, emancipated Black families lived in Fifth Ward, Third Ward, and the southwestern section of Fourth Ward.

As the city progressed, two aldermen from each ward, plus the mayor, became the major public officials, along with lower officials, some appointed and some elected, such as the hide inspector, wharf master, and sexton.[5] From 1838 through 1856, the city ward system continued electing two aldermen per term. Fourth Ward saw an increase in factories and heavy industry such as iron foundries and brickyards, mostly on the north side of the bayou.

Having only horse, wagon, and foot transportation, citi-

The Beazley-Telschow House, built in 1888 on Kane Street, is an L-shaped Folk Victorian home that has seen many add-ons over the years. The Old Sixth Ward Historic District Neighborhood Association notes that the cow on the roof "does not alter the architecture of the house and as such, does not violate the historic preservation ordinance." Photos by Barbara Eaves.

The William Henry Lighthouse residence on Kane Street, known as the "Queen of the Sabine," was the only two-story brick home in Old Sixth Ward. The only surviving home of the ward's wealthier section, it was built in 1906 for William Henry Lighthouse, who managed two brick foundries and owned Lighthouse Brick Company.

The Andrew and Josephine Kuhn House, possibly the city's only surviving Queen Anne cross-gable side-hall Victorian cottage, was built in 1883 on Center Street and moved to its current location on Kane to avoid demolition. The house maintains its original color scheme. The rear portion was rebuilt, in part with material salvaged from other Kuhn family homes in 2002 after being damaged in the move.

Decorative features on Old Sixth Ward homes range from traditional gingerbread to singular artist's touches, such as that shown here.

To see the homes on the Old Sixth Ward walking tour and learn more about the neighborhood's preservation work, visit the Old Sixth Ward Historic District Neighborhood Association website, www.old6ward.org/walk.html.

zens generally lived within a mile of the city center, purchasing outlots of twelve to thirty-five acres for summer homes in Fourth Ward located on the west side of the city. The north side of Buffalo Bayou rose fifty feet above sea level, thus being the highest point near the city. North Fourth Ward saw industry develop near the center of the city with large acreage lots on the west section. Each acreage lot began as large farms and country estates for city dwellers to escape the summer city heat. Names such as Spring Gardens and Vauxhall Gardens were popular in the area.

Gregor Heiss, a printer by trade, developed a public pleasure garden on six acres north of Buffalo Bayou that copied the famous Vauxhall Gardens of London and New York City. Much like an outdoor evening supper club, Heiss provided food and beer service to customers who came to see the lovely hillside decorated with native sycamores, mulberry, and cherry trees. Oil lamps provided a pleasant lighting with the sea breeze softening the landscape as it crossed the Bayou. Local musicians spiced up the evening conversations.

A large spring outcropped just a few hundred feet west of the Stockbridge land that Dr. Henry Evans purchased in 1837. Evans constructed a home on the edge of the high bank of Buffalo Bayou.[6] Dr. Evans captured the spring into a channel that ran west around the rear or north side of his home just before falling into the bayou, thus creating a lane for irrigating his elaborate garden of flowers, herbs, and vegetables. The spring and homestead was named Evans' Spring Garden for the lavish growth produced on the property. Spring Garden, along with numerous upstream springs, served to provide potable, clean, clear drinking water to the citizens of Houston.

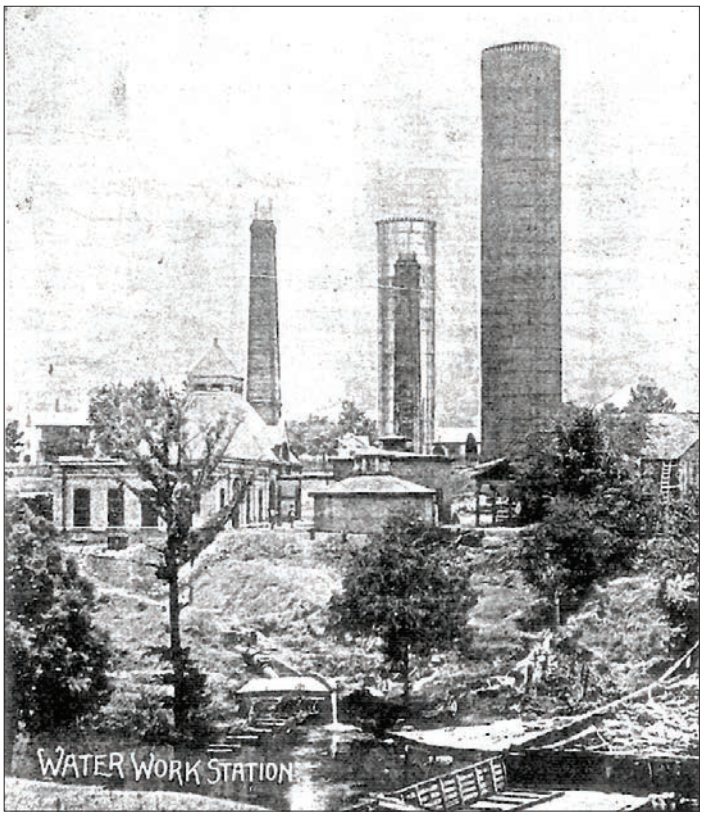
Between 1840 and 1850, the springs provided the safest and purest artesian water for the townspeople until a series of slaughterhouses set up on the bayou west of Houston. Citizens' utilized water from Beauchamp Springs on White Oak Bayou until the city forced the slaughterhouses downstream of Houston. Citizens then began building cisterns and digging water wells for drinking, washing, and crop irrigation. Hand-dug wells excavated from twelve to twenty-six feet tapped the underground aquifers around the city. The Houston Waterworks Company opened in the Sixth Ward in 1879 to serve Houston citizens and hotels with artesian water from deeply dug wells.[7]

Prior to the Civil War, the arrival of the Houston Texas Central Railroad in the 1850s into the northern portion of Fourth Ward created the need for a new subdivision in First Ward and the north part of Fourth Ward. William Robinson Baker, former Harris County Clerk, platted a large subdivision of over 400 blocks in 1856 to attract railroad workers coming from Ireland, England, Germany, and North American states. According to Baker's map, the western city limits stopped at Sawyer Street on his new Baker Subdivision.

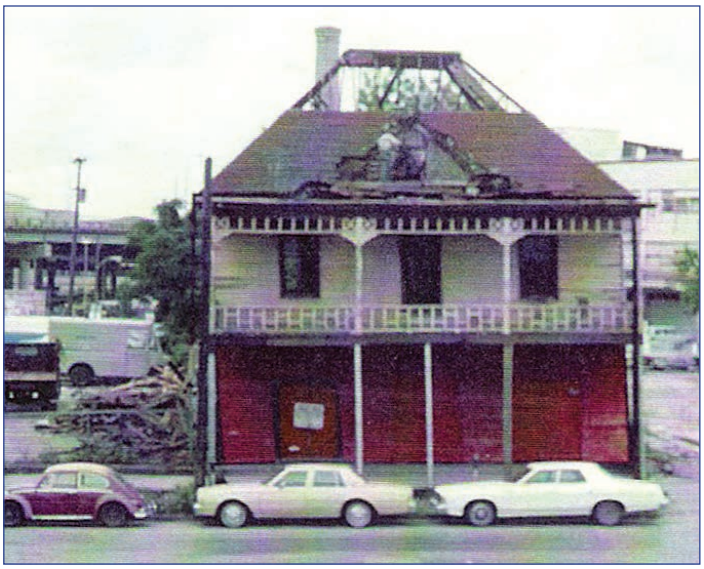
With the advent of the railroad to the Brazos River in 1856, the north side of Fourth Ward became an industrial and manufacturing center for tin shops, iron founders, railroad car shops, warehouses, small cafes, wagoneers, barrel-makers, and gypsies. Indian tribes camped on the high ground of the First Ward with the Gypsies occupying the nearby "Vinegar Hill" to the south in an area called "Tin Pan Alley," adjacent to the Stockbridge homestead. Vinegar Hill became notorious with Tin Pan Alley as the main thoroughfare. The elevated area of Vinegar Hill emulated from the numbers of "vinegarroons" that infested the place. The site was just north of the Farmers' Market near the Capitol Street Bridge. Queen Caroline, otherwise, Caroline Riley, ruled as the one-eyed terror of the Hill, governing with a rod of iron. Big Foot Jen, Charles Johnson to some, Lillie Rivers, and Julia Baker acted as first lieutenants for Queen Caroline. The dusky Queen and her sidekicks governed the Hill encampment, quelling frequent rebellions with teeth and claws, but using knives and six shooters when necessary. Sadly, to the disappointment of the town, Queen Caroline died and a 300-pound "Auntie" took over the district as the new "Queen" until the land was sold at public auction in 1881.[8]

The Irish constructed the railroad and moved along with the construction out of town. Located in the north Fourth Ward, the Germans came to work in the new railroad yards and local evolving industries that served the railroad.[9] The new industry, residential construction, and noisy railroad traffic forced Vauxhall Gardens to move across the bayou to the south.

Following the Civil War, the western portion of the north Fourth Ward land converted from the Archibald Wynns' Farm to Glenwood Cemetery, a Victorian garden spot for local citizens to spend weekend afternoons and picnic. Farther out Washington Avenue, just south of White Oak Bayou, the Black population created a private garden cemetery, named Olivewood. Washington Avenue became a planked road for travelers.



Houston's Water Works Station, circa 1880.
Photo courtesy of Houston Public Library.



The Cadillac Bar under demolition in 1971. The Cadillac Bar converted an old house into a commercial property on the Stockbridge Ford land near the location of Samuel Stockbridge's home. The building was made of heart cypress or pine planks that were two stories in length. The building was all board and batten construction, solid as a rock, and probably built sometime in the 1840s or early 1850s. Photo by Janet K. Wagner.

At the point of the pie shaped north Fourth Ward, brickyards mined the dark red clay outcroppings, moving upstream as the clay played out. Young's Brick Yard at Houston Avenue (then Young's Street) became a baseball ground when the brickyard left. Many years later, the area became a Farmer's Market. King's Brick Yard took over the clay at Sawyer Street and the bayou, making brick for the 1852 Harris County Courthouse. The Houston Brick Company settled at the water's end of Sabine Street, purchased by William Marsh Rice in later years, moving upstream to Memorial Park, the Archery Range, and Brunner Subdivision.

The North Fourth Ward population, generally German and railroad workers, differed greatly from the post-war South Fourth Ward residents composed mainly of Reconstruction workers, freed slaves, and new comers to Houston. Because of the differences in language and occupations, Buffalo Bayou became a stronger dividing line between the southern part of Fourth Ward and the new Sixth Ward, drawn out of the North Fourth.

Sixth Ward was created on April 18, 1874, at a time when industrial activity was on the rise in Houston. The bayou had been dredged to Main Street, and a street rail system opened connecting the Fairgrounds, Main Street, the Market House, and Union and Central Depots. The new rail cars raced along at ten miles per hour, mule drawn. Wiggins & Simpson established a large iron foundry along Buffalo Bayou in the Sixth Ward point. The Foundry had evolved from Simpson Brenard & Company dealing in agricultural implements since 1866. At the first Texas State Fair held in Houston, the foundry provided all the steam power for the entire fairgrounds. The iron foundry burned to the ground in May 1866, rising from the ashes by 1876 to be re-named the Phoenix Iron Works. The Houston Water Works established west of the old Stockbridge home site and mill in 1876, fire-fighting becoming a major concern to Houstonians.[10]

The Houston Soap Works, established next to the Houston Water Works along Buffalo Bayou in the east point of the Sixth Ward, used a large barn for molding, cutting, and packaging the soap. Johann S. Menger purchased 1.4 acres of the old Nordhausen-Gaucher Brickyard on January 13, 1874, from Lardner Stanley.[11] Three steam-heated vats or soap tanks were wood fired to heat the potash or soda to make lye. The lye would be added to the melted grease, stirred well, brought to a boil, salted, and allowed to settle. After adding more lye and boiling for two hours, the mixture became soap and firm. The use of potash would produce soft soaps while soda produced hard soaps. One tank melted the pure grease that could be bacon, lard, or beef tallow.

Many types of oils and grease can be used to produce soap. During this period, Houston had an abundant supply of beef tallow. Byproducts of slaughterhouses, beef hoofs and tallow, were used mainly for the production of candles and soap. Beef tallow produces a harder soap than most and sometimes becomes brittle upon drying. Its color is off-white or light tan. Pure lard, obtained from the rendering of swine, makes a pure-white, softer type of soap, which explains why some folks used clarified bacon drippings to make their lye soap. During the Civil War, the Houston slaughterhouses gave the beef away to the citizens, since their main product comprised the hides exported to Italy for shoe leather. The Menger family sold the soap works in 1918 having made only laundry and toilet soaps since 1897.[12]

Boarding houses appeared almost overnight and thrived in the Sixth Ward, supported by the terminus of the Houston & Texas Central Railroad Depot. Dora Heinecke converted the old Stockbridge homestead into the Green Tree Hotel and Saloon in the late 1850s, becoming more of a saloon by the 1900s. The Green Tree Hotel, by 1925, became the Preston Hotel and grocery store. The building was demolished in the 1960s. The development of the Houston Heights as a new town in the 1890s finally brought electrified rail service to the Sixth Ward along Washington Avenue.

In 1905, the city resorted to a commission form of government, eliminating all geographic ward designations.[13] The city limits expanded westward to Shepherd Drive and the Brunner District. So accustomed to the use of the Ward terminology in some neighborhoods, the expression remains in use by the local citizenry to the present day.

The Sixth Ward Historic District, located between Memorial Drive and Washington Avenue, designated by the Department of the Interior in 1978, became the first National Register District in Harris County. However, that is another story.

Janet Wagner was responsible for registering Houston's first Historic District, The Old Sixth Ward, and founded the Old Sixth Ward Historical Association. She was instrumental along with Kirk Farris in registering the first City of Houston Archeological Landmark in Frost Town. She recently became the first woman chair of the Harris County Historical Commission.

The Spirit of Giving: Jane Blaffer Owen and the University of Houston

By Aimee L'Heureux

CORRECTION: *The article "Recalling Houston's Early Days and Its Oilmen: A Conversation with Jane Blaffer Owen and Elizabeth Gregory, Joe Pratt, and Melissa Kean," which appeared in the Spring 2011 issue of* Houston History *featured a picture of a young woman, which was mislabeled as Jane Blaffer Owen. The photo was actually Janie Owens, a former University of Houston student.*

Houstonians remember Jane Blaffer Owen as daughter of Robert Lee Blaffer, a founder of Humble Oil & Refining Company; granddaughter of William T. Campbell, who established The Texas Company (later Texaco); and wife of Kenneth Owen, a descendant of New Harmony Utopian Society Founder Robert Owen. But most importantly, Houstonians remember her for her spirit of giving which helped to transform New Harmony, Indiana, and provide affordable and accessible higher education through the University of Houston.

Jane Blaffer Owen was born on April 18, 1915. She grew up in Houston, Texas, and went on to serve the community as the first vice president of the Allied Arts Council, a trustee of the C. G. Jung Education Center, a board member of the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, a sustaining trustee of the University of Houston's Moores School of Music, a board member of the Houston Symphony and the Contemporary Arts Association, as well as holding numerous other postions.[1]

Blaffer Owen supported the University of Houston's Blaffer Gallery and Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture. The Blaffer Gallery, nestled in the Fine Arts Building on the main campus, is a contemporary art museum "dedicated to fostering the careers and understanding of emerging, mid-career, and underrepresented artists and bodies of work through exhibitions, publications, and public programs." Blaffer's educational programs include public lectures, artist's talks, docent tours, audio guides, and youth programs such as Studio Saturday, Summer Arts, and the Young Artist Apprenticeship Program.[2] "Mrs. Owen was a lifelong supporter of the museum carrying her maiden name," recalled museum director Claudia Schmuckli. "She embraced Blaffer Art Museum's mission and vision and was uniquely invested in the future of the museum. While New Harmony was her first love, her commitment to the University of Houston was exemplary, and we mourn her loss deeply."[3]

Former UH dean of Architecture, Joe Mashburn, and Jane Blaffer Owen collaborated with Ben Nicholson from Chicago Art Institute and fifth-year UH architecture students in the digital fabrication class to design and build "The Grotto for Meditation." Now standing on the University of Houston campus, it reinterprets the project first proposed approximately forty-eight years ago in New Harmony, Indiana.[4] In 1963, Jane Blaffer Owen commissioned Frederick J. Kiesler, an Austrian American stage designer and architect, to create the grotto as a quiet, meditative spot for the arts community of New Harmony, but it was never built. "Our students reimagined the Grotto for Meditation," said visiting assistant professor of architecture Andrew Vrana. Applying today's technology to Kiesler's concept, "it is very much in keeping with his idea," recalled Lecturer Joe Meppelink. "Digital fabrication has allowed us to find a very unique solution for our grotto." The approximately 300-square-foot finished project features a space for visitors to relax and listen to the water.[5]

Jane Blaffer Owen with family member John Royall and Blaffer director Claudia Schmuckli. Photo by James Wright, Wright One Photography.

Although much of her philanthropy went to New Harmony, a rural escape from Houston's bustling city life, Jane Blaffer Owen did not forget her roots and gave generously to the Houston community. She passed away on June 21, 2010, at the age of ninety-five. Her spirit of giving lives on in the arts and preservation projects she supported in New Harmony, Indiana, and Houston, Texas.

Aimee L'Heureux is a Ph.D. student in history at the University of Houston and associate editor of *Houston History*.

News Updates & Books *by Barbara Eaves*

HISTORY NOTES

Lots going on! Our 1910 Harris County Courthouse should be back in business this fall, the City is planning a big 175th birthday party, a new Jesse Jones biography is coming out, and work is underway on the Rice University Centennial. Meanwhile, enjoy the Houston Public Library's new Texas Room and loggia, and the new visitors' center at Bayou Bend.

HOUSTON 175: CELEBRATE HISTORY

A group of Houston non-profit organizations, working with the Mayor's office, joined to produce exhibitions, tours, a film series, and a history conference to celebrate Houston's birthday. Dubbed *Houston 175: Celebrate History*, Mayor Annise Parker is the honorary chair; the Architecture Center Houston Foundation is managing the project; and you are invited to the party! Events kick off the week of August 26, 2011, 175 years after the Allen Brothers bought the Houston site. On the weekend of October 28-30, there will be a citywide crawl of ten exhibitions with each investigating one particular aspect of Houston's history. The party ends June 5, 2012, 175 years after the date of Houston's incorporation. For details check www.houston175.org.

Current exhibit topics and participants/venues are:

Architecture	ArCH Foundation
City government	City Hall
People	FotoFest/Houston Center for Photography
Commerce	Museum of Printing History
Public Spaces/Art	Houston Arts Alliance
Education	UH/Downtown at Willow Street Pump Station
Transportation	Houston Public Library
Visual/Performing Art	Diverse Works
Sports	Harris County/Houston Sports Authority at Union Station
Medicine	Texas Medical Center

The Buffalo Bayou Partnership will sponsor boating and recreational activities, including their annual KBR Kids Day on Buffalo Bayou (www.buffalobayou.org).

Meanwhile, play the "My Houston is Here" game. Log onto www.houston175.org, download a sign that says "My Houston is Here," hold it in front of your favorite place in Houston, and take a picture. Submit your picture online for others to admire – and where you can admire theirs.

THE HISTORY CONFERENCE, *MILESTONES AND ARRIVALS: 175 YEARS OF COMING TO HOUSTON*

will be held on Saturday, October 29, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the Hilton-University of Houston Hotel & Conference Center, sponsored by the Houston History Association. Co-sponsors include: Texas State Historical Association, University of Houston–Center for Public History, *Houston History* magazine, and Architecture Center Houston Foundation.

The conference kicks off with presentations on our changing demographic and industrial makeup, featuring speakers Stephen Klineberg, Rice University; Joseph Pratt, University of Houston; and Bernadette Pruitt, Sam Houston State University. Houston has always been a city of immigrants – individuals, businesses, institutions. Why is this? Why does it continue? What milestones are significant? Presenters will discuss these and other questions.

Betty Chapman will be honored for her work in preserving and promoting Houston history. Local museums, and historical, preservation, and archival groups will have displays throughout the day. The $50 fee includes registration, lunch, and parking. For information and to register, visit www.houstonhistoryassociation.org, click on news, click on Houston History Conference.

NEW VIDEO AVAILABLE:

Sam Houston: American Statesman, Soldier & Pioneer

The first full-length movie on Sam Houston's life, produced by Denton Florian and written by Sam Houston scholar James Haley, is now available at www.samhoustonmovie.com ($24.95 + tax and shipping). Houston is the only man in history to serve as a U.S. representative, U.S. senator, army general that won one of the most significant battles in American history, president of the country it created, and governor of the state it became. Both houses of the Texas Legislature honored the film with a concurrent resolution sponsored by Senator Tommy Williams (R-The Woodlands/Beaumont) and Representative Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham/Huntsville). *Sam Houston* was meticulously researched and shot at locations in Texas, Tennessee, and Virginia where Houston actually lived, worked, fought, drank (dare we say?), was baptized, and died. Included are the only images of Sam and Margaret Houston together, a newly discovered image of Houston's first wife, 300 photographs and documents, animated maps, and more. Teaching tools are available.

GHPA: NEW WEBSITE, GOOD BRICKS, TOURS

The Greater Houston Preservation Alliance's redesigned website, www.ghpa.org, is now online. A new feature is a digital archive of GHPA newsletters dating back to 1983, five years after the organization's founding. This virtual time capsule of the historic preservation movement in Houston contains photos and histories of significant buildings—some restored, others demolished. If you have copies of any missing newsletters, please email info@ghpa.org.

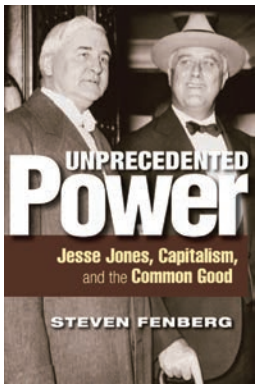
GHPA is now accepting nominations for the 2012 Good Brick Awards for excellence in historic preservation. Projects must be located in Harris County and completed in the last three years. Updated entry guidelines and nomina-

tion forms are at www.ghpa.org/awards/. Entry deadline is Monday, September 12, 2011.

GHPA is partnering with the Glenwood Cemetery Historic Preservation Foundation to offer quarterly guided tours of the park-like cemetery grounds at 2525 Washington Avenue. These are not ghost tours. Rather they examine the cemetery's art and design and include stories of individuals interred there. Reservations required. www.ghpa.org/tours/.

Unprecedented Power: Jesse Jones, Capitalism and the Common Good

By Steven Fenberg, (Texas A&M University Press, $35).



Jesse Holman Jones went to Washington as an appointed official. There, he provided the pragmatic leadership that salvaged U. S. capitalism during the Great Depression and mobilized industry in time to fight and win World War II. While the story of this Houston businessman is fascinating in its own right, it is especially relevant now because President Obama's actions in today's economy have been likened to Franklin D. Roosevelt's. Jones – an entrepreneur with an eighth grade education – was considered the most powerful person in the nation, next to FDR. As chairman of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, Jones saved farms, homes, banks, businesses, built infrastructure, and in the process made a substantial profit for the government. Then he turned RFC's focus to global defense and World War II. According to author Steven Fenberg, Jones believed he would thrive only if his community thrived, a belief that directed him to combine capitalism and public service to strengthen his community, to restore the fortunes of his country, and to save nations. In writing this definitive biography, Fenberg had unrestricted access to the archives of Houston Endowment (the Jones charitable foundation which, today, continues to help Houston thrive), and an impressive array of other sources.

HOLD THESE DATES

OCTOBER 1, 2011: **General Land Office** holds its second annual Save Texas History Symposium. The meeting will be in Austin, at the AT&T Conference Center on the UT campus. Visit www.glo.texas.gov. This is a neat website!

OCTOBER 25, 2011: **Party for Texas** — A high-powered, casual, grand finale gala for the 175th anniversary year of the Battle of San Jacinto, starring Ray Benson and Asleep at the Wheel, will be held at the River Oaks Country Club, sponsored by the Friends of San Jacinto Battleground. Proceeds will benefit Save the San Jacinto Battleground Fund for preservation and restoration of the historic battlefield landscape. At the ball, the Friends will officially present acreage recently rescued from development as a gift to the people of Texas. Visit www.friendsofsanjacinto.org.

MARCH 1-3, 2012: **Texas State Historical Association** hosts its 116th annual meeting in Houston at the Omni Hotel. Watch www.onlinetsha.com.

HONORS

MERLINE PITRE, professor of history and dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Behavioral Sciences at Texas Southern University, was elected 2011-2012 president of the Texas State Historical Association. Two of Dr. Pitre's most noted scholarly works are *Through Many Dangers, Toils and Snares: The Black Leadership of Texas* and *In Struggle against Jim Crow: Lulu B. White and the NAACP, 1900-1957.* Her *Black Women in Texas History*, co-edited with Bruce Glasrud, won the 2008 Liz Carpenter Award for best book in Texas women's history. She was elected a Fellow of the Texas State Historical Association in 2009.

DR. GREGG DIMMICK, a Wharton pediatrician, received a National Honorary Membership in the Sons of the Republic of Texas. Such memberships are reserved for individuals whose work has advanced Texas patriotism but who are not otherwise eligible because they do not directly descend from a citizen of the Republic. Dimmick is an expert avocational archeologist. He authored *Sea of Mud: The Retreat of the Mexican Army after San Jacinto* (TSHA '04); edited *General Vicente Filisola's Analysis of Jose Urrea's Military Diary: A Forgotten 1838 Publication by an Eyewitness of the Texas Revolution* (TSHA '07); and is working on a book about Santa Anna's army in Texas. Dimmick continues to do archaeology at the San Jacinto Battleground and other sites.

NEWS

DE ZAVALA CENTENNIAL MARKER RESTORED

Chris Varela, Harris County Historical Commission vice chairman, inspects the replica de Zavala Centennial marker.

For the second time in his life, Lawrence K. de Zavala unveiled a granite marker commemorating his great-great-grandfather, Lorenzo de Zavala, first vice president of the Republic of Texas. He was eleven years old at the first dedication and eighty-six at the second, where eleven-year-old fifth great-grandson Lorenzo Sterling Flores joined him. The original marker was erected as part of Texas Centennial celebrations in 1936. Hurricane Ike smashed it in 2008. The replica, dedicated on May 21, 2011, was sponsored by the Lorenzo de Zavala Lodge No. 1397 A.F. & A.M. and the Harris County Historical Commission. Frank de la Teja, Texas's first state historian, delivered the keynote address. The marker stands on de Zavala Point, home of Cemex, one of the world's largest ce-

ment producers. The Masons presented a de Zavala flag to Cemex to fly at the site. The Texas Historical Commission is restoring damaged Centennial markers to celebrate Texas's 175th anniversary. The de Zavala marker is the first to be restored in Harris County, and the state's only authorized replica.

RICE UNIVERSITY CELEBRATES 100

Rice Institute opened on October 12, 1912. Founded with the $4.6 million fortune of William Marsh Rice, Rice University is harking back to its past for inspiration in planning its 100th birthday party, which will run October 10-14, 2012. A panel will discuss the future of education; a colloquium will explore the relationship between a university and its city; a newly-commissioned orchestral piece will be introduced; and Bruce Wolfe's sculpture of founding president, Edgar Odell Lovett, will be dedicated in front of Keck Hall. There will be tours of art and architecture on campus, picnics, reunions, concerts, "spectacles" in the academic quadrangle, a student dance called "Esperanza," and football game with UT-San Antonio. A Texas historical marker will be dedicated, four books will be published and a fifth updated. Check the evolving calendar at http://centennial.rice.edu/about/overview/.

ADOPT-AN-ACRE AT NASH PRAIRIE

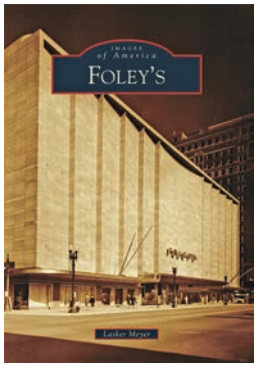
The Nature Conservancy launched an "Adopt-an-Acre" program at Nash Prairie to conserve one of the last, largest remnants of coastal tall grass prairie on the Gulf Coast. This 400-acre tract holds historical, botanical, and ecological significance and is located in the Austin colony, near where Santa Anna was held prisoner after San Jacinto. Botanists have identified almost 300 plant species here – one thought to be extinct. Such prairies help aerate water, prevent coastal erosion, and are valuable as sources of seed to restore other grasslands. Learn more or contribute at http://nature.org/Texas.

When Rice Institute opened, the 1912 Ford Model T was the height of modern technology. This one, owned by Houston's Don Adcock, was nick-named "Centennial Sammy" for Rice's mascot, Sammy the Owl, in the recent Art Car Parade.

Two More Good Books on Houston Topics from Arcadia Publishing

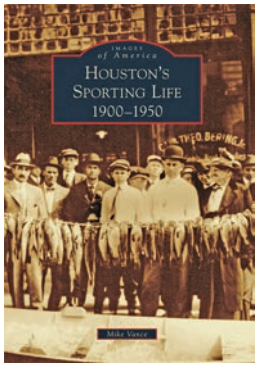
by Joe Pratt

Arcadia Publishing continues to include interesting books on Houston topics as it grows nationally and tweaks its standard format. The two new Houston books in its "Images of America Series" are *Foley's* by Lasker K. Meyer and *Houston's Sporting Life, 1900-1950* by Mike Vance.



Foley's was one of the city's leading department stores for much of the twentieth century. Lasker Meyer, the son of one of the store's owners, worked at Foley's for much of his life, rising to the CEO position from 1982-1987. In detailed two to five page introductions to each chapter, he covers the store's general evolution while also discussing themes such as community involvement and integration. The photos that follow these introductions have short captions identifying key people and events depicted, including the ever-popular Thanksgiving Day parades and Christmas windows. The result is a pleasing book that tells and shows much about our region while also giving the history of one important regional institution—Foley's.

Mike Vance, the founder of Houston Arts and Media (HAM) takes on a much broader task in his book on the sporting life in Houston. He includes photos with detailed captions about pro teams, high school and college sports



of all sorts, individual sports from golf to tennis, hunting and fishing, and everything in between. The book is filled with action photos of Houstonians having fun in athletic competitions. Readers will stop and look harder at those things that most interest them. I found myself drawn to photos of Dizzy Dean as a Houston Buff, Denton Cooley as a UT basketball player, and the team of All-Stars from Houston who won the Little League World Series in the 1950s. The most striking photos for me are the shots from 1950 of ice hockey teams from both the University of Houston and Rice.

As with all of Arcadia's publications, the photographs are the heart of the matter in these two books. The good news is that the photos presented generally are larger than those in previous Arcadia books. I applaud the trend toward better, bigger, and fewer photos. But given our experience publishing *Houston History*, I certainly do not envy the publishers or the authors as they grapple with the constraints inherent in using black and white photos on relatively small pages. That said, I will admit that it was a great pleasure to see interesting aspects of Houston's history by scanning the photos in each of these books.

ENDNOTES

LAKEWOOD CHURCH

1 Jeannie Kever, "Houston Area Survey Gets New Home, Ensuring Its Survival," *Houston Chronicle,* February 24, 2010. Sociologist Scott Thumma has compiled research about megachurches at Hartford Institute for Religion Research, available at http://hirr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/megachurches.html.

2 To more easily identify *which* Osteen I make reference to, I will often use first names only.

3 John Osteen, *Rivers of Living Water: A Baptist Preacher's Experiences With the Power That Comes Through the Holy Spirit* (Houston, John Osteen Ministries, 1975), 6-7; "John H. Osteen's Personal Testimony" (Cassette), Holy Spirit Research Center, Oral Roberts University. Sam Martin recounts Osteen's conversion along with their lifelong friendship in *How I Led One and One Led a Million: The Story of Sam Martin and John Osteen* (Houston: Lakewood Church, 2001), 2-5.

4 John H. Osteen, *This Awakening Generation* (Houston: John H. Osteen Evangelistic Association, 1967), 23-25; John H. Osteen, "The Unified Service," (M.R.E. thesis, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1944); John H. Osteen File, Texas Baptist Historical Collection; *Central Baptist Church 75th Anniversary Book* (Baytown: Central Baptist Church, 1996), 3.

5 John H. Osteen File, Texas Baptist Historical Collection; *Central Baptist Church 75th Anniversary Book*, 3. In *Your Best Life Now* (2004), Joel alludes to his father's ministry at Central Baptist although he does not identify the reasons for divorce (176).

6 John H. Osteen, *How God Baptized Me in the Holy Ghost and Fire* (Houston: John H. Osteen Evangelistic Association, 1961), 6-7; *How to Be Healed* (Houston: John H. Osteen Evangelistic Association, 1961), 9-10; *Supernatural Manifestations in the Life of John H. Osteen* (Houston: John H. Osteen Evangelistic Association, 1961); "This Southern Baptist Preacher Wept, Shook and Listened As…He Heard God Speak," in *Baptists and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit*, ed. Jerry Jensen (Los Angeles: Full Gospel Businessman's Fellowship International, 1963), 6-10, 30-31.

7 John H. Osteen, "This Baptist Preacher Saw It…and He Will Never Be the Same Again!," *Faith Digest* 6/7, July 1961: 3-5; "Mexican Arena of Faith," *Faith Digest* 6/8, August 1961: 3-9; "I Waited, I Wondered, I Witnessed," *Faith Digest* 7/4, April 1962: 2-7; David Edwin Harrell, Jr., *All Things Are Possible: The Healing and Charismatic Revivals in Modern America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), 187; *Oral Roberts: An American Life* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 423-424.

8 Osteen, *How God Baptized Me in the Holy Ghost and Fire; How to Be Healed; Supernatural Manifestations in the Life of John H. Osteen; The Supernatural Gifts of the Spirit* (Houston: John H. Osteen Evangelistic Association, 1961).

9 Vinson Synan, *Under His Banner: History of Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International* (Costa Mesa: Gift, 1992); John H. Osteen, "Between the Horns of a Dilemma," *Praise* 2/5, June/July 1963: 4-5.

10 See, for example, John Osteen, *There is a Miracle in Your Mouth* (Houston: Lakewood Church, 1972); *Rivers of Living Water; You Can Change Your Destiny* (Houston: Lakewood Church, 1978). Available at the church's website for it's 50th anniversary commemoration, Lakewood Church produced a timeline that noted major events in its history.

11 The Word of Faith Movement (WOFM) is popularly known as the prosperity gospel. Sociologist Milmon Harrison locates the WOFM as part of the post-World War II charismatic revival that focuses on religious identity in Jesus Christ, speaking positive ideas in the midst of personal troubles ("positive confession"), and a deep conviction that material well-being and divine healing are an integral part of the life of faith. The content of John Osteen's messages and publications fit this definition although he often privileged physical healing over financial prosperity. See Milmon Harrison, *Righteous Riches: The Word of Faith Movement in Contemporary African American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 8-14; Catherine Bowler, "Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2010).

12 Jim Asker, "Lakewood Pastor Has Camera-Ready Message," *Houston Chronicle*, April 2, 1983; Judge Woodrow Seals to John H. Osteen, April 11, 1987, Woodrow Seals Papers, Houston Metropolitan Research Center.

13 Lakewood Church Dedication Service, *Houston Post*, April 8, 1988; John H. Osteen, "The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Me!," *Testimony* 26/1, 1987: 1-7.

14 Lakewood Bible Institute Student Handbook, Holy Spirit Research Center, Oral Roberts University; "Let Lakewood Bible Institute Help You Become All God Wants You to Be!," *Manna*, Spring 1986: 11-14.

15 Lisa Osteen, *Six Lies That the Devil Uses to Destroy Marriages* (Houston: Lakewood Church, 1988). Lisa eventually married Kevin Comes who became facility manager at Lakewood Church. See also Dodie Osteen, *Healed of Cancer* (Houston: Lakewood Church, 1986), 1, 15; James S. Olson, *Making Cancer History: Disease & Discovery at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 163-213.

16 Evening with Joel Madison Square Garden DVD (2004); Cecile B. Holmes, "Stepping Into the Pulpit," *Houston Chronicle*, October 3, 1999; Bill Shepson, "He's Doing His Father's Business," *Charisma*, August 2000: 76-78; Ernest Herndon, "How a BIG Church Grew Bigger," *Charisma*, June 2004: 42-50; Tara Dooley, "Spreading Its Word," *Houston Chronicle*, September 26, 2004; Joel Osteen, *Your Best Life Now: 7 Steps to Living at Your Full Potential* (New York: Warner Faith, 2004), 215.

17 John Osteen, *Becoming a Man of Unwavering Faith* (New York: FaithWords, 2011), 8; Joe R. Feagin, *Free Enterprise City: Houston in Political-Economic Perspective* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988); Lakewood Church Opening Weekend DVD (2005); Tara Dooley, "Lakewood Church: A Center Becomes a Sanctuary," *Houston Chronicle,* July 12, 2005; Tara Dooley and Richard Vara, "16,000 Voices Strong," *Houston Chronicle*, July 17, 2005; William Martin, "Prime Minister," *Texas Monthly*, August 2005: 106-113, 167-175; Wes Eichenwald, "Opposites Attract: Joel & Victoria Osteen on How They Live Happily Ever After," *TexasFamily*, May/June 2006: 30-36; Tara Dooley, "Sunday Conversation: Osteen Still 'Queen Mother,'" *Houston Chronicle*, May 10, 2009. In mid-2010 the Houston City Council voted to sell the former Compaq Center to Lakewood Church for $7.5 million. See Audrey Barrick, "Osteen Celebrates Lakewood's Permanent Home," *Christian Post*, April 1, 2010, www.christianpost.com/news/osteen-celebrates-lakewoods-permanent-home-44562/. See also, Shayne Lee and Phillip Luke Sinitiere, *Holy Mavericks: Evangelical Innovators and the Spiritual Marketplace* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 25-51.

18 For more on the history of "Evening of Hope" events, see Lee and Sinitiere, *Holy Mavericks*, 47-49.

19 Ibid., 38-39; Lakewood Church 50th Anniversary DVD (2009); Joel Osteen, *The Christmas Spirit: Memories of Family, Friends, and Faith* (New York: Free Press, 2010), 129-133; Marcos Witt,

How to Overcome Fear: and Live Your Life to the Fullest (New York: Atria, 2007); Cross Rhythms, "Marcos Witt: The Worship Leader Speaks About His Ministry," www.crossrhythms.co.uk/articles/music/Marcos_Witt_The_worship_leader_speaks_about_his_ministry/14257/p1/; Ruben Hernandez-Leon, *Metropolitan Migrants: The Migration of Urban Mexicans to the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Zulema Valdez, *The New Entrepreneurs: How Race, Class, and Gender Shape American Enterprise* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

20 Coupled with attention from Joel's appearance on *Larry King Live*, the controversy generated by an alleged altercation between Victoria Osteen and a Continental Airlines flight attendant in December 2005 compounded public scrutiny. The flight attendant later sued, and a jury found Victoria Osteen not guilty of assault in August 2008. See Armando Villafranca and Harvey Rice, "Osteen Family Leaves Plane After Dispute," *Houston Chronicle*, December 21, 2005, www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/front/3538956.html; Anne Thomas, "Joel Osteen's Wife Cleared of Assault Charges Thanks God," *Christianity Today*, August 15, 2008, www.christiantoday.com/article/joel.osteens.wife.cleared.of.assault.charges.thanks.god/21221.htm.

21 *Larry King Live*, "Interview with Joel and Victoria Osteen," December 22, 2006, http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0612/22/lkl.01.html. Osteen's original apology letter is no longer available on his website; however it is posted in its entirety at www.joelosteenblog.com/2005/07/13/joel-osteens-letter-about-the-interview/. See also Michael Horton, *Christless Christianity: The Alternative Gospel of the American Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008), 29-69; John MacArthur, "Your Best Life: Now or Later?," at www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/80-334; "Becoming a Better You," 2010 Christless Christianity West Coast Conference (Ligionier Ministries) at www.ligonier.org/learn/conferences/christless-christianity-2010-west-coast/becoming-a-better-you/; Hank Hanegraaff, *Christianity in Crisis: 21st Century* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2009), xii-xvii, 34-39, 114.

22 Biographical information about Hixson comes from his web site, www.jbhixson.org.

23 J.B. Hixson, *Getting the Gospel Wrong: The Evangelical Crisis No One Is Talking About* (Longwood, FL: Xulon Press, 2008), 42-47.

24 Joel Osteen, *Become a Better You: 7 Keys to Improving Your Life Every Day* (New York: Free Press, 2007), 88, 91; 229-230; 236-238.

25 Ibid., 236-237.

REV. AIREY

1 "Preacher, Magician, Reporter, Rev. Airey of the Cowboy Boots Dies," copy of unspecified Houston newspaper article, November 1, 1944. The newspaper clippings mentioned throughout are from Marjorie Griffith's private collection. Her father-in-law, founder and longtime St. Andrew's member, Henry Justus Brown, lived at 212 W. 19th Street, and the mission was formed in his parlor in 1911. The title Reverend rather than Father was more customary during this time period. Rev. Airey was a low church Episcopal minister.

2 "Beloved Priest Enters Paradise," *The Texas Churchman*, January 1945.

3 "Rites Set Thursday for Rev. J. W. E. Airey," unspecified Houston newspaper, October 31, 1944.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 J. W. E. Airey, Jr., interview with author, April 9, 2011.

7 Walter Cronkite, *Houston Press*, 1935.

8 "Rites Set Thursday for Rev. J. W. E. Airey."

9 Ibid., Parish Record Book, 1935-1945, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church; J. W. E. Airey, Jr., interview.

10 "Rites Set Thursday for Rev. J. W. E. Airey"; Vestry Minutes, February 17, 1941, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church.

11 Vestry Minutes, February 28, 1942, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church.

12 J. W. E. Airey, *Houston Post*, August 9, 1936.

13 *Colorado County Citizen*, August 22, 1935.

14 Telegram and letter are in an archive belonging to Dana Butler, Mason, Texas.

15 "Dedication of the San Jacinto Monument," *Life*, 6 (May 8, 1939): 27.

16 J. W. E. Airey, Jr., interview.

17 Ibid.

18 Rev. Airey letter to Jerry Werlla, October 31, 1944, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church Archives.

19 Bishop Clinton S. Quin, *The Texas Churchman,* Winter 1945.

20 "Rites Set Thursday for Rev. J. W. E. Airey."

CENACLE SISTERS

1 The Cenacle Sisters are a worldwide Catholic women's religious community founded in 1826. www.cenaclesisters.org.

2 The Divine Office, known as the Liturgy of the Hours, is the official prayer of the Church that includes reciting of scripture and sacred readings at prescribed hours of the day.

3 Ann Minick Criswell, "There's a Place Nearby to Get Away From It All," *Houston Chronicle*, Sunday, April 7, 1963. For many years, meals at the Cenacle were in silence with spiritual readings offered by a sister. They still encourage silence in the dormitory areas and at meals during Lenten and other silent retreats.

4 The Theresians are a group of women who follow the simple path chartered by Therese de Lisieux better known as the Little Flower.

5 Sonja Earthman Nova, personal conversation with author, 1985.

6 Eileen Surles, r.c., *St. Theresa Couderc* (Editrice Ancora Milano, 1970), Houston Cenacle archives. St. Theresa Couderc was canonized on May 10, 1970.

7 Marguerite Johnson Barnes, "Places To Go When The World Crowds" *Houston Post*, n.d., Houston Cenacle archives. Barnes writes the congregation's early growth paralleled the emancipation of women, which according to Sr. Margaret Byrne, "made heavy demands of womanhood, civically, politically and socially. The Cenacle was the response to a modern need – a provision . . . for people living in the world to have the opportunity for spiritual refreshment within the cloistered precinct of retreat houses." Rice University's Woodson Research Center and Collections has the Marguerite Johnson Barnes archives, which includes her newspaper articles from the 1950s and early 1960s.

8 In 1959, the Diocese of Galveston was designated the Diocese of Houston/Galveston. Prior to the redesign, the boundaries extended from Austin to Orange, and as far north as Tyler. www.archgh.org/About/History/.

9 The diocese of Houston/Galveston is now led by Daniel Cardinal DiNardo.

10 Madeleine McDermott, "History for Sale," *Houston Chronicle,* Sec.8, February 4, 1973. Former Houston mayor Thomas H. Scanlan left his estate to his seven daughters. Legend has it that he threatened them with disinheritance if they married. His will stated his daughters could enjoy the family wealth while alive, but when the last one died, the remainder would go to Catholic charities and education. They carried out his wishes. However, in 1972, Fuqua Industries Inc. of Atlanta paid the Catholic Church approximately $10 million dollars for the property, which later became Sienna Estates.

11 Kenneth Briggs, *Double Crossed, Uncovering the Catholic Church's Betrayal of Nuns* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 50.

12 Sister Byrne, quoting the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" according to Richard P. Mcbrien; W. A. Abbott, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* (1966); Jacques Deretz and Adrien Nocent, eds., Dictionary of the Council (1968); J. H. Miller, ed., *Vatican II: An Interfaith Appraisal* (1966); Herbert

Vorgrimler, ed., *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, 5 vols. (1967-69).
13 Figures provided by Sr. Mary Dennison, rc.
14 Like many U.S. retreat centers, the Cenacle supplements its income by providing space and food to churches and schools that want privacy for staff enrichment days.

IGLESIA DE LA LUZ DEL MUNDO

1 Ondina E. Gonzalez and Justo L. Gonzalez, Christianity in Latin America: A History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 290.
2 Arlene M. Sánchez Walsh, *Latino Pentecostal Identity: Evangelical Faith, Self and Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 15.
3 www.luzdelmundo.net.
4 Patricia Fortuny-Loret de Mola, "The Santa Cena of La Luz del Mundo Church: A Case of Contemporary Transnationalism," *Religion Across Borders: Transnational Immigrant Networks* (New York: Altamira Press, 2002), 25.
5 Richard Vara, "Lighting Up Their World: La Luz del Mundo Prepares to Dedicate New Church Facility," *Houston Chronicle,* July 23, 2005, 2.
6 De Mola, "The Santa Cena," 35.
7 Ibid., 31.
8 Gonzalez, *Christianity in Latin America*, 291.
9 De Mola, "The Santa Cena," 25.
10 Vara, "Lighting Up Their World," 2.

WHEELER AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

1 The Holy Bible, Jeremiah 29:11
2 Reverend William "Bill" Lawson, interview by Jane Ely, March 4, 2008, The Houston Oral History Project, African American Library at the Gregory School, Houston Public Library, Houston, TX.
3 Lawson interview; www.wheeleravebc.org/about_us/lawson/lawson.html.
4 Lawson interview.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 "Melanie Lawson," *Houston Post*, November 1, 1987, 6G.
9 Rayne Jackson, "Two Houston Icons Discuss Social Justice at St. Martin de Porres Feast Day Celebration," November 1, 2010, NewsWireHouston.com; Lawson Interview; www.garylavergne.com/lawson.htm.
10 "About Us," Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church, www.wheeleravebc.org/about_us/history.html.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.; Reverend Doctor Marcus D. Cosby, interview by Tomiko Meeks, May 20, 2011.
13 "About Us," www.wheeleravebc.org/about_us/history.html.
14 Ibid.

FIFTH WARD

1 "Songs by Weldon Juke Boy Bonner," © 1968 by Tradition Music Company c/o Achollie Records, El Cerrito, CA; reprinted in Richard West, "Only the Strong Survive," *Texas Monthly* (February 1979): 170.
2 Thomas Lorenzo, "A Space for Songs," www.livablehouston.com/good/articles/thomas.html; Sig Byrd, *Sig Byrd's Houston* (New York: Viking Press, 1955), 146-152; "A Musical History of the Fifth Ward, Part I," *Houston Press*, February 17, 2009; Roger Wood, *Down in Houston: Bayou City Blues* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 152-184.
3 Linda Brown, telephone interview by Patricia Pando, March 30, 2011; http://app1.kuhf.org/houston_public_radio-news-display.php?articles_id=18290.
4 David G. McComb, *Houston: The Bayou City* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 71-72; www.gbgm-umc.org/mtvernonhou/; www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hpfhk; Brown, interview; Omowale Luthuli, telephone interview by Patricia Pando, March 31, 3011. Today the Fifth Ward is generally regarded to be bounded by Buffalo Bayou on the south, Lockwood Drive on the east, Liberty Road on the north and Jensen on the west. This relatively small area defines the City Council-designated Greater Fifth Ward boundaries. This article considers the Fifth Ward the area set by the city until the end of the ward system in 1905: east of White Oak Bayou, north of Buffalo Bayou and north and east to the city limits.
5 Joe R. Feagin, *Free Enterprise City: Houston in Political and Economic Perspective* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 49; McComb, 85.
6 McComb, 100; Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration, *Houston: A History and Guide* (Houston: Anson Jones Press, 1942), 89-92.
7 www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hpfhk; McComb, 156-157.
8 www.ourmotherofmercy.net/history.html; www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hpfhk; Wood, 138-140; Alan Govenar, *Texas Blues: The Rise of a Contemporary Sound* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 254, 335; West, 176; Luthuli, interview.
9 *Houston City Directory for 1927* (Houston: Morrison and Foundry Directory Company); www.phillisWheatleyhighschool.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=50&Itemid=69.
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11 Wood, 49-50.
12 Howard Booth and Cary D. Wintz , eds., *Black Dixie: Afro-Texan History in Houston* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1992), 165; Wood, 31, 80; *Houston City Directory for 1955* (Houston: Morrison and Foundry Directory Company).
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14 West, 96.
15 West, 174; Alvia J. Wardlaw, "John and Dominique de Menil and the Houston Civil Rights Movement," in *Art and Activism: Projects of John and Dominque de Menil,* Josef Helfenstein and Laureen Schipsi, eds. (Houston: The Menil Collection, n.d.), 109-111.
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SIXTH WARD

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2 Houston City Council Minutes (hereinafter HCCM), June 29, 1846, A/327, C/446, 516; HCCM, June 1, 1846, A/327, $100 al-

located to improve Montgomery Road; Harris County Deed Records (hereinafter HCDR), A/361, D/42/ Q/510; H. Kosse Map of City of Houston, December 28, 1854; HCCM, April 7, 1838, Petition of Calvin Stockbridge for license for ferry toll at bridge he constructed across Buffalo Bayou above Houston.

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4 August Kalb personal interview with Janet K Wagner, 1975.
5 HCCM, February 24, 1840, A/16, 29.
6 HCDR, Z/403, R/39.
7 HCCM, December 3, 1874, C/480, 488; HCDR, 18/524.
8 Sigman Bird, *Sig Byrd's Houston* (New York: Viking Press, 1955), 214, 216-218; "Farmers Market Erection," *Houston Post-Dispatch*, April 1, 1928; "Farmers Market Closed," *Houston Post*, February 30, 1958; *Houston: A History and Guide*, 287, 106.
9 David G. McComb, *Houston the Bayou City* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), 36, 37, 52.
10 HCCM, 1868, B/361, Petition of George W. Carter et al for franchise for street railway; *Houston: A History and Guide*, 107; HCCM, June 3, 1876, D/252, 269, 271, 327; Ordinance, E/90, 109.
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JANE BLAFFER OWEN

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