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Hill/Finger Lecture Series presents
Historic Houston Streets: The Stories Behind the Name
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Why would anybody write a book on the streets of Houston? Well, about six years into the project I am beginning to wonder that myself. It started out when I went to the library looking for some information on the streets, and there was very, very minimal information. Actually there was a ton of information there; it was minimal information in any one place. So I talked to Will Howard, who was working back in the Texas Room at the time, and he said, "If you want to become a library rat, I will let you go in the back stacks. You can work down here as long as you want and volunteer your time, and in your spare time you can work on the book. I said, "That sounds great." I started out, and that expanded into interviewing hundreds and hundreds of Houstonians, elderly people who have lived in neighborhoods for 50, 70 years, and it became a passion and almost a compulsion. The book would never been written if it had not been for my beautiful wife, Barbara, who is standing over here, because I would have continued to do research forever. She said, "Stop. Publish the damn book."

Let's start and just go right into the streets. What I tried to do is pick out a number of streets that have interesting stories. There are a lot of historical streets in the book—Crockett, Bowie, Houston, Travis, Fannin, etc, but I am not going to insult anybody here by trying to tell you more about those people. You already know more about them than I do.

Let's get cracking with an interesting story. This street is not far from here. It is called Anita. Anita is a street that is just to the north of Elgin. She was one of the daughters of Samuel K. McIlhenny. Mr. McIlhenny was a very, very successful merchant in early Houston and the family home was called The Gables. Unfortunately, Anita, her sister Rosalie, and their mother Eva made the fatal mistake on September 8, 1900, of visiting their beach house in Galveston. We all know what happened there. All three women were killed in The Great Storm. The miraculous thing is that their bodies were found and brought back to Houston for burial in Glenwood Cemetery. The 1900 map came out after the storm, and Mr. McIlhenny was so distressed about the death of his beloved family members that he wanted to name streets after them. So Anita and Rosalie were so honored by having streets named after them. I do not know why he did not give Eva a street. Maybe he was not so distressed over her but he certainly was distressed over the girls. In the 1900 map at the end of the year, these two streets appeared between Tuam and Elgin.

The next interesting street is called Artesian. Artesian is still here; it is over by where the new Ferris wheel and The Aquarium Restaurant are. In the late 1800s Houston's water supply was questionable at best. The city could not afford to build a water system, so a private company dammed up Buffalo Bayou and started selling water out of the reservoir. For all reports that

came out that, it was totally un-potable. However, in the early 1890s it was discovered that we were sitting on a virtual lake of artesian water—pure water down below the surface. So this street is named for the early wells that were drilled there by the Houston Water Works on the banks of Buffalo Bayou. If you go to the library you can pull the old Sanford Insurance maps out, and they will show you the exact location of the wells, the suction pipes, the water pumps and the water pipes going throughout the city. If you have been down to that facility down there, you will notice that a couple of these stacks are actually still standing.

This is probably the most unusual first name of anybody to have a street named for him. The gentleman's name was Decimus Ultimus Barziza. Here is Mr. Barziza's tombstone here. In Latin Decimus and Ultimus means tenth and last and he was the tenth and last son of Phillip Ignatius and Cecile Amanda Barziza. He was really quite an interesting man. He was a captain of his Texas Brigade. He saw some action at Gettysburg and was actually wounded in the attack on Little Round Top, a very fierce battle, if you're a Civil War follower. It was on the 2nd of July, 1863, at which point he was captured by the Union army and taken prisoner. He spent about a year in POW camp but then escaped to Canada. After the war he came back to Houston. He was an author. He wrote two books: *The Adventures of a Prisoner of War* and *Live Scenes in Federal Prisons*. He was a politician. He was a representative for the first Texas legislature and a businessman. He founded the state's first trust company called Houston Land and Trust. You can visit his grave in Glenwood Cemetery.

A street that we all know and many do not know a lot about is Bellaire Boulevard. In 1908 the Burlington Railroad executive named William W. Baldwin purchased 9,449 acres of land in southwest Houston and named it Westmoreland Farms. He called the town at the center Bellaire. Initially the name was thought to come from a marketing brochure, which said, "The town of Bellaire or 'Fine Air' for Westmoreland Farms is fanned day and night with the cooling breezes of the Gulf of Mexico." That is probably a stretch of the imagination--either that or he'd never been to Bellaire, one of the two. In 1910 an advertisement described the boulevard as "a fine double road of white shell and Houston's most popular driveway." That is pretty much impossible. It's actually more likely that since Baldwin's railroad, which was called Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy, served the town he liked very much in Ohio called Bellaire, Ohio. He probably named it for that town.

We have another street that all of us probably drive on all the time, Bissonnet. George Herman Bissonnet was a native Houstonian and was a pilot in the United States Army Air Corps. That was what they called the U.S. Air Force before it was the U.S. Air Force. In World War I he was killed in a training crash while he was training for fighting the war in Florida. That street has had three other names before it got to be named for Mr. Bissonnet. It was initially called County Poor Farm Road, because it ran out to the County Poor Farm. The ditch out there is still called Poor Farm Ditch and you have probably driven across it and just did not know what the name of it was. Secondly, it was called Richmond Road, because it is the principal artery leading to the Fort Bend County Seat, Richmond. Then it became named West 11th or just 11th St. which is on earliest planning map of Southampton. It was subsequently changed to honor Mr. Bissonnet.

Another street that people get confused or talk about is Buffalo Speedway. Early legend says that there was an automobile race track located somewhere south of where St. John's School is today on the corner of Westheimer and Buffalo Speedway. The old stock car race tracks that were located at Arrowhead Park on OST, Playland Park on South Main, and Meyerland are no longer there. But actually there was never a track on Buffalo Speedway. Mr. Thomas Anderson, a great historian and a man who passed away here the other day, told me that the street earned its name when the concrete was first laid there. It was about a mile long strip, and every boy with a car came out there and decided to race down that street. Thus it picked up the name because it was a straight street - it was known as Buffalo Speedway.

This is the first map the city of Houston done in 1836, referred to as the Borden map. You can see we have grown a little bit since these days. The last street is called Prairie for obvious reasons. Everything beyond it was Prairie. You know where Prairie is. It is way over there. On the earliest map when they were talking about this street it was going to be called Carolina. The reason it was called Carolina was that Senator W. C. Preston, for whom Preston Avenue was named, was a strong backer of Texas annexation, which was not a popular cause in Washington, D.C. then, because they were afraid of starting a war with Mexico. They honored both Preston and South Carolina with a street name. Unfortunately, somewhere along the way there was a transcription error and it got changed to Caroline from Carolina. It has never been corrected and it is kind of a shame, because we have streets named for 48 of the 50 states. Only South Carolina and Maine do not have streets named for them.

The research leads me to believe that James Collingsworth was an early Texas politician. The Constitution of the Republic of Texas Constitution prohibited a president from having consecutive terms. So in 1838 Sam Houston resigned from the office and could not stand for reelection. Houston's opponents and critics backed Mirabeau B. Lamar. Lamar had two people running against him - one was Peter W. Grayson and the other one was Mr. Collingsworth. Before the election could take place, Grayson committed suicide and Collingsworth got drunk and fell in Galveston Bay and drowned. The only living candidate, Mirabeau B. Lamar won the election.

Edward Hawkins Cushing was a publisher of *The Houston Telegram*, the city's earliest newspaper. Cushing bought the newspaper from Gail Borden in 1856 and operated it for the next 10 years. During the War Between the States he faced two serious problems for a newsman. One was how to gather accurate news. The mail service had been suspended because of the war and the telegraph lines were down because most of them had been cut by marauding troops. Cushing solved this problem by setting up his own pony express. The second problem was a severe shortage of newsprint, and he used any paper in any color he could find to print the paper. Sometimes he even used wallpaper and printed on the back side of it. Certain days the paper might come out and it might be yellow, it might be blue, whatever he had to use. He was a very good newsman and he had very accurate facts. Jefferson Davis, former president of the Confederate States of America, used Cushing's files to write his own account of the Civil War.

A street out in West Houston that is pretty well known, Dairy Ashford, has a funny story behind it. In 1894 surveyors named the town we call Alief, Dairy or Dairy Station, because it was

located on the San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railroad line. There were two trains that ran through each day and for some reason the residents started calling the day train the Dinky and the night train the Davy Crockett. When the U.S. post office denied an application for the name Dairy when the town applied for it, they changed the name to Alief honoring the first Postmistress whose name was Alief O'Zelda McGee. The opposite end of the line was Ashford, which was also at that time known as Satsuma or Thompson Switch. These towns had a lot of names back then. It was located near Cypress and on the Houston and Texas Central Railroad. A gentleman named J. T. Thompson, who platted the town, called it Satsuma, because there were some natural orange groves there in the area and later it was changed formally to Ashford.

Not a lot of streets in Houston are named for women. There are obvious reasons. We do not have many named for minorities either. All the people that named the streets back in those days were the powerful white males, but we do have some streets named for women. This is a very important one here. Her name is Kezia Payne Depelchin. Most of you probably have heard of the Depelchin Faith Home. Her family arrived in Galveston in 1837, and by 1839, Kezia was an orphan as both of her parents had died in a yellow fever epidemic. During the Civil War she became a nurse in Houston. In 1888 Depelchin was chosen the first woman matron of the Bayland Orphans Boys' Home, which was down on Galveston Bay. It was later moved to where Bayland Street is and the building is still there. She founded the city's first daycare center in 1892, and a year later chartered Faith Home, a facility that still exists today out on Shepherd and Memorial Drive. Now it is called Depelchin Children's Center.

This next one is a real character. Everybody knows this guy. Richard W. "Dick" Dowling is one of the city's great characters. There is a statue of him in Hermann Park. Dowling was born in Tuam, Galway County, Ireland in 1838. He immigrated to America after that. He became a saloonkeeper in Houston, and he worked at a bar downtown called The Finish. The most popular drink at The Finish was called Kiss Me Quick and Go. He volunteered for the Confederate Army. He became a hero by defeating the Union effort to invade Texas at the Battle of Sabine Pass. When he came back to Houston, he had been such a successful saloonkeeper, he opened his own saloon called The Bank of Bacchus, but he died of a yellow fever epidemic in 1867. He is buried in St. Vincent's Cemetery off of Navigation near the original Ninfas. The Ancient Order of Hibernians commissioned Frank Tyler to sell the statue of him, and it originally stood in Market Square. The statue moved many times over the years and it finally ended up in 1958 in Hermann Park, where it has been ever since. He is proudly dressed in his Confederate uniform and now he guards the concrete-lined concourses of the Braes Bayou. A lot of the times they would find that the sword was missing. People would steal his sword because they could pull it out, so they finally solved that problem. It had been stolen at least 5 times since 1905. Historically the Hibernians come out and bathe the statue every St. Patrick's day, as well as drinking some beer while they are out there.

Dunlavy is a street in the Montrose area. It is named for Herbert D. Dunlavy. He was a United States Marine that was killed in action in World War I. He was not only the first Houstonian casualty of that war, but he was also a hero. He single-handedly captured the crew of a German machine gun nest on the 6th of June in 1918. For this action he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. Unfortunately the next day Dunlavy was resting in a trench, and he was killed by

the force of an artillery shell that exploded near him. In 1921 he was honored by his church, Christ Church Cathedral, along with five other servicemen who were members who lost their lives in the conflict. There is a special war memorial for those people down there at the church. Many of you may have seen it if you are members.

Edloe is a funny-named street and I always kind of wondered about it. I fortunately had a friend who knew the man that named it. It is south of the River Oaks area, as most of you probably know. Real estate developer Edward Lilo Crane, Sr. named this street for his son, Edward Lilo Crane, Jr. The way he came about it was, is the contraction of the first two letters of Edward—Ed plus the first and last letter of Lilo—Lo, and an e tossed in on the end. It runs north and south and dead ends into Westheimer, but if you extend that street through the little part Westheimer and on straight into River Oaks, it will take you straight to the 3600 block of Chevy Chase, right through Mr. Crane's front door. He was quite a real estate developer. He actually developed Garden Oaks, Southside Place, River Oaks Terrace, Cherryhurst, and Pineview. He is buried in Glenwood Cemetery as well.

This is one of the funnier stories in the book. I can just imagine this happening. This is another lady that got a street named for her, but you will see it was kind of tough to get it done. Many of you probably remember E. A. "Squatty" Lyons, the Harris County Commissioner. He was the Commissioner for decades from the 40's on. His wife was named Fern, and she was always after Squatty to name a street for her. And he kept delaying it and finding excuses to not do it. He resisted for years. Finally he relented, and he named a very short street for her – a street which was about to be redistricted into someone else's district on the south side of dear old Tully Stadium, out off Memorial Drive. When she saw the street, she said, "He picked something just like me, short and something he knows he wouldn't have to maintain for very long."

Out on the east side we have a Staff Sergeant Macario Garcia Street. I believe it used to be 75th Street. On November 22, 1944, near Grosshou, Germany, a wounded Staff Sergeant Garcia single-handedly captured two German machine gun nests killing six of the enemy and capturing four others. For his extraordinary acts of bravery he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor by President Harry S. Truman on the 23rd of August of 1945. Garcia also earned a Purple Heart, a Bronze Star, and a Combat Infantryman Badge. Because The Governor of Mexico, because Garcia was of Hispanic background, the Governor of Mexico gave him their highest honor, the Mérito Militar. Unfortunately, in 1972 Garcia was killed in a car accident, but he is buried in the Ring of Honor at Houston National Cemetery out off Veterans Memorial Highway, and you can visit his grave out there. It is a beautiful sight.

Another street that is pretty well-known, and many people do not know why it is called that is Gessner. Gessner is on the west side. Gessner is named for August Gessner. He was a German immigrant. He arrived in the United States in 1886. He was a Spanish-American war veteran, and he was so pleased with that he went back to Puerto Rico, and he built a monument to Teddy Roosevelt and The Rough Riders. He arrived in Houston and he opened A. D. Gessner Cabinet Works. Gessner became friends with the infamous long-time Harris county Commissioner, E. A. "Squatty" Lyons. Squatty liked him a lot so Squatty decided it may be easier to name a street after him than it was for Fern, so August got a street named for him.

This is not really a street, but we call it the Gulf Freeway. When it was being constructed, it was referred to as a concrete engineering marvel, the longest toll-free superhighway constructed in the nation after World War II. The expressway took sixteen years in planning and another six years to build. However, if you have driven on it, as many of us do, maybe we are not sure it will ever be completely finished. J. W. Van London was the engineer and the manager of Houston Urban Expressways. He designed and supervised the construction of the freeway. The original cost was \$28,643,521. If you do not believe that, you can go to the library and actually see the tab. The bill's over there. It was initially called the Superhighway, but the city decided it had to be called something better than that, so they held a contest to rename it. In December 1952 a young lady named Ms. Sara Yancy won a hundred bucks for her choice of the Gulf Freeway. It officially opened on August 2, 1952.

One of the early architects of the city was Eugene T. Heiner. He was probably one of the most famous architects of the 19th century in this area. His specialty was designing courthouses. He did Galveston and Hallettsville. He did jails in Galveston, Harris, and Tarrant counties. He did prisons. He did the Texas State Penitentiary in Huntsville - the big red one. He also built a building on Texas A&M campus. He is most remembered here for his magnificent high Victorian style Cotton Exchange and Board of Trade building in 1884, which is still down on Market Square. Other commercial buildings, which are still here, include the Sweeny and Coombs building in 1880, the Henry Brashear building in 1882, and the Houston Ice and Brewing Company plant in 1893. He loved to employ stucco, color, texture, and cast iron in his buildings. In addition, in 1891 Heiner was founder and first secretary of Houston Business League, which is basically like the present day Chamber of Commerce.

Here is an interesting wild west story of our early days. There were two gentlemen, James B. Hogan, Jr. and his brother, Thomas Hogan. They came to Texas in 1836 to help fight for Texas independence. They both fought with Sam Houston at the Battle of San Jacinto. Following the revolution, James opened the first blacksmith's shop in Houston on Main Street. He was first elected sheriff of Harris County in 1850 and served in that position until 1854. Thomas won the re-election in 1854 and served for the next two years. Thomas is most remembered for pursuing a murderer whose name is Hyde who killed someone here in Houston and fled to Louisiana. Hogan went after Hyde and caught him, and Hyde was brought back to Houston and publicly executed in the first legal hanging in the city's history in 1854. After the brothers retired from public life, both men joined back together and opened Hogan's new hotel on Market Square. You can find both these gentlemen buried in the Founders Memorial Cemetery on West Dallas.

We seem to have exciting elections in this country over the past few years with a lot of problems. I am wondering why they are not able to handle them like this one. James S. Holman was elected District Clerk of the County of Harrisburg, which is what this was called before it was called Harris County in 1837. The City of Houston was incorporated about that time, and Chief Justice Andrew Briscoe called an election. We needed a mayor. Holman was elected the first mayor in a very tight contest. He got 12 votes. His next competitor, Francis Lubbock, got 11 votes. Thomas W. Ward came in 3rd with 10 votes.

I was looking at a Key map and I came across this street and I had to know the answer so I went to my friends at Planning and Development and said, "Why do we have a street called Inch?" They started laughing, and they said, "Well, we will tell you. This is a neighborhood out in Spring Branch area. A developer came in to get his plat approved. For a plat to be accepted, all the streets have to be named; if there are any missing, then they will reject the plat." Well, they pointed out that this little two block street was not named. The developer looked over, and he saw a ruler and he picked up a ruler and he laid it on the plat, and he said, "By God, it is an inch long. We will call it Inch." That is how it got the name and it stayed, because most people probably would not want to live on Inch, but since it is only a cross street and there is no addresses on Inch, it stayed on there. You can go visit Inch if you are out in the Spring Branch area.

Some of you are from River Oaks or pass through River Oaks a lot and know there is a lot of streets in there named for country clubs. The reason the neighborhood was initially called Country Club Estates and later changed to River Oaks. I will not talk about all of them so I will just pick out one - Inwood. Inwood is named for the Inwood Country Club, which is located on Jamaica Bay on Long Island. The town is called Inwood as well. The Inwood Golf Club hosted the 1921 PGA Open and the 1923 U.S. Open. It is famous because the 10th hole there is only 106 yard par 3. This is the shortest golf hole ever played in U.S. Open history.

I mentioned we did not have a lot of streets named for women. We certainly do not have a lot of streets named for African-Americans. We do have one named for a very prominent African-American. His name is A. K. Kelley. He was born a slave on a plantation in Brazoria County in 1846. Following emancipation he went on to work for the Southern Pacific Railroad. He invested in real estate and one time owned somewhere between 21 and 42 rent houses. Initially he was the owner of a laundry and he owned the Evergreen Negro Cemetery, which is still here in town. He is also buried there. Mr. Kelley was the founder of the Mount Zion Baptist Church, which is one of the oldest places of worship in our city. Not only does the street remember him but Kelley Courts, which was a housing project for over 300 families, honors Mr. Kelley, and was named in his honor in 1942, fourteen years after he passed away.

John Henry Kirby was called "the father of industrial Texas." Kirby owned the two largest lumber companies in East Texas. In 1895 the Houston Baseball Association was chartered with capital of \$3000 and Kirby was the President. In 1922 Kirby joined a Texas company founder, Joseph Cullinan, who formed the American Anti-Klan Association to force the Ku Klux Klan to disband. Kirby completed construction of his luxurious mansion at 2006 Smith in 1928. The Kirby mansion had one of the city's most beautiful gardens that contained baroque water parterres, a conservatory, a pergola, a natatorium and a lake with a little isle in the middle and a rustic bridge. He also owned a place called Camp Killcare on Armand Bayou where he and influential friends partied on weekends, swam, fished, and hunted alligators. Kirby and Howard Hughes, Sr. were great friends and some of the first Houstonians to own automobiles. They were constantly racing through the city at six or eight miles an hour in these automobiles. The great depression unfortunately took its toll on many Houstonians, including Kirby. He filed bankruptcy in 1933.

This is a tragic tale. It is probably apocryphal but I am not sure, because it sounds too good that it could not be true. It involves a young girl, her grandfather and the city of Houston. According to the *Houston Post*, this was in a 1904 edition of the *Houston Post*. A young lady named La Rue Sachs, a resident of the Fourth Ward, or Freedman's Town, one day was walking down the street and she was run over by a streetcar. The city settled with her grandfather, paying him \$2000. He used the funds to buy a farm just west of the ward boundary, developed the property, and in 1919 he added a north/south street that intersected West Dallas. He named the street La Rue in honor of his dearly departed granddaughter, and donated the right of way to the city. City officials gladly accepted the gift and immediately raised his taxes because of the improved status of his property. So much for being civic-minded citizen.

Another two brothers who were characters in our city were Michael and John Lyons for which Lyons Avenue was named. They were Irish immigrants who arrived in Houston at the end of the 19th century. John opened a saloon on the street that's name change in 1894 to honor his brother Michael. It is possible that Michael's political connections was the reason he got a street named for him. He was married to Mayor John Brown's daughter Elizabeth, and that may have helped seal that name change. The street was previously known as Odin from the first Catholic Bishop in the diocese of Galveston named John Mary Odin. And it is a possibility that if the Fifth Ward Civic Association had its way, the street may be changed again and be called Barbara Jordan Avenue.

Both MacGregor Drive and MacGregor Park are named for Henry F. MacGregor. He was a major influence at the *Houston Post* for many years. And along with John Kirby he put up the land for St. Agnes Academy. He was one of the organizers of the Houston Symphony Association. He gave the city a park with a fountain, a pool, and a sculpture of his wife on the corner of Main and Richmond, next to the Delmar Theater. Little remains of the park today and the statue of his wife, Elizabeth Stevens MacGregor, whom everyone called Peggy, has been moved to MacGregor Park. The interesting thing about the sculptor, Gutzon Borglum, is that his next commission after doing this little statue of Peggy was to do Mount Rushmore.

Shinpei Mykawa was a very interesting man. He was born in Aichi, Japan on December 1, 1874. He came to the U.S. as a naval officer representing his country in 1903 at the World's Fair at St. Louis. Returning to Japan, he passed through Houston, and he noticed the countryside was perfect for growing rice. He immigrated to America, and he bought land near a little town called Erin Station, 10 miles south, and he established a rice farm. Unfortunately, on the April 24, 1906, he was killed when he fell underneath a piece of his agricultural equipment. He is buried in Hollywood cemetery. The tombstone on his grave is written in Japanese on one side and English on the other. He was very popular with his neighbors. Everybody really loved this guy, so they honored him, when they changed Erin Station to Mykawa, Texas. When the city cut a road along the railroad tracks there, they changed it to Mykawa Road.

The street that is kind of hard to find, and you will understand why I say that when I tell you what it is, is called No Name. No Name is a street that is out near Beltway 8 in the west. It is 3 blocks long. It runs through a concentration of town houses. It is not marked in any manner; has

no addresses and thus the name. It even lacks a street sign, but it is actually truly a street named No Name.

The Galleria area is the site of the famous Pin Oak Stables, and the street out there is still called Pin Oak. The Abercrombie family owned the land and built the facility there for their only daughter Josephine. She began riding horses at age four and became a very accomplished horsewoman. Many of you may remember that the annual Pin Oaks Charity Horse Show was held in the arena there. It was one of the premier social events of the city in the 1950s.

I do want to talk about another golf street in River Oaks because I think it is a good story. It is called Pine Valley. The Pine Valley Country Club is in Clementon, New Jersey, and the first round of golf he ever played here, a young and not-so-yet-famous nor wealthy golf man by the name of Arnold Palmer broke par, won enough money to buy an engagement ring, and eloped with his bride.

Rankin Road—George Clark Rankin was an ordained Methodist minister. He was transferred to the Shearn Church in Houston in 1892. He was known for his hellfire and brimstone sermons. He would tour Houston saloons and fleshpots and gambling halls in disguise and then on Sunday evenings he would call down damnation on customers and the establishments. It was said that the church was packed both from “the vestibule to amen corner” to see who he was going to indict next. He claimed over 500 prostitutes were in the city, many of them living in the shadow of Shearn Church. In the end though, in 1896 Rankin was called by the First Methodist Church of Dallas and Houston returned to its sinful ways

The next gentleman is obviously very famous - it is William Marsh Rice for whom Rice Boulevard is named. Rice gave an endowment of \$200,000 in 1891 for “the foundation of an institute for the advancement of literature, science, and art.” We now call it Rice University. The interesting thing about this story is that Rice died in New York City under very mysterious circumstances on the 24th of April in 1900. It turned out it was actually a case of ‘the butler really did do it.’ On April 23, 1901, Charles Jones, Rice’s manservant, was indicted for his murder. He was tried and convicted. Rice was cremated and his ashes are kept under his statue, which is right here in the middle of the quadrangle at Rice, thus making the campus the largest private cemetery in the city of Houston.

Developers like to have fun sometimes, and one of the things they like to do is spell things backwards, so there is a street out in the Sharpstown area called Saxet. Most of you can probably guess, Saxet is Texas spelled backwards, S-a-x-e-t.

This is one of the funniest stories I ever came across, and I verified this one as being true with Pat Hardy at Planning and Development as well as with the person whose father actually was working there when the street was named. When Ravenslade, which is a neighborhood out on 290, was being planned, all the streets had some sort of avian connection. They were called Ravens Claw, Ravens Roost, Ravens Light, Nevermore (obviously a genuflection to Edgar Allan Poe), Birdhall, etc. Developers believed the lots would sell faster if this sort of starter neighborhood had a school, so they gave the Cy-Fair Independent School District land for

Millsaps Elementary. Unfortunately, the school did not have adequate access for emergency vehicles, so the city required another street be run right in front of the campus. The developers went to CyFair ISD and asked to return some of the donated land so they could build the street. The district said they would be happy to sell the land back, but they sure as hell weren't going to give it back to them. The developer was furious. He comes down to Planning and Development. People down there telling me he was standing there. He said, "I want to name this street Screwed, because I got screwed." They said, "Ah, that is probably not the best idea." He said, "I did get the shaft. Can I name it Shaft?" The name of the street that runs in front of Millsaps Elementary School is now Shaft.

Another street named for a famous Houstonian and a famous family is, of course, Shepherd Drive. Benjamin A. Shepherd is a man that is known well throughout society here. I believe his desk is somewhere in The Heritage Society museum. He was a Virginian who came to Houston in 1844. In 1847 his Commercial and Agricultural Bank became the first chartered bank in Texas. Although he was not invited in 1866, to become a founder of the city's first national bank, he was elected to the board of directors a year later. In 1867 he was named President of the First National Bank when it encountered financial difficulties following the Civil War. Shepherd managed the bank with an iron hand for the next 25 years. He was one of the incorporators of the Buffalo Bayou and Brazos and Colorado Railroad, as well as one of the founders of the Cotton Exchange and Board of Trade in 1874. The town of Shepherd in San Jacinto County is named for him following the laying out of the route of the Houston, East and West Texas railroad in 1875. That family has been here for six generations now and they gave the city land for Shepherd Drive and they funded the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University.

Probably the street I am asked about as many as any other street in the whole place is Stella Link. Everybody wants to know who Stella is. Contrary to popular opinion Stella is not Mr. and Mrs. Link's little girl. The street ran parallel to a railroad that ran from Bellaire to Stella, Texas, which is at a junction in the International and Great Northern, and the Texas and New Orleans railroads, immediately is south of Houston. Thus it was the link to Stella.

Some of you may have heard of Tanglewood. Mary Katherine Farrington Miller, daughter of Tanglewood developer Willaim G. Farrington, named this street. Her dad told her she could name a street but it had to be easy to pronounce and remember. She had enjoyed reading Nathaniel Hawthorne's Tanglewood Tales as a student at Lanier Junior High School. She was also familiar with Boston Symphony's 210 acre formal garden in Lenox, Massachusetts so Mr. Farrington agreed with his daughter and thus the name Tanglewood became the name of the neighborhood and the main thoroughfare.

T. C. Jester—Mr. Jester was the pastor of the Baptist Temple at the corner of 20th Street and Rutland in the Houston Heights. He was appointed the position in 1927 and remained on the job until his death in 1950. Every businessman in the Heights closed his business for Mr. Jester's funeral. He began a program of tithing by members in 1938 and some of the older parishioners still tithe to the temple. He was very active in the community, and he served on the Houston City Planning Commission and the board of the Baptist Hospital.

Voss—this is a well-known street, many of us have been on it. The story behind it is kind of interesting. The land where it is was owned by a man named C. H. Voss, and he owned 12 acres at the intersection Westheimer and Post Oak where the Galleria is today. William Farrington, the developer, wanted to build a regional shopping center there, so he went and talked to Mr. Voss, and in 1951 the only building on the property was a tavern and a pool hall owned by Voss and his wife Ella. While the cold beer may have been a drawing card for clients, many came to use the pay phone. It was the only telephone in the area for miles and miles. Voss wasn't interested in selling this land but he finally did agree to lease the property to Farrington for 99 years and that's how the shopping center got to be built.

The longest street in the city is more than 41 miles long. It is Westheimer and was named for Michael Louis Westheimer. He was an immigrant from Germany who came to Houston in 1859. He was quite an entrepreneur. He owned a flour mill, a livery stable on the corner of Milam and Congress; he was a hay merchant, and laid the city's first streetcar tracks. At an auction he bought a 640-acre farm for \$2.50 an acre where Lamar High School is today. Property's gone up out there a little bit. He started a school on the property for his sixteen children as well as his nieces and nephews who'd come over from Germany. The shell lane leading out to the schoolhouse became known as "the road to Westheimer's place." Thus it became Westheimer Road. Out of the family livery business came the Westheimer Transfer and Storage Company, and also they once owned the Westheimer Undertaking and Embalming Company. Westheimer is still a very prominent family in Houston today.

Two more I want to tell you about. One, this is just a great story, and I love great stories about streets. This man is named John Woodhead, and if you live in the Montrose area or have been through there, obviously you know Woodhead. He was an early settler from England. He was reported to be "a great church worker who left many descendents in the Houston area." In 1935 people from the Lanier Junior High School appearing before City Council requesting the street in front of the school be changed to from Woodhead to Higginbotham in honor of the school's principal, Ms. Blanch Higginbotham. They also had another motive besides just polishing an apple for the principal. It seems that the students at the other schools started calling the Lanier kids "wood heads" implying that they were not very smart. After hearing testimony as to the high character of Mr. Woodhead, the Council decided to retain the street name. The students wrote a letter of apology to E. S. Woodhead, John's brother and also a Houstonian. In the letter they said, "if we have offended members of your family by this petition, we offer our sincere apology, and yet we cannot regret the opportunity that has come to us to learn more about the distinguished gentleman for whom this street is named.

Last but not least, there is Zindler Street. Zindler Street is named for Benjamin Zindler. In 1888, he founded a men and boys clothing store called Zindler's. For many years it was located at the corner of Fannin and Congress. Today it operates under the name of Zindler's Big and Tall. Most of us are familiar with this name because of his grandson, Marvin on Eyewitness News and Channel 13 and Chicken Ranch fame. The street is located in a neighborhood called Denver Harbor which is off the Ship Channel, but there are actually a number of streets in the

neighborhood named for famous retail establishments. There is not only Zindler, but also streets called Kress, Woolworth and Gazin.

There is one other thing I would be remiss in not mentioning because it was such a big help. One day when I was working on this book, I was sitting out on your plaza here having lunch and talking to a friend and I looked up and saw this monument. On the monument there is this big brass plaque. I keep looking at it and I see all those names and I say, "My gosh! These names are people who have streets named for them." I went over and read the plaque and saw that it was honoring men who were killed in World War I. It was very interesting because for the book, I was able to go back and find out who all these people were by checking the war records at the Clayton Library. The inspiration for including all these streets in the book was because The Heritage Society has this lovely memorial to them.

This is a little about Houston streets. Again, I very much appreciate your coming out on this lousy day and thank you for taking your time. I hope that you learned something or at least were slightly amused. Thanks a lot.

We've got 10 minutes or less and if you would like to ask any questions, I will try to answer them. I do not know if I can or not because there are 40,000 streets in the city of Houston.

Q: Is Lubbock street named for Francis Lubbock or for Thomas Lubbock?

A: As far as I can tell it is named for Francis Lubbock. I can tell you a little bit about it for those of you who would like to know anything about it. The book basically says this, that he was an early Houston resident he acquired 200-acre ranch at 75 cents an acre in 1846 and was an achiever.

Q: [inaudible].

A: Yes. There is a street called Weingarten that's out by the University of Houston according to the Weingarten family. At that time there was a Weingarten store there years ago on the corner of that street.

Q: How about Smith Street downtown?

A: Smith is named for Benjamin F. Smith.

Q: Not Def Smith.

A: No. Def Max Smith was with Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans. He came to Texas in 1832. He fought at Gonzales, Goliad, Bexar, San Jacinto. He built one of the city's first hotels. [inaudible].

Q: Westheimer and 1093 are both names. Was it Westheimer before it was 1093 or 1093 and then they called it Westheimer after that?

A: It was originally—I think, everybody just referred to it as the road to Westheimer, so my guess would be it was probably first called Westheimer and then later it was extended on out to Fulshear and beyond and it became 1093. I am not certain.

Q: Yeah, because at the Galleria is 1093.

A: Yeah, it is now. It has been for a long time, but I do not think it was in the 1860s--my guess would have been ... casually referred to as the road to Westheimer's house.

Q: How did Main Street get its name?

A: [inaudible] It was named by the Allen brothers, and maybe because the fact that it was the only street in town, I believe that, let's see was 90 feet wide versus 80 feet--it was kind of the kind of streets. Most of the merchants built their homes on it and leading citizens lived on it and that type of thing.

Q: In Sharpstown, Meyerland and Westbury—what names did they use to name these streets? [inaudible].

A: I do not know. A lot of times I found over time developers just named streets because they needed a name. Sometimes they may find a theme like Ravenswood [inaudible].

Q: Was Holcombe named after Mayor Holcombe?

A: Yes it was. And the interesting thing about that was he was the mayor of Bellaire, and he didn't want anything named for him because he was a very modest man. So he went out of town and the City Council voted it while he was out of town. He came back and they had changed the name and there wasn't anything he could do about it.

Q: Who decides what to name a street?

A: That is a very interesting question. [inaudible] how does a street get named, particularly renamed. It is a very, very difficult process, because you have to go to City Council and it has to be approved to get a street name changed and as we've gotten to be bigger and bigger and bigger. It's harder and harder and harder to have that happen, because as you can imagine, people at those business have to change all their stationery and their business cards and their advertising and everything, so it is a real problem get it changed and it is very hard to get it changed any more. All that happens today is people—we also call them called honorary streets and I talk about them in the book. You can find somebody like Mrs. Dorothy Hood, this famous artist. She lived on a street in the Heights. They wanted to change the street name. They ran into this problem, so they ended up naming the block an honorary street called Dorothy Hood Street. It is not really a real street name. That is about the only way you can get it done.

Q: Heights Boulevard.

A: Heights Boulevard?

Q: Right.

A: Heights Boulevard is modeled after the big Boulevard in Boston. It is called Heights because the Houston Heights itself is the highest elevation in the city of Houston and this was the main street, but they took the model from Commonwealth Avenue in Boston.